

**CREATING A SAFE SPACE**

**EMBRACING DIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE**

# MY NAME IS AISHA

- Front-end web developer
- Dog enthusiast

# I TEACH PEOPLE



**PROBLEM**

We all need to make diversity in tech a priority. We need to be better.

**SOLUTION??**

There isn't any easy fix. There are lots of interconnected issues.

**NEITHER**



We'll touch on both, but the focus will be on action items to help us move forward.

# A NOTE ON COMMUNITIES

The numbers I'll mention are related to women and POC, but the strategies we'll discuss will benefit everyone!

# WHY YOU SHOULD CARE

- The population is shifting.
- We need more talent.
- Happier employees == less turnover
- POC are huge consumers.

# DIVERSITY IMPROVES PERFORMANCE

- Companies that are very diverse in terms of gender and race tend to perform better financially.
- Diversity fosters innovation by breaking down bias.
- Communication within a diverse company tends to be more effective.

# WHAT'S THE PROBLEM AGAIN?

Some would say that we've come a long way and, to an extent, that's true. All of the many *isms* haven't gone away, though. They're just more subtle.

# SECOND-GENERATION BIAS

- Lack of role models
- Stereotypical career paths and tasks
- Restricted accessibility to networks, mentors, and other forms of professional support
- Cultural expectations lead to assumptions

# THE WAGE GAP

White Americans hold a disproportionate amount of wealth.

The vast majority of jobs in the US are attained through friends or family.

**VOCAB**



# MICROAGGRESSION

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*"The casual degradation of any socially marginalized group"*

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# TOKEN HIRE

*"A person who is brought into a company dominated by members of a group (or groups) to which they do not belong"*

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# **INTERSECTIONALITY**

There are lots of interconnected issues present here that cannot be separated.

# YOU'RE NOT BAD

We all have biases, but it's easier to attribute bad behaviors to bad people than to take responsibility for our part in the system.

**EXERCISE!**

# INSTRUCTIONS

1. Pair up with someone close by.
2. For 30 seconds, one person will speak and the other will listen while maintaining steady eye contact, but not necessarily trying to focus on the speaker's words.
  - (Try to speak softly so that everyone can hear their partner!)
3. When I call time, switch roles. Now the speaker will listen and vice versa.

# DEBRIEF

- Was it difficult to avoid focusing on the speaker's words?
- Why might that be (or not)?
- As the speaker, how did knowing the other person wasn't really paying attention affect you?
- Did it have any bearing on what you chose to say?
- Did you feel any discomfort?
- How can we apply this experience to interactions in the workplace?

**SO WHAT CAN WE DO?**



# IDENTIFY YOUR BIASES

This is a long process, but it begins with each of us as individuals!

# HAVE A PLAN

It's natural to get defensive when people start talking about *your* biases, but this is an opportunity to affect change.

Instead:

- Stop
- Breathe
- Apologize
- Ask

# **DON'T BE AFRAID**

Yes, you may say something offensive.

It's important to remember that marginalized people do not owe you this conversation.

# EXAMINE YOUR PROCESS

- Recruitment
- Onboarding
- Culture
- Feedback
- Responding to bias

# **SUPPORT PIPELINE ORGANIZATIONS**

This is a multi-pronged discussion. We have to work to make our industry hospitable to marginalized people, but we also have to address inequalities in earlier stages.

**GET 'EM YOUNG**



**CRISTO REY**  
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# **BOOTCAMPS**

This model can be extremely effective, but students tend to be pretty homogenous. Programs like Grand Circus and Hackbright Academy are working to improve this.

# LEADERSHIP

It's wonderful that we're making this education more accessible, but we have to prepare people for careers in tech that could lead to leadership roles.



# ASK FOR HELP

When you do, remember:

- You might get it wrong.
  - That's okay!
  - ...But it means you have to try something different.
- Approach underrepresented groups in a way that's
  - Respectful
  - Mutually beneficial

**ALTERCONF**



TRANS\*H4CK

Trans\*H4CK

**GIRL DEVELOP IT**

**Girl Develop It**  
*don't be shy. develop it.* 

**WOMEN RISING**



**WOMEN RISING**

# HOMework

- Take an implicit attitude test from [Project Implicit](#).
- Identify one bias you have and three ways it might affect marginalized people around you.
- Decide on an appropriate response to being called out on your bias.

# RESOURCES

- [Diversity Matters](#)
- [CODE2040](#)
- [What Works for Women at Work](#)
- [Geek Feminism](#)
- [Ashe Dryden](#)

**LET'S TALK**



**THANK YOU!**

@AishaBlake | [aishablake.com](http://aishablake.com)