Welcome to the Ally Skills Workshop TTT

Please fill out a name tag & include the pronouns you normally use. Examples:

- she/her/hers
- he/him/his
- they/them/theirs
Ally Skills Workshop
Train-the-trainers
Valerie Aurora
Frame Shift Consulting
http://frameshiftconsulting.com

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Music: "Chill" CC BY Kevin MacLeod http://incompetech.com
Schedule

Day 1
● 15 min: Introduction
● 45 min: Preparing to teach
● 60 min: How to teach the workshop
● 60 min: Reframing questions exercise

Day 2
● 150 min: Students teach scenarios
● 30 min: Q&A session & freeform discussion
What is the Ally Skills Workshop?

Teaching people with privilege how to support more marginalized people in everyday ways

“Ally skills” vs. “allies”: focuses on actions rather than self-identification as a "good person"

Mainly small group discussion and group report-out

Audience: Volunteer-only, ideally 20-40% people from marginalized groups
Facilitating the Ally Skills Workshop is rewarding

“Can we get more training like that?” actual comment from student

Watch people have “Aha” moments

Take action to end social injustice

Highly interactive, time flies

No two workshops are ever the same
Facilitating the Ally Skills Workshop is hard

People ask tough questions

People tell you emotionally intense things during breaks

People say discriminatory things without realizing it

People get upset when they are confronted with their privilege or bias

You will have to kick someone out eventually
Facilitating the Ally Skills Workshop is hard

At companies, the workshop exposes built-in conflict between making upper management wealthier and the well-being of employees.

HR is often at the intersection of this conflict and teaching the workshop can highlight this pain point.

Staying away from legal advice or human resources rules is hard but often necessary.
Workshops are better when...

Facilitator has significant experience being marginalized
Facilitator has a significant source of power or privilege
Facilitator is both compassionate and firm
Two people with different experiences co-facilitate
Identifying your power and privilege

Workshop participants will need to identify their own power and privilege

You serve as a role model when you identify your power and privilege

Your power and privilege will affect how people listen to you as a facilitator
Identifying power and privilege example

Lead author of Ally Skills Workshop, most popular ally skills training

Taught ally skills to 2500+ people in Spain, Germany, Australia, Ireland, Sweden, Mexico, New Zealand, etc.

Linux kernel and file systems developer for 10+ years

Valerie Aurora
Let’s talk about technical privilege

We are more likely to listen to people who "are technical"

... but we shouldn’t be

"Technical" is more likely to be granted to white men

I am using my technical privilege to end technical privilege!

https://frYERZelic.kr/p/ CC BY @sage_solar
Exercise: Identifying your power and privilege

Fill out the power and privilege exercise

Identify a privilege that makes teaching the workshop easier for you

Write a 1-2 sentence introduction for yourself that includes one privilege and explain how it helps you teach the workshop and make the world better

Then we will introduce ourselves, with gender pronouns
Preparing to teach the workshop

Identify your privilege and power
Prepare to share a story of your own mistake
Practice reframing questions
Practice interrupting
Exercises on all of these coming up!
Preparing to teach the workshop

Practice politely but firmly standing your ground

Cultivate compassion to the entire group

Practice smiling, nodding, and praising

Practice apologizing, correcting yourself, and moving on

Practice admitting you don't know the answer
Recommended reading/watching/listening

- Facilitator's guide
- Ally Skills Workshop handout
- Ally Skills Workshop video (edited)
- Dear Ally Skills Teacher [https://dearally.com](https://dearally.com)
- "Better Allies" by Karen Catlin
- “Feminism is for Everybody” by bell hooks
- “Women, Class, and Race” by Angela Davis
- "So You Want to Talk About Race" by Ijeoma Oluo
Selecting workshop participants

Participants must be volunteers - **NON-NEGOTIABLE**

Screen participants in advance for public workshops

Avoid large power differences between participants (usual rule: only three levels of hierarchy in a workshop)

Ideal class size is 20 to 30 participants

Aim for 20-40% members of marginalized groups
Do not record

Do not record or broadcast the workshop! People won't feel safe asking questions or having discussions.

Recording is possible if you edit out participants.
Send an anonymous survey

Send an anonymous survey after the workshop

Schedule time to read the results of the survey when you can handle negative comments (but mostly they will be positive)

You want some negative feedback

Will always get "too hard" and "too easy" (same workshop)
Choosing scenarios

Scenarios are real-world examples of situations in which people can act as allies.

