

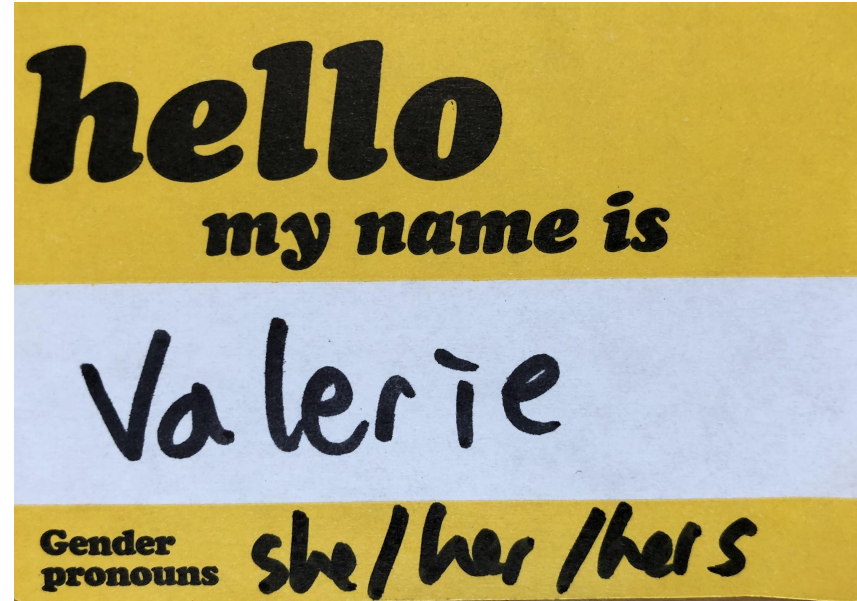
Welcome to the Ally Skills Workshop TTT

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

she/her/hers

he/him/his

they/them/theirs



→ Pronouns

Ally Skills Workshop

Valerie Aurora

Frame Shift Consulting

<http://frameshiftconsulting.com/ally-skills-workshop/>

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The Ada Initiative

Format of the workshop

- 40 minute introduction
- 45 minute group discussion of scenarios
- 10 minute break
- 75 minute group discussion of scenarios
- 10 minute wrap-up

~3 hours total

SO LONG!

2 hour-long workshop: most common complaint was "Too short!"

3 hour-long workshop: only a few complaints that it was too short



<https://flic.kr/p/7NYUA3>
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Valerie Aurora

Founder Frame Shift Consulting

Taught ally skills to 2500+ people in Spain, Germany, Australia, Ireland, Sweden, Mexico, New Zealand, UK, and across the U.S.

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

What is an ally? Some terminology first:

Privilege: an unearned advantage given by society to some people but not all

Oppression: systemic, pervasive inequality that is present throughout society, that benefits people with more privilege and harms those with fewer privileges

Terminology

Marginalized person: a member of a group that is the primary target of a system of oppression

Ally: a member of a social group that enjoys some privilege that is **working to end oppression** and **understand their own privilege**

Ally is a verb, not an identity

Being a marginalized person takes no action - it is an identity

Acting as an ally is about action - it is not an identity, which is why we talk about "ally skills" instead of "allies"

Depending on what is most relevant about you to the situation, you may switch between being marginalized and acting as an ally

Example

Privilege: The ability to interview for a job and have the interviewer assume that if you have children, you will continue doing a good job at work

Oppression: Family members' expectations that women take on most of the childcare, fathers using paternity leave for things other than childcare, belief that mothers don't want to return to full-time paid work

Example

Marginalized person: Any woman who wants to work for pay for an employer

Ally: A man who takes on significant childcare responsibilities, donates to women's causes, uses paternity leave for childcare, speaks up at work against stereotypes about mothers, and reads news articles about privileges fathers enjoy and mothers don't

Terminology

Power: The ability to control circumstances or access to resources and/or privileges

Intersectionality: The concept that people can be subject to multiple systems of oppression that intersect and interact with each other, coined by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw

Question: What is an example of intersectionality?

