

11/2/2011

NHWI

Gender Ambassadors Panel (GAP):
Contemporary Gender Equality Listening Session Report
For Gilford, NH

Gilford, NH

PAMELA LAFLAMME FACILITATOR; SUE TREMBLAY, NOTETAKER

About the New Hampshire's Women's Initiative (NHWI):

The New Hampshire Women's Initiative (NHWI) is a new non-profit organization dedicated to continuing the legacy of success of our merging partners: the Commission on the Status of Women, the Women's Lobby and Alliance, and the Women's Policy Institute. The NHWI mission is to advance social, economic, and political opportunity and equality for women in New Hampshire.

The NHWI has a unique governance structure. Its board is supported by both a Founding Mothers' Panel, comprised of the founders of the merging partners, and a Gender Ambassadors Panel, a group of young women leaders who are interested in better understanding and re-framing the dialogue around gender equality issues in New Hampshire. This multi-generational sphere of influence will help the NHWI leverage both the rich history and accomplishment surrounding women's issues in New Hampshire and at the same time craft a new path forward for gender equality born out of contemporary thinking and needs.

About the Gender Ambassadors Panel (GAP):

The goal of the Gender Ambassadors Panel (GAP) is support the mission of the NHWI by informing its research, outreach, and advocacy with a better understanding of the gender equality issues that younger women and men identify as important to them. GAP members will work toward that goal by hosting Contemporary Gender Equality Listening Sessions in various geographic locations around the State. The Listening Sessions will be facilitated focus groups consisting of six to ten participants engaged in a formal discussion for up to ninety minutes using pre-determined questions. Results will be documented and shared with the NHWI Board. The Listening Session participants will come primarily from the existing networks of GAP members and are expected to be primarily women, however the method can be adapted to reach other networks and populations, including men.

About the Authors:

FACILITATOR BIO: Pamela Laflamme facilitated a meeting of women from several North Country towns. She stated that a report will be generated from the meeting and that final report of all meetings held throughout the state will be available sometime next year. She lives in Gorham, has worked for the City of Berlin as its Planner for 11 years, married, has two children 7 and 11.

NOTETAKER BIO:

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Introduction and Background

Methods:

Gaining insight into a community with the use of focus groups is a commonly used approach to qualitative research. Qualitative research is a systematic approach to understanding human thoughts, behaviors and motivations through thoughtful survey design, observation and inquiry.

The GAP Listening Sessions are designed like focus groups where a facilitator and note-taker work together to gain insight into participant's thoughts and feelings about contemporary gender equality issues facing young women and men in NH.

Prior to conducting the listening sessions, each facilitator and note-taker is provided a facilitation packet that details instructions for conducting an effective focus group. This includes instructions for the specific roles of the facilitator and note-taker, the length of the session and how to draft the report after the listening session.

Location

Participant Background

Seacoast Community Leaders Listening Session Format

The listening session followed a traditional focus group format, which included a two to three minute allotment per question, per person. Each session was designed to last two hours including introductions, participant feedback, a participant exercise, and concluding remarks.

The Listening Session was conducted using an agenda and script provided in the facilitation packet (Appendix A: Listening Session Script). The session began promptly with introductions of the facilitator, note-taker and the participants. The participants introduced themselves by first name, occupation, age, and town of residence.

Summary of Findings:

The Summary of Findings is organized by each question asked at the listening session. Synthesis of material will occur at a later date when all of the listening sessions have been conducted. Please note that participants are identified only by a number to protect their privacy.

Bios:

Participant 1 has been working as an independent contract manager to bring organizations together that work with children 0-6 and coordinate outcomes, and goals.

Participant 7 said she is the owner and manager of a restaurant that has been in operation for 14 years. She feeds people. She was reminded by a few members of the group that she also has two other businesses.

Participant 6 works for a rural health network, and has been working on a bringing students to rural NH so that they can perhaps establish their career here

Participant 3 is the Housing Coordinator for a NH city and is enjoying the job and the team. She is from Colebrook, moved from Boston.

Participant 2 lives in Shelburne, works for [redacted] in a seasonal field program; she would like to make the area better place.

At this point Participant 7 mentioned that men would not have problem telling us what they are good at and noted that all the women were being modest; Participant 2 noted that frequently when she is with a committee of men, you have to repeat what you say and then they take credit for it.

Participant 5 works for [redacted] lives in Gorham, manages the [hospitality.company]; President of a Chamber of Commerce, contract illustrator.

Participant 4 is CFO for CAP in Berlin, a City Councilor, she has 5 children. To the comment about men taking credit for her comments, she commented that she is not afraid to say, "Is that not what I just said."

What about gender equality?

Participant	Comment	Note-taker observation
2	"Why talk about equality?"; she said she is excited not to talk "Old boy" to get her point across.	
1	She was at the National Women's Conference in 1977 and the Conference on the Status of Women in 1984; she is interested to look back. That was a time in history when women who wore provocative clothing at night could have that used against them in a sexual assault case.	
7	There was a law passed that men could no longer rape	

	<p>their wives. Feminism was a big deal in college, and she said she doesn't think about it anymore. She is curious on how things have changed and if they changed.</p>	
2	<p>Has not thought about it.</p>	
7	<p>Thought it was a good sign she did not.</