Start and end with easy scenarios.

Slides on web sites include some scenarios.

Ask participants for suggestions in advance and/or take requests during workshop if you feel prepared.
Setting up the workshop space

Projector with screen that can be viewed by all participants (microphones optional)

Ideally, round tables seating 4-6 people - no tables is okay, but then arrange chairs in circles

Groups should be close enough that everyone can hear one person speaking loudly, but far enough apart they can have conversations at the same time
Setting up the workshop space

Arrive 30 minutes early to do room setup - it will ALWAYS be wrong

Pass out handouts, pens, name tags

Place a chair for you to sit in during group discussions that is far enough away to not be obviously listening

Move/change anything that seems like it will interfere!
Introducing the workshop

Give credit according to the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike license

Optionally stall for time by asking why people came to the workshop

Introduce yourself

Describe the high level format and schedule
Acknowledge your privilege and explain it

Start by calling out one of the ways that you have privilege and how you are using it to end inequality

Define privilege, oppression, etc.

Give a concrete example that is non-obvious to the majority of your audience
Educate them on privilege and ally actions

Share some research on different response to ally action versus self-advocacy

Remind people that the goal is to act as an ally in ways that ultimately destroy whatever privilege they are using

Have the class do the privilege and power identification exercise
Talk about what the workshop is not

Prevent bad things that have happened before!

Not a way to get out of mistakes, past or future

Prevent showdowns over legal advice or HR policies by stating now that you can’t answer those questions

Narrow the scope to what to do to fight oppression
Review safer space parameters

Check for recordings going - often you are being recorded without knowing it!

The goal is to make people aware of both reasons to trust and reasons to doubt

Lead by example - leave names and identifying details out of stories
**Review basic ally skills**

People have tons of self-imposed rules for responding to oppression: must be witty, well-researched, etc.

Identifying and lowering these standards increases chances of taking action

Participants are usually relieved

Emphasize “do this while not harming other groups” - this happens a LOT
Break the tension

Everyone is pretty nervous! Talking about oppression, racism, sexism, etc. is super hard

Use cat photos or some form of (truly) inoffensive unrelated humor to break the tension

If it doesn't work right away, keep talking about how awkward the awkwardness is until the tension does break
Go over terminology and discussion guidelines

Tell people what to do if they make a mistake

Give people a minute to read the handout

Encourage them to discuss among themselves and ask questions of the instructor
Share a story about a mistake you made

Give other people room to make mistakes by sharing a mistake you made, and how you responded

Sharing your mistake models vulnerability, apologizing, and correcting yourself

Do not use a highly emotional or painful experience
Sharing a story example: "You guys"
Exercise: Share a story about a mistake you made

Think of a time you did or said something oppressive that you can share with the class

Choose something mild that won't upset people a lot

Include what you did afterwards: apologized, made amends, developed a new habit, etc.

Tell the story to your group
Forming groups

Forming diverse groups is awkward! What helps:

- Pre-formed groups via seating arrangements
- Reminding people that everyone is a volunteer
- Encouraging people to switch groups at breaks
- Telling people that discussions are better with lots of different perspectives
- Framing this as an opportunity to hear different points of view people normally don't get to hear
Forming groups

Be prepared to help move people around

Ask people to notify the instructor if everyone has same pronouns

Insist that people actually say their pronouns explicitly

Don't guess gender - ask for volunteers with different pronouns to move and if no one volunteers, that's okay
Tell people how to introduce themselves

Introductions can get VERY LONG

Tell people to say their name, their occupation or affiliation, and their pronouns

Demonstrate by introducing yourself

Slide should show the common pronouns you did not use so people can note them
Meeting roles

Ask each group to choose a gatekeeper and explain what the gatekeeper does

Encourage people to gate-keep the gatekeeper

Ask people to choose a report-out person for each scenario, which can and should change

Gatekeeper can optionally change - some groups do this
Give them final discussion tips

Assure them that there are no trick questions

Tell them to make up details if they feel they need them

Ask them to focus on how an ally could respond, not the person being marginalized
Why all this preparation?

Without all this, we reproduce oppression inside the workshop - privileged people dominate discussion.