Why allies instead of marginalized people?

"[...] Ethnic minority or female leaders who engage in diversity-valuing behavior are penalized with worse performance ratings; whereas [ethnic majority] or male leaders who engage in diversity-valuing behavior are not penalized for doing so."

David Hekman, Stefanie Johnson, Wei Yang & Maw Der Foo, 2016

Does valuing diversity result in worse performance ratings for minority and female leaders?

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

Exercise: Identify your power and privilege

Privilege is often invisible to people who have it

Identifying your power and privilege helps you act as an ally more effectively

This exercise is voluntary - you do not have to do it

If people assume you have a privilege that you do not, you can make your own decision about whether to include it

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

What did you think?

Do you have more or less power than you thought?

Do you have more or less privilege than you thought?

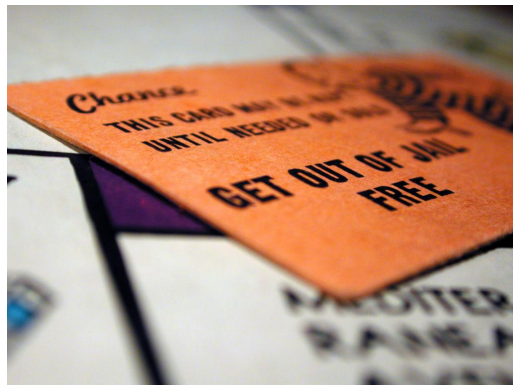
Any surprises or things you hadn't thought about before?

What this workshop is not

A certification, an apology, or a "get-out-of-jail-free card"

Representing anyone's employer or giving legal advice

Time to discuss whether oppression exists, is bad, should be stopped, etc.



<https://flic.kr/p/97JC>
CC BY Mark Strozier

Help us create a safer space

You may leave or return at any time, for any reason,
without explanation

This workshop is not recorded

This workshop is designed to be voluntary

Please anonymize if you repeat sensitive stories

Share at the level of people you just met at a conference

Basics of ally skills

Be short, simple, firm

Don't try to be funny

Play for the audience

Practice simple responses

Pick your battles



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While you're trying to help one group, don't be:

- sexist
- homophobic
- transphobic
- racist
- ableist
- classist
- ageist
- body-shaming
- and don't describe people as sexually undesirable, unattractive, etc.



CC BY-SA Alan Levine <https://flic.kr/p/9dgohA>

Awkward...



CC BY terren in Virginia <https://flic.kr/p/6HpEEF>



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DREADED GROUP CHOOSING TIME

Form groups of 4 - 6 people

Groups that are more diverse have better discussions

Introduce yourself briefly

If everyone in the group has the same pronouns, tell the instructor

Form groups now!

What if I make a mistake?

**Apologize, correct yourself, and
move on.**

One of my many mistakes: "You guys"



CC BY-SA Jenna St Martin photo

Preparing for group discussion

Choose a **gatekeeper** to interrupt people who are speaking too much and invite others to speak

Feel free to gate-keep the gatekeeper

Choose someone to report out, and rotate this person each scenario



CC BY TANAKA Juuyoh (田中十洋)
<https://flic.kr/p/bVnHL6>

A few more tips for group discussion

There aren't any trick questions

If you're not sure of the situation, pick one (or more) interpretations and discuss it

Use the discussion guide if you get stuck

Focus on **how someone could act as an ally in this scenario**, not as a marginalized person

Scenarios & group discussion

Scenario

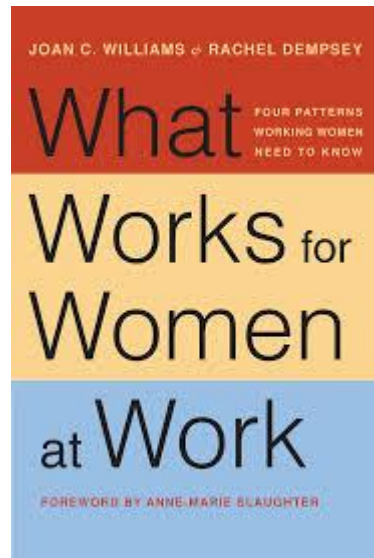
A woman in your company goes on maternity leave. You are discussing which projects to assign to people after she has returned, including one that is in her area of expertise and requires some travel. A co-worker says, "She has a small baby, I'm guessing she won't want to travel."

