Introduce self and event, thank audience, etc.

You can mention that some of the findings you’ll discuss today come from NCWIT’s Report on Male Allies: Released in 2013, Authors: Catherine Ashcraft, Wendy DuBow, Elizabeth Eger, Sarah Blithe, and Brian Sevier. Full report available on NCWIT site
It might be helpful to start with a few words about why diversity is important in the first place. Why are we going to all this effort? It’s important to make the rationale clear for efforts like this and to make sure everyone is on the same page and up to speed.

In short, quite a bit of research over the past 10 years increasingly demonstrates specific benefits diversity brings to innovation and productivity. In particular, a number of studies have shown that diverse teams perform better on a number of measures including: better, more creative problem solving, increased market share, increased profits and improved bottom line. You can see a summary of this research at the NCWIT link on this slide. But the short story is that we know that diverse teams generally improve innovation and produce better ideas and results.
And so these findings spell some trouble for tech which, as we know, is not very diverse. Here are some stats on diverse participation in tech from the US Department of Labor in 2015:

As you see here, women comprise 57% of all U.S. professional occupations (those requiring a 4-yr degree). But they hold only 25% of Computing jobs – and this number has been declining since 1990s when it reached a high of 37%.

The numbers are even lower for certain tech jobs – such as software developers (only at 18%) or 13% of computer hardware engineers.
And as you can see the numbers are also problematic for other underrepresented groups. Here is some data on race/ethnicity and tech:

**READ SLIDE**

**If needed for Q&A:**
- Breakdown is 9% black and 7% Hispanic for Professional occupations
- 4% black men computing and 5% Hispanic men computing
- 3% and 1% Hispanic women
So we know that tech is missing out on a lot of highly qualified talent from a diverse range of groups. Though today we may be highlighting gender concerns and the role of male allies, the end game is to have all kinds of diverse participation in tech (e.g., across age, abilities, language, race, and sexualities). And of course, even when it comes to gender, women aren’t one big homogenous group nor are men. We all also belong to many other different groups and have different intersecting identities – like race/ethnicity, sexual orientation and some of the other identities you see in this slide. And, of course some of these identities have been more historically marginalized than others so that’s also important to keep in mind.

It’s also worth mentioning that the strategies and actions we will suggest later today are not “women” specific. They are about fixing the overall environment, making it more inclusive for a variety of underrepresented groups. This also means that it’s not only male allies that are important but “majority group” allies in general are important. Will say more about that in a moment. But for now, remember that we are all sometimes a “minority” and sometimes a “majority” in certain contexts. So be thinking about how your identity shifts with the context and how some of the strategies we talk about today are things that any “majority-group ally” can do (e.g., white women advocating for women or people of color; heterosexual folks advocating for LGBTQ inclusion)…and that ultimately these are strategies that benefit ALL employees.
So why focus on male (or majority-group) allies?

While these issues have historically been framed as “women’s issues,” they actually aren’t simply women’s issues. They are business issues and they are human issues. So we need all hands on deck. Women and men need to work together as allies in order to change current problematic work environments that prevent all of us (even men) from realizing our full potential.

- Also important to study because men, particularly white men, are still most often the gatekeepers and powerholders in IT so important to understand their perspective and enlist their support.

- Also we know that women’s decisions to pursue and remain in technology careers are often influenced by the men in their lives, whether it’s fathers, brothers, friends, colleagues, or supervisors. So it’s important to understand circumstances under which men advocate, what motivates and hinders them, how they advocate, in order to create more advocates and accelerate success.
But don’t just take my word for it. As you can see from this quote, men in the NCWIT male allies study also had similar reasons.

READ QUOTE

“I think it is super important for men to be seen as gender advocates, because...85% of our leaders are men in this company, and if they are not gender advocates, then the culture won’t change — we won’t have the right environment.”

— male interviewee
Finally, the last reason male allies are important is that men also benefit from expanding gender norms. Men also feel pressure to live up to gender norms and expectations. So expanding these norms or images of what is appropriate for men and women is important for everyone. And we need people of all genders to advocate for each other.

