

What Works for Women at Work

with Joan C. Williams, Professor of Law, University of California Hastings College of Law

1. REFLECT *(First 10 minutes)*

Each person write about your experience.
Pick one pattern of bias experienced by women at work that resonates with you. List the ways in which you have encountered that kind of bias.

What strategies could help you overcome this bias?

Key Take-Aways

PATTERNS OF GENDER BIAS

Prove It Again: Needing to prove yourself repeatedly

The Tightrope: Walking the line between being liked but not respected or respected but not liked

Maternal Wall: Feeling your competence and commitment questioned once you become a mother

Tug of War: Tension among women based on different styles of navigating bias in the workplace

STRATEGIES FOR OVERCOMING BIAS

Form a Posse: Team up with people to publicly celebrate successes

Gender Judo: Use a mix of “masculine” and “feminine” traits to be assertive and approachable as needed

Strategic “No”: Say “Yes” to one or two pieces of office housework, then say “No” and provide alternatives for the rest

Ask for Help: Bring others on board to share office housework

Be Explicit: Counter assumptions about mothers by being explicit about your career goals and choices

Make an Enemy into an Ally: If someone is undercutting you, call it out, find common ground and propose mutual support



2. SHARE *(For the next 10 minutes)*

Now pair up. Share with your partner your experience with one of these patterns of bias. What strategies could you use to navigate this bias? How would using this strategy affect your work performance—and how you feel about your work?

After 5 minutes, switch and let your partner share. Stick to the allotted time so everyone gets a turn.

3. DISCUSS *(For the next 15 minutes)*

Choose one person in the group who would like to hear additional strategies to overcome a bias she is experiencing. Have her share her experience, then have group members share (1) Experiences with this same pattern of bias, (2) Strategies they have used to overcome the bias

For this discussion, share experiences, do not to give advice. If time allows, another woman can share a different pattern of bias where she currently faces a challenge and seeks additional strategies to overcome the bias.

4. ACTION *(For the final 10 minutes)*

Pick One Action you will do after the meeting. Imagine who, what, where, and when it will happen. Each person share the One Action with the group. Plan to report back at the next meeting.

One Action: