

April 18, 2012

NHWI

Gender Ambassadors Panel (GAP):  
Contemporary Gender Equality Listening Report Session  
For Nashua, NH

Senior Housing in Exeter, NH  
Authors | admin

## **About the New Hampshire's Women's Initiative (NHWI):**

The New Hampshire Women's Initiative (NHWI) is a new non-profit organization dedicated to continuing the legacy of success of our merging partners: the Commission on the Status of Women, the Women's Lobby and Alliance, and the Women's Policy Institute. The NHWI mission is to advance social, economic, and political opportunity and equality for women in New Hampshire.

The NHWI has a unique governance structure. Its board is supported by both a Founding Mothers' Panel, comprised of the founders of the merging partners, and a Gender Ambassadors Panel, a group of young women leaders who are interested in better understanding and re-framing the dialogue around gender equality issues in New Hampshire. This multi-generational sphere of influence will help the NHWI leverage both the rich history and accomplishment surrounding women's issues in New Hampshire and at the same time craft a new path forward for gender equality born out of contemporary thinking and needs.

## **About the Gender Ambassadors Panel (GAP):**

The goal of the Gender Ambassadors Panel (GAP) is to support the mission of the NHWI by informing its research, outreach, and advocacy with a better understanding of the gender equality issues that younger women and men identify as important to them. GAP members will work toward that goal by hosting Contemporary Gender Equality Listening Sessions in various geographic locations around the State. The Listening Sessions will be facilitated focus groups consisting of six to ten participants engaged in a formal discussion for up to ninety minutes using pre-determined questions. Results will be documented and shared with the NHWI Board. The Listening Session participants will come primarily from the existing networks of GAP members and are expected to be primarily women, however the method can be adapted to reach other networks and populations, including men.

## **About the Network Facilitators:**

The first round of listening session hosted by GAP members took place in the fall of 2011. The listening sessions generated so much interest that participants, board members, and other colleagues wanted to be a part of the process and host their own sessions! The NHWI Board and GAP members enthusiastically support this extension of the listening sessions to others in our community. Network Facilitators use the same facilitation packet, including the note takers table, and draft a report based on the content of their session.

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## Introduction and Background

### Methods:

Gaining insight into a community with the use of focus groups is a commonly used approach to qualitative research. Qualitative research is a systematic approach to understanding human thoughts, behaviors and motivations through thoughtful survey design, observation, and inquiry.

The GAP Listening Sessions are designed like focus groups where a facilitator and note-taker work together to gain insight into participant's thoughts and feelings about contemporary gender equality issues facing young women and men in NH.

Prior to conducting the listening sessions, each facilitator and note-taker is provided a facilitation packet that details instructions for conducting an effective focus group. This includes instructions for the specific roles of the facilitator and note-taker, the length of the session, and how to draft the report after the listening session.

### Location

The listening session was held in Nashua, NH.

### Participant Background

Ages 43 to 61, all white.

### Listening Session Format

The listening session followed a traditional focus group format, which included a two to three minute allotment per question, per person. Each session was designed to last two hours including introductions, participant feedback, a participant exercise, and concluding remarks.

The Listening Session was conducted using an agenda and script provided in the facilitation packet (Appendix A: Listening Session Script). The participants introduced themselves by first name, occupation, age, and town of residence.

### Summary of Findings:

The Summary of Findings is organized by each question asked at the listening session. Synthesis of material will occur at a later date when all of the listening sessions have been conducted. Please note that participants are identified only by a number to protect their privacy.

#### 1. What brought you here today?

Participant	Comment	Note-taker observation
1	Because I was asked to come	
3	Had not been to meeting NHWI in a long time and missed it. Read up on the initiative – became interested and issues ... gar...	
2	Always called a tom boy. In mall ... her entire life. Navy. Only female sexual harassment issues. Boston ... the same. Company had rules but did not back them up. Rules are a façade where she goes (still is tested ...)	
4	Two instances in growing up. Motorcycle shop. Direct inequality. Physical harassment and bias → men. Never got respect she does now because she wants the check.	
5	Gender gap is warped. Men can't multi-task like women can. Gender gap/inequality gap in ... No one should be okay with that inequality. So	

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	it's better for the next generation of girls.	
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2. How do you define gender equality?

Participant	Comment	Note-taker observation
5	Why don't we have gender equality? Same job should be the same. Not about physical but about ability. ... 80 numbers each. Women are too smart to be that stupid. Commission status of women. Working smarter not harder. Women are more practical. Head vs. Back.	
2	Skirts vs. pants. Abuse in office ... in construction stand up for themselves.	
3	Finances. Momentary. Unequal to men in her office for the same job. Inequity.	
1	Her husbands are ... Owns company no matter what sex. Pay scale is the same.	
2	Unitil – Not the same.	
2	Treatment and pay scale defines gender equality.	
5	Attitude of the good old boy network.	
4	Male ego. Ask/suggest and don't tell perception of her as 'show' vs. 'go.' She loves it for those that want to truly work. Stereotype. Cultural changes slowly.	
6	Surrounded herself with strong women. Learned how not to treat people. Does not like strong women. No such thing as	

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	gender inequality as long as you choose. It is our choice. Stand up for it! Don't let them have the upper hand.	
2	Inequality settles for less due to economic necessity.	
6	Finance. Economics. Stereotype. Choice. Recognition. 'Make your ... a ...' Girls always took care of driving.	
4	Family farm. Religion. Catholic church. < Cultural generations.	
6	Gender built into U.S.	
1	Paths we've chosen to be with.	

