

# **Her Seat at the Table: Women and Self -Advocacy**

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**Columbia Law School Mediation Clinic**

# Welcome and Introductions

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# Goals for this Workshop

- Understand the importance of including women in negotiation processes
- Recognize barriers that currently prevent women from fully participating in negotiations
- Commit to increasing women's participation in negotiation

Icebreaker

# Icebreaker

**What does meaningful inclusion of women in negotiation processes look like?**

# Representation v. Meaningful Inclusion

It's not just about numbers —it's about meaningful inclusion.

## Case Study: Syrian Women at the Table

**2016:** Staffan de Mistura appoints an advisory board of 12 women leaders to participate as **third -party observers** in Geneva peace talks.

- Numbers showed 15% of Syrian women were at negotiation tables

**2017:** Mariam Jalabi and other women start the Syrian Women's Political Movement.

Why Should We Include  
Women in Negotiations?

# Economic Theory of Inclusion

- **The Economic Argument:** include women in negotiations because negotiations that involve women are more likely to result in better and longer -lasting agreements.





# Economic Theory of Inclusion

- One study showed that when women's groups were able to strongly influence a peace negotiation, the parties almost always reached an agreement.
- When women are included in the negotiation process there is a:
  - 20% increase in the probability that a peace agreement will last 2 years,
  - 35% increase in the probability that a peace agreement will last 15 years.

# Economic Theory of Inclusion

## Benefits

- Serves as a strong incentive for including women
- Encourages those in power to see value in women's contributions and perspectives

## Costs

- Reinforces stereotypes/does not address biases
- Values women for “beneficial” characteristics and not for their intrinsic worth
- Creates more pressure to perform than for men in the same position

# Social Theory of Inclusion

- **The Social Model:** include women in negotiations because gender inclusivity is an important goal in and of itself.



# Social Theory of Inclusion

## Benefits

- Recognizes that women are intrinsically valuable
- Sends a clear message to the broader community that women are valued
- Empowers women to fully participate in negotiation processes

## Costs

- Not as effective at incentivizing gender inclusivity

# Including Women and the UN

Including women in negotiations and other peacemaking processes is critical to many of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

**Goal 5:** Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.



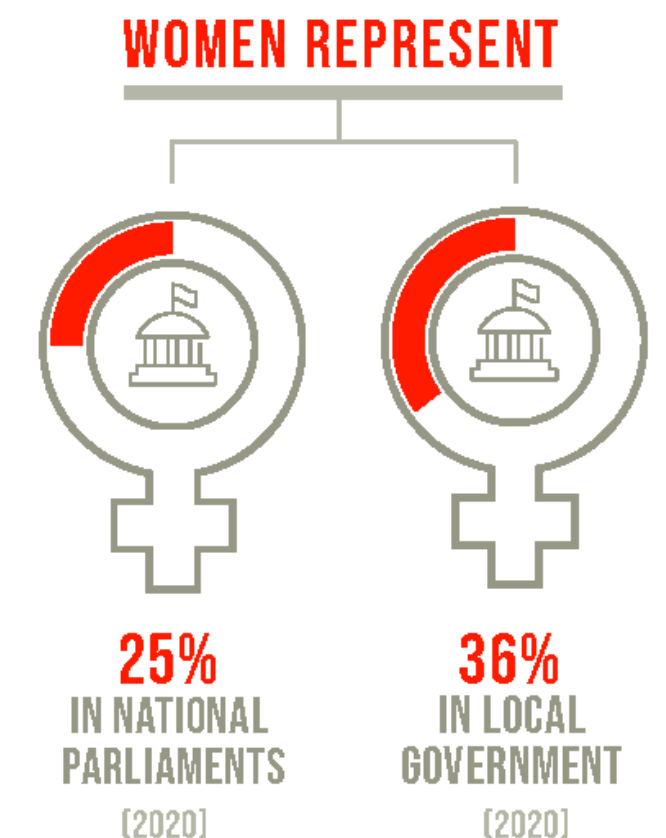
# Sustainable Development Goals

## Targets

- 5.1—End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.
- 5.5—Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision -making in political, economic and public life.
- 5.C—Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.