Let's look at an example. The story of a young girl named McKenna Pope who advocated for her 4 year old brother, Gavin. Gavin loved to cook and would have loved to have an easy bake oven, but since the commercials only included girls and a lot of pink and purple, Gavin wasn’t so jazzed about it really. One day, McKenna found Gavin trying to cook a tortilla on a lamp in his bedroom, and she thought, “well that’s no good!” So she decided to do something about it. She created a Change.org petition where she asked Hasbro to offer a more gender-neutral color for the toy and include boys in its commercials. Tens of thousands of people signed and a bunch of celebrity chefs led by Bobby Flay created their own video in support of McKenna and Gavin. Eventually, Hasbro invited McKenna and Gavin to see the black oven they had in development. Not that boys can only play with black ovens by the way, but it does at least show the importance of multiplying the available options.

This example illustrates a few key points: 1) that men also stand to benefit from expanding gender norms, 2) that it’s important to advocate for each other, and 3) that it’s also especially important, when possible, to start early, as in this case here!

Overview

- **Pivotal Experiences & Compelling Arguments:** What Motivates Men to Be Allies?
- **Setting the Stage for Success:** Tips for Avoiding Common Pitfalls
- **Call to Action:** What Can Male Allies Do?

Note to Speaker: This is an overview slide for the rest of the presentation – you can use, omit or may need to alter if you don’t cover all these categories.

So here’s a quick overview of what we’ll be exploring today…
First, what motivates men to be allies or advocates? A combination of personal and professional experiences can profoundly affect men’s thinking about gender diversity in the technical workplace. Nearly all the men interviewed noted that specific professional or personal experiences had changed their thinking about gender and diverse inclusion issues in the technical workplace.

This chart shows the different kinds of professional and personal experiences men talked about as affecting their thinking and motivation to participate in making change.

**READ OR HIGHLIGHT SOME OF THE ITEMS ON CHART**

Let’s look at a professional example in particular.
So this was a man talking about a very influential experience he had interacting with a female colleague, and notice how he didn't let her comment slide. He made an effort to find out more from her so he could better understand. We'll say more about that later.
Men also noted a number of different kinds of “minority” experiences they had as also being significant for their understanding of these issues – whether it was as a member of a racial or ethnic minority, or a more “temporary” experience such as being the only man in a particular environment, or an outsider in a foreign country, or feeling left out as a child at school. One man recalled, “I grew up in a little town in the middle of nowhere, largely economically disadvantaged, and so I had some personal experience about what it meant to start behind the curve, and so I at least like to think I have some sympathy for people who start out with some disadvantage in the environment they are competing in.”

Other men noted how attending female conferences, like the Grace Hopper conference, the world’s largest gathering of women technologists, was a very powerful minority experience.
Men also talked about the kinds of arguments that they had found compelling as well as the kinds of arguments they used to persuade others.

First, men reported that they and many other men found the business case for diversity and inclusion compelling. And they said this helps convince others of the importance of inclusion. An example of this kind of argument is highlighted in this quote.

**READ POP OUT QUOTE**

In the first business-case, or economic, argument, men noted that a global company needs to be diverse to appeal to its global customers and relate to its non-U.S.-based employees. For example, one man said, “I guess probably the most simplistic way to put it is the world is diverse. And if our customers are comprised of individuals with a multitude of diverse perspectives and backgrounds and attitudes, we need our organization to be as close as possible a reflection of that, to be able to have a better understanding, a better knowledge, a better empathy, and a better ability to cooperatively work among our teams.”
For many of the men interviewed, however, the economic arguments were not the only reasons they valued diversity, and for some, the bottom line did not even enter into their reasons. The men who provided values-based arguments often used phrases such as “the natural thing to do” or “the right thing to do.”

Example: Yeah, the values versus economics. I mean, I understand the economic argument, but I don’t think that’s ever really been what motivated me. I think, in some sense, because really the stories aren’t about economics — the stories are about justice.

Although a smaller proportion of men, 38% overall, mentioned equity or fairness-based rationales compared to economic rationales, the equity rationale seemed to be what actually motivated men to action.
The key takeaway here is that while many found business case arguments were convincing and made people theoretically supportive, these weren’t enough to actually move them to action. It often took moral arguments to really motivate them to action, to light a fire so to speak…
Second, think of ways to replicate these experiences for other men. Some of them can’t be replicated – you can’t make someone a minority but you can create minority experiences – many of the men talked about how minority experiences like attending Grace Hopper were super powerful.

You might also try to build in opportunities that ensure that male employees have experiences with female mentors, bosses, or other female leaders. Consider setting up formal or informal programs or rotational assignments that might encourage these kinds of pairings.

