Ally Skills Workshop handout

This is a resource for people who want to have a conversation about diversity and inclusion without unintentionally saying something harmful. It also includes some references for further reading if you'd like to know more about any particular subject.

Basic concepts
- **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

Workshop discussion guidelines
- You may leave or return at any time, for any reason, without explanation
- Anonymize any sensitive stories if you repeat them
- Focus on what an ally can do in this situation, not the target
- There are no trick questions

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, ageist, body-shaming, or make fun of people for being sexually undesirable, unattractive, etc.

Guidelines for future ally work
- Set specific goals for yourself for next week/month/year
- Treat ally actions as bare minimum expectation
- Follow and support leaders from target groups
- 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

Terminology

If you make a mistake, that's fine! Just apologize, correct yourself, and move on. Also, members of a marginalized group can agree to call themselves anything they want.

Gender

- 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
- Use men for cis and trans men, women for cis and trans women, non-binary people/folks, cis men/women, trans men/women, people of all genders, folks, people, everyone, all, y'all, all y'all, yinz…
- Don't use "girls" for women 18 years of age and over, "females" for humans, "guys" for groups that are not all men, "ladies", "transsexual", "people with [BODY PART or CHROMOSOME]" instead of "men" or "women"

Sexuality

- Use straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual/pansexual (attracted to people of all genders), asexual (little or no sexual attraction to anyone), queer: catch-all term for anyone who is not a straight cis woman or man

Racial and ethnic groups

- Avoid abbreviated forms of names of racial or ethnic groups
- Use Wikipedia to find preferred terms for racial or ethnic groups
- Don't use "ethnic," "urban," "inner city" or other euphemisms to designate people of a particular race or ethnic group

Disability

- Use "abled person," "disabled," or "person with disabilities"
- Only use respectfully in cases of self-disclosure: ADD/ADHD, autism spectrum, schizophrenic, bipolar, etc.
- Don't use "lame," "dumb," "retard," "stupid," "crazy," etc. - instead use "foolish," "wild," or a specific adjective like "crowded" or "disorganized"
- Don't use names of specific disabilities as metaphors or similes to indicate badness

Body size

- Describe body size using neutral descriptions: "higher weight," "lower weight," "larger body," "smaller build," "medium size"
- Don't use medicalized or value-judgement terms for body size like "healthy weight," "obese," "struggles with his weight", "normal weight," "overweight"

Religion, class, age, family role, etc.

- Speak respectfully about religious or spiritual beliefs, with the exception of any bigotry or intolerance that is part of those beliefs

- Don't use stereotypes about working class people (e.g. janitor), adults of particular ages, people with family roles (mother, grandparent, etc.), or caregivers
- Don't use "politically correct" in a serious or literal way - it is a derogatory label created to criticize and deride the concept of "treating people with respect"
- Use "undocumented" not "illegal immigrant" or "illegal"

Resources

The slides and handout for this workshop are available at:
http://frameshiftconsulting.com/ally-skills-workshop
http://www.suffolk.edu/campuslife/27883.php A dictionary of social justice terms.
http://www.glaad.org/reference/transgender A guide to writing or speaking about transgender people or issues.
The Wikipedia pages on names for racial and ethnic groups are remarkably useful.
https://everydayfeminism.com/2015/08/size-discrimination-facts/ Information on body size discrimination
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paradox_of_tolerance Useful explanation of why a tolerant culture must be intolerant of intolerance (a favorite troll argument).
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.
https://danceswithfat.wordpress.com/blog/ The Dances with Fat blog explains what's wrong with how our culture talks about body size and includes specific advice for allies.
http://geekfeminism.wikia.com/wiki/Charles%27_Rules_of_Argument Charles' Rules of Argument are useful to avoid wasting your time and energy.
http://geekfeminism.wikia.com/wiki/Tone_argument Resources for identifying and responding to the tone argument (hint: usually involves the word "tone").
https://frameshiftconsulting.com/speaking/#meeting Effective and just meetings have people filling four specific meeting roles: gatekeeper, facilitator, note-taker, and timekeeper.
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.
http://biasinterrupters.org/ Specific bias interrupting techniques for the workplace.
http://www.isshamenecessary.com/ How to use shame ethically and effectively in the service of social justice.
http://geekfeminism.wikia.com/wiki/Community_anti-harassment Resources for developing a community code of conduct.

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

"Alcohol and Inclusivity: Planning Tech Events with Non-Alcoholic Options" by Kara Sowles
https://blog.valerieaurora.org/2018/03/30/cross-post-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

"No more rock stars: how to stop abuse in tech communities" by Leigh Honeywell, Valerie Aurora, and Mary Gardiner https://hypatia.ca/2016/06/21/no-more-rock-stars/

"The Al Capone Theory of sexual harassment" by Leigh Honeywell and Valerie Aurora
https://qz.com/1043588/the-al-capone-theory-of-sexual-harassment-can-help-silicon-valley-stop-hiring-horrible-people/

"A post-election guide to changing hearts and minds" by Valerie Aurora
https://captainawkward.com/2016/11/21/guest-post-a-post-election-guide-to-changing-hearts-and-minds/

"How to Respond to an Offensive Comment at Work" by Amy Gallo
https://hbr.org/2017/02/how-to-respond-to-an-offensive-comment-at-work

"Want to Hire More a More Diverse Set of People? Raise Your Bar" by Joelle Emerson
https://medium.com/inclusion-insights/want-to-hire-more-diverse-people-raise-your-bar-b5d30f91cbd9

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