

Sarah - Seeking Freedom To Achieve Her Dreams

"I got so angry when the teacher asked for some 'strong boys' to help lift the PE equipment, I know the girls are strong enough to carry the equipment too, and comments like that suggest we aren't capable and able to contribute."

Sarah's Story

I am a year 11 student living in a country town. I live at home with my parents and younger brother. In our house the roles of cooking and household chores are shared. I even put my hand up for jobs outside like bringing the wood up for the fire as I am capable of doing those things too.

I like school and love sport. I play basketball once a week and play netball on the weekend. I would say that I am a bit of a leader at school, and I like to speak up if I don't agree with something and challenge the status quo. I'm a member of the Shire's Youth Action Group and enjoy being part of it, and think that I might be able to influence change.

I'm a social person and like to hang out with my friends on the weekend and go to parties whenever they are on.

Attitudes and Behaviours

I have a good understanding of gender equality and it's something that I am really interested in, because I don't like to be treated differently or miss out on things because I'm a girl. I get really annoyed when I see men and women, boys and girls treated differently because I really believe we should all get to do the things we want to do, and be treated the same regardless of our gender. I've noticed that a lot of teachers and older people that I look up to don't have the same understanding and beliefs that I do about gender roles and stereotypes. It's really surprising that some of these people make sexist comments, and being younger I find it hard to speak up to older people to let them know that I'm uncomfortable about what they are saying. I feel like some teachers are reinforcing gender roles and stereotypes by saying things like 'man up', and dividing up the boys and the girls in class room activities. When this happens I feel dis-empowered and believe it influences my peers beliefs and attitudes in a negative way.

Needs & Expectations

I want there to be a shift in some of the views of the people I look up to so they reinforce and role model the messages I hear in the respectful relationships program and become champions for gender equity. I want to feel supported by them to achieve any aspirations I might have, regardless of my gender.

I need to educate those around me about gender equality and sexism, and the impact it has on me so they can support me to be the best version of me that I can be. I need some skills in challenging sexist comments and gender stereotypes so I can advocate for myself and my stance.

I want to have the freedom without judgement or comment to explore and be who I want to be, do roles that I want to do, and participate in things I enjoy, whether that be dancing or football.

