

FEMINIST FIGHT CLUB

@ COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

THE DISCUSSION GUIDE

For offices, classrooms, book clubs and more



THE WOMEN & GENDER
COLLABORATIVE
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

The Feminist Fight Club at Colorado State University provides an inclusive space for community, growth, learning, and support for all members. We seek to develop our skills in identifying and addressing problematic behaviors that disadvantage women and other marginalized groups in the workplace and on campus by building upon the research and strategies presented in the book, Feminist Fight Club. We also focus on holding ourselves accountable to one another as we model and practice behaviors that foster a campus culture and climate that supports the success of all students and employees. To this end, we commit to support one another through honest reflection, courageous dialogue, and collective action.

Rules of the Feminist Fight Club at CSU

Every fight club needs a few simple rules. These are rules we've adopted for the FFC at CSU.

Rule No. 1: You must talk about the Feminist Fight Club at CSU.

Rule No. 2: You *MUST* talk about the Feminist Fight Club at CSU.

Rule No. 3: We fight PATRIARCHY (and all forms of harassment, bullying, inequity, discrimination, -isms, and -phobias), not each other.

Rule No. 4: Membership to the FFC means you've taken an oath to help and support women - ALL women – and those from historically marginalized groups.

Rule No. 5: The FFC is inclusive and non-hierarchical. Everyone's an equal fighter.

Rule No. 6: The fight is not over until we have achieved gender equity
for all people.

Rule No. 7: No wallflowers. Everyone must fight!



Introduction

- **Luck: A thing women credit for their success. What men give credit to: *skill*.**
Have you ever called yourself “lucky” for a professional or personal success? Was it actually “luck”? What’s an accomplishment you’re proud of that you feel comfortable taking full credit for – no luck required?
- **Subtle Sexism /n./**
The kind that makes you wonder, *Am I actually just making this up? (No, you are not.)*
The author describes “subtle sexism” as “a kind of can’t-put-your- finger-on, not-particularly-overt, hard-to-quantify, harder-even-to-call-out behavior that maybe isn’t necessarily intentional, or conscious.” Describe a time you lived or witnessed subtle sexism or a micro-aggression in school or at work. How did you handle it? How would you handle it if you had a second chance? If others were present, what could they have done to better support you?



Part One: Know the Enemy

HOW TO STOP A MANTERRUPTER



How to Stop a Manterrupter.

Research shows that women are twice as likely to be interrupted when they speak, by both women and men, and more frequently if they are women of color. Practice interrupting an interrupter on behalf of your fellow woman, and vow to the group to call out this behavior next time you see it.

- **Bro-prop-ri-a-tion /n./**

When a man appropriates a woman's idea.

Research shows that women are less likely to have their ideas correctly attributed to them, by both women and men. Have you ever had your idea credited to someone else, or witnessed this happen? What did you do? What would you do next time? What will you do to help someone else get the credit they deserve when you see a bropropriator in action?

- **Fact: As job applicants, women with kids are 44 percent less likely to be hired than childless women with similar qualifications.**

What's your university's parental leave policy, and is it consistent for women and men? What can you do to make the parents on your team or in your classroom feel valued and affirmed?

- **Squad Goals.**

Are there any men in your office, classroom, or on campus that you would happily invite to join your squad? How could you initiate this conversation and encourage men to be allies?



Part Two: Know Thyself

- **Avoiding Burnout.**

In *The Feminine Mystique*, Betty Friedan coined the term “the problem that has no name” to describe the sense of emptiness many women of her era (the 1960s) felt by virtue of not feeling fulfilled in their professional lives. Fifty years later, the problem seems to have reversed: Often women feel *overwhelmed* by the pressure to have, and do, it all. Do you feel pressure to be “flawless” or “do it all”? How can we be kinder to ourselves?

- **Be a Power Poser!**

Power posing for 90 seconds has been found to raise testosterone levels, and ultimately, confidence. Get off your feet and practice!

- **We Fight Patriarchy, Not Each Other.**

Name a time you’ve felt competitive with or undermined by another woman. Is there some way you could have caught yourself in the act, and reversed the equation? What might have happened if you addressed the situation directly? How will you interrupt internalized oppression and internalized sexism when you see it in yourself or perpetuated by others?

- **Overcome Your Inner Impost-Her.**

Think of a time you’ve experienced Imposter Syndrome and share it with the group. What could you have done differently to overcome it? Come up a few ways you could encourage yourself and others to embrace growth, learning, and development as an ongoing process, not a pre-requisite.

- **Boast Buddy /n./**

They boast for you, you boast for them, everyone gets credit.

Women often find it difficult to highlight their accomplishments, and are perceived as braggy when they do. Your assignment: Find a partner in the room. Introduce yourselves, and spend 2 minutes telling each other about something you’re proud to have accomplished over the past year and why. When time is up, go around the room and spend 15 seconds “boast bragging” on behalf of your partner. Congratulations, you’ve found yourself a boast buddy!



Part Three: Booby Traps



I'm Not Bossy, I'm the Boss.

