
Barbershop Toolbox

Tool #01

March 2017





Leadership Engagement on Gender Equality

This session was developed in co-operation with Dr. Michael Kimmel, one of the world's leading experts on the studies of men and masculinities. Dr. Kimmel is experienced in engaging with leadership on gender equality. For more information and resources from Dr. Michael Kimmel, see the [Resource](#) list below.

Goal

This session aims to explore how leadership can support women to advance in the workplace and how to set an example so that both female and male employees are valued, deserving of equal pay and of family-supportive workplace policies.

After the session, individuals should have a deeper understanding of the benefits of gender equality and what they can do in their own position as leaders to influence change. Leaders must be engaged, motivated and have a clear vision on how they can contribute to achieving gender equality.

The role of governments and corporations in achieving gender equality has been well documented. Men comprise 60% of the employed labour force, and 95% of the CEOs of the world's largest corporations are men. At the same time only 23% of seats in national parliaments are held by women. As such, the importance of leading by example through actions that demonstrably advance and empower women is vital.

Required for this session

Facilitator for the session. Discussion leaders to facilitate table discussions. Material for facilitator and discussion leaders, including the Facilitator's Checklist and Terminology from [Getting Started](#). The facilitator and discussion leaders should also have a copy of the questions with explanations, as presented below. Provide the participants with a clean version of the questions, without the explanations (provided at the end of this tool).

Timeframe

1.5 – 2 hours



Guidelines for organizers

This session should bring together members at the top-level to discuss how to get men and boys engaged in advancing gender equality. Attendees are encouraged to make a personal commitment to carry the message forward after the event.

The set-up is designed to mobilize leadership and encourage attendees to take action to achieve gender equality from the top down. The session should encourage an informal, candid Chatham House Rule discussion, meaning that any information disclosed during the session may be reported by those present but the source of that information may not be explicitly or implicitly identified. Be strict on keeping the participation only at the highest level, and do not allow participants to send their deputy or assistant, as this session should encourage participants to ask questions and share their thoughts freely, which can be challenging for members of leadership in settings where the discussion is not kept at a peer-to-peer level.

Find an expert to take on the role of main facilitator for the session. This can be someone within the workplace, in the local community or an international activist/expert. Guidelines on the role of facilitators are outlined in **Getting Started**. The facilitator introduces the session, guides the discussion leaders and wraps up the session at the end.

Be prepared to divide the participants into groups, based on gender. Organize the seating so that

each table has a discussion leader, who has been familiarized with the questions and their purpose beforehand. Choose discussion leaders who are respected among their peers and have some authority in the group.

Ask key members of leadership to prepare a personal commitment to achieving gender equality before the event and have them publicly declare them during the session. See examples under the **Be the Change – Make a Commitment** tool.

As leadership is often pressed for time, consider organizing this session as a working breakfast or lunch. Have the facilitator introduce the material while the food or drinks are served and then proceed to table discussions, as outlined below.

Guidelines for facilitator

INTRODUCTION

Start the session by giving a brief introduction to the benefits of gender equality and the goal of this session. For facts and inspiration, see **Resources** below. Explain that part of the discussion will take place in groups and that each table has a discussion leader who will ask the questions and manage time. Encourage the participants to be honest and open and explain to them how Chatham House Rule discussions work (for explanation, see above). Consider inviting a gender expert to hold a short keynote on the benefits of gender equality during the introduction. This could be a successful CEO or

politician who has implemented gender equitable policies, a local activist or an international expert, such as Dr. Michael Kimmel. Another option would be to show a video that introduces the material – for suggestions see **Resources** below.

TABLE DISCUSSIONS

After the introduction, each table should discuss the questions below for at least 30 minutes. Here the discussion leaders should lead the discussion on their table. Remind them to be strict on time, allowing 3–5 minutes discussion per question, based on overall time. As the session's facilitator, you should walk around to support the discussion leaders and help solve any disputes if they arise.

Remind the discussion leaders of the time when there are 15, 10 and 5 minutes left.

DEBRIEF

When time is up, ask the discussion leaders to join you for a debrief on the main themes that came up on their tables. Each discussion leader should be prepared to give insight into how the discussion evolved on his/her table. See **Concluding remarks** below.



Questions for discussion

What sort of messages were you given about what it means to be a man/woman?

For discussion leaders: This provides a basis for the following questions.

Where did you get these ideas from?

For discussion leaders: This establishes that we often get them from other men.

How has your understanding of how it is to be a woman changed?

When was the first time a woman told you about something – sexual assault, sexual harassment, something that made her feel uncomfortable – and you heard her, not as something “bad” that happened “by accident” but as something that is in the nature of how we are raised to look at women?

For discussion leaders: These questions provide the opportunity for a personal reflection which results in a deeper discussion on gender equality in general.

What are the chief obstacles in your organization to achieving greater gender equality?

What can you, as a leader, do tomorrow to begin to rectify that?

What concrete steps can leadership take to reach gender equality within the workplace?