# Facts and Figures

- ❖ Out of six active UN -led or co -led processes, women were included in 14 out of 19 delegations.
- ❖ Between 1992 and 2018, in major peace processes women constituted:
  - 13% of negotiators
  - 3% of mediators
  - 4% of signatories



# Still more to be done!

- Women make up only 25% of U.N.'s highest positions
- Continuous appeals for the U.N. to (1) spotlight the candidacies of women and (2) increase transparency in the candidate selection process, i.e.
  - “The Campaign to Elect a Woman Secretary General”
  - “1 for 7 billion: Find the Best U.N. Leader”



# Barriers to Full Participation

# Barriers to the Table

- **Conceptual Barriers**

- For example, historical perspectives of war and peace as male dominated

- **Structural Barriers**

- Women are excluded at lower levels, which prevents them from advancing to higher levels

- **Practical Barriers**

- Lack of childcare facilities for women who are primary caregivers

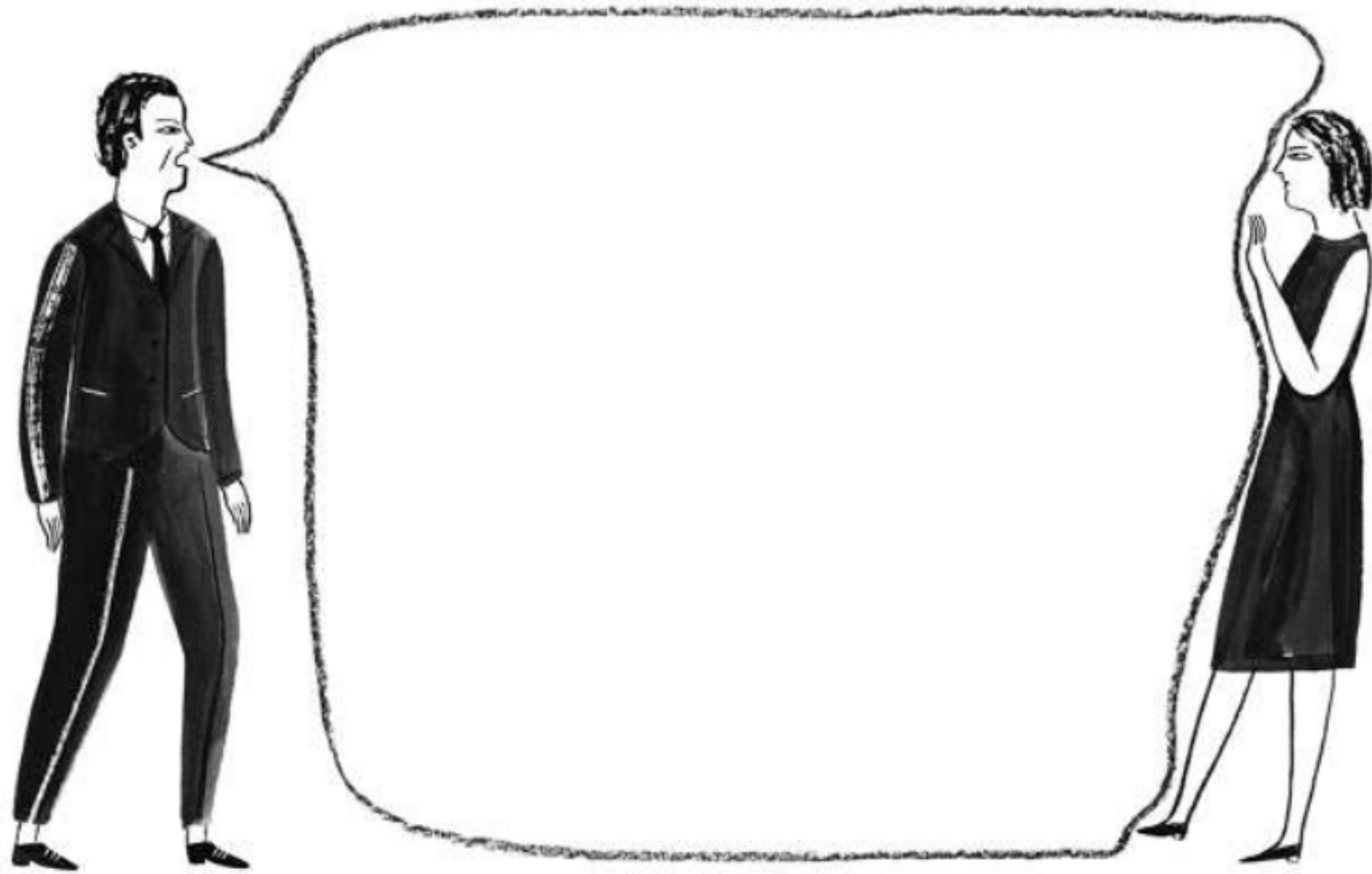
# Barrier at the Table: Speaking Up

- Women who speak up are not perceived as favorably as men who do the same.
- In one study, male executives who spoke more often were perceived as more competent. When female executives spoke more than their peers, they were perceived as less competent
- Women are also interrupted much more frequently than men.