3. How have you, in NH, experienced gender equality or inequality? Outside of professional setting? What's happening that's important?

Participant	Comment	Note-taker observation
6	NH [redacted].....association. No females on their board and never have.	
2	... No woman in operations department management or higher.	
4	Better in construction	
5	Conscious efforts to do better	
3	Technical field. Most are men in top positions.	
6	Does not anticipate discrimination. Not so much the old boy network in NH as MA. How you carry yourself determines equality vs. inequality.	
5	#6, she is unique. Attractive but tough background. Confident.	
6	Being who you are. Don't flaunt it; use it. Knowing the difference.	

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	Again back to confidence.	
2	Disregarded taken seriously in Home Depot. Credibility. Women don't. Patronizing. Disregard for profession expertise.	
3	Talked down to at work	
5	Claremont, NH high school. Picnic table build. Girls in AM.  Preconceived notions even though they're more ... I should be the nurse not the ...  Women across the board are better ... girls. Nurses run the show. Male does deferring to female nurses.	Cultural bias
6	Portsmouth Shipyard. Federal grade level strictly based on ability not gender. 18/25 years. Two women there grade ..., but have to work twice as hard. Positions more to more 'feminine rules.' Trying to increase number of women in Shipyard.	

4. Post-It Exercise!

Participant	Comment	Note-taker observation
6	Back to choice  Welder vs. Administrator  Encouraged not to move up  Culture of Shipyard  Treated well	



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2	Diversity  ... of equality  Level of playing field  Lots of buts, very few women	
5	Is it only a façade?  Get ... contacts  Disadvantaged ... and women	
All	DBE / WB Enterprise in NH	
1	Bid on jobs	
6	Solicit based on women  Affirmative Action - ...	
2	DBE  Feds. ... disadvantage when in NH	

**Closing remarks from participants:**

None.

**Limitations:**

**Facilitator and Note-taker observations and concluding thoughts:**

**Appendix A: Listening Session Script**

**I. Welcome and Introductions (\*slightly shortened for this listening session)**

- Thank participants for coming
- Distribute participant information sheets (and agendas if using)
- Introduce facilitator and note taker
- Overview of New Hampshire Women's Initiative

- The New Hampshire Women's Initiative is a new non-profit organization
- A unification of:
  - The Commission on the Status of Women
  - The Women's Lobby and Alliance
  - The Women's Policy Institute
- ***NHWI Mission: To advance social, economic and political opportunity and equality for women in New Hampshire.***
- Has a Board of Directors and two advisory panels
  - Founding Mothers
  - Gender Ambassadors Panel
- Objective of Listening Sessions & GAP
  - Gender Ambassadors Panel will support the mission of the NHWI through researching and better understanding the gender equality issues that younger women and men identify as important to them.
  - Members of GAP will host a series of Contemporary Gender Equality Listening Sessions in various geographic locations around the State.
- Introduction of participants: *First name, age, town, occupation*

## II. Overview of the Process

- Description of plan for Listening Session by facilitator
- How discussion will be documented during the Session
- How a report will be prepared after the Session
- Assurance of confidentiality (inform participants that any report will only identify participants by age, zip code, and industry/occupation)

### I. Establishment of Ground Rules (\*slightly shortened for this listening session)

- Ground rules encourage active and honest participation and a safe discussion environment.
- If a participant violates a ground rule, they will be politely reminded of the ground rule.
- If a participant continues to violate a ground rule, they will be asked to leave the group.

#### **Ground Rules (The 5 A's)**

### **Participants of this group...**

- Agree to maintain confidentiality
- Agree that there are no “right or wrong” answers to the questions
- Agree to speak honestly based on our own experiences
- Agree that only one person will speak at a time
- Agree to respond to one another politely and respectfully

## **II. Discussion of Contemporary Gender Equality**

1) What made you interested in attending today’s listening session on gender equality?

2) How do you define the term gender equality?

What does gender equality mean to you?

What does gender equality *not* mean to you?

What issues or subjects do you think about when you think of gender equality?

3) In New Hampshire, have you experienced or observed gender equality or inequality?

## **III. Post-it Note Exercise**

What issues relating to gender equality do you think are most important for the New Hampshire Women’s Initiative to address?

**(Each participant receives 3 standard yellow Post-it notes and a black sharpie; they must write their top three issues, one per Post-it note. Ask them to put the Post-its up on a white board or wall. Then each person gets one red dot. They must place their red dot on their top issue, which doesn’t have to be one of the ones they originally wrote.)**

*\* Facilitator must collect the Post-its and return to the GAP Committee when complete*

## **IV. Wrap-up**

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- Do you have any other thoughts or ideas that you really want to share about gender equality in NH? (\*not asked at this listening session due to time constraints)
- Thank you to participants by facilitator
- Collect participant information sheets; distribute NHWI information sheets

**V. Adjourn**