

**Stereotype Threat**

refers to the concern with being viewed through the lens of a stereotype.<sup>1</sup>

Stereotyped threat is caused by cues in the situation that remind people of negative stereotypes.<sup>13,18</sup>

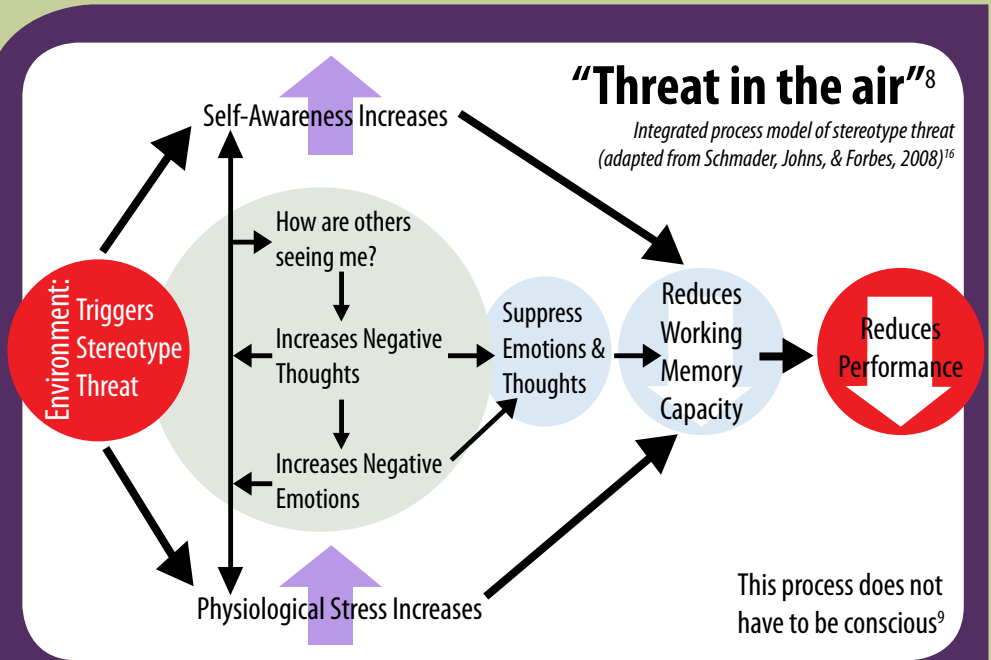
Anxiety over confirming these stereotypes can **impair** an individual's ability to perform up to their full potential.<sup>2</sup>

Research has shown that stereotype threat negatively impacts: women's math performance<sup>3</sup> (compared to men's), White men's math performance<sup>4</sup> (compared to Asian men), men's social sensitivity<sup>5</sup> and spatial abilities<sup>6</sup> (compared to women's), White athletic performance<sup>7</sup> (compared to Black), and Black students' verbal problem-solving abilities<sup>1</sup> (compared to White students').

Stereotype threat may be a significant factor in undermining women's success and persistence in engineering.<sup>13</sup> This has important implications for STEM fields. A simple reminder of one's race or gender is enough to elicit stereotype threat.<sup>18</sup>

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.



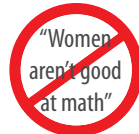
**Environment Triggers**

Don't...

... define people by their gender,



... or their group,



... or stereotype on performance expectations

**Impact on STEM**

Reduced:

Performance<sup>18</sup>

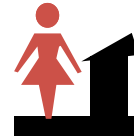
of women & minority students on the SAT, by 50 points<sup>18</sup>



Job Engagement & Organizational Commitment

in academia<sup>11</sup> & in the engineering industry<sup>12</sup>

**Coping Strategies & Alleviating the Threat**

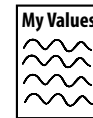


Role Models

Show that others have struggled and succeeded<sup>9,17,20</sup>

Self-Affirmation

Write about your core values<sup>21</sup>



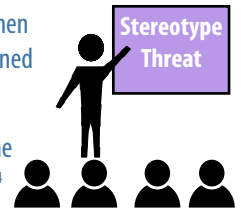
Reframing the Situation

Create identity safe contexts e.g. gender-fair tests<sup>3</sup>

Learning about Stereotype Threat

Performance improves when stereotype threat is explained before a test<sup>14,15,19</sup>

Attribute the anxiety to the stereotype, not the self<sup>14</sup>



## References

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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 eng•cite

eng•cite is the working name of the Goldcorp Professorship in Women in Engineering at UBC. The Professorship – established in 2014 – is a vital aspect of the UBC Faculty of Applied Science's efforts to promote the engineering field to young women, to meet its goal to increase female enrollment in Engineering to 50% and to address a national shortage of Engineers expected by 2020.

The Goldcorp Professorship is a catalyst of change for the engineering field, with a commitment to help UBC become the national leader for gender diversity in engineering. Dr. Sheryl Staub-French, who holds the Professorship, works with teachers, counsellors, parents and high school students to promote engineering education, and provide mentorship and role models for young women who might not otherwise consider or pursue engineering education and careers.

Find out more at: [engcite.ca](http://engcite.ca)