

About Women On Campus

Volume 8, Number 3 • Summer 1999

About Women on Campus takes on a different look for this Summer 1999 issue. As classes begin across the country, issues of the ways in which men and women (and boys and girls) are treated differently come into focus again. The lead article, "Subtle Ways in Which Men and Women May Be Treated Differently," puts the spotlight on behaviors that communicate attitude differences in classrooms, meetings, and conversations. Its many examples portray actual situations that readers themselves have experienced or watched, and it's thoughtful reading for instructors, faculty members, department chairs, counselors, and students.

The second article addresses the issue of student-on-student sexual harassment—should schools be held liable? This timely piece, reprinted from *Insight*, states the recent Supreme Court decision and analysis by NAWE's senior scholar in residence, Bernice Sandler, that schools whose staff members ignore cases of sexual harassment should be liable for damages when students are harmed by it. Her writing articulates the difference between childish teasing and hurtful harassment, making a strong case for school administrators and teachers to understand that sexual harassment is deleterious behavior. Looking the other way is unacceptable.

Subtle Ways In Which Men And Women May Be Treated Differently

Bernice R. Sandler

The word "women" as used here includes *all* women. However, for women of color, disabled women, lesbians, and older women these behaviors may be exacerbated and these women may experience other forms of differential behavior as well. Additionally, other "outsiders" such as men of color, persons for whom English is a second language, and those from working class backgrounds often experi-

ence many of the same behaviors described here.

Most of the behaviors are what has been described as "microinequities," a term coined by Mary Rowe of Massachusetts Institute of Technology. They describe the small everyday inequities through which individuals are often treated differently because of their gender, race, age, or other "outsider" status. Taken by itself, a microinequity may have a minuscule effect, if it has any at all, and is typically not noticed by the person it happens to or by the person who asserts it. Yet when these behaviors occur again and again, and especially if they are not noticed or understood, they often have a damaging cumulative effect, creating an environment that is indeed chilly—an environment that dampens women's self-esteem, confidence, aspirations, and their participation.

Because overt behaviors are more easily recognized, they have generally been omitted. Those that are included here are the

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Student Harrassment
and School Liability 5



**National Association for
Women in Education**

Suite 210, 1325 18th Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20036-6511
Phone: (202) 639-6330
e-mail: nawe@naewe.org

Editor: Bernice Rosnick Sandler
Executive Director: Lynn M. Gargano
Editing: The Running Group
Production: Imtek Office Solutions

About Women on Campus is published by NAWE, Advancing Women in Higher Education, to provide information about programs, issues, and concerns of women students, faculty, and administrators. Association members receive About Women on Campus as part of their membership fee. Individual subscriptions are \$30 for one year. Institutional subscriptions are \$50 for one year.

ISSN: 1061-768X

Application to mail 2nd class postage rate pending at Washington, D.C. Postmaster: Send address change to About Women on Campus, 1325 18th Street, NW, Suite 210, Washington, D.C. 20036-6511.

Volume 8, Number 3, Summer 1999

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NAWE, Advancing Women in Higher Education is an independent non-profit professional organization dedicated to the education and professional and personal development of women and girls. An important force in American education for more than 80 years, the Association is at a crossroads, serving new populations, expanding its services, and developing new and innovative programs to meet the ever-changing needs of women in education.

The mission of the NAWE is to address issues in higher education, with particular attention to the interests, scholarship, and advancement of women educators and students. In a supportive, diverse organizational environment for educators from a broad range of specialties, NAWE develops leaders for today and tomorrow.

types of behaviors that are typically minimized by the person engaging in the behavior. Some of the behaviors below may fit in more than one category.

Behaviors that Communicate Lower Expectations for Women

Asking women easier, more factual questions, men the harder, open-ended ones that require critical thinking.

Grouping women in ways that indicate they have less status or are less capable.

Doubting women's work and accomplishments: "Did you really do that without any help from someone else?"

Expecting less of women in the future.

Calling males "men" and women "girls" or "gals," which carries the implication that women are not as serious or as capable as men.

Yielding to the Influence of Internalized Stereotypes

Using examples that reflect stereotypes.

Addressing women in ways that reinforce stereotypes and social roles rather than intellectual ones, for instance, calling women "honey."

Focusing on a woman's appearance, personal qualities, and relationships rather than on her accomplishments: "I'd like you to meet our charming new colleague," rather than "I'd like you to meet the new hot-shot we just hired."

Judging women by their physical appearance and downgrading those who are not "attractive."