# Communication Styles and Language

- The “double -bind” of speaking up and linguistic style
- The way men and women speak in workplace settings
  - Women downplay their own authority
  - Women may use “we” rather than “I” when referring to work they’ve done
  - Women often presume they cannot speak up without knowing every detail.
  - Women speak in ways that “save the face” of others

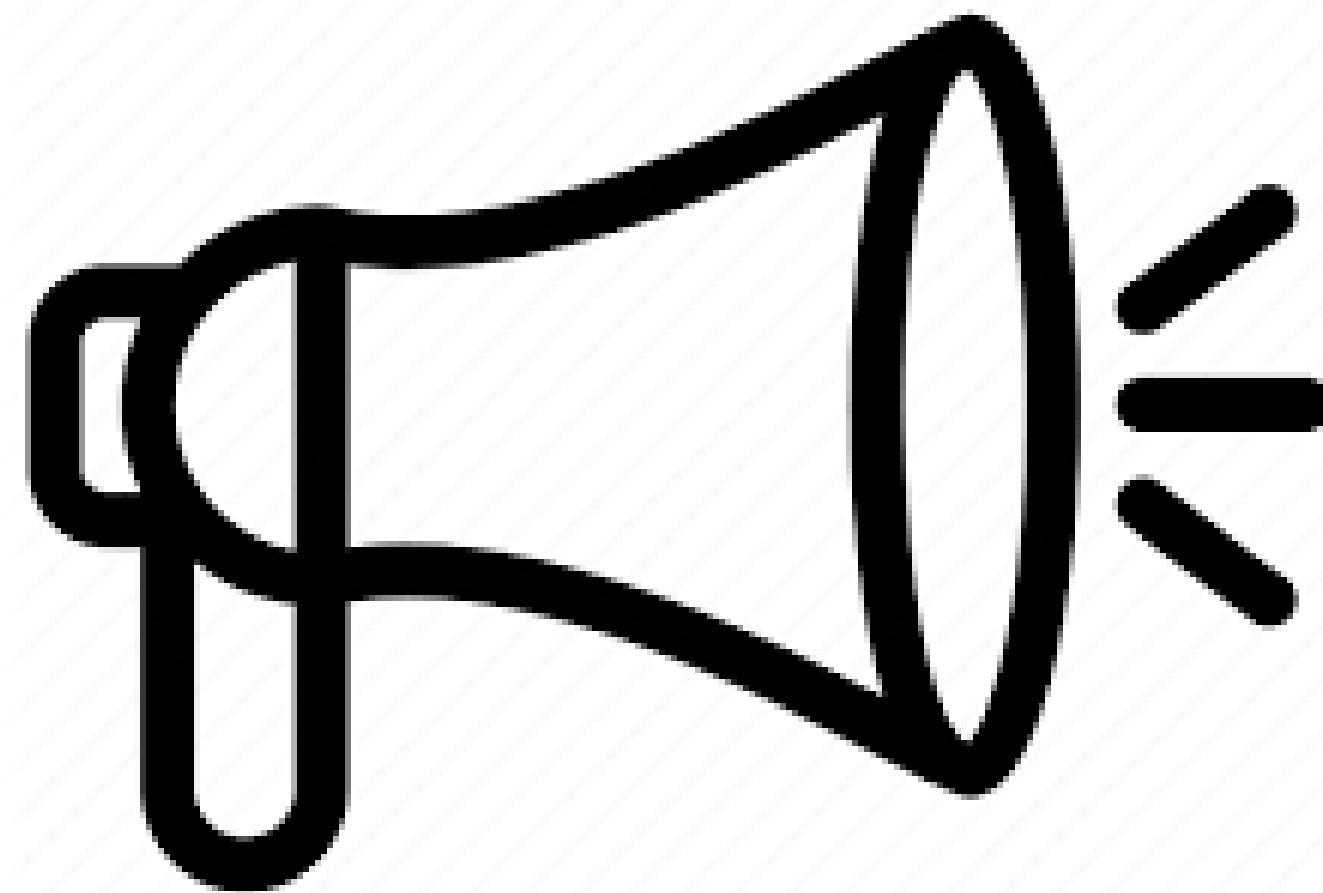
**What do you think are some concrete actions that you can take to overcome these barriers?**



# Strategies for Gender Equality

- Amplification
- Separating Intent and Impact
- Mirror and Window Questions
- Allyship

