

NHWI

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

**Offices of Brown & Company Design
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MARY JO BROWN, FACILITATOR; ELLEN KOENIG, NOTE-**

Brown & Company, Portsmouth, NH
 FACILITATOR: Mary Jo Brown
 NOTE-TAKER: Ellen Koenig

1. What brought you here tonight?

Participant	Comment	Note-taker observation
5	I like the power of collective thinking; right level of people interest and concern.	
4	Not well-informed; 3's story reminded me that our tax consultant, who was my husband's consultant – but all my info personal was lumped into my husband's info – didn't think the worst – but the person didn't communicate to ME, he communicated to my husband. But it was MY business – and I need to get someone for my own business – probably a woman.	
3	Began my career in banking at [redacted] – and lots of reasons I don't do that anymore. Because I switched my career (now a writer), I don't encounter it as much. However, when I thought about attending here tonight, what I experienced in NY, and what happens here in NH – and how my vendors treat me (accounting, computer) – they don't give me the respect even though I am paying them.	
2	Just attended a banking conference – 700 people – only 30 women - I don't know what's going on in our state.	
8	I came because you invited me.... I came with an open mind – women in transition are coming to me for business consulting – a lot of older women are out of work and trying to find what to do with themselves – <i>Time</i> magazine article – “never had a woman work for him who asked for a raise.”	
6	Started the women's Leadership Summit as a response to a report that came out from WPI in 2005. Wanted to know that NH is 48 out of 50 states in terms of women's opportunity and pay. I'm curious to see if that awareness is still the same or has it changed. There is a	

	firm just down the road, which treats women poorly – nothing has changed – discouraging.	
1	Want to change the conversation – more men and young women; good men need to stand up and realize they need to be part of the conversation. My manager asked me today, “What women’s things are you involved with? That’s how they describe diversity.” I’m glad I’m your token diversity rep.	
7	All my life been interested in women’s issues – resigned a job in the 0’s due to sex discrimination – I’m fired up when I see what’s going on now with politics – I was asked at a former job, “Are you expecting something in 9 months? I should have said – a raise.” We really need a women’s lobbyist in Concord.	

2. How do you define gender equality?

Participant	Comment	Note-taker observation
1	Imagine a world where women aren’t victims of sexual crime – we’re not questioned when we testify against a rapist – we are given the benefit of the doubt. Gender equality = human equality – can be a nicer term	
2	Equal opportunities	
5	Equal voice add representation = equal at the table - not about “she’ or “he” - it’s just equal.	
7	Equal pay for equal work; many of the issues are similar to what gay people are looking for. I think word “feminism” has a lot of baggage.	
8	The words don’t go together for me. I don’t think we’re equal, and I like that. Equal pay – I like that. We have years of conditioning – how do we bring about a change in that thinking. I’ve had corporate jobs and had to push – and had to do it in a way that was different – I had to play the game of chess by the roles and navigate as best I could. I think of gender – women are different – do woman want to be same or treated equally? I agree with your comments about women being the victims of sexual crimes. I prefer the term “human equality.” In the pay realm, equality is very important.	

	I work in the arts – we now use the word “innovation.”	
6	Is that what a good society does? Treat everyone equally? Is equality really the goal? Equal pay/equal work – what does that really mean? It is not about discrimination ... Is it really equality? I don't know that want to be treated the same as man.	

Feminism – what do you think about the word?

Participant	Comment	Note-taker observation
5	I step away from the word – it has a negative connotation – I think we should have made more headway than we have. I think we should be at a different platform now. We have voices now of younger people now – we need diversity.	
8	Word “feminism” sounds aggressive.	
4	Polarizes – more value on one than another – humanism seems to be an interesting term.	
1	I'm conflicted – you should feel uncomfortable – I'm proud to be a feminist – maybe it has closed doors because you're threatened by it – maybe you should be threatened – it's an important topic – I sometime like to make people uncomfortable – they should sit with that and think about it.	
7	We just got a fundraiser from Rick Santorum – you would feel really uncomfortable reading it.	
8	Like what the legislature is doing now – telling us who can use birth control.	
6	“The future of women” – they predicted there would be a huge backlash against women right now – and they are right. The various assumptions they made are	

	interesting – it was worldwide, not just USA.	
8	There's a lot of fear in the country right now – parallels the Catholic Church – to keep women represented – women are the fastest growing segment right now.	

What words would you use that wouldn't close doors?

