

Worksheet - Addressing Gender-Based Violence against Trans and Non-binary People in Universities and Academia (Online training)

Chisato Namatsu and Anne Laure Humbert, University of Gothenburg

Exercise 1: Problem Tree

Introduction

The goal of this exercise is to have a better understanding of the gender-based violence against trans and non-binary people in a university through the case story, considering not only the individual consequences of gender-based violence but also its root causes and structural and institutional aspects.

You will analyse gender-based violence against trans and non-binary people, using a metaphoric diagram, a Problem Tree. The trunk represents the main issue, gender-based violence against trans and non-binary people.

In this exercise, you will classify your analysis into the following parts using sticky notes on Miro board:

- Tree roots: Causes and deeper root causes leading to gender-based violence in the university. Some causes may be layered and interrelated.
- Branches: Effects or consequences that Sam experienced as a form of gender-based violence against trans and non-binary people.
- Air: External factors such as the social, economic, and political environment outside of the university.

Case story

Sam, a senior lecturer at a university faced significant challenges after transitioning while employed in the Faculty of Humanities. Once transition became visible, Sam began to experience increased hostility from both colleagues and students.

Despite clear communication about Sam's new name and pronouns, many colleagues and students continued to misgender and call Sam by the wrong name. This constant disregard for Sam's identity created a toxic and hostile work environment. Sam's gender was politicised, and several colleagues overtly expressed that they did not have to accept what Sam asked for if they did not want to in the name of freedom of thought and religion. Sam's attempts to correct this behaviour were often ignored, adding to stress and discomfort.

Professionally, Sam noticed a disturbing shift: being excluded from important department meetings and gradually pushed out of research projects and social activities. Once a well-respected member of the academic team, Sam now felt increasingly isolated, as these exclusions seemed directly tied to transition.

The students also reflected this exclusionary attitude. Some students made derogatory comments during lectures, while others refused to participate or walked out of classes. Despite reporting these incidents to the administration, no meaningful action was taken.

Exercise 2: Calling out and calling in

This exercise aims to learn the effective strategy to dealing with resistance and misconceptions and develop practical skills through role-playing in a university setting.

Characters

Sam: A teacher who gives a lecture about gender equality and diversity. Respond to a comment by Alex during the lecture, using either strategy of calling out or calling in.

Alex: A student who makes a harmful comment during the class.

Other student(s): Other students in the classroom. Sam can choose whether to involve other students in the conversation with Alex as a strategy.

Observer(s): Those who do not act any roles observe the interaction, Instead, they observe the effectiveness and limitations of the approaches during roll-playing.

Background

Sam gives an introductory lecture about gender equality at university. The levels of students' prior knowledge about gender issues are different. This course continues with the same students for the next few months.

Incident

Sam is talking about the equality from the perspective of diverse gender and sexual orientation, and starts to explain trans people's rights. In the middle of the lecture, Alex, a student who is interested in women's rights, asks a question. Other participants listen to Alex's opinion quietly, and some of them appear to be convinced by it.

Step 1

Following the scenario above, choose a misunderstanding comment about trans and non-binary people from the 2021 report '[Trans Rights are Human Rights: Dismantling misconceptions about gender, gender identity, and the human rights of trans people](#)' by GATE, ILGA-Europe, and TGEU.

Decide on 'calling out' or 'calling in' as your main approach and discuss how the teacher can respond to it, considering the facts and data in the report to refute the misconception.

Step 2

Write a short script of a conversation between Sam and Alex, and possibly involving other students as well, which will be rehearsed in step 3.

You can refer to the table below to consider how to deal with the comments in the respective approaches of calling out and calling in while those two approaches are not mutually exclusive strategies. Note that holding the person accountable of their comments is important, but what needs to prioritise the most is the people who may be harmed by the behaviour.

Calling out	Calling in
Wow. Nope. Ouch. I need to stop you right there.	I'm curious. What was your intention when you said that?
I need to push back against that. I disagree. I don't see it that way.	How might someone else see this differently? Is it possible that someone might misinterpret your words/actions?
I wonder if you've considered the impact of your words.	What sort of impact do you think your (decision, action, comment) might have?
That's not our culture here. Those aren't our values.	How do you know it is/isn't working?
It sounds like you're making some assumptions.	What do you assume to be true about ____?
It sounded like you just said _____. Is that really what you meant?	How is ____ different from ____? What is the connection between ____ and ____?
You may or may not realize this, but you're talking about me/my story/my identity markers.	What would other stakeholders say, think, or feel?
I need to leave the room if the conversation is going to continue down this road.	What factors do you think led to this outcome? What challenges might be present that you may not be considering?

Interrupting Bias: Calling Out vs. Calling In, Dr. Rebecca Eunmi Haslam, Seed the Way LLC

Step 3

Assign the characters to the members of the group.

Rehearse how Sam would respond to Alex's comment based the script you made in step 2. Those who do not act should observe other members performing.

Step 4

Reflect the role-playing performance, and discuss the benefits, limitations and risks of the strategy you employed.

Further questions:

If you have extra time, discuss the following points as well.

- What factors can influence on your strategy and the choice of approach?
- After this communication in the lecture, what kind of follow-up can Sam do for Alex and the whole class?
- How do you imagine calling out and calling in is applicable in your real-life environment?

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