Tip: 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



Things to pay attention to

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?

Scenario

On a Slack 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 forms of oppression or topics that are common (such as ableist language)

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

Hand over any dispute over CoC violations to an expert

Scenario

You are one of the interviewers for a person applying to an operations position. You notice that their resume says they graduated from university 20 years before anyone else on the team. In the hiring discussion, a coworker says, "I worry that they won't be able to keep up with the rest of us."

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/>

Scenario

In your team's weekly meeting, you notice that women are interrupted more often and speak for less time than men, on average. You also find yourself going along with whatever the loudest, most persistent talker wants to do, even when you think it is not the best solution.

Tip: Create psychological safety

Psychological safety means an environment in which people take turns sharing information

Google study showed the most productive and profitable teams have psychological safety

Two elements: sensitivity to others' feelings, and conversational turn-taking (equal speaking time)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychological_safety

Scenario

Your team announces that the next team-building offsite activity will be playing laser tag.

Tip: Inclusive offsites

Design your offsite meetings to be inclusive

Make a list of marginalized groups and spend time researching how each might feel left out

Lists of more inclusive and less inclusive offsites here:

https://geekfeminism.wikia.com/wiki/Inclusive_offsites

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>

Goal-setting exercise

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

Advanced ally skills

Treat ally actions as bare minimum expectation

Follow and support leaders from marginalized 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

Subscribe to Dear Ally Skills Teacher <https://dearally.com>

Ally Skills Workshop

<http://frameshiftconsulting.com/ally-skills-workshop>

— Frame Shift Consulting —

Alternate intro slides

Welcome to the online Ally Skills Workshop!

Please take a moment to do the following:

1. Use headphones if at all possible!
2. Rename yourself: click on "Participants," mouse over your name, click on "Rename," and type in the name and pronoun you want other people in the meeting to use. Example: "Valerie (she)"
3. See chat for URLs for the handout and online tips & tricks:
<http://files.frameshiftconsulting.com/handout.pdf>
<http://files.frameshiftconsulting.com/onlinetips.pdf>

Example

Privilege: The ability to walk into a convenience store and have the owner assume you are there to buy things and not steal them

Oppression: The self-reinforcing system of stories, TV, news coverage, police, and legal system stereotyping Black people as criminals, that benefits non-Black people and harms Black people

Example

Marginalized person: Any Black person who wants to enter a convenience store

Ally: A non-Black person who donates to legal system reform organizations, actively objects to racist stories, calls their representatives to support police reform, and reads news articles about this privilege

DREADED GROUP FORMING TIME

In a minute, the instructor will form you into groups of 4 - 6 people using the Zoom breakout room feature

You will get a pop-up inviting you to join the room

When time is up, you will get a 60 second warning before rejoining the rest of the group - keep talking till the end

Don't sign out during breaks!

A few more tips for group discussion

Online discussion tends towards silence - gatekeeper,
invite people to speak

There aren't any trick questions

If you're not sure of the situation, pick one (or more)
interpretations and discuss it

Focus on **how to respond to incidents as an ally**, not as
the marginalized person

Break time

Do not sign out of the Zoom meeting!

Please return in 10 minutes

You will be assigned to new groups on return

Use the chat feature to message the instructor privately if you have any comments or requests

Other scenarios

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

Scenario

Someone tells you that you have said or done something racist. You didn't mean to be racist and don't consider yourself a racist person.

