The ISS Mary Anne Haas - Women's Symposium presents

“When Her Shackles Are Different Than My Own…”

Exploring the Power and Necessity of Intersectionality in Women's Liberation and Leadership

Facilitated by Alysa Perreras
"When her Shackles are Different Than my Own..."

Session 2

ISS Women’s Symposium 2021
Excited to continue learning together...

Community Objective:

- We will identify and engage in dialogue about the factors that inhibit authentic intersectional praxis, both on a systemic and personal level
- We will explore vulnerability as a tool of authentic leadership
Access the participant guiding document
Collaborative Reflection - 8min

Recapping last session!
What is Intersectionality and WHY does it matter? - 8 min

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario 1</th>
<th>Scenario 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A group of HS teachers begin a campaign in their school community to address social media pressure, specifically the standards of beauty, placed on young women.</td>
<td>Recognizing the increased toll that the pandemic has taken on teacher mental health, the leadership body compiles a list of self care tips for staff.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Guiding Questions:**
- What are some of the harmful outcomes that could result from ignoring intersectionality in this scenario?
- Discuss the value of applying an intersectional informed lens to the scenario by dialoguing about what it LOOKS LIKE in practice?
From Understanding to Action

Understanding Intersectionality

Myth and Hard Truths of Intersectionality

Failing to act with an intersectional lens

Presentation created by Alysa Ferreras
Myth #1: “Stuck in hierarchies of Victimhood” or...

“Intersectionality Stalls Progress”
What this myth fails to understand...

- Intersectionality does not prescribe any single truth or reality
- Acknowledging complexity and criticality means making decisions rooted in authentic change and sustainability (not just slowing down...)

"Intersectionality is not a belief system, or a prescribed set of behaviours, or a political position. It's not a thing your organisation needs to do, per se. Instead, it's a framework, a scheme or system to understand the complexities of discrimination."

(Leon, 2020)
Myth # 2: “Freedom as Pie”
What this myth fails to understand...

- Freedom can be an expansive and infinite reality; oppressive SYSTEMS have stolen our imagination
- Until all of us are free, we will always be stuck in cycles of ‘managing’ power and oppression versus true liberation

“Trans women, particularly Black and Indigenous trans women, are directly targeted by multiple systems of oppression that compound to create a culture of violence...when these women are free it would mean that everyone else would have to be free since our freedom would necessitate the destruction of all the systems of oppression.”

(HRC, 2020)
Hard Truth:
We all likely have some level of deeply programmed and internalized superiority.
Superiority: a complex multi-generational socialization process that teaches people to believe, accept and or live superior societal definitions of self
Leading from an intersectional framework means...

We willingly wrestling with...

- The hierarchies in our mind
  - Our superiority beliefs about our own entitlement, intellect, normativity, meritocracy
- Resentments around other people living in their truth (remember, freedom isn't pie!)
Collaborative Reflection - 10 min

- What is resonating with you? What is new? What is difficult? Why?
So now what?
Shame
● “I am a mistake”
● “I am a horrible person”
● “I doesn’t matter what I do now”

Guilt
“I made a mistake”
“I caused harm”
“There is a way for me to take responsibility for my harm”
Guilt alone is NOT productive. It is a better entry point than shame--but alone, it is performative.
It Won’t Always Be Straight Forward

We WILL make MISTAKES
Vulnerability in Reckoning w/ Mistakes and Navigating Guilt
Vulnerability and Accountability

Vulnerability....

- "Is uncertain and emotional exposure"
- Is acknowledging our mistakes and the harm we caused
- Is committing to doing better, knowing we may still mess up again

Vulnerability IS NOT...

- Victimizing ourselves through shame and/or guilt
- Separate from accountability or continued growth
  - Vulnerability w/o changed behavior become performative and gaslighting behavior
Vulnerability in Practice- 12 min

- Reflect on a time we failed to include intersectionality in our leadership practice.
  - Who was harmed?
  - Who benefited? What myth or hard truth was driving that choice?
Our commitment to liberation work will always be on a spectrum; be vigilant and willing to redirect.
Coming up...

• Building our intersectionality toolkit
POLL Question

What will you learn best from in our last session together?


Thank you!

Stay updated and connected at ISS.edu/WomenLead

@ISSCommunity • #ISSedu • #Wlead • Facebook.com/groups/ISSWomenLead