

Ally Skills Workshop resources

Terminology

If you're unsure what terms to use in order to avoid being offensive, just ask!

- Privilege: an unearned advantage given to some people but not all
- Oppression: systemic, pervasive inequality present throughout society that benefits people with more privilege and harms those with fewer privileges
- Target: someone who suffers from oppression
- Ally: a member of a social group that enjoys some privilege that is working to end oppression and understand their own privilege
- Cis: your gender is the same as the gender that was assigned to you at birth
- Trans: your gender is different than the gender that was assigned to you at birth
- Non-binary or genderqueer: "male" or "female" doesn't describe your gender accurately
- Groups of people by gender: men for cis and trans men, women for cis and trans women, non-binary people/folks, cis men, trans men, cis women, trans women, people of all genders, folks, people, everyone, all...
- Straight: women attracted primarily to men or men attracted primarily to women
- Gay: men or women attracted primarily to people of the same gender as themselves
- Lesbian: women attracted primarily to women
- Bisexual: people attracted to both men and women
- Pansexual: people attracted to people of any gender
- Asexual: people with little or no sexual attraction to people of any gender
- Queer : useful catch-all term for people who don't fit easily into "straight cis woman" or "straight cis man"
- Use the term(s) for each ethnic group or race that the majority of that group prefers that outsiders use
- Avoid abbreviations for ethnic groups - just say or write the full name
- Use "abled person," "disabled," or "person with disabilities"

Terms not to use in this workshop

- "Political correctness" - invented and promoted by bigoted U.S. conservatives
- "Girls" for women 18 years of age and over
- "Females" for humans - used for animals and plants too
- "Guys" for groups that are not all men
- "Ladies" - associated with "proper" (i.e., subservient) behavior
- "Transsexual" - not inclusive of all trans people
- "People with [BODY PART or CHROMOSOME]" instead of "men" or "women"

- Coded words or phrases like "ethnic" or "from the banlieues" to mean people of a particular race or ethnic group
- Don't use "lame," "dumb," "retard," "stupid," "crazy," etc.; instead use "foolish," "thoughtless," or "inconsiderate" or a specific adjective like "crowded," "disorganized," or "annoying"
- It's fine to use figures of speech like "see what I mean" or "I hear you"

Workshop discussion guidelines

- You may leave or return at any time, for any reason, without explanation
- Please don't repeat sensitive things, or anonymize them if you do
- Focus on what an ally can do in this situation, not the target
- Avoid rules-lawyering - there are no trick questions
- Speak respectfully about religious or spiritual beliefs (but you don't need to be respectful of bigotry or intolerance)
- Don't use stereotypes about people with lower class jobs (e.g. janitor), adults of particular ages, family role (mother, grandparent, etc.)
- Treat caregivers of all sorts respectfully, including mothers

Guidelines for responding to oppression

- Be short, simple, and firm
- Humor usually backfires, avoid it
- Pick your battles
- Play for the audience
- Practice simple responses
- Don't be sexist, homophobic, transphobic, racist, ableist, classist or make fun of people for being sexually undesirable, unattractive, etc.

Guidelines for future ally work

- Don't expect praise and credit for fighting inequality
- Follow and support leaders from target groups
- Assume targets are knowledgeable about their oppression
- Follow your discomfort: if something makes you feel bad, find out more and understand why before reacting

When you make a mistake, apologize, correct yourself, and move on

Resources

We are often asked for the simple cheat sheet of things not to do or say. This does not exist! Part of supporting marginalized groups is making a continuous, on-going effort to educate yourself and change your behavior. Here are some resources to help with this:

<http://firstyearexperience.ucla.edu/abcsofsj> A dictionary of social justice terms, with references.

<http://itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/2012/03/the-genderbread-person-v2-0/> A reference for understanding variations in gender and sexuality.

<http://www.glaad.org/reference/transgender> A guide to writing or speaking about transgender people or issues.

<http://geekfeminism.wikia.com> The Geek Feminism Wiki is an intersectional feminist resource for questions related to women in geek fields.

<http://adainitiative.org/> The Ada Initiative has specific advice in the areas of running conferences, codes of conduct, and areas relevant to women in open technology & culture.

<http://captainawkward.com/> The Captain Awkward advice blog has great tips for how to say uncomfortable things to people, enforce boundaries, and similar skills.

http://geekfeminism.wikia.com/wiki/Charles%27_Rules_of_Argument Charles' Rules of Argument are useful to avoid wasting your time and energy.

<http://adainitiative.org/2013/10/02/running-your-unconference-discussions-effectively-adacamp-session-role-cards/> Effective and just meetings have people filling four specific roles.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ambivalent_sexism Wikipedia page on "benevolent" sexism and its harm towards women with many links to peer-reviewed research.

<http://nyupress.org/books/9781479835454/> What Works for Women at Work: Four Patterns Working Women Need to Know by Joan C. Williams and Rachel Dempsey

<http://www.sirc.org/publik/drinking4.html> How societal attitudes affect response to alcohol.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paradox_of_tolerance Wikipedia page describing the paradox of tolerance: To be tolerant you must be intolerant of intolerance.

<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/selectatest.html> Test on implicit associations about race, gender, sexual orientation and other topics.

Relevant papers and articles

"Does valuing diversity result in worse performance ratings for minority and female leaders?" by David Hekman, Stefanie Johnson, Wei Yang, Maw Der Foo

<http://amj.aom.org/content/early/2016/03/03/amj.2014.0538.abstract>

"Research: Vague Feedback Is Holding Women Back" by Shelley Correll and Caroline Simard <https://hbr.org/2016/04/research-vague-feedback-is-holding-women-back>

"The one word men never see in their performance reviews" by Kathleen Davis
<http://www.fastcompany.com/3034895/strong-female-lead/the-one-word-men-never-see-in-their-performance-reviews>

"Assessing the Attack Threat Due to IRC Channels" by Robert Meyer and Michel Cukier
(gendered nature of harassment on IRC)
http://cdm16064.contentdm.oclc.org/utils/getfile/collection/p266901coll4/id/655/file_name/617.pdf

"Alcohol and Inclusivity: Planning Tech Events with Non-Alcoholic Options" by Kara Sowles
<https://modelviewculture.com/pieces/alcohol-and-inclusivity-planning-tech-events-with-non-alcoholic-options>

"Inclusive offsites" by Sara Smollett, et al.
http://geekfeminism.wikia.com/wiki/Inclusive_offsites

"What Google Learned From Its Quest to Build the Perfect Team" by Charles Duhigg
(psychological safety)
<http://mobile.nytimes.com/2016/02/28/magazine/what-google-learned-from-its-quest-to-build-the-perfect-team.html>

European Commission: Gender Pay Gap
http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-pay-gap/index_en.htm

Wikipedia page on the gender pay gap https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gender_pay_gap

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Slides, handout, facilitator's guide, etc.:
https://internetfreedomfestival.org/wiki/index.php/Allys_Skills

"Focus on Allies" is a related free 1 hour talk:
<http://frameshiftconsulting.com/speaking/#focus>

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