Also, if you are a woman or member of an underrepresented group, don’t be afraid to “test the waters” with people you think may be supportive and share your experiences in the technical workplace. As the men quoted earlier noted, women and underrepresented people in tech’s stories were often turning points in their thinking about these issues.
Before moving to talk about action and what male or majority group allies can do, we want to highlight a few tips that will help these efforts be successful. Help us avoid common pitfalls.
First, I’ve alluded to this already but we want to be clear that these strategies are not limited to things that only men can do – in some contexts any majority group ally or anyone at all can do them. But we also know that one’s position, say in terms of power in the organization, makes it easier for them to act in certain contexts than those with less power. Sometimes it’s better for a male ally to step in when someone is being interrupted than to always have to intervene yourself. Or sometimes male allies are in better positions to advocate for and effect important policy changes.

Make It Clear:
These Strategies Not Limited to Men

- But **position** and **identity** DO matter
- Sometimes in a better position to make change
But like I said earlier, not all men are in an equally powerful position to effect this kind of change – for example, more junior employees or some men of color. We all have different intersecting identities when it comes to things like race, class, gender, sexual orientation. And most of us sometimes are in the majority; sometimes in the minority. Sometimes we need an ally; sometimes we can be an ally (e.g., white folks for people of color; straight folks for LGBTQ). So it’s important to think of this not only in terms of male allies but also majority group allies…To think about when you might be able to be a majority group advocate, even if you are sometimes a minority in another contexts.
Second, it’s important to be clear about what male allies are advocating for exactly. This is not about helping, saving or “fixing” women – in fact, framing it this way is a recipe for disaster. We want to keep the focus on fixing the environment – so male allies are working to fix the environment. Now you may at times in fact be helping an individual woman out – say if you prevent someone from interrupting her, but the goal here is not to save her from this situation but to point out a larger problematic environmental norm and help to change it in the long term so that the environment is better for everyone.
Finally, we need to make it okay to make mistakes. This can be a scary prospect for a lot of people – as these amusing interpretive memes suggest. In fact, many of the men in the NCWIT study expressed having initial concerns like these. So it’s important to assume best intentions and make it okay to talk about mistakes and how to improve in the future.
So moving to action – what CAN male allies do?
This slide highlights the top 10 things male allies reported doing in the NCWIT study. We won’t talk about all of these now but we’re going to mention a few highlights.
First some small but very significant things you can do starting right now. These are things individuals, any of you can do – you don’t have to wait for a fancy program or support from the larger company – you can start enacting these the minute you walk out of the room.
First, listen. Listen to women’s stories and the stories of people from other underrepresented groups in tech. This may seem like such a small thing but I really can’t overstate the importance of this. It’s one of the most important things to do to increase understanding and shift mindsets. These stories alert male allies to pressures and circumstances they might have never noticed and help them better know how to act.

READ QUOTE

Importantly, these men revealed strategies that other men might use to listen to and learn more from their female colleagues. First, some companies provided formal venues in which employees could hear about women’s experiences and have conversations about them. Another started a formal collection of anonymous stories to add a human touch and to make the discussion specific for his own company. Other men’s management style helped to elicit these kinds of stories informally from all their employees. One manager described it this way: “[I wanted to] make sure that everybody on my team was being successful, knowing each person individually, rather than thinking, ‘Well, they are all just engineering units to me.’ No! They are people.”

TIP: If you’re not sure how to begin the conversation, you can mention that you’ve been reading about these experiences and were just wondering if she had any thoughts on these issues.

TIP: The men suggest practicing what you might say in difficult or touchy conversations.
Second, talk to other men. After hearing these stories, men had more detailed examples to share and were better equipped to make the case for change when talking to others in the company. In conversations with other men, they raise awareness about why gender diversity is important, share what they have learned from women’s stories, and intervene privately to correct discriminatory treatment, as needed.

**READ QUOTE**

**Men also observed that identifying which men are the most likely potential supporters was important.** Recognizing that not all men will be open to these conversations, one man in the study described how he decided which men to talk to about these issues:

“I think there’s a category of men who don’t understand why it matters and don’t care and want to spend no time with it. I think there’s a bunch in the middle...and when they get challenged, you know, they’re smart people, so they think it through....I spend no time in the [first] category, because those people aren’t gonna get it, regardless. I spend most time [with] people that are sort of open to the ideas and are willing to talk about it and think about it.