**Amplification**



# Amplification

## Case Study: Obama White House

- When President Obama first took office,  $\frac{2}{3}$  of his senior staffers were men
- Female staffers adopted a meeting strategy they called “ **amplification** ”:
  - When a woman made a key point, other women repeated it, giving her credit
  - This forced the men to recognize the contribution and denied them the chance to claim the contribution as their own



# Amplification

## Case Study: Obama White House

- “We just started doing it, and made a purpose of doing it. It was an everyday thing.” - Obama Aide
- As a result:
  - President Obama began calling more often on women and junior aides to voice their opinions
  - Women gained parity with men in the President’s inner circle during his second term
  - There was an even gender split among top aides

Shine Theory: “ I don’t shine if you don’t shine ”

- Amplifying unleashes the influence of others

**Amplification**

*Speak her name*

*Give her credit*

# Separating Intent and Impact

- “What we mean” vs. “how the message is received”
  - Our intentions don’t always align with what we say or do, and this can impact how others receive what we say or do
- Understanding intent and impact is the cornerstone to initiating/sustaining successful and meaningful conversations
  - You can be aware of your intentions and the other person’s impact on you BUT you can never be aware of the other person’s intent or your impact on them.

# Facts

v.

# Feelings

What is the difference between a fact and a feeling?

- ❖ Facts are proven with research and evidence.
- ❖ Feelings are beliefs, judgments, and opinions.

Facts are based on objective, unbiased information, not feelings or personal interpretations.

- ❖ Objective information is an observation of measurable facts.
- ❖ Subjective information mixes facts with feelings, which leads to biased information.

# Listener's Biggest Mistake: Assigning Intent

- You only have an idea of the other person's intent in most conversations. But it is only an assumption. It is not a fact.
- The most common mistake we make as listeners comes from confusing the speaker's intent with the impact we feel.
- Someone can offend me (impact) but it doesn't mean they are being offensive (intent).

# Asking the Right Questions

# What is the purpose of asking questions?



# Goals of Questioning

- Clarifying
- Suggesting
- Stimulating
- Encouraging participation
- Focusing
- Exploring and evaluating alternatives
- Gather Information
- Moving toward closure



# Mirror and Window Questions

- **Mirror:** Questions to ask yourself to structure and clarify thought process
- **Window:** Questions to ask the other party to build trust and gather information



# What is a Mirror Question?

Mirror questions are about reflection. Steer your internal conversation.

*What's brought me here?*

*What do I need?*

*How have I handled this successfully in the past?*

# What is a Window Question?

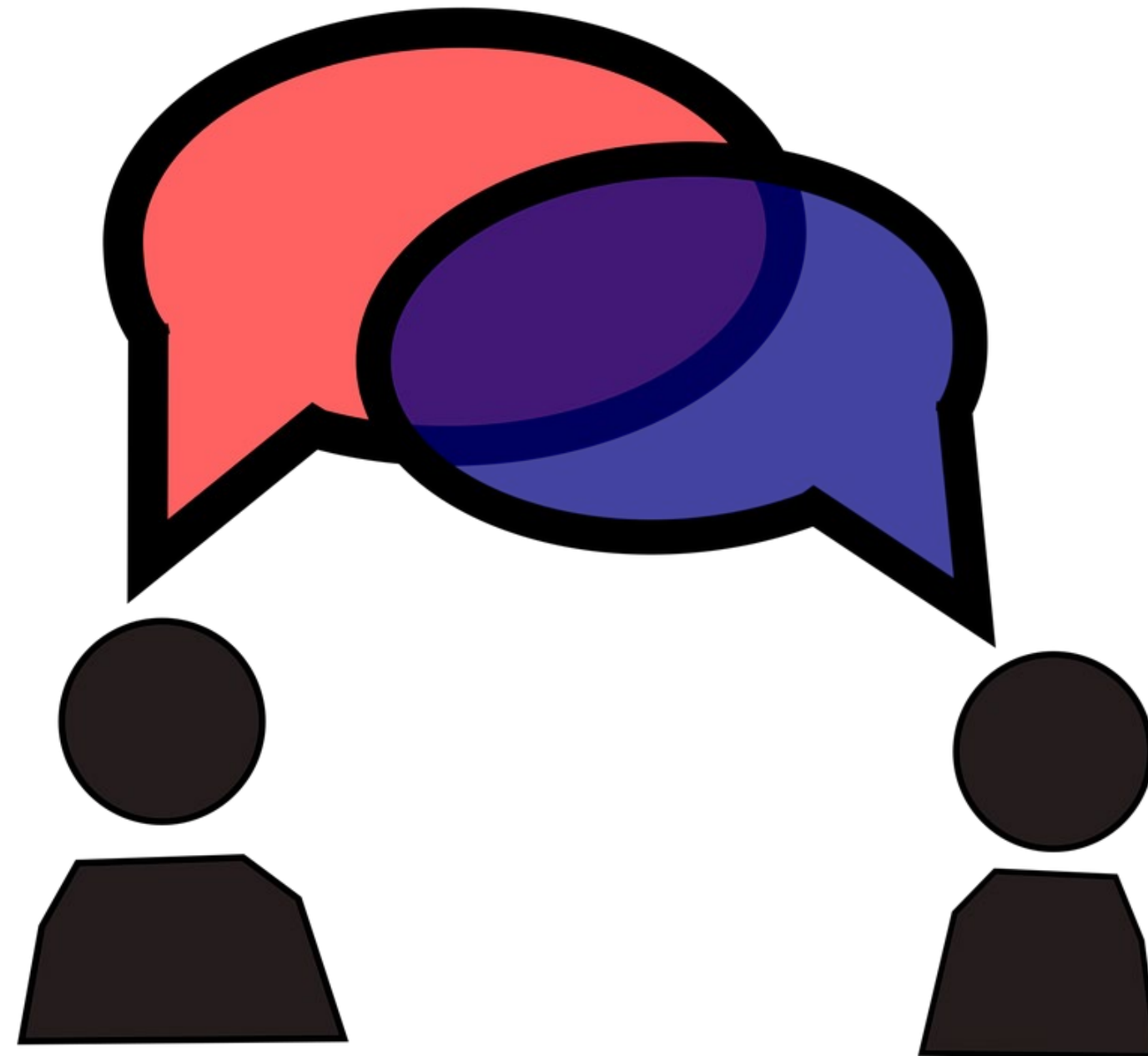
Window questions are about asking open questions.  
Build trust and gather valuable information.