Tip: Apologizing

Apologize immediately and sincerely; “I’m sorry if you were offended” is not an apology

Do research on your own to figure out what happened and whether it was racist; apologize more specifically and acknowledge harm done

Process your own feelings of anger or hurt without acting on it right away

Scenario

A colleague of yours consistently uses male pronouns to refer to software and people of unknown gender ("he crashes on start," "what would he do?"). When you tell them it makes you uncomfortable to treat maleness as the norm, they say that male is the default gender in their first language and you should be more considerate of people from other cultures.

"Paradox" of tolerance

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paradox_of_tolerance

A tolerant society must be intolerant of one thing:
intolerance itself (otherwise intolerance takes over)

Multiculturalism means including and welcoming different
cultures - except parts that harm or exclude people

Company culture takes precedence over other cultures in
this case

Scenario

Several of your co-workers disagree strongly over a technical decision in a meeting, including a south Asian co-worker who reports to you. Later, one of the other people in the meeting tells you they were disturbed by your report's tone in the meeting. Everyone else in the meeting was a white man.

Tone policing/the “tone argument”

When members of marginalized groups advocate for themselves or their ideas, it violates expectations that marginalized people should be submissive and quiet

The same behavior in a person with a lot of privilege may be described as "passionate" or "committed"

Tone policing often uses the word "tone"

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tone_policing

Scenario

You are part of the performance review process and see a lot of feedback for other employees. The feedback for several women include comments like "Needs to work on her communication style," or "too aggressive." Many 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

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Tip: Create psychological safety

Psychological safety means an environment in which people take turns sharing information

Google study showed the most productive and profitable teams have psychological safety

Two elements: sensitivity to others' feelings, and conversational turn-taking (equal speaking time)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychological_safety

Scenario

A colleague of yours consistently expresses disdain for gender non-conforming people, including queer people. When you tell him this makes you uncomfortable, he tells you that making fun of gender non-conforming people is part of the culture he grew up in, and you shouldn't try to impose your culture on him.

"Paradox" of tolerance

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intolerance itself (otherwise intolerance takes over)

Multiculturalism means including and welcoming different
cultures - except parts that harm or exclude people

Company culture takes precedence over other cultures in
this case

At a meeting, a manager says, "It's great to hire more Black people, but let's not lower the bar." Before you can reply, another manager says, "Oh yes, we'll be careful not to lower the bar."

Reframe the discussion

Assumption: at present, everyone has an equal chance at being hired, regardless of race

Reality: Black people face a much a higher bar than white people during hiring (and in general), and white people often get a pass or exceptions to the process

Reframe: "Actually, the problem is that Black people have to pass a higher bar, and we need to fix that."

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>

One of your direct reports avoids speaking to another of your direct reports. When you ask, they say it is because that person is gay and homosexuality is against their religion and not acceptable where they grew up. When you push back, they say that you should be more considerate of people from other cultures.

"Paradox" of tolerance

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paradox_of_tolerance

A tolerant society must be intolerant of one thing:
intolerance

Your company culture takes precedence over any
individual person's culture if they request tolerance for
their intolerance

You are in a hiring committee discussion trying to decide between two candidates, a Latina woman with non-traditional educational background and several years of full-time experience, and a white man with no full-time experience from a top-tier school. Someone says, "I know we said that experience is more important than educational background, but this guy's education is so stellar I think we should make an exception."

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A co-worker shares an article on your work Slack claiming that white men are biologically more suited to STEM careers, saying "I don't agree with all of it, but it has some good points." Another co-worker replies, saying that they disagree with the article but we have to be tolerant of co-workers with different political views because diversity of thought is important too.

"Paradox" of tolerance

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paradox_of_tolerance

A tolerant society must be intolerant of one thing:
intolerance itself (otherwise intolerance takes over)

Your company culture should be tolerant and inclusive of
everything except intolerance itself

Short take: company culture takes precedence over
intolerant opinions or cultural beliefs

Scenario

You notice that several of your other colleagues raise their voice and speak more slowly when talking to your wheelchair-using colleagues. In meetings, they single out visually-impaired colleagues by name when they describe what is on a slide.