Participant	Comment	Note-taker observation
7	I think gender equality is okay.	
2	I think feminism arouses an emotion – I don't think men relate to it – seems like it's been viewed as a movement – a one-time thing – so feminism doesn't relate to me.	
6	What about the word equity?	
7	In our business we think of stock.	
1	I think of fairness.	
8	I like "human," "fairness" – "gender" may connote gay/lesbian.	

Womens' Movement –

Participant	Comment	Note-taker observation
	Bowel Movement	
	Flashback, Feminism, Gloria Steinem	

Women's Issues

Participant	Comment	Note-taker observation

	Menstruation	
	A problem – not a solution	

Women’s rights

Participant	Comment	Note-taker observation
	Strident	
	Globally, there’s a lot there – the right to marry who you want, right to education	

Other words?

Participant	Comment	Note-taker observation
	Feminazi = where does that come from?	(Several had not heard that word before)
2	Has there ever been a men’s movement?	
7	Years go, I worked with the NH Constitution, I worked to make things gender neutral – someone said to me, “I suppose you’ll be known as Thoresibly (a sister, not a son).” The reasons I put it in, it rubbed me wrong that “men” could hold property.	

3. How have you, in NH, experienced gender equality or inequality?

Participant	Comment	Note-taker observation
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8	What are some examples of “gender equal”?	
7	In my business – we are paid based on what we sell – no difference between men and women – there’s lots of examples in the financial industry – most of the support people are women – we had one guy and I think men were uncomfortable that he was a support person – I think he was discriminated against. For a long time I was the only woman I the office – we had some back in 2000, but none made it.	
1	I did a ride along with the Dover police - we met a woman that was trying to get her boyfriend arrested – the officer was so skeptical of everything she was saying – I tried to encourage him to really listen her – I was nervous to call him out – but he was born in 1989, so I could tell him what I think.	
2	A woman police chief was just hired in Greenland. But in Kittery I saw that they just hired their first policewoman. The Police Chief just retired, so I think there is a correlation. My dad was police chief in Elliot and hired the first woman police officer in the 80’s.	
1	And there’s a story that there was a prostitution ring in Kittery and the chief looked the other way.	
2	Bankers tend to stay in positions for a long time. Older banks typically have more men. With [redacted] – we are a new bank – so we have a lot more women. I feel we have a real advantage as a new company. Maybe there aren’t enough women role models....	
5	You have the chance to start fresh. So many others have an established culture – and it takes enormous energy to change it – how does an individual woman go up against established culture with “grace.” Will NHWI helped to teach “grace”? Once you do it, you set an example for others to see.	

6	I see it in my MBA classes. You break them up into groups and who do you think takes the notes? Who organizes the next meeting? I think there's a lot of education to be done with women as well as men.	
7	I don't see that as a negative – I see it as an opportunity for control.	(Laughter)
7	I'm struck by young men facing discrimination – ex. Nursing, teaching. A lot of women don't want to have a male nurse. Maybe women don't want to give up that part.	

What are some contemporary stories?

Participant	Comment	Note-taker observation
1	We were at some friend's house and we were talking about labor and delivery. And I asked the woman if she was a nurse. They started laughing – she is a doctor. She gets it all the time.	
8	There's so much in our psyche, from years past. How can we be help other women not make these assumptions? I've bought a car and they put it in my husband's name.	
4	I was in the hospital and was diagnosed with appendicitis. The first diagnosis was "women's issues," but returned in the middle of the night with acute pain.	
7	I think women have that issue when they complain about heart issues.	

Having children? Giving birth? Marriage?

Participant	Comment	Note-taker observation

7	My husband and I had a business together, but we gave all the pay to him. But then we went to Social Security and I got no credit for having worked during those years. I bet I'm not the only one in that situation.	
8	I had a guy client who is afraid that his wife won't need him anymore, because she is earning so much more.	
1	A client of mine - business owner – husband and wife – he gets paid 3x what she does – and she does most of the work.	
7	Sometimes companies can benefit from women's owned business – can be an advantage.	
8	I've seen men who are not comfortable with this.	
3	I feel discriminated against because I don't have a child. When someone can leave a meeting early to pick up their child, but I can't. I get the feeling the mother who works – her time is more precious than mine. I don't know too many people in this situation, but the women I know of the same age report feeling the same.	
8	I worked with a woman going through a divorce – and I coached her to present her stay-at-home skills from a business perspective. She got a good job.	
7	Sometimes when I interview staff, I ask them, "What makes you most proud?" Different responses from people with children and people without. People with children always mention their children. I've had a lot of discussions with my sister-in-law who doesn't have children.	
1	I don't mention when I'm going to pick up my daughter, I always say it's a work thing.	
6	When men say they are doing something family related, they are seen as heroes. At UNH, at a recent meeting, one woman announced she was leaving to pick up her kids. The other women at the meeting were incensed.	

