FEMINIST FIGHT CLUB AND THE FFC @ CSU

WHY “FEMINIST FIGHT CLUB”?

The Feminist Fight Club at CSU is inspired by the book, Feminist Fight Club, by Jessica Bennett. The book is an accessible, research-based starting place that provides shared language and shared resources for identifying and responding to subtle sexism.

BEYOND THE BOOK

The FFC at CSU is intentional about being intersectional and inclusive in our efforts as we adapt and develop new fight moves to appropriately support all members of our campus community.

The FFC purpose statement provides a great starting point for talking about the FFC @ CSU. It outlines our goals and methods for creating an inclusive campus culture.

F-WORDS

“FEMINIST”

Feminism can be defined as “advocating for equal standards for all people, regardless of gender.” As bell hooks says, “Feminism is a movement to end sexist oppression.” According to Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, “We Should All be Feminists.” We are here for it.

“FIGHT”

We are fighting gender-based oppression, white supremacy, and other systems of oppression - not men, and not each other. Our strategies include:

- Identifying and interrupting problematic behaviors
- Creating a supportive and inclusive environment for community and learning
- Lifting each other up and leveraging our strengths to make culture change
- Sharing resources and strategies for intervention (a.k.a, “fight moves”)

“F***”

It’s true - the book has crass and sometimes exclusionary language. The FFC @ CSU expects use of inclusive language (such as not essentializing sexed body parts). However, if reading the actual “f-word” offends to the point of no longer listening to the message, it may be good to check in about tone-policing. It’s not okay for anyone to say mean or disparaging things about people, but it’s also unfair to dismiss others’ experiences just because they are expressed in ways that make you feel uncomfortable.

FEMINIST FIGHT CLUB AT CSU

PURPOSE:

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.

CSU’S PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNITY

INCLUSION:

We create and nurture inclusive environments and welcome, value and affirm all members of our community, including their various identities, skills, ideas, talents, and contributions.

INTEGRITY:

We are accountable for our actions and will act ethically and honestly in all our interactions.

RESPECT:

We honor the inherent dignity of all people within an environment where we are committed to freedom of expression, critical discourse, and the advancement of knowledge.

SERVICE:

We are responsible, individually and collectively, to give of our time, talents, and resources to promote the well-being of each other and the development of our local, regional, and global communities.

SOCIAL JUSTICE:

We have the right to be treated and the responsibility to treat others with fairness and equity, the duty to challenge prejudice, and to uphold the laws, policies and procedures that promote justice in all respects.
WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

The FFC @ CSU provides opportunities for professional and leadership development, including education on inclusive practices that foster a culture of accountability and effectiveness through committee activities. In this way, engaging with the FFC @ CSU holistically and systemically supports the University mission to improve the campus culture and climate around gender.

JOIN THE FFC @ CSU

The FFC @ CSU has regular meetings to share concrete strategies for supporting self and others, and members can join internal working groups to support the purpose and operation of the FFC. We also have an FFC for Men and a student-led FFC.

BRING THE FFC INTO YOUR UNIT

The FFC Toolkit helps campus leaders structure their own efforts for creating a gender inclusive culture and develop a customized tip sheet for addressing unique challenges in their particular division, college, department or office. Such units become part of the FFC Community with regular support and contact to stay connected to the overall FFC efforts on campus.

GETTING SUPERVISOR SUPPORT

The Feminist Fight Club at CSU was introduced as part of a university-wide, presidential initiative to improve the campus culture and climate around gender and make CSU the best place for people of all genders to work and learn.

If you are reluctant to join or be an active member, remember that “fight moves” can be a very useful tool to garner necessary support:

Negotiate - Articulate how the FFC @ CSU provides opportunities for professional development, inclusive excellence, networking, and building supportive relationships across campus.

Ask for Backup - FFC @ CSU members can leverage a letter of support for their involvement, which can be included in an annual performance evaluation.

Build a Critical Mass – Create a network of support within your own unit by inviting your team members (or your supervisor) to attend an FFC workshop or join the FFC @ CSU together.

INDIRECT WAYS TO SUPPORT THE FFC @ CSU

Talk about the FFC @ CSU and the unique ways we are developing to create a culture of inclusion and support for our campus community. If you’re unsure, ask questions and learn more until you feel more comfortable.

Share FFC @ CSU tip sheets and resources with your colleagues, friends, and supervisors. Bring them up in staff and committee meetings and regularly talk about how you might use “fight moves” to interrupt problematic behavior.

QUESTIONS TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN CONSIDERING PROBLEMATIC BEHAVIORS

1. How might an example of problematic behavior differently affect people based on other identities? To whom is this most often directed? For whom might this show up in other ways?

2. Are there specific conditions within your unit that make it uniquely difficult to identify and address these behaviors? Who might be especially vulnerable? What else is at stake?

3. Are there intersecting systems, practices, or policies in place that hinder effective intervention or protect perpetrators of bad behaviors?

WHEN CONSIDERING FIGHT MOVES

1. Does considering other identities (in addition to gender) shift how this fight move might be put into practice? Can this fight move be effective for everyone? Consider what might make a fight move less appropriate for others to employ or use to support someone else.

2. Is there anything about this fight move that is exclusionary, alienating, or not supportive of other subordinated identities? How could you make it more inclusive and supportive?

3. Are there intersecting systems, practices, or policies in place that make it difficult to access available resources, opportunities, and support by those who need them?

CONTACT INFORMATION:

The Women & Gender Collaborative: thecollaborative.colostate.edu

Follow the Women & Gender Collaborative: facebook.com/WGCollaborativeCSU

Questions, or to join the Feminist Fight Club at CSU Contact Cori Wong; cori.wong@colostate.edu