Welcome!

We're so happy you could join us today! A few things you can do while we are waiting to get started:

- Get the files at https://frameshiftconsulting.com/materials/
- Rename yourself: click on "Participants," mouse over your name, click on "Rename," and type in the name you want other people in the meeting to use for you. If you like, include your gender pronouns. Example: "Kendall (he/him/his)".
- You are welcome to turn off your video, use your favorite virtual background, or show us your pet!

Ally Skills Workshop

Valerie Aurora & Kendall Howse
http://frameshiftconsulting.com/ally-skills-workshop/

k

Format of the workshop

- 20 minute introduction

- 2 hours group discussion of real-world scenarios

- 20 minute wrap-up and Q & A

Long breaks every hour, short "move" breaks in between

k

Kendall (Boo Boo) Howse

Award-winning designer, marketing strategist, and DEI leader

30+ years of activism and advocacy, focusing on practical antiracism strategies

Artist, writer, world-touring musician

Kendall Howse

k

Valerie Aurora

Founder Frame Shift Consulting

Taught ally skills to 4000+ people in Spain, Germany, Australia, Ireland, Sweden, Mexico, New Zealand, UK, and across the U.S.

Software developer in Linux and file systems for 10+ years

Valerie Aurora

v

What are ally skills? Some terminology first:

Privilege: an <u>unearned</u> advantage given by society to some people but not all

Oppression: widespread inequality that is present throughout society, that helps people with more privilege and harms those with fewer privileges

More terminology

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

Ally: someone that society gives privilege to that is **working to end oppression** and **understand their own privilege**

Actions

Allyship is an action, not an identity

Being a marginalized person takes no action - oppression just happens to you, no matter what

Being an ally is about what you do, so let's talk about "ally skills" instead of "allies"

Depending on the situation, you may switch between being a marginalized person and being able to take action as an ally

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

Why focus on ally skills?

In an experiment, researchers found that when **marginalized people** work to increase diversity, supervisors give them **worse** performance evaluations

But when more **privileged people** work to increase diversity, it does not harm their performance evaluations (and may improve them)

k

Let's focus on ally skills

For this workshop, let's assume that oppression exists, it's bad, we should try to stop it, it's possible to stop, etc.

Disagree? No problem, just argue about it somewhere else

We can't give legal advice or tell you what your employer's rules are

CC BY-SA Todd Chandler
https://flic.kr/p/gqhYR2

k

Exercise: Identify your power and privilege

Privilege and power are often invisible to people who have them, but identifying them helps you act as an ally

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

Download at https://frameshiftconsulting.com/materials/

k

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?

Basics of ally skills

Be short, simple, firm

Don't try to be funny

Play for the audience

Practice simple responses

Pick your battles

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

- ✖ sexist
- ✖ homophobic
- ✖ transphobic
- ✖ racist

- ✖ ableist
- ✖ ageist
- ✖ classist
- ✖ casteist

... and don't criticize people's bodies or attractiveness

What if I make a minor mistake?

Acknowledge, apologize, and move on.

k

One of Valerie's mistakes: "You guys"

CC BY-SA Jenna St Martin photo

Help us create a safer space

You may leave or return at any time without explanation

This workshop is designed to be voluntary

You only have to share if you feel comfortable doing so

Please anonymize stories if you can

Joining groups is optional

Tell us if you should not be in a group with someone

Preparing for group discussion

Each group will choose a **note-taker** and **moderator**

Moderator interrupts people who are speaking too much and invite others to speak

Feel free to moderate the moderator! 🙂

Note-taker writes a short summary of what you talked about and copies it into group chat on return

Do not volunteer to be note-taker more than once!

A few more tips for group discussion

There aren't any misleading scenarios

"You" in the scenario means "a potential ally"

Focus on **what an ally can do**

If necessary, make up additional details

When you get the 1 minute warning, keep talking!

Note-taker: don't use the breakout group chat for notes

v

Scenarios & group discussion

Scenario: What could an ally do?

At a meeting, a woman makes a suggestion, but no one picks up on it. Later on in the meeting, a man makes the same suggestion and is given credit for it.

Remember, choose your notetaker and moderator!

Tip: Effective and just meetings have structure

Meetings without explicit structure inherit structure from society, reinforcing systems of oppression

Use structure to fight oppression: agenda, meeting roles, reserved speaking time, hand signals, etc.

Useful meeting roles: facilitator, moderator, note-taker, timekeeper

https://frameshiftconsulting.com/meeting-skills/

Who is speaking in your group?

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?