With all this, you still have to walk around and check if this is happening, but it only happens ~ 1 in 5 workshops.

Best way to learn ally skills is to do them in the workshop!
Guiding scenario discussion

Each scenario takes about 15 - 20 minutes total

Read the scenario and ask if anyone has questions

Tell them to discuss for 5 - 8 minutes

Pay attention to rhythm of discussion, if someone is dominating discussion, etc. and intervene if necessary

Give 30 seconds warning before ending discussion
What if someone talks too much in their group?

Tell the whole class "If you know you speak a lot, don't speak first and let silence go longer before speaking"

Take them aside during a break and say you noticed them speaking a lot

Pass them a note

Directly ask them to stop speaking in front of everyone
Guiding scenario report-outs

Ask everyone to stop talking (they won't, use bell)

Starting with a different group each time, ask them to report out major points of discussion

Ask them not to repeat things other groups already said

Briefly affirm good suggestions and explain bad suggestions (really bad ones immediately)
Guiding scenario report-outs

Wait till end of report-out to add any missed points - give participants a chance to discover them first

Write down points you want to cover and cross them off

Certain questions almost certainly will come up in certain scenarios

Example slides come with “tips” slides in between scenarios
Practice interrupting with role play

Interrupting is a crucial facilitating skill

Interrupting is not bad; interrupting in ways that reinforce oppression is bad

Interrupting is vital when someone is saying something harmful

Interrupting is important when someone is taking up too much time
Interrupting exercise: Example

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bj_zWqwcCiE
Useful interrupting phrases

"I'm so sorry, but I want to be sure everyone has time to speak. Could you summarize?"

"I think what you're trying to say is X, is that right?"

"I hate to interrupt, but we have to move on."

"Can we take this offline?"

"I'm going to interrupt you and ask you to follow up after the workshop, is that okay?"
Exercise: Practice interrupting with role play

One person read out loud from the facilitator's guide (or talk about something extemporaneously)

Another person practices interrupting them

Switch roles and repeat until everyone has practice interrupting
Summary of ideal facilitation style

Affirm and praise frequently - smile and nod

Be polite but firm about what you know to be true

Let participants come up with answers first whenever possible

Summarize missed points at end of discussion (use written notes and mark points off as people say them)
Ending the workshop

Do goal-setting exercise

Explain more advanced ways to continue education in ally skills

Thank everyone for participating, tell them it was a great workshop because they participated, ask them to give themselves a round of applause

Stick around for questions and discussion
What if someone comes late?

Do NOT allow people to participate in group discussion if they missed the introduction - this is crucial.

Feel confident in your ability to say no and tell people they have to leave.

If you are feeling generous, you can go over the handout with them while the rest of the groups are discussing a scenario (or if you have two facilitators, one can do this).
What if you have to ask someone to leave?

Call a 5 minute break

Pull them aside where you can't be overheard

Say something apologetic and non-blaming about how the workshop isn't a good fit, etc.

Suggest that they can attend another workshop

Keep repeating yourself until they leave
Hard stuff rarely happens

Asking someone to leave happens ~1% of workshops
Someone obnoxious happens ~5% of workshops
You can designate someone to help you
It's okay to make a mistake - not the end of the world
If your career is at risk, protect your career first
Start choosing scenarios to facilitate

This is a great opportunity to practice facilitating when the stakes are lowest

Participation is optional

You may co-facilitate with a classmate or with a facilitator

Example scenarios with extensive notes are in the Facilitator's Guide
Exercise: Reframing questions

CC BY Amy https://flic.kr/p/8Ldbrd
"Twisted Tropes" Titus Kaphar (2016)
CC BY smallcurio https://flic.kr/p/28WksSN
Why is reframing questions a useful skill?