Tip: Share your experience

Two problems: lack of knowledge, and fear of mistakes

Share your own experience learning to be a better colleague to disabled colleagues

Share articles or guides on creating a more accessible workplace and offer to help review

Help others apologize, correct themselves, and move on

Scenario

In your weekly team meeting, the only woman of color takes the notes for the fourth week in a row, even though that's not part of her job description. When you talk to the meeting lead about this, they say, "I ask for volunteers and she's the only one who volunteers."

Tip: Fairly distribute "office housework"

"Office housework" is necessary but unrewarded work (taking notes, organizing parties, tidying, etc.)

People of color and women of all races are expected to do more of this work and punished for not doing it

"Asking for volunteers" activates this expectation

Instead, managers should assign this work to all available team members on a strict rotating basis

Scenario

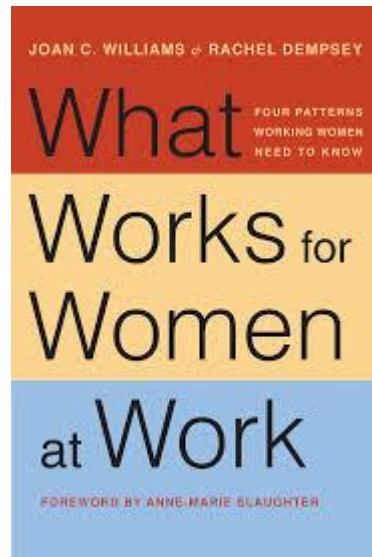
A woman on your team has been successfully filling in for her direct superior for 6 months after he left. Instead of promoting her, your director hires a man from outside the company with less experience and asks her to train the new hire. When you ask why she is reporting to someone less qualified, your director tells you that the new hire has a lot of potential.

Tip: 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



Scenario

A Black woman co-worker points out on Slack that a recent company-wide meeting has all white male presenters. Several other people criticize her for being too abrasive, aggressive, loud, out of line, etc.

Tone policing/the “tone argument”

When members of marginalized groups advocate for themselves or their ideas, it violates expectations that marginalized people should be submissive and quiet

Some groups are stereotyped further as inappropriately angry ("angry Black man," "angry feminist," etc.)

Tone policing often uses the word "tone"

http://geekfeminism.wikia.com/wiki/Tone_argument

Scenario

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

<https://hypatia.ca/2014/09/13/charles-rules-of-argument-the-short-version/>

Scenario

One of your co-workers asks another co-worker to stop saying "crazy." The second co-worker has never heard this request before and doesn't understand it, and gets angry at the first co-worker. When pointed at the code of conduct, the second co-worker says they can't see anything in the code of conduct about saying "crazy."

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 forms of oppression or topics that are common (such as ableist language)

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

Hand over any dispute over CoC violations to an expert

Scenario

On a company Slack channel, a co-worker responds to a suggestion of yours with, "That's so gay!" and a smiley face emoji.

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>

Scenario

On a professional mailing list you belong to, a semi-famous colleague who came out as trans a year ago starts a discussion. In the response thread, another person repeatedly mis-genders them by using incorrect pronouns (e.g. “She tried to argue X...”)

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

<https://hypatia.ca/2014/09/13/charles-rules-of-argument-the-short-version/>

Scenario

When discussing which of two final candidates to make an offer to, a co-worker says, "I know we agreed experience is more important for this position, but the younger candidate has a degree from Stanford, which I think makes them better than the older candidate with ten more years of experience."

Tip: Bias interrupters

3 step process from UC Hastings WorkLife Law Center

1. Use metrics
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3. Repeat as needed

Detailed list of bias interrupters for workplace systems:

<http://biasinterrupters.org/>

Scenario

At a party at work, a male manager makes a joke about how much sex another male coworker 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:

<https://blog.valerieaurora.org/2018/03/30/cross-post-alcohol-and-inclusivity-planning-tech-events-with-non-alcoholic-options/>