

Creating more welcoming and inclusive communities: A focus on gender

Science of Learning & Art of Communication

Wednesday, January 15, 2020

Presented by

Kathleen Holgerson

Women's Center

Student Union Room 421

www.womenscenter.uconn.edu

Introductions

- Name
- Area of study
- What is your family's cure for the common cold?
- What is the origin of your name? (Who gave you your name? Why? What is the meaning of your name? Nicknames?)
- What is your typical family meal?


Hopes

- Developing cultural competency and empathy
- Understanding diverse perspectives
- Achieve compassionately constructive conversations and behavior choices

What might challenge our ability to be a welcoming and inclusive environment?



Goal



To work together to build our toolbox to explore how gender matters in our scholarship, practice, and engagement with students and colleagues.

Our Mission

The mission of the Center is to

advocate,

educate, and

provide **support** services for the

achievement of women's equity at the University
and within the community at large.

Special attention is focused on women who face
additional challenges due to their race, nationality,
class, sexual identity, religion, age, and physical or
mental ability.

Our Herstory

- Established in 1972
- Grew out of the activism of students, staff, and faculty
- Provided education and resources, and served as a gathering place



Overview of Frameworks

- Community of Practice
- Birdcage/Intersectionality
- Levels of Oppression

Community of Practice



A group of people who **share** a concern or a **passion** for something they do and learn how to do it better as they **interact** regularly.

~ Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger

Community of Practice

Requires 3 elements:

Identity

- ✓ **Shared** domain of interest (gender equity)
- ✓ Implied **commitment** (no one HAS to be here)
- ✓ Value **collective competence** and learn from each other

Community

- ✓ Engage in **joint activities** and discussions
- ✓ Build relationships that enable **learning from each other**
- ✓ Mutual engagement binds individuals together into a social entity

Practice

- ✓ Requires commitment, time and **sustained** interaction
- ✓ Creates a shared repertoire of communal resources (routines, vocabulary, sensibilities, etc.)

Learning Together

- ▶ Mainstream thinking tends to assume that learning is
 - ▶ Something individuals do (what is in your head)
 - ▶ Has a beginning and an end
 - ▶ Is formal and the result of “teaching”
- ▶ Collective learning
 - ▶ Involvement in relationships within a community which develops around issues that matter to participants.

Tenets of Consciousness-Raising

- Go around in a circle
- Always speak personally, specifically and from your own experience
- Don't interrupt
- Never challenge anyone else's experience
- Try not to give advice
- Sum up – find the common element and see what conclusions can be drawn

Consciousness-Raising

Gender roles

- ▶ When was I first aware of the differences in the roles of men and women?
- ▶ How were these roles played out by my parents/family?
- ▶ Have my expectations of gender roles changed?

Consciousness-Raising

Education

- ▶ What were my parents' /family's attitudes towards education?
- ▶ What were my teachers' /guidance counselors' expectations of me?
- ▶ Did they have different expectations of the students based on their gender? On their gender expression?
- ▶ What were my aspirations?
- ▶ What are my educational successes?

Consciousness-Raising

Other topics to explore:

- Role models
- Firsts
- Hopes
- Power
- Anger

Feminist Theory and Practice



“Revolutionary feminist consciousness-raising emphasized the importance of learning about patriarchy as a system of domination, how it became institutionalized and how it is perpetuated and maintained.”

hooks, *Feminism is for EVERYBODY*, p. 7

Birdcage of Oppression

Points of advantage

Race

Gender identity
or expression

Class

Ability

Sexual
Orientation

Religious
Affiliation

National Origin

Points of disadvantage

Race

Gender
identity or
expression

Class

Ability

Sexual
Orientation

Religious
Affiliation

National
Origin

In my environment

My co-workers are

My supervisor is

My teachers were mostly

Most of my close friends are

My mentors are

The people I mentor are

My neighbors are

Feminist Theory and Practice



“In its earliest inception feminist theory had as its primary goal explaining to women and men how sexist thinking worked and how we could challenge and change it.”

hooks, *Feminism is for EVERYBODY*, p. 19

Levels of Oppression

LEVEL	INDICATORS/MANIFESTATIONS	RESPONSE/ACTION
INDIVIDUAL	Bias & Prejudice	Education & Awareness
GROUP	Stereotyping & Discrimination	Laws, Policies & Regulations
INSTITUTION	Power + Prejudice = "ism"	Social Change /Structural Change

Comparing Individual & Institutional Oppression

Individual	Institutional
One on One	Group on Group
Overt	Covert
Observable	Subtle
Causes Injury or Harm to Individual or Property	“Business as Usual”
Publicly Condemned	Publicly Sanctioned

Birdcage



Feminist Theory and Practice



“...feminist theory which included both an analysis of sexism, strategies for challenging patriarchy, and new models of social interaction.”

hooks, *Feminism is for EVERYBODY*, p. 19

The National Academies of
SCIENCES · ENGINEERING · MEDICINE

CONSENSUS STUDY REPORT

Sexual Harassment of Women

Climate, Culture, and
Consequences in
Academic Sciences, Engineering,
and Medicine



SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Recognizing All Types

SEXUAL COERCION

promising professional rewards in return for sexual favors

threatening professional consequences unless sexual demands are met

UNWANTED SEXUAL ATTENTION

sexual assault

rape

unwanted groping or stroking

PUBLIC AWARENESS

GENDER HARASSMENT

relentless pressure for sex

nude images posted at work

unwanted sexual discussions

sexually humiliating acts

relentless pressure for dates

sexual insults
e.g., "for a good time call...",
calling someone a whore

offensive sexual teasing

offensive remarks about bodies

sexist insults
e.g., *women don't belong in science*

sabotage of women's equipment

obscene gestures

gender slurs
e.g., "pu**y"

vulgar name calling
e.g., "slut," "bitch," c**t"

insults to working mothers
e.g., "you can't do this job with small kids at home"

Things to consider

- ▶ How does gender harassment show up in your experience?
- ▶ Is your field/department tolerant of and/or perceived to be tolerant of some or all forms of sexual harassment?
- ▶ How do you and your colleagues actively address gender harassment?
- ▶ How is work to create more diverse, inclusive, and respectful environments embedded into the systems and structures in which you operate?
- ▶ Is gender harassment considered as important as research misconduct?
- ▶ How are power and dependencies diffused in relationships between trainees and faculty/advisors?

Wrap-up

- I learned ...
- I figured out ...
- I feel ...
- I felt challenged ...
- I'm wondering ...
- I'm clearer about ...
- I've discovered ...
- I'm taking with me ...