

Authentic inclusion and respect are key to building successful, diverse teams

- Differing viewpoints and backgrounds help you, in the long run, think more tactically and creatively.
- If you are the person assembling a team, be mindful of:
 - The overall balance of a team and the team's purpose.
 - If you have a team whose job is to comprehensively review projects, it is crucial that team be meaningfully diverse (ie, not 7 men and 1 woman, 10 white people and one person of color, 9 artists and one writer, etc).
 - Consider the strengths and weaknesses of each person carefully; balance off the personalities
 - Consider the rank of individuals within your structure. If you put two women on the team but they are both very junior, and the men on the team are all high ranking and have not demonstrated good allyship skills, you run the risk of those two women being overtalked, interrupted, and unwittingly silenced by the men on the team. Consider pairing a junior woman and a more senior woman up on teams, so the senior woman can help clear the path for and amplify the younger woman.
 - Think outside the norm - look at what the project really needs and how different types of personalities and strengths can accomplish the job
 - Not isolating individuals on a team
 - If you have a small office and only a few people of color or a few women, don't always split them up and have them be 'the sole representative' on their respective teams.
 - Not asking individuals to 'speak for' everyone of their identity group
 - The classic "You're a woman, how would moms feel about?" Don't do that.
 - Take your key team members aside and make your intentions clear: if you want a senior woman to mentor a younger woman, tell her. If the lead on the team is a senior male, tell them you need them to model good allyship to the younger men on the team.
- If you find yourself on a new team and you note imbalance
 - Speak up early. "So, I'm the only woman in the room, and I've already noticed I'm getting interrupted and overtalked, and even got turfed from the table when the client came in. We need to put a stop to that. Can you help?"
 - Cultivate an ally on the team. "Dave, I got interrupted a lot in that last meeting. People around the table really respect you and listen to you- can you help me out by redirecting back to me when I get interrupted? Thanks."

Sometimes you find yourself in an awkward position on a team

- Talk to the team lead and be clear about it
 - "I've noticed the team keeps looking to me for the mom's perspective. I'm a 26 year old with no kids – I am not going to have that perspective, but what I do bring to the table is XYZ skillset. Can we have Jack the coordinator perform

some basic research on parental preferences on this topic and present them to the team?”

- Sometimes, you need to escalate it.
 - Scenario: Maria is the lone Latinx member of a team. One of her teammates pushes her to discuss how socioeconomically disadvantaged visitors might feel about a new, upcharge experience.
 - She points out to him she wouldn't know, and perhaps there's survey data that might answer his question, but he persists.
 - Maria asks for a meeting with the team's project manager and HR. “It hasn't escaped my notice I'm the only Latino/a on the team. Paul keeps asking me questions that indicate he expects me to have the 'poor person's' perspective. That's racist and I'm uncomfortable with it. I have tried to push back on him to no effect. I need someone in a position of authority to explain to Paul why his assuming I must know about poor people because I'm Latina and the only POC at the table is racist and won't be tolerated.”

Meetings can be a minefield of subtle bias. And, frankly, overt bias

- Be clear what expectations are
- If you're in a leadership position, intervene swiftly if things begin to go awry
 - Redirect to women who are interrupted
 - Amplify voices (women's, POC's) by citing their name and idea “To go back to what Lindsey was saying...” “Jin had a great idea when he said...”
 - At breaks or after meetings, talk to team members who need to improve their habits and behaviors
 - Redirect marginalized people back to the table
 - “If we all scoot over a little, there's plenty of room for Sally.”
 - “Actually, we really do need Rose at the table. Jack can take notes from one of the back chairs without a problem.”
- If you are in a position to tag team help, do it
 - The old trick of a woman picking up and reasserting what another woman has said, by name
 - If you're of rank, interrupt the interrupter.
- And if you're the one getting run roughshod over
 - “I'd like to finish my thought.” “As I was saying.” “That's not quite what I was going for, before I was interrupted.”
 - Interrupt them back. Overtalk the overtalker (warning, can get loud, and you might get told you were being aggressive. You can call that out: “The only reason I had to get louder was because I kept getting interrupted and was not allowed to finish a thought. That's disrespectful and not constructive.”)
 - Find an ally during a break or after the meeting, and work together next time to cut that behavior off at the pass.