Many of the men found that once they started conversations with other men who were initially resistant, in most cases, they could help take these men a step further.
Men also observed that it was sometimes easier for them to bring up gender issues because they were unlikely to be perceived as speaking in their own self-interest. About half the men believed that when men advocated for gender diversity, they might be seen as more “credible” or “selfless,” since they were not as personally invested in the outcomes of such advocacy. Not that it should be this way but that strategically this could be a good way to at least start a conversation.

One advocate suggested that men can be convincing representatives for gender issues but noted that it should be done carefully.

READ QUOTE
Solicit the opinion of quieter employees during the meeting or after the fact. Ask to hear from the quieter employees or approach them later to see if they had ideas they would like to share.

Intervene when someone is being interrupted or not getting credit. Simply commenting along the lines of, “Let’s let _______ finish, and then we’ll come back to you” can make a big difference.

Find a meeting ally who can support you and help notice subtle biases. If you are the person facilitating a meeting, it can be hard to keep track of all the contributions and directions. Invite a partner to be on the look out for tracking who has spoken, where ideas originate, who wanted to contribute next, and so on.
In general, across industries and occupations, women more frequently experience personality penalties or advice that suggests they are “too abrasive” and need to “tone it down.” In addition, preliminary findings from another study on 125 performance evaluations in a tech company document the fact that women receive 2.5 times as much feedback related to their aggressive communication styles as do men.

READ SLIDE

Interrupt: Watch out for instances where you may make these comments and intervene when you hear others make them. Ask questions like: “What do you mean by that exactly?” or “Do you think we might be operating on some hidden biases here?”

Question “Personality Penalties”

- “Pushy, bossy, aggressive”
- “Has a challenging personality”
- “Sometimes you could tone it down a little”
- “Not a risk-taker; not very confident; not leadership material”
- Doubt Raisers: “Need to see more evidence?”

ncwit.org
Evidence suggests that biases exist when it comes to who gets assigned (or who takes on) certain tasks or responsibilities. Sometimes this manifests in women taking on more organizing, note-taking, or relational kinds of tasks – what Joan Williams (2014) terms “office housework.” It also can result in women being channeled more frequently into technical execution roles (e.g., QA or testing) with less access to core, creative technical roles.

Often managers haven’t even really thought about how they go about assigning tasks, so the first step is to just stop and think about it – what patterns might there be? Can you institute a better process for assigning tasks or think more broadly about who can fill what roles? Encourage others to think about this too.
Also, providing legitimate encouragement is key. Seems like such a simple suggestion and it is but so important. Often when one is a minority in a majority-group environment it feels risky to take on a new role, apply for a promotion or an award. This is why encouragement is so significant – it can be a big factor in helping someone take that step.
These remaining strategies may sometimes be more complicated and be best implemented by managers, supervisors, and organizations as a whole rather than individual male advocates. But if you are a male ally in a leadership position you may also be able to enact some of these on your own.
Several of the allies in the study talked about ways they *actively* recruited women.

**READ QUOTE**

Here’s another approach one of the men described:

*I said I’d like to have two male and two female candidates please, and they just stared at me and said, ‘I don’t think we can -- no one’s ever asked that. I’m not sure we can find them.’ I said, ‘Well, I’m not going to interview anybody until I get two and two.’*

**Other Ideas:**

- Invite female students to apply for internships
- Recruit from nontraditional places (different universities, different departments at the same universities, different job boards)
- Provide promising underrepresented employees with development experiences
Another Example: I went through all of our job descriptions and edited out where there was a gender bias, just in terms of almost what I would have considered beforehand throwaway words. They really weren’t that meaningful. But then I went back and looked at them with a more critical eye and said, “No, these are really much more gender biased. They’re going to put people off from applying.” And then the people that do apply, we’re going to apply that job description to the measurements that we employ when we are talking to them, but they are not appropriate. When I made changes across to some of my staff’s job descriptions, [they asked] why am I changing their job descriptions? So we got to get into that discussion.”

Also, Physical environment counts a lot! **Analyze physical office environment.** As you prepare to bring in candidates for interviews, review the physical space. Just as you want to “tidy your house” for guests, you want to give newbies a welcoming first impression of your space.