Americans may think they prefer men to be their boss—by an average of 33 percent, no matter their gender or education level, according to recent studies. But if you dig deeper into that data you'll find a revealing caveat: that the majority of people who say they prefer having a man for a boss have *never actually had a woman for a boss*. Those who had worked for a woman before in fact preferred reporting to women. Name a woman who's been your boss, professor, teacher or mentor who you look up to. What makes her so special?

- **Believe Your Own Hype.**

For any member of a minority group, it can often feel paralyzing – and exhausting – to constantly have to worry that you are not confirming the stereotypes that others may have about you, or that you might be the “token” in the room. This anxiety actually causes those who experience it to perform worse as a result (it's what psychologists call “stereotype threat”). But an easy way to get *out* of our own heads is through written affirmations. Your assignment: On the back of this page, write down five things that make you a great employee, student, boss or something else. Now tack this to the wall of your cubicle, bathroom mirror, or desk.

- **Paying it Forward.**

Make one realistic goal of how you can support another woman or girl in your life this month. State this goal out loud to the group.

- **Don't Tell Me To Smile.**

Practice the comeback you're going to give the next time a colleague, friend, or stranger asks you why you're not smiling.



Part Four: Get Your Speak On

- **No Ums, Likes or 'I feel like's Allowed – A Drinking Game.**

Please fill (or refill) your cups with the drink of your choice. For the next ten minutes, each time a person uses a filler word from the list below, make them stop and take a sip. The goal here is not to entirely eradicate these words from your speech – we aren't trying to make you sound like a robot—but to be conscious of how often you use them, and when they might not be necessary. Have fun!

Filler words include:

- Sorry
- Um, Uh
- I'm not sure, but--
- Like (repeatedly)
- I feel like
- Kind of
- Just (as in: "I just wanted to check in...)
- Does that make sense?

Part Five: F You, Pay Me

- **Negotiation Role-Play.**

Think about a job, task, leadership role, or raise you want and believe you deserve. Take five minutes alone to prepare a case for why you think you'd be a great candidate for the position. Review the tips in chapter five! Now pair up and take two minutes to present your case to a partner. Do they have any feedback on how you might have done better? Now switch.



Part Six: What Would Josh Do? (WWJD)

- “The first time I walked into a meeting with Josh I thought, ‘*Who does this guy think he is?*’ And then I realized: I could learn from him.” - *Feminist Fight Club*

Who is your “Josh”? Is there anyone in your work or classroom, of any gender, whose behavior irks you? What about someone whose behavior you might consider modeling?

—How to Say no—

Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Learning to Say No.

The author cites research showing that we *expect* women to say yes more frequently than men, and that women have a harder time saying no. Think of a time you said yes to something when you really wanted to say no. What was it, and why did you say yes? Could you have said no? Commit to being conscious of who you ask to do “extra” work, and consider what you could offer them as compensation or reward.

- **Enlisting Men as Allies.**

In the “PSA—A Penile Service Announcement,” the author lists a number of simple ways that men can be allies to women in any context. Are there any men you’d feel comfortable inviting into your discussion, or sharing these tools with? If the answer to both of these things is no, then consider taking your book to your local Kinko’s and photocopying the PSA. Get to class/school/work early and leave a copy on every man and woman’s desk.

For men who engage with FFC: Identify your five favorite fight moves. How will you incorporate fight moves into your everyday life at work, at home, and/or in the classroom? Name another man in your life with whom you will share and discuss FFC strategies.



- **Fact: Executives called the pilot episode of *Seinfeld* “weak.” Oprah was fired from her first job as a reporter. *Harry Potter* was rejected on the first round.** In short, the world is full of stories about successful people who failed, then tried again.

Activity: Make a Failure Resume. Think of it like a resume (or a list) of your accomplishments – but instead of things you’ve succeeded at, you’re going to list your 5 worst failures and one thing you learned from each. Prepare to present to the group.

You Know the Rules, Now Take the Oath*

Print it. Sign it. Cut it out. Post it on your wall, mirror, computer, wherever you’ll see it.

Take an Oath to Speak Up

I, _____, vow to speak up really loud in spaces where my voice needs to be heard. I will speak up to support myself and others who want it, even if other people don’t like it, because the research shows that not all voices have equal opportunity to be heard.

To make this delivery more memorable, I, _____, will speak clearly and slowly, I will stand up if it’s appropriate and make eye contact with the person I most want to hear what I’m saying. These strategies may not stop an individual who continues to repeat what I say, but they will help me be heard the first time.

Signature

*Adapted by the Student Feminist Fight Club at CSU from the original Oath to Speak Up



More Resources

The Women & Gender Collaborative

thecollaborative.colostate.edu

Join the Feminist Fight Club at CSU

cori.wong@colostate.edu

Follow the Women & Gender Collaborative

 @WGCollaborativeCSU

Questions, comments, and feedback about the FFC at CSU or the Women & Gender Collaborative can also be sent to Cori Wong (cori.wong@colostate.edu)

Stay Connected to FFC

 @feministfightclub

 @feministfightclub

 @ffcbook

FFC Logo & Graphics

Available for [download](#)

Tell Us About Your Club!

contact@feministfightclub.com

For more information, including newsletter, swag, events, or to connect with the author, check out feministfightclub.com.





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