	It's best not to say anything.	
1	My biggest pet peeve – “babysitting” your own kids.	
5	Questions of a female applicant can be very different from a male. “Will you need child care?”	
6	I work with an engineering company – until recently all men – I did a 360degree eval. The male managers all scored terribly. The woman manager scored really highly. She only earned 60% of what the other managers earned. She doesn't have a degree, worked her way up. Now she's as good as the engineers. They refused to promote her. While other men had gotten MBA's through the company, she didn't. Finally they offered to only pay 70% of her costs. That same organization had a bad year. They picked all the married women, and told them their salary would be reduced, because they had a husband. Bullying is also a problem. Often women are not educated to stand up for themselves – sometimes they turn on each other – victim mentality.	
7	I thought all these issues we dealt with so long ago were getting better – but they're not.	

What role does religion play?

Participant	Comment	Note-taker observation
8	A big part of the problem	
7	UU (Unitarian Universalists) are a haven for people dissatisfied people from other religions.	

4. Post-It Exercise!

Participant	Comment	Note-taker observation
<p>Top Three Issues from participants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Outdated policy that is discriminating but perhaps forgotten/not obvious - Opportunity that is not available to all, on the basis of gender - Funding for youth development/gender understanding in school - Mutual consideration & respect - No discrimination in workplace. What can be done to prevent it? - A focus on children—integrated across ethnicity - Education; e.g. role playing, scripting, resources for how to respond to gender inequality experiences - General education - Lobbying for changes in policy - Appropriate representation of women’s opinions relating to women sensitive/related issues - Education: awareness of discrimination where when it takes place. Encouraging change. - Networking opportunities - Educating men - Fair & equitable employment opportunities - Promoting women’s rights as human rights - Equal pay for equal work - Equality pay for equal work - Human rights & how relates to gender - Equal opportunity for advancement - Sexual violence - Health care (birth control) - Equal health rights - Minimum wage - Women in prisons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Funding for youth development/gender understanding in school (2) - Education; e.g. role playing, scripting, resources for how to respond to gender inequality experiences (6- 5 red one yellow?) - Appropriate representation of women’s opinions relating to women (1) - Networking opportunities (1) - Promoting women’s rights as human rights (1) - Fair & equitable employment opportunities (3- one red, one blue, one yellow?) - Health care (birth control) (1)

5. Closing remarks

Participant	Comment	Note-taker observation
6	One thing that didn't come up is race. If this discussion is only a white women's discussion, then it won't be as effective. There is also a religious divide. A refugee woman who has just arrived here from Ghana who might have been a nurse there gets a job here cleaning toilets.	
1	Rape and domestic violence is huge issue, I'm surprised we didn't see more of that.	
6	6 women in my class just recently talked online about how they have been raped.	
7	I think it's a really important issue. Many years ago, when the Newark riots occurred, I met an older woman who had been raped. If you looked at the woman you would know it is a crime, not passion. Much more pervasive – in college – getting people drunk. When my daughter was 13, she had a friend who got pregnant. Birth control is a huge issue.	
6	The YWCA says this is escalating in Manchester.	
7	Some famous actresses have come forward with stories of family abuse.	
8	In my work with at-risk kids, they have some horrible stories. Rather than focusing on the story, we try to empower them with the strengths that they have to connect with a mentor, and move forward with their strengths. If we could focus on a process where women could handle themselves better in these situations. Media puts us in a bad situation. I support a process to better educate women. – how to see the warning signs.	
1	I think we should teach our men not to rape women. How do we make them responsible?	

7	Media is a problem – provocative clothing.	
8	How do you know as a young woman to make a better choice with the men they are with? So they know how to handle themselves – to stand up for themselves. Most of us can deal with anger, rather than grace.	
5	Why not more on sexual issues? I think education is part of that. Education is from the bottom up. Mutual respect can be from the top down.	
4	I thought about that too. How do we create culture that there's enough self-worth that we don't need to dominate other people?	
2	Double standards.	
8	I was in a manufacturing facility and running the floor. I answered the phone, and the guy said, 'IT'S A WOMAN. I can't work for a woman.'	

Other thoughts?

Participant	Comment	Note-taker observation
Facilitator:	Gender equality is hard – we don't have the language to talk about a lot of what we feel. Interesting that a really interesting topic (rape/domestic violence) just came up at the end of the meeting – with strong feeling on both sides.	

Meeting Adjourned