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Below are a few examples of “fight moves” that can be used to interrupt and change problematic behaviors and systems. Some are inspired from the book, FEMINIST FIGHT CLUB, while others are suggestions from our own campus community. (Page numbers refer to the hardcover edition.)

BEING AN INCLUSIVE SUPERVISOR: EDUCATION

EDUCATE YOURSELF

A healthy, supportive supervisor/supervisee relationship has been found to be a critical component of positive workplace belonging. In order to supervise effectively, we need to understand our identities and how they relate to and differ from the identities of our team members.

The first step is education. Attend workshops and trainings that explore identity, power, privilege, oppression, and more. Remember, the nature of identity means that it can and will impact the dynamics in a workplace, in both positive and potentially problematic ways. Be aware of the power and privilege at play through careful observation and do your best to advocate when possible.

FIGHT MOVES FOR INCLUSIVE SUPERVISION: SUPPORTING

WOMANTERUPTION

As a supervisor, you can utilize Womanterruption methods by speaking up to support the women and non-binary folks that you supervise (8). Say things like, “Wait, can you let them finish?” when you notice someone interrupting them. This can also be applied if their ideas are being shared second-hand in another space: “I agree, that’s a great idea. I’ll be sure to tell [employee’s name] that you are interested in their input about it.”

SHEVENT PLANNER

Team bonding and team building matter but sometimes work events intentionally or unintentionally leave people out (38). As a supervisor, we can take a critical look at what our team building events look like and set expectations which ensure the activities, locations, costs, etc. are accessible by everyone on the team and not excluding people who might be missing out on the networking and information sharing that often occurs in these settings.

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MOTHER-DUCKER
Are notes, mailings, lunch orders, or party planning always being assigned the women and non-binary folks in your office? If so, work to ensure your supervisee a) gets credit for that work and b) is not the only person being assigned those tasks (56). Create a calendar to rotate those responsibilities so they don’t always fall to women and non-binary folks in the team.

MOVE UP OR MOVE ON
Richard Branson once shared a workplace philosophy: “Train people well enough so they can leave, treat them well enough so they don’t want to.” Supervisors should support a supervisee’s career goals, even if it means they may outgrow a position (73). Remember, it’s not an issue of loyalty. Inclusive supervision means we embrace the ambitions of our team members, provide as much opportunity for growth as possible, and support them when they are ready to move up or on.

WHEN SHE SHINES, YOU SHINE
If you identify as a woman and supervise a woman, don’t play into the “women are the worst enemy to other women” mindset (86). If you supervise an amazing woman or non-binary individual, be excited about that opportunity to support, and not compete, with them.

DIAGNOSIS: PASSION
When a woman expresses emotion at work, people assume she’s hormonal; when a man expresses emotion at work, people assume he’s passionate (125). As a supervisor, you have the agency to stop this narrative whether that is during an informal conversation, a meeting, or in the way we write evaluations.

FIGHT MOVES FOR INCLUSIVE SUPERVISION: EMPOWERING
TOUGH TALK
Encourage team members to own their ideas and deliver them with active, authoritative words; not ”I wonder what would happen if we tried…” but “I’d suggest we try…” (12).

TAKE CREDIT WHERE IT’S DUE
A lot of us work in teams such as committees and task forces as well as more informal groups. Encourage and support your supervisee to make sure they are taking and being given credit for their work because the default is to give credit to the men on the team (60). Evaluations are a great time to put this into practice.

JUST SAY NO
Women may find it difficult to say ‘no’ at work. Support your supervisee in her quest to prioritize what she can and cannot take on. Encourage her to make those calls and trust her ability to manage her own workday. Remind her that you are there for support when needed.

SUMMARY
Identities matter in the supervisor/supervisee relationship. Through education, support, and empowerment, we can increase the chances for everyone on our team to bring their authentic selves into the workplace.