Allies workshop

Men learning to support women in open technology and culture - in real-time

Full CC-BY-SA curriculum online at: http://geekfeminism.wikia.com/Allies_workshop

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Increasing the participation and status of women in open technology and culture
http://supportada.org/what-we-do/
Why should men fight sexism in open tech/culture?
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- **Open source community**
  - Men 98.5%
  - Women 1.5%
  - Source: FLOSSPOLS report

- **Wikipedia editors**
  - Men 90%
  - Women 9%
  - Trans 1%
  - Source: Nov. 2011 Editor Survey
A note about gender binary language ("men and women")

- “Men” refers to people given the societal advantages accorded to cis males
- Gender binary language often intentional
- Focus of this workshop: improve treatment of women
- Practical goal for this workshop: don’t make things worse for trans and genderqueer folks
Why should men fight sexism in open tech/culture?

• Because you are a decent person, and...
• Men have built-in advantage:
  • Woman complains, is whiny, weak
  • Man complains, is brave, progressive
• Men: expect positive reactions!

You have power, use it
Off-topic for this workshop

- Are women treated worse than men in open tech/culture?
- Is it a problem? Is it worth fixing?
- Learn more:
  - http://geekfeminism.org
  - http://geekfeminism.wikia.com
Format of the workshop

- Present real-world scenarios and discuss potential responses
- Form groups of 4-6 people to discuss and come up with responses
- Alternate small group and whole room discussion
Safe learning space

• Workshop is recorded but you are not.
• This is a learning experience.
• You are supposed to make mistakes.
• Don't repeat what people said in this room if it is unflattering.
Aaaaaawkward...

Talking about sexism, sex, gender, discrimination is uncomfortable

Let's all take a minute to laugh uncomfortably together now!
Basic principles of response to sexist incidents

- Short, simple, firm
- Humor usually backfires
- Pick your battles
- Play for the audience
- Don't be homophobic, transphobic, or make fun of people for being sexually undesirable, unattractive, etc.
DREADED GROUP CHOOSING TIME

• Form groups of 4 - 6 now
• Or move up front and listen
• Probably everyone is nice and cool!
Creating a friendly environment

- A woman you don't know stands near your group at a geek event
- You are deciding where to hold an event
Speaking up about casual sexism

• Mailing list post asks “How would you explain this to your girlfriend?”

• Someone makes a sexist joke, everyone looks at the one woman in the office who speaks up about these things
Speaking up against advocacy of sexism

• Wikipedia Talk page: “She only has a Wikipedia page because she's hot.”

• On identi.ca: “Women should just shut up and write code if they want respect.”
Witnessing harassment of women

- IRC/chat: “I don't believe you're a woman unless you send me pics”
- Someone leaves a sexist comment on your blog
Not supporting sexist organizations

- A company's booth staff is wearing only underwear and body paint
- You receive an invitation to an all-male panel
Educating yourself

- You read a blog post about harassment and think “Why didn't she just knee him in the groin?”
- You are angry because someone just accused you of being sexist
Advanced ally tips

• Don't expect praise and credit for not being sexist or fighting sexism
• Follow and support women leaders
• Assume women have more knowledge and wait for invitation to explain
• “It's hard to be told to shut up and listen, but sometimes you need to shut up and listen.” - Mary Gardiner, Wikimania 2012
Thank you!

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