People will have genuine questions about some apparent contradiction which means they have to be oppressive

Usually based on one or more of:

1. Incorrect facts
2. Ignoring systemic oppression
3. Putting onus of change on marginalized/less powerful
Reframing example

“You say you want us to treat women like everyone else, but then you want us to act differently around women. That's illogical!”
Assumptions

"Everyone" is "men"

All men like this abusive culture

What these men like defines "normal" behavior

Men should not have to change to accommodate women

Systemic sexism does not exist
Reframe assumptions

"Everyone" includes people of all genders
Many people dislike this abusive culture
Women should be included in defining "normal" behavior
Men should change to accommodate women
Systemic sexism exists
Reframing reply

"I used to think that too, because I thought that the way we were treating people was normal. But then I realized that our culture was only friendly to men who didn't mind being part of abusive culture. When I changed my definition of normal behavior to be welcoming and inclusive of women too, then I realized that we could treat everyone with equal respect and also be more welcoming of women."
Reframing process

1. What assumptions are they making?
2. Are those assumptions true?
3. What systemic oppression is being left out?
4. Where is the burden of change placed?
5. Rewrite the question with facts, inclusion of systemic oppression, onus of change on the privileged
6. Kindly walk them through the thought process
Useful reframing phrases

"So let's talk about an underlying assumption a lot of us have about that..."

"I hear you saying XYZ, what are some of the assumptions underlying that language?"

"I also used to wonder that same thing, and then I learned..."

"I used to think that, and then..."
Dealing with bad faith participants

Some people know they are making logical errors or basing arguments on lies and don't care.

Debating people acting in bad faith just gives more weight and credit to their arguments than they deserve.

You can still use reframing techniques, but you should play to the audience, not to the person acting in bad faith.
How to practice reframing

Search for hot button topics on Twitter and read arguments from obvious throwaway accounts

Search for debunking of myths about marginalized groups

Practice asking the three questions about assumptions, context, and burden of change
Reframing exercises
Reframing exercise

“Affirmative action gives people of color in the U.S. unfair advantages over white people. How is that not discriminating on the basis of race?”

Assumptions?

Systemic oppression?

Burden of change?
"We agree, giving people unfair advantages on the basis of race is not good. Unfortunately, white people have been the recipients of unfair advantages for centuries and continue to be so today. In order to make society more fair, we have to give back a little bit of that advantage with things like affirmative action."
Reframing exercise

“Making jokes about sex isn't sexist. Women like to have sex too.”

Assumptions?
Systemic oppression?
Burden of change?
Reframing reply

"Whether or not women like to have sex has nothing to do with whether sex jokes are sexist. Because our society praises men for having sex and dehumanizes women when we talk about sex, sex jokes signal that it is okay to objectify and harm women. I want to make the world less sexist, not more sexist, so I don't make sex jokes."
Reframing exercise

“You are infringing on free speech, and how can we have an open and free society without that?”

Assumptions?

Systemic oppression?

Burden of change?
Reframing reply

"I agree, an open and free society is really important. What I notice is that some people get lots of speech, and others get silenced. When we defend speech that dehumanizes a whole group of people, we end up with less free speech, and an intolerant and closed society. Many countries have limits on free speech for things as mundane as protecting Disney's right to make money off Mickey Mouse. Let's protect people's lives, too."
You don't have to reframe a lot

Questions like this are relatively rare

Often the audience can help answer them

Your co-facilitator may have an idea

You can ask to come back to that after the break

You can say "I don't know, but I suspect there is a problem with assumptions/facts/burden of change"
Scenario facilitation practice
Sign up with Valerie for the scenario you want to facilitate! See page 25 of guide for scenarios.
Practice leading scenario discussion

Your participation is voluntary

Choose an existing scenario or create a new one

Your choice on feedback: none/any, positive/negative, public/private, instructor/class

Your choice on whether participants can deliberately make it harder to facilitate
A woman you don't know is standing near your group at a conference or similar event in a male-dominated field. She is alone and looks like she would rather be talking to people.
Tip: Pay attention to patterns of discussion

Who is speaking most in your group?

Is someone having difficulty being heard?

Are there patterns related to gender, race, age, or anything else?

How do these discussions compare to ones you have in other contexts?
At a meeting, a person who is hard of hearing makes a suggestion, but no one picks up on it. Later on in the meeting, a hearing person makes the same suggestion and is given credit for it.
Tip: Effective and just meetings

Good meetings have the following roles:

- Facilitator
- Timekeeper
- Notetaker
- Gatekeeper

https://frameshiftconsulting.com/speaking/#meeting
You are eating lunch in the employee kitchen when a group sits down near you. One person comments loudly “If I ate that, I’d be as big as a house!” A higher-weight coworker is sitting nearby and can clearly overhear.
Tip: Weight discrimination at work

“Fat talk/diet talk” is seen as bonding but creates a hostile environment for other employees.

Higher weight people face workplace discrimination, particularly women, regardless of ability to do the job.

