

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

## 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/utills/getfile/collection/p266901coll4/id/655/filename/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](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](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](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gender_pay_gap)

## Online materials, license, and attribution

Slides, handout, facilitator's guide, etc.:  
<http://frameshiftconsulting.com/ally-skills-workshop>

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

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