Is there room to increase gender awareness in hiring practices, salary negotiations, promotions or when dealing with sexual harassment?

Can work/life balance be increased to meet the needs of both mothers and fathers?

For discussion leaders: These questions allow each participant to reflect on the ways he/she can make a difference.



Concluding remarks

When inviting the discussion leaders to give an insight into their table's discussion, this can either be done by having them all join a panel or by simply standing up, giving a brief summary and answering a few questions from you. Remind the discussion leaders not to share any private or sensitive information without permission from the participant who shared it.

Ask each discussion leader some of the following questions:

What were the main ideas about what makes a man?

What were the main obstacles identified to achieving gender equality?

What possible remedies were identified?

What concrete actions did participants commit to implementing in their near surrounding?

Here it would be ideal to have members of leadership declare their commitment to achieving gender equality, again see suggestions under the engagement tool **Be the Change – Make a Commitment**.

For the last 15–20 minutes you should summarize the session, remind the participants that the overall objective was to deepen understanding and create a base for more gender equitable practices and policies from the top down. Highlight some of the

obstacles mentioned and solutions identified during the table discussions as well as the commitments made by key members. Use best practice examples from the Women's Empowerment Principles and HeForShe IMPACT 10x10x10 Frameworks (see **Resources**, below). Tie this into how each participant can make a personal commitment by signing up as a "HeForShe" and take action on both individual and organizational level (see **Becoming an agent of change**, below).

Remind the participants that throughout our lives, we receive signals from family, friends and the media about how we are expected to behave as men, and how to treat women and other men. It is important to recognize that the roles we assign to women or men are created by society and not related to any biological factors.

Becoming aware of the negative consequences that these stereotypes can have in our professional and private life is an important first step. Be critical and challenge these stereotypes when you encounter them in daily life or in your community.

Becoming an agent of change

Encourage participants to take the HeForShe and PwC's interactive 35 minute online course **Building Gender IQ** on the benefits of gender equality and why it matters.

Organize follow-up meetings to discuss ways to implement the suggestions and recommendations that came up during the table discussions.

Publicize the leadership commitments.

Inform staff members that leadership has committed to working actively towards gender equality within the workplace.

Organize a workshop for all staff to create a more gender aware workplace (see **Workshops** in this toolbox).

Use the "HeForShe Commitment API" to measure male employee engagement, as outlined in the HeForShe IMPACT 10x10x10 Corporation Framework.

Establish gender sensitization training initiatives and gender equality initiatives.

Graft the theme of gender equality onto major corporate conferences, events and meetings.

Use the corporate footprint to inspire suppliers and customers to join HeForShe, as outlined in the HeForShe IMPACT 10x10x10 Corporation Framework.



Clean version of questions to distribute to participants

What sort of messages were you given about what it means to be a man/woman?

Where did you get these ideas from?

How has your understanding of how it is to be a woman changed?

When was the first time a woman told you about something – sexual assault, sexual harassment, something that made her feel uncomfortable – and you heard her, not as something “bad” that happened “by accident” but as something that is in the nature of how we are raised to look at women?

What are the chief obstacles in your organization to achieving greater gender equality?

What can you, as a leader, do tomorrow to begin to rectify that?

What concrete steps can leadership take to reach gender equality within the workplace?

Is there room to increase gender awareness in hiring practices, salary negotiations, promotions or when dealing with sexual harassment?

Can work/life balance be increased to meet the needs of both mothers and fathers?



Resources

Michael Kimmel, Why Gender Equality is Good for Everyone, Ted Talk

Dr. Michael Kimmel is a highly experienced educator and facilitator who travels the world to get men engaged in the dialogue on gender equality.

For more visit his website.

On a more gender equitable workplace

Catalyst.org, Flip the Script: Women in the Workplace

HeForShe, Action Kit for the Workplace

HeForShe, IMPACT 10x10x10 Corporation Framework

World Economic Forum, The Global Gender Gap Report 2016

Empowering women in politics
CATALYST, Government Affairs

Halla Tómasdóttir, It's time for women to run for office, Ted Talk

HeForShe, IMPACT 10x10x10 Head of State Framework

OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, Handbook on Promoting Women's Participation in Political Parties, 2014

UN Women, Importance of women's leadership and political participation

Women Political Leaders Global Forum

Economic empowerment of women
Halla Tómasdóttir, A feminine response to Iceland's financial crash, Ted Talk

Jacki Zehner provides an excellent list of resources on the benefits of women's economic empowerment in a wide variety of sectors

LeanIn.Org and McKinsey & Company, Women in the Workplace 2016, comprehensive study on the state of women in corporate America

Sheryl Sandberg, Why we have too few women leaders, Ted Talk

The website Women on Boards provides a selection of the latest global research into boards and corporate governance

UN Women on importance of women's economic empowerment

United Nations Foundation, A Roadmap For Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment, 2013

Work/Life balance

#LeanInTogether, We all have an important role to play in reaching equality

MenCare, Parental Leave Platform

White Ribbon, It Starts With You, Stays With Him