

MHCC Listening Space – 16 June 2019

Today is a listening space. We are particularly inviting men to listen to women - not because women are better or our experiences more important, but because our culture is aligned in ways that create particular challenges for women, and violence against women is an increasingly visible concern. To work for gender equality, which benefits both women AND men, we need to listen to each other; to not just know in theory about issues, but to hear how it feels for the women in our community, whom we love and know, to live within that reality.

1. Read through '40 ways gender shapes our days'. Which items apply to you? Which are important to you? Which apply to you but you don't really notice them?
2. Notice your response. How does this list make you feel? What do you need to pay attention to in yourself in order to listen well to others whose experiences are different to yours? What do you need to pay attention to in yourself to be able to share your own experience?
3. If you or someone you love have experienced sexual assault and this discussion causes distress, please do what you need to care for yourself, right now. You may like to find one of the caring professionals within our community to talk to, excuse yourself from the activity to spend time alone, or call a supportive friend outside this community.
4. Either on your own, with a pair or in groups, consider any of the following questions (pairs or groups preferably include two different genders)
 - What struck you as you considered the '40 Ways'?
 - *For women:* What parts of your own experience of being a woman would you like the supportive men of this community to be aware of?
 - *For men:* What parts of women's experiences most challenge you?
 - *For women:* What would you like men to do better to be your allies?
 - *For men:* Pay attention to how you are feeling as you listen, as you attempt not to defend your experience of being a man.
 - What do you do on a daily basis to reduce the risk of you being sexually harassed or assaulted?
 - How does your age influence your experience of gender? What is new at the age you are now compared to earlier life stages?
 - What's good about being a woman? What's hard?
 - If I've asked the wrong questions: ask better ones that reflect your experience.
5. Return to the large group to share observations *but not anyone else's experiences*

We acknowledge this resource is biased towards cisgender experience due to the community participating. If you have a non-binary gender identity we ask your grace to adapt the questions to suit your experience, or opt out completely if that is what you need to do.