Body size is falsely equated with virtue: self-control, hard worker, in good health.

Workplace “health initiatives” often discriminate against higher weight and disabled employees.
On a company mailing list, someone writes “How would you explain this [technical thing] to your grandmother?”
Tip: Charles’ Rules of Argument

1. Don't go looking for an argument
2. State your position once, speaking to the audience
3. Wait for absurd replies
4. Reply one more time to correct any misunderstandings of your first statement
5. Do not reply again
6. Spend time doing something fun instead

A Black person in your community points out that a conference in your community that has all white speakers. They do this on a social media platform you actively participate with this community on. Several other people criticize the Black person for being too abrasive, aggressive, loud, out of line, etc.
Tone policing/The "tone argument"

When people speak up in support of oppressed groups, it makes people in the dominant group feel guilty and sad.

A common response is to ask the people speaking up to not hurt the feelings of the dominant group.

Often this uses the word "angry" and especially "tone".

http://geekfeminism.wikia.com/wiki/Tone_argument
You are part of the performance review process at your company. The feedback for several women include comments like "Needs to work on her communication style," or "too aggressive." Fewer men's reviews have the same problems.
Hint: it’s not the women

"When we analyzed a sample of performance evaluations of men and women across three high-tech companies and a professional services firm, we found that women consistently received less feedback tied to business outcomes. [...] 76% of references to being "too aggressive" happened in women’s reviews, versus 24% in men’s."

Shelley Correll and Caroline Simard,
https://hbr.org/2016/04/research-vague-feedback-is-holding-women-back
**Tip: Bias interrupters**

3 step process from UC Hastings WorkLife Law Center

1. Use metrics
2. Implement bias interrupters
3. Repeat as needed

Detailed list of bias interrupters for workplace systems:

http://biasinterrupters.org/
A woman in your company goes on maternity leave. You are discussing which projects to assign to people after she has returned, including one that is in her area of expertise and requires some travel. A co-worker says, "She has a small baby, I assume she won't want to travel."
What Works for Women at Work

By Joan C. Williams and Rachel Dempsey

Four patterns of subtle bias, varying by race, ethnicity, appearance, etc.

1. Prove-it-again
2. The Tightrope
3. The Maternal Wall
4. Tug-of-war
A co-worker comes out as trans. Another co-worker assumes you are cis and starts complaining to you privately about how ridiculous it is to expect everyone to start using your co-worker’s new name and pronouns.
Tip: Read Captain Awkward

Advice blog that answers questions on social interaction from an awkward, geeky perspective

Great for "How do I get someone to stop doing something without upsetting anyone?" type of questions (hint: someone is already upset)

http://captainawkward.com
At a party at work, a male co-worker makes a joke about how much sex another male co-worker must have had in order to have so many children. Everyone is holding an alcoholic drink.
Why talking about sex at work is harmful

Double standard for straight sex and gay sex

"Family size" talk can be racism & religious discrimination

Some racist stereotypes are about sex or genitals

Fertility, pregnancy, adoption can be highly emotional
Why talking about sex at work is harmful, cont’d

Strong pressure to "be cool" about sex
Assumes parents are cis and straight
Double standard for sex for men and women
Sex talk => objectification & harassment of women

Take-away: Save talking about sex for outside of work
Myths about alcohol and bad behavior

The immediate physiological effects of alcohol are:

- Loss of coordination
- Sleepiness
- Difficulty multi-tasking

Everything else (violence, sexual advances, rude comments) is voluntary and under conscious control:

http://www.sirc.org/publik/drinking4.html
How to counter cultural messages about alcohol

Don't serve alcohol at all (surprisingly popular!)

Serve high quality non-alcoholic beverages

Serve at same stations with same prominence

More tips on serving alcohol in an inclusive manner, by Kara Sowles:

Scenario

On an internal company chat channel with about 50 people, a co-worker is talking about a badly implemented software feature. They write, "That's so ghetto," followed by a smiling face emoji.
Tip: Have a concise code of conduct with examples

Have a short, clear, concise code of conduct that focuses on what **not** to do

Specifically list common forms of oppression

Put everything else (values, how to be inclusive, etc.) in separate documents

Hand over any dispute over CoC violations to an expert

Optional Q&A

Frame Shift Consulting
http://frameshiftconsulting.com
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