For example, research shows that a working space that uses “geeky” stereotypes (e.g., comics, stacked soda cans, computer parts) is less appealing and communicates a lower sense of belonging to young women and to young men who do not resonate with “geeky” characteristics (Cheryan et al., 2011; Cheryan et al., 2009). This reinforces a stereotypical culture that does not fit many people interested in tech.
Another way to be an ally is to consciously develop talent and leaders is through mentorship and sponsorship. While a mentor is more like a coach, a sponsor is someone who advocates for you publicly, makes sure your work is seen by the right people at the right time. You may not even know this is happening. Sponsors are everywhere informally, but we tend to sponsor people like ourselves, so consciously thinking about who else we may want to sponsor even though we don’t think of them immediately.

While female mentors and sponsors are important, women actually benefit greatly from powerful male mentors and sponsors.

**READ QUOTE**

These sponsoring relationships should be tailored to the individual’s needs, but two common suggestions are helping women navigate “hidden rules” in the organization and making technical women’s accomplishments more visible in the organization.

**ALSO on the topic of mentoring, men benefit from having female mentors:** “I think every man needs to have a mentor as a woman once. Because that was very impactful on me.”
Mentoring & Sponsoring Resources

Mentors Advise  Sponsors Act

NCWIT Resources Alert:
Sponsorship Toolkit
Mentoring-in-a-Box

Check out these resources for more info.
Men also noted that another way to advocate was around flexible work policies. Although flextime or other work-life policies might be in place, the implicit culture of an organization often discouraged taking advantage of these policies.

While companies in this study were pursuing various approaches to addressing work-life integration and workload management, many of the men supported flexible work hours for their own employees, allowing them to work from home or leave at certain times, for instance. Some of these men admitted to being wary of these alternative work arrangements at first, but then changing their mind once they either watched their employees become more productive or needed an alternative work arrangement themselves.

“I think men need to put themselves in a position that if you were the primary caregiver for a parent or for a child, as the case may be, would you think about doing the organization any differently than you do right now?”

Contending with work-life integration personally rendered men more empathetic and active in support of policy change and implementation.

An example from a senior leader: “I’m probably one of the few Vice Presidents to have 5 children, and so trying to balance work and life for me, it’s a very important thing. I really try to set the example, and stay off of email at nights, on the weekend. And people are very clear in where my values are…with respect to my family, I think that then that permeates to the organization.”

TIP: Setting aside time to attend family or personal events, publicly utilizing leave policies, and respectfully encouraging employees’ alternative or flexible work hours are some ways men suggest doing this. Also, you can find out more info about work-life in Section 4 of the Male Ally report.
Lastly, As the adage goes, what gets measured gets done. Many of the leaders in our study talked about the importance of establishing metrics and measuring progress for a variety of diversity efforts—from examining the gender and racial/ethnic composition of their workforce to establishing metrics to diversify internship programs, interviews, new hires, promotions, the composition of project teams, and performance appraisals.

READ QUOTE

This will look different in every company. These quotes summarize examples from two different companies:

1. “We had goals, like fifty percent of all our hiring was diverse. So we had some very strong, passionate leaders who had deeply held beliefs about how to do things.”

2. So you [have] a plan for the year, and the plan is based on you setting your milestones or goals….This is what you expect to do, and this is how we’re going to measure it…which is actually a good thing. It forces you to sit down and think about what you do. And I was always asking them to put one in about diversity.

NCWIT can work with your teams if you want to begin to review your current diversity and inclusion efforts and plan for the future. They also have resources on how to release that information publicly if your senior leadership wants to do so.
So it’s time to dive right in and take action. Even if it feels risky at first, go ahead and make an effort. This is how one male ally described it.

**READ QUOTE**

This is an important thing to have discussions about… Share this quote, for instance, and it makes it okay for men to talk about similar fears, risks, challenges they’ve experienced.

“Every person that becomes an advocate had to go through that door where they take the first risk and realize, ‘Oh, that wasn’t so bad.’ So I would talk about the risk-taking that you take the first or second time and how, all of a sudden, it is no longer risk-taking.”
The NCWIT website features the full report.

The Action toolkit also has more information about some of the strategies we’ve talked about here.
Creating Change with the Report

How Can I Use This Report to Help Make Change?

- Make the case for why gender diversity is important
- Talk with men about how they can become advocates and allies for diversity
- Share this information with men who are already advocating but are interested in learning more
- Share this information with those who want to identify and work with male advocates
- Include excerpts or “sound bites” from the report in newsletters, emails, or other communications
- Raise this topic at team meetings, workshops, company events, or similar venues

READ slide about how to use the report. And other ideas from you?
Questions?