Long break

Scenario: What could an ally do?

You are in a meeting about hiring more people from a marginalized racial group into positions of power. A colleague of yours says, "It's great to hire more people from this group, but let's not lower the bar." Before you can reply, another colleague says, "Oh yes, we'll be careful not to lower the bar."

Tip: Reframe the discussion

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

Reality: Racialized people face a much a higher bar than members of the dominant race, who often get a pass or exceptions to the process

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

Short break

Scenario: What could an ally do?

Several of your coworkers loudly praise others when they take the stairs. They also want to start a office-wide challenge to take a certain number of steps daily.

Tip: Keep fitness talk consensual

People with mobility impairment may not be able to take the stairs or walk any steps, much less thousands per day

People should only comment on other people's fitness or health decisions when everyone present wants to hear it

Most workplace wellness challenges are ableist in some way (and also don't have the desired effect)

Long break

Scenario: What could an ally do?

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.

Tip: "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 is good but you should leave out the parts that dehumanize people based on identity

Company culture takes precedence in this case

Short break

Scenario: What could an ally do?

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 with specific suggested scripts and detailed explanations

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

Start planning how to use ally skills in your life!

Download the goal-setting exercise:
https://frameshiftconsulting.com/#materials

Spend 5 minutes filling it out

Type "done" in chat when you are done

Advanced ally skills

Speak less, listen more - except when speaking is risky

Treat ally actions as bare minimum expectation

Follow and support leaders from marginalized groups

Understand your discomfort before reacting

Avoid "sensitivity gotcha" and encourage growth mindset

Made a mistake? Acknowledge, apologize, and move on

Ally Skills Workshop

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

Frame Shift Consulting

Alternate intro slides

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

Can I act as an ally when clients misbehave?

Depends on the power distribution

Can they easily fire you and get the same benefits?

Can you easily fire them and get replacement business?

Ally skills only work from a position of power

https://dearally.com/2019/05/14/6-what-do-i-do-about-oppressive-speech-from-clients/

Other scenarios

Scenario: What could an ally do?

In meetings, you notice that both clients and your coworkers tend to speak more to older and/or more tenured coworkers, even when responding to question or comment from a younger and/or newer coworker.

Tip: Redirect the conversation

"I'm not sure. [NAME], what do you think?"

"You know who the expert on that is, [NAME]! [NAME], can you answer that?"

"[NAME] could probably give you a better answer than I can. [NAME], is this something you know?"

"I'd like to hear from [NAME] because they always bring a new perspective. [NAME], any thoughts?"

Scenario: What could an ally do?

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."
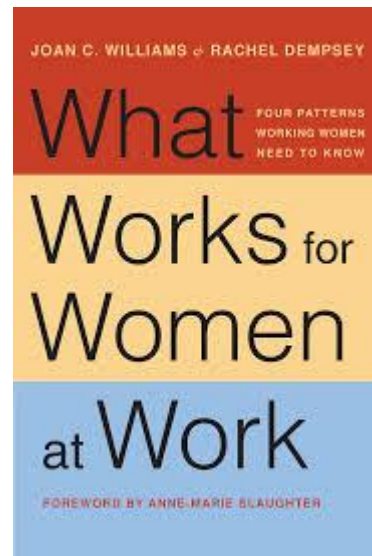
Tip: What Works for Women at Work

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

Scenario: What could an ally do?

Whenever the topic of sexism comes up, a male colleague says, "I do my part. I always insist on walking women to their cars after dark. And I put a lunch on their calendar to give them my career advice."

Tip: Don't insist on giving unwanted "help"

Offer help in a way that makes it easy to people choose what works best for them because they are the experts

Acting as an ally means reducing the imbalance of power, not reinforcing it

Being a powerful "savior" is rewarding - avoid the lure!

Anti-racism version: "white savior"

Scenario: What could an ally do?

While driving together somewhere, a colleague of yours starts a sentence with "Look, it isn't politically correct to say this, but I'm going to say it anyway—"

Tip: Learn to interrupt, and keep interrupting!

"Let's not make this weird."

"Not this again! I don't want to argue. How was your weekend?"

"I read that political correctness means treating people fairly and respectfully, which is something I'm really into."

"Why do you want to tell me something that you know I won't agree with? Do you want my approval?"

Scenario: What could an ally do?

While talking about an incident of structural racism in the news, a white colleague of yours says proudly, "My parents raised me not to see color."

Tip: Recenter the conversation

"I decided to talk less about how un-racist I am and talk more about how to stop the racism that is happening."