*Tell me more about...*

*What does that look like?*

*What's concerning you?*

When might we want to use mirror v. window questions?

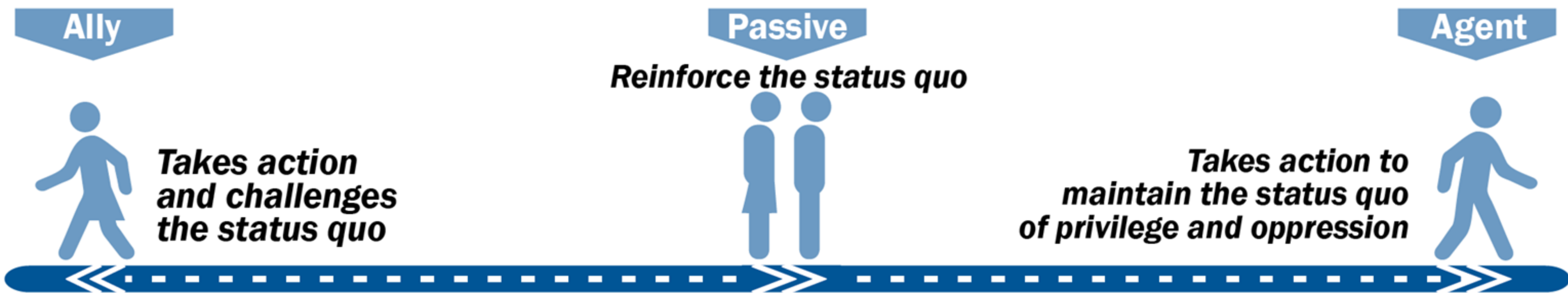


Allyship

# Definitions

- Allyship is understanding the **imbalance** in power and opportunity and **actively** working to correct it.
- An ally is a member of a dominant group that recognizes an imbalance of power and actively challenges the status quo.
- We can **all** be allies.

# Ally -Agent Continuum



# Allyship Makes a Difference

- When women have the support of male allies in the workplace, organizations are over three times as likely to foster a diverse environment

Matt Krentz et al., Five Ways Men Can Improve Gender Diversity at Work, BCG (2017), <https://www.bcg.com/en-us/publications/2017/people-organization-behavior-culture-five-ways-men-improve-gender-diversity-work>.

- In male -dominated spaces, mentorship can be a key vehicle for career advancement

Aarti Ramaswami et al., *Gender, Mentoring, and Career Success: The Importance of Organizational Context*, 63 PERS. PSYCH. 385, 400 (2010).



# Reflection

What is one change you are excited to implement going forward after our discussion today?



QUESTIONS?

# STAY IN TOUCH!



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*Unleash Inf*