Describing women by their physical characteristics, such as a "blonde."

Using a different vocabulary to describe equivalent behavior or accomplishment, such as "angry

man" but "bitchy woman."

Expressing stereotypes that discourage women from pursuing professional careers, such as "Women are naturally more caring, and men are naturally more aggressive."

Assigning classroom tasks according to stereotyped roles. For instance, assigning women to be the note-takers.

Falling back on disparaging stereotyped words when angry or annoyed with females: "Look here, sweetie," and "Don't talk back to me, little girl."

Excluding Women from Participation in Meetings and Conversations

Ignoring women while recognizing men, even when women clearly volunteer to participate by raising their hands.

Addressing a group as if there were no women present: "When you were a boy. . ."

Interrupting women more than men or allowing their peers to interrupt them. Women may be more vulnerable when interrupted—they may not participate again for the rest of a meeting.

Treating Men and Women Differently When their Behavior or Achievements are the Same

Treating women who ask extensive questions as troublemakers and men as interested and bright.

Believing that women who ask for information don't know the material, but that men who do so are smart, inquisitive, and involved.

Viewing marriage and parental status differently for men and women—as disadvantages for women and advantages for men.

Attributing women's achievements to something other than their abil-

ities, such as good luck, affirmative action, beauty, or having "slept their way to the top."

Frowning when women speak (male and female students may also do this.) Men and women alike may be less reinforcing when women speak.

Judging women who speak tentatively as being less competent or knowledgeable.

Giving Women Less Attention and Intellectual Encouragement

Making less eye contact with women.

Much of the material for "Subtle Ways..." is drawn from *The Chilly Classroom Climate: A Guide to Improve the Education of Women*, by Bernice R. Sandler, Lisa A. Silverberg and Roberta M. Hall, published by the National Association for Women in Education, Washington, D.C. The book describes and documents more than 50 ways in which male and female students are treated differently in the classroom, and examines issues such as teaching style and pedagogy, intersections of race and gender, the importance of including women in the curriculum, and how gender affects faculty evaluation. The book also contains over 270 specific recommendations for action that administrators, department chairs, faculty, and individual students can take to improve the classroom climate for women and other groups.

To order call NAWA at (202) 659-9330. The cost is \$15 for members or \$20 for nonmembers. Bulk prices are available. For more information go to <http://www.nawe.org/ChillyClassroom.html>.

Nodding and gesturing more and paying more attention in general to men than to women when they are speaking.

Responding more to men's comments by making additional comments, coaching, and asking questions; but responding more often to women with "uh-huh."

Calling on males more frequently in meetings and in conversations.

Calling males by name more frequently.

Coaching men but not women: "Tell me more about that. . ."

Waiting longer for a man to respond to a question than a woman, before going on to another person.

Crediting men's comments to their owner or "author" ("As Bill said. . ."), but not giving authorship or ownership to women. Sometimes a comment made by a woman is later credited to a male.

Giving men more detailed instructions for a task.

Giving women less feedback—less criticism, less help, and less praise (This is one of the critical ways in which women and men are treated differently).

Being more concerned about men's behavior than women's, such as worrying about a male who doesn't participate but not being concerned about women who do not.

Giving women less encouragement to take on harder tasks.

Engaging in more informal conversation with men than with women.

Discouraging Women Through Politeness

Using some forms of politeness that shift the focus from intellectual activities to social behavior: "I like to see the girls' smiling faces."

Males may perform hands-on tasks for women (as when helping them with a computer task) under the guise of being helpful, thereby depriving women of the experience and communicating lower expectations for them.

Faculty members may be excessively kind and paternalistic or maternalistic in trying to be helpful and hold women to a lower standard.

Men may tell a group that they are refraining from telling certain jokes or using certain words because there are "ladies" present.

(True courtesy and respect do not patronize, trivialize, or depersonalize another person's abilities and talents, nor do they disappear when a woman acts in a way that deviates from gender stereotypes.)

Singling Women Out

Singling out women and other groups such as people of color. "What do you women think about this?"

Men are more likely to touch women than other men. If touch is being used to reassure or indicate friendliness, males are being excluded. Touch is often associated with power; frequently the message transmitted by a touch conveys a "power play."

Defining Women by their Sexuality

Relating to women in a sexual manner—sexual comments about or toward specific women or women in general, such as discussing appearance or physical attributes or using sexual humor.

Valuing and praising women for their intellectual appearance, not for their intellectual ability.

Devaluing or ignoring comments made by women perceived as "unfeminine" or believed to be lesbian or bisexual.

