Stereotype Threat

refers to the concern with being viewed through the lens of a stereotype.1

Stereotyped threat is caused by cues in the situation that remind people of negative stereotypes.11,18

Anxiety over confirming these stereotypes can impair an individual’s ability to perform up to their full potential.2

Research has shown that stereotype threat negatively impacts: women’s math performance (compared to men’s), White men’s math performance (compared to Asian men), men’s social sensitivity and spatial abilities (compared to women’s), White athletic performance (compared to Black), and Black students’ verbal problem-solving abilities (compared to White students’).

Stereotype threat may be a significant factor in undermining women’s success and persistence in engineering.11,12 This has important implications for STEM fields. A simple reminder of one’s race or gender is enough to elicit stereotype threat.18

STEM fields should consider ways to create identity safe environments to help people overcome stereotype threat.

By actively raising awareness about stereotype threat, providing role models, and encouraging self-affirmation exercises, individuals’ performances are more likely to match their potential.

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More information and resources at: http://wwest.ca
References

Recommended Readings
2. Dr. Toni Schmader’s website: http://schmader.psych.ubc.ca/research.html

About ONWiE
The Ontario Network of Women in Engineering (ONWiE) was formed in 2005 between all the schools and faculties of engineering across Ontario. The objective of this network is to work collaboratively to support current female engineers, students, and encourage the next generation of women to pursue careers in engineering.
Find out more at: http://www.onwie.ca/