



Are You a Mentor, Supervisor, or Manager for Women?

Gender bias is widespread and has a major effect on women's careers. You can combat gender bias with effective mentoring.

Leaders at ESF want to overcome gender biases to ensure women's careers are supported and valued. Please do your part to support women in your role as a mentor.

Office of Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity
Endorsed by the SUNY ESF Provost's Office

Have you?

Introduced your junior colleague to your professional network

Women have less extensive networks and you can help form valuable connections.

Encouraged a junior colleague to take worthwhile career risks

Men apply for jobs when meeting 60% of criteria, but women don't apply unless they meet 100% of criteria, and this 'cautious' approach is sometimes reinforced by mentors. Support your mentee in taking a chance for an exciting opportunity.

Suggested a junior colleague as a candidate for an opportunity

Visible and active support from senior leaders results in pay raises, high-profile assignments, and promotions. Vocal supporters arise informally more often for men, but making a conscious effort to advocate on behalf of women for honors, committees, or professional opportunities can help even the playing field.

Spoken up on behalf of a junior colleague

Fictitious managers with female names are rated as less likeable, more hostile, less competent, and less desirable as bosses. Students rate the same online instructors more harshly when given female names. So, consider complaints with a grain of salt, and defend your mentee to dispel negative comments quickly. If a man is praised, you can highlight a woman's achievements to give equal air-time.

Implemented and advertised objective and clear criteria

For reviewers to equally rate male and female postdoctoral candidates, women need 3 more Nature/Science articles or 20 more specialist articles. If merit-based 'perks' are offered, be sure they are objective. Could salary supplements be earned via standard criteria instead of negotiation?

Checked your letters of recommendation for biased language

Letters for men more likely use 'brilliant, creative, outstanding' and letters for women 'careful, conscientious, reliable.' Which can be "doubt-raisers". Try switching the pronouns in a letter to confirm that nothing sounds odd.

Treated women as professional colleagues

Women should be evaluated as professionals at work, so it is best to avoid comparing colleagues to wives/ mothers/daughters or celebrities, commenting extensively on physical appearance, referring to colleagues as 'girls', or using language that might downplay the equality of an individual's work.

If you see something, say something. Speak up on behalf of women. You set the tone - make a difference!