Using the words "lesbian" and "bisexual" as pejorative terms, especially when women raise women's issues.

Engaging in sexually harassing behaviors or allowing others to do so.

Overtly Hostile Behavior Towards Women

Ridiculing or making denigrating remarks about women's issues, or making light of issues such as sexual harassment and sexual assault.

Discouraging women from conducting research on women's issues.

Calling women names if they are interested in women's issues or protest sexism.

Making sexist remarks about women in general or about specific women.

Using humor in a hostile manner.

Engaging in negative body language or behavior (for example, men rolling their eyeballs) when women speak.

Hissing or ridiculing women who raise women's issues.

Denigrating or ridiculing women or engaging in other rude behaviors that express hostility to women.

Telling sexist or sexual jokes that denigrate women.

Not taking women's comments or their work seriously.

MALE AND FEMALE BEHAVIORS

Generalizations

Men are generally more concerned with autonomy and often relate to each other through competition and power. Women are more likely to be concerned about connecting to other people and relationships, and more likely to interact by cooperating and synthesizing. (Autonomy and intimacy needs—everyone has both, but in

most people one or the other predominates in their behavior.)

Interruptions—men may interrupt to control and show dominance and change the topic or trivialize it. Women may often interrupt as a way of continuing the flow of conversation as in, "So what you're saying is. . ."

Women more likely to raise their hands before asking a question; men are more likely to call out.

Men are more likely to answer a question quickly, sometimes before the question is finished, and to organize their responses as they are talking. Women are more likely to think before they participate; they organize their responses first, and then raise their hands to respond.

Men validate themselves by verbal sparring, "affirmation by opposition" (wrote Robby Henes); women are more likely to validate themselves by gaining consensus among the group, often inviting others' viewpoints rather than defending their own as the only correct answer.

Women may take others' comments more seriously. Praise (in part because it is rare) may have a strong impact; criticism may be viewed as more negative than intended.

Men and Women Talk Differently: The Differential Use of Speech and Language by Gender

Women generally use speech for developing and maintaining relationships.

Women are more likely to start conversations and keep them going, men are more likely to interrupt.

Women's speech is typically more tentative, polite, and deferential.

Women's speech is often hesitant.

Women's speech is generally more apologetic.

Women's voices are more likely to rise at the end of a sentence.

Women are more likely to answer questions and use them to obtain information. Women may also use questions as a way to make a point and to avoid making a definitive statement.

Men are more likely to listen to the first part of a statement and then almost immediately develop a response in preparation for competition in the conversation. They often do not respond to statements made by others but instead bring in extraneous topics that are important to themselves—topics that show them as experts, as smarter than others. Men are often more critical of others, while women are more likely to "add a thought."

Men are more likely to control the topic of conversations in mixed gender groups.

Women's verbal comments are often accompanied by nonverbal behaviors such as smiling or averting their eyes, especially when dealing with men or any person in authority.

Men speak more often than females in mixed gender interactions.

Women and men may respond differently to disagreement. Men are more likely to see it as positive, except when women engage in it. Men are more likely to view a competitive and controversial classroom as invigorating, energizing, and interesting; women may perceive the same classroom as negative, unappealing, and even distressing and inhospitable.

Men are more likely to use sports and military analogies.

Even when men and women speak in the same manner, they may be perceived differently. Women speaking assertively may be viewed as arrogant and bitchy.

The value of women's speech is that it encourages participation by

others, but this is often devalued.

Men and women alike respond to and may be more comfortable with behaviors that are consistent with their expectations as to how men and women are "supposed to behave." Gender-related speech often replicates these expectations.

Behavior of some males may directly discourage women's participation in meetings, particularly when men dominate and control discussion.

Devaluation

Devaluation is often used as a partial explanation or rationale for differential treatment.

Gender affects our view of someone's competence. What is viewed as male is usually seen as more important than that associated with women.

Perceptual bias is not uncommon. For instance, a woman's success, such as getting into a prestigious program, is said to result from "luck" or "affirmative action" while a man's similar success is attributed to talent.

Women's issues may be devalued, as well as women's ways of speaking.

Devaluation and Power

It is the power difference between men and women that gives value to or devalues whatever differences exist.

Stereotypes that reinforce differences are maintained precisely because they reinforce power and privilege. Behaviors which are valued such as competitive, status-seeking behavior, are behaviors that reinforce privilege.

Men may assert power and expect to be treated more favorably than females.

Distributed by the Ombuds Office, Spring, 2003