"I heard that 'I don't see color' sounds like 'I don't see people being racist to you' and so I stopped saying it."

"It feels good to feel like I'm not the problem, but now I want to be part of the solution. And that means seeing race so that I notice when unfairness is happening."

Scenario: What could an ally do?

A peer manager tells you that one of their reports has complained about people using the word "Aspie" in a derogatory way. The manager says, "I told them to stop complaining and grow a thicker skin."

Note: "Aspie" is a nickname for Asperger's syndrome, which can be used as a slur.

Tip: Include the context of systemic oppression

Foot-stepping analogy: Why is this person so upset that you accidentally stepped on their foot?

Answer: Because someone steps on their foot TEN TIMES A DAY, EVERY DAY, FOR THEIR ENTIRE LIFE

The person who likes the slur can also "grow a thicker skin," accept this criticism, and change their behavior

https://thebias.com/2017/09/26/how-good-intent-undermines-diversity-and-inclusion/

Scenario: What could an ally do?

In your organization, you notice that the higher up the hierarchy someone is, the more likely they are to be white, male, or otherwise privileged. Three different groups announce a new senior hire in one month. All three appear to be white men.

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: What could an ally do?

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" can be used as a form of bonding but creates a hostile environment

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 and don't work

Scenario: What could an ally do?

In a meeting you attend, several people disagree strongly but productively over a technical decision. Later, one of the other people in the meeting tells you they were disturbed by your report's tone in the meeting. Your report was the only person of a marginalized race/ethnicity in the meeting. This has happened many times.

Tip: 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: What could an ally do?

A woman on your team has been successfully filling in for her direct superior after he left. After 6 months, she asks to be formally promoted to the position. Instead, your director hires a man from outside the company with less experience to fill the position and asks her to train the new hire. When you ask why, your director tells you that the new hire has a lot of potential.
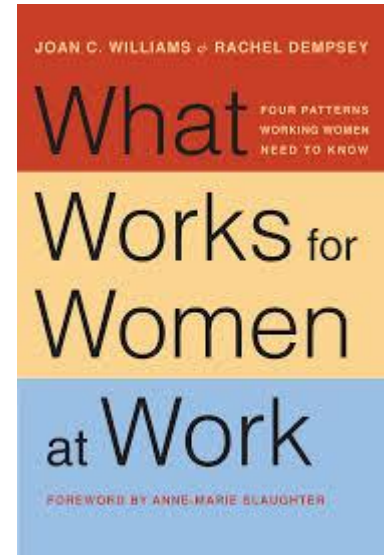
Tip: What Works for Women at Work

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: What could an ally do?

In your weekly team meetings, you notice that women don't speak nearly as often as men. When women do speak, you notice that they are interrupted more often than men.

Tip: Create psychological safety

Psychological safety means an environment in which people feel safe and 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**

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

Tip: How to create psychological safety?

More structure: agenda, moderator, reserved speaking time, hand signals to request speaking time, etc.

Praise and reward when quiet people speak up more

Discourage shaming, humiliation, dominance

Reduce hierarchy (switch up who takes notes, change meeting leader, powerful person gets coffee, etc.)

Scenario: What could an ally do?

A woman of color points out that an upcoming company-wide meeting will have all white male presenters. Several other people criticize their coworker for being too abrasive, aggressive, loud, out of line, etc.

Tip: 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: What could an ally do?

In your team's weekly meeting, you notice that the group often ends up agreeing with whatever the loudest, most persistent talker wants to do, even when most people 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: What could an ally do?

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 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

https://frameshiftconsulting.com/code-of-conduct-book/

Scenario: What could an ally do?

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: What could an ally do?

In social spaces at work, like work parties and online social chat channels, you notice that men speak far more often than women. When you ask women why they speak less, they note that women generally have less power in your company hierarchy and men with more power strongly influence the topic of conversation.

k

Tip: Be welcoming and redistribute power

People with more power can express interest and encourage follow-up: "That's interesting!" "Tell me more" "Thank you for bringing up that important topic"

Automatic measurement can inform people privately if they are taking up more space than average, or as a group

Giving more power and influence to care and maintenance functions can change the power balance positively

Scenario: What could an ally do?

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

Scenario: What could an ally do?

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

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: What could an ally do?

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: What could an ally do?

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: 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

https://frameshiftconsulting.com/code-of-conduct-book/

Scenario: What could an ally do?

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

2.   Implement bias interrupters

3.   Repeat as needed

Detailed list of bias interrupters for workplace systems:

http://biasinterrupters.org/