



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.^{13,18}

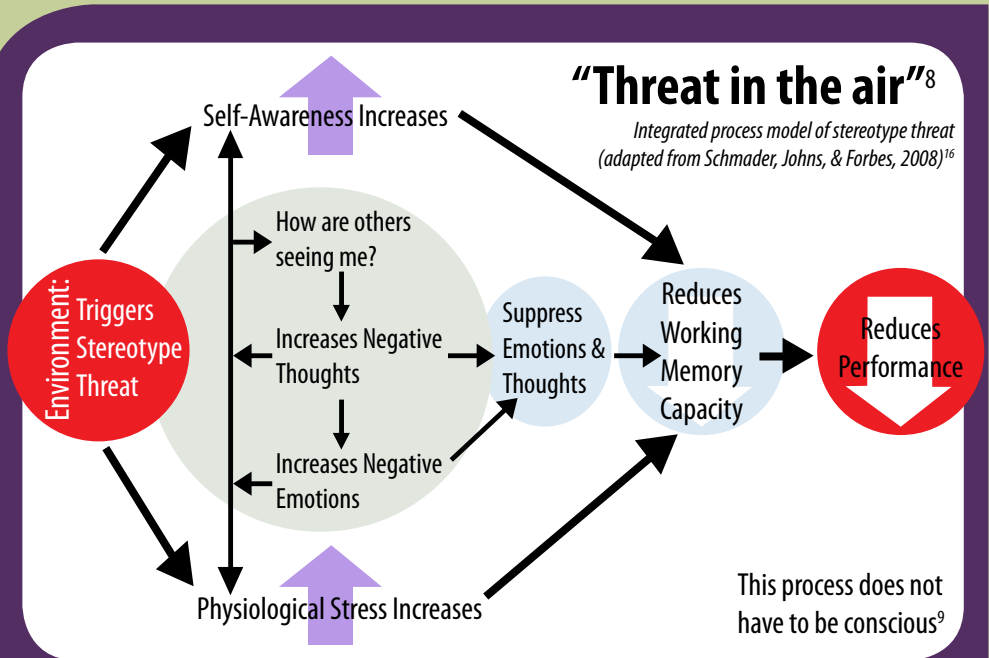
Anxiety over confirming these stereotypes can **impair** an individual's ability to perform up to their full potential.²

Research has shown that stereotype threat negatively impacts: women's math performance³ (compared to men's), White men's math performance⁴ (compared to Asian men), men's social sensitivity⁵ and spatial abilities⁶ (compared to women's), White athletic performance⁷ (compared to Black), and Black students' verbal problem-solving abilities¹ (compared to White students').

Stereotype threat may be a significant factor in undermining women's success and persistence in engineering.¹³ 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.



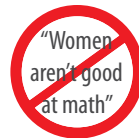
Environment Triggers

Don't...

... define people by their gender,



... or their group,



... or stereotype on performance expectations

Impact on STEM

Reduced:

Performance¹⁸

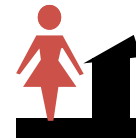
of women & minority students on the SAT, by 50 points¹⁸



Job Engagement & Organizational Commitment

in academia¹¹ & in the engineering industry¹²

Coping Strategies & Alleviating the Threat

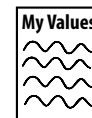


Role Models

Show that others have struggled and succeeded^{9,17,20}

Self-Affirmation

Write about your core values²¹



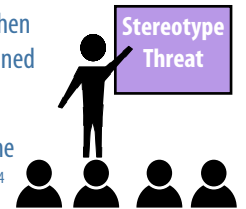
Reframing the Situation

Create identity safe contexts e.g. gender-fair tests³

Learning about Stereotype Threat

Performance improves when stereotype threat is explained before a test^{14,15,19}

Attribute the anxiety to the stereotype, not the self¹⁴





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Recommended Readings

1. <http://www.reducingstereotypethreat.org/>
2. Dr. Toni Schmader's website: <http://schmader.psych.ubc.ca/research.html>

About SCWIST and Make Possible

SCWIST is a non-profit association that promotes, encourages and empowers women and girls in science, engineering and technology. The MS Infinity Program introduces girls to exciting career options and positive female role models in science and technology. The IWIS (Immigrating Women in Science and Technology) Program provides support to immigrating professional women including resources, skill development workshops and networking opportunities. Program details at www.scwist.ca/

The Make Possible Mentoring Network is part of the Government of Canada's Status of Women Initiative to help attract and retain women in technology and advance the digital economy. Make Possible provides mentoring support, networking connections, professional development and leadership opportunities to help women reach their full potential in the technology sector and all STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) fields. The Make Possible vision is a world where aspiration, opportunity and diversity intersect. The Make Possible mission is to help women connect, collaborate and lead through a dedicated mentoring network in STEM. For more information: contact@makepossible.ca or visit <http://www.makepossible.ca/>