

Topic - Stereotypes of young people – Young Voice 2017/18

The Bolsover District Youth Council “Young Voice” has been working on tackling negative stereotypes of young people. The Youth Council worked in groups to look at what a stereotype is and what prejudice involves.

Stereotype – Definition:

“A widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing”

Prejudice – Definition:

“A preconceived opinion that is not based on reason or actual experience”

Examples:

- *“Basing your opinion on a non-personal experience i.e. judging race based on a news headline”*
- *“Seeing people from a certain group acting in a certain way then assuming that the whole group acts that way”*

Stereotypes – perceptions

Youth Council felt that young people are often pigeon-holed in the following categories:

• Easily pulled into peer-pressure	• Have hardly any respect	• Always in trouble
• Mess around	• Under-achieving	• Less understanding
• Take Drugs/alcohol	• Shop lifters	• Low trousers
• Listen to Rap music	• Smokers	• Judge people by first look
• Easily influenced	• Gangs / hoodies – seen automatically as law breakers (ASB)	• Mean / bossy / cause drama

Youth Council identified that people can be stereotyped because of their “differences” e.g.:

- | | | |
|-------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| • Age | • Sexuality | • Mental Health |
| • Ethnicity | • Disability / learning disability / Special Needs | • Labelling - Goth/Geek/Nerd/Hoodie |
| • Religion | | |
| • Income | | |
| • Gender | | |

Youth Council feel stereotyping is a big problem for young people.

Positive aspects of young people were identified as including:-

- More opportunities for young people
- Physically Active – i.e. PE / Sport / targeted activities for young people
- Education standards improving
- See the world in a different way
- More risk taking
- Good with technology – keep up with the pace of advancements
- Passionate
- Enthusiastic
- Positive approach
- Open minded / liberal / accepting

Three groups identified ways they can help promote a positive image of young people:-

- Discussions and meetings
- Myth busting – Myths vs reality
- Organise an event to do the above involving various groups
- Assemblies
- PowerPoint Presentations in form time
- Stereotypes Poster
- Newsletter
- Tackle fake news
- Better promotion in schools

Breaking down the barriers

- Stubbin Wood Special School now part of the Youth Council.
- Icebreaking / teambuilding activities in Youth Council meetings.
- Stereotypes Poster competition run through Youth Council – big hit on social media.
- Frank discussions in Youth Council.
- Youth Council ground rules set for each meeting – respect for others etc.
- Opportunities to lead the debate through chairing meetings – including being a Lead Youth Councillor.
- Mental Health Ambassadors at Shirebrook Academy.
- Positive Activities Rewards Scheme – Schools can each nominate students to undertake fun Outdoor Activities at Pleasley Vale or Extreme wheels activities. Schools can nominate students for improved behaviour or for doing something good for the community.
- The Youth Council's hard work is promoted through the Young Voice newsletter in September.
- Visit to June Full Council being arranged.
- Talks on Mental Health, Stigma and Hate Crime delivered to Youth Council.
- Fundraising for Young Minds charity.

Richard Gadsby – Improvement Officer, Performance Team. May 2018.