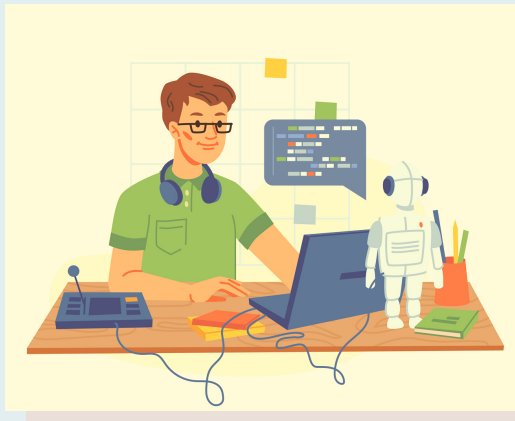


Countering Stereotypes about Computer Science



What are stereotypes?

- Beliefs about what computer scientists are like or what they do
- *Example:* boys are more interested or better than girls at computer science (CS)
- *What if stereotypes are true?* Whether or not they are true on average, they can be harmful for individuals because they are often not true.¹

Stereotypes matter

- They tell a single story: *"if you don't fit this stereotype, then computer science is not for people like you."*
- The more that girls believe stereotypes, the less interested they are in CS (across ages and racial/ethnic groups).²
- Stereotypes can cause girls to lose interest in CS and choose other activities.²



When should we address stereotypes?

- As early as possible!
- Children believe that boys are more interested than girls in CS by 3rd grade.²
- Girls lose interest in CS during middle school.³



How do we address them?

- **Broaden stereotypes:** Show relatable role models, to tell more stories about who computer scientists are.⁴
- **Teach growth mindsets:** Explain that mistakes are how we learn, not a sign you don't belong.⁵
- **Promote belonging:** Help girls build connections with others and feel valued in the classroom.⁶
- **Think before you speak:** Pay attention to how you talk about gender. Saying "girls are just as good as boys!" can make students think the opposite is true.⁷

