



## Working Group of Gender Equity

# How to be a male ally for gender equity?

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# Is gender inequity a problem in Indian academia/ institutes, (in Astronomy)?

**Yes!**

**Recruitment**

**Retention**

**Advancement**

Statistics presented at previous WGGE sessions demonstrate this!

People are cognisant of gender inequity and are attempting to address it at various levels

**(especially at the top level: e.g., DST KIRAN program, ASI-2020 SOC)**

# Why do we need male allies?

- **Not just a women's issue. Equity is relational**
  - inequities because of uneven distribution of power
  - for redistribution of power between genders, men also need to be willing partners.

# Why do we need male allies?

- **Efforts by and investing in women alone will not bring progress**
  - Men occupy important positions and can use their power to be effective advocates.
  - When institutions are male-dominated, men can play an important role in creating a more inclusive and equitable climate
  - Bottom-up approaches like Allies Programs are as important as top-down approaches

# Why do we need male allies?

- **Men also benefit**

- from gender equality and a more equal society
- relief from long work hours and bad health
- helps to challenge gender stereotypes, rigid gender norms, and negative masculinity

# Men in academia want to address gender inequity, but there are barriers

- **Unconscious bias / schemas / implicit association**
  - Explicit bias is on the decline, but implicit bias is pervasive
  - Gender bias is often unconscious and favors men regardless of gender
    - rating student candidates
    - letters of recommendation
    - rating faculty candidates and hiring
    - student evaluation of teaching

# Men in academia want to address gender inequity, but there are barriers

- **The “chilly climate”**

“A range of informal practices and implicit policies which, despite their relative subtlety and the fact that they do not intend to be harmful, do systematically disadvantage women relative to men” (Wylie, 1995)

- **Microaggressions**

“... brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to certain individuals because of their group / gender membership.” (Sue, 2010)

# Men in academia want to address gender inequity, but there are barriers

- **The “wimp penalty”**

Men perceived as less self-promoting and more collaborative and power-sharing are evaluated by both men and women as less competent (and, not incidentally, less masculine)



# How can men be good allies?

- **Educate oneself on gender related issues**
  - review literature
  - Assess your own implicit bias by taking a gender-science implicit association test:  
<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>
  - Watch the 10-minute video “5 Ways Men Can Help End Sexism”:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o1ZctJat4pU>
  - Read the 14 advocacy tips at  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o1ZctJat4pU>

# How can men be good allies?

- **As an ally, learn to partner and collaborate with humility**
  - Listen to women
    - requires focus, sincerity, empathy, refusal to interrupt, and genuine valuing of both her experience and her willingness to share it with you.
  - Remember, it's not about you!
    - ask women how you can amplify, not replace or usurp existing gender parity efforts
  - Get comfortable being uncomfortable
    - Learning about the professional challenges of women may produce feelings of self-shame or self-blame that cause anxiety. The solution is more interaction and learning, not less.
  - Engage in supportive partnerships with women
    - share your social capital (influence, information, knowledge, and organizational resources) and platforms.

# How can men be good allies?

- **Acknowledge male privilege**

- When one group is disadvantaged in a system, by necessity, another group is systemically advantaged.
- Your privilege is not your fault, but it is your responsibility
- Reach out to other men and sensitise them towards existing gender inequity. Introduce them to knowledge, skills, and strategies to effect positive personal, departmental, and institutional change
- Build a supportive network of men allies who are committed to gender equity
- Recognize that women cannot and should not have the primary responsibility to remedy acute organizational gender imbalance and inequity

“Discrimination isn't a thunderbolt, it isn't an abrupt slap in the face. It's the slow drumbeat of being underappreciated, feeling uncomfortable and encountering roadblocks along the path to success. These subtle distinctions help make women feel out of place.”

- Megan Urry

# Equity vs Equality (UNESCO)

**Gender Equality** does not mean that women and men have to become the same, but that their rights, responsibilities, and opportunities will not depend on whether they are male or female

**Gender Equity** means fairness of treatment for women and men according to their respective needs

**Equity is a means for the goal of equality**