

# Inclusive events, work environments and building ally skills

Openness, Equity, Diversity  
and Inclusion in Academia  
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# Melanie Imming



## ■ BACKGROUND

Melanie Imming is a strategic consultant who loves to explain complex concepts using plain language and visuals. Melanie has years of experience managing large digital projects, and in helping organisations develop their stakeholder engagement strategy. She is a known advocate for Open Science practices.

Melanie develops event formats to get people to really interact and learn from each other. She tries to make those events as inclusive as possible.



# Esther Plomp



## ■ BACKGROUND

Esther is a researcher at the Research Center of the University of Aruba, and a member of several Open Science Communities (OLS, The Turing Way, Digital Research Academy)

I (no longer) have any disabilities: which means I have a lot more energy/time left to do all the things I want to do. This allows me to contribute and build a 'better' CV.

By increasing awareness of this I hope to live in a less ableist world at some point.



# Agenda

- Intro Ally Skills
- Group discussion 1

## Break

- Group discussion 2
- How to take action for inclusive events/work environments

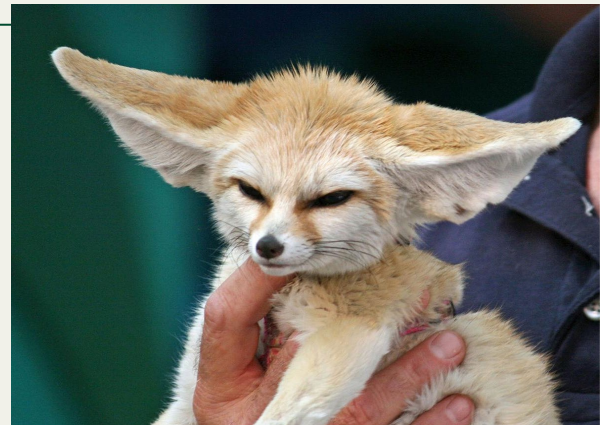
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# Ally Skills

**Ally:** a member of a social group that enjoys some privilege that is working to end oppression and understand their own privilege

Actions!

**Privilege:** an unearned advantage given by society to some people but not all



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**Oppression:** systemic, pervasive inequality that is present throughout society, that benefits people with more privilege and harms those with fewer privileges

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# Skills

Acting as an ally is about action - it is not an identity, which is why we talk about "ally skills" instead of "allies"

Depending on what is most relevant about you to the situation, you may switch between being marginalized or acting as an ally



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# Exercise: Identify your power and privilege

- Privilege is often invisible to people who have it
- Identifying your power and privilege helps you consider ways you can act.
- If people assume you have a privilege that you do not, you can make your own decision about whether to include it
- You don't have to share your answers

**Power:** The ability to control circumstances or access to resources and/or privileges

**Privilege:** an unearned advantage that society gives to some people

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# Basic Ally skills

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- Be short, simple, firm
- Don't try to be funny
- Play for the audience
- Practice simple responses
- Pick your battles
- Treat ally actions as bare minimum expectation



# What to do when I make a mistake?

## Apologize, correct yourself, and move on.



# Scenarios & group discussion

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# In your groups

**Introduce yourselves** briefly:

- name
- gender pronouns (optional)
- position

Each group will choose a **moderator** to remind people who are dominating the discussion too much and invite others to share (Feel free to moderate the moderator!)

Choose **someone to take notes and report** what you discussed

We will switch roles in the second discussion!



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# Tips

- There aren't any trick questions
- If you're not sure of the situation, pick one (or more if time allows) interpretations and discuss it
- Focus on how someone could act as an ally in this scenario, not as a marginalized person
- "You" in the scenario description is a theoretical person who could act as an ally, not a literal "you"



At a meeting, a woman makes a suggestion, but no one picks up on it. Later on in the meeting, a man makes the same suggestion and is given credit for it.

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Scenario (15 min)



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# Effective work meetings

Good meetings have the following roles:

- Facilitator/Moderator
- Timekeeper
- Notetaker



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# Break

- 11:15 - 11:45
- 14:30 - 14:45

A colleague of yours says, "It's great to hire more people of color, but we should focus on their qualifications."

Before you can reply, another colleague says, "Oh yes, we'll be careful not to lower the bar."

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Scenario (10 min)





# Assumption-Reality-Reframe

- **Assumption:** everyone has an equal chance at receiving an award, being hired, regardless of race (unlikely to be true - incorrect facts)

**Reality:** People of color are expected to prove their qualifications; while other races may get a free pass (assumption ignores systemic oppression)

**Reframe:** "Actually, the problem is that people of color have to pass a higher bar, and we need to fix that."

even "objective" measures, such as degrees, awards, publications can encode bias!



# Higher bar

- ★ “Widely documented **bias, harassment, discrimination** and other exclusionary behaviours create especially hostile climates for BIPOC people in STEMM”
- ★ “The obstacles selectively slow down scholars from historically excluded groups, increasing the time and energy necessary to progress, and meaning that **they have to be that much better** than their peers to be viewed as performing ‘equally’”

[Asefaw Berbe et al. 2021](#) and resources therein



**Fig. 1 |** The hostile obstacle course that women and BIPOC researchers have to endure in STEMM. Illustration inspired (with permission) by Emanu's Equality hurdles<sup>18</sup>. Credit: Mvmet.

# Get to work...



## ■ Our input

Looking back on what we discussed earlier, and your experiences, we would like to ask you to answer the following questions on your worksheets:

- 1. Which ally strategies could work well to reach which situation?**
- 2. How can we make our work environments more inclusive?**



# Stickers!



## ■ Our input

Please go to the other tables, and use as many stickers as you wish to let all know which strategies or their goals you see as:

### 1. Your Blue Sky Wish

### 1. Easy to Grow/Feasible Idea

### 1. Your Preferred First Step



# Thank You!

Sign up for longer (online) Ally Skills workshops:

- [July 2](#)
- [October 1](#)

Or start smaller with the [privilege exercise!](#)



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# Resources

- ★ [Bias interruptor](#)
- ★ [Responses to 10 common criticisms of anti-racism action in STEMM](#)
- ★ [Ten simple rules for building an antiracist lab](#)
- ★ [Ten simple rules to host an inclusive conference](#)
- ★ [Ten simple rules for pushing boundaries of inclusion at academic events](#)
- ★ [How to incorporate open elements in your training](#)
- ★ [The Open Science Festival Guiding Principles to be as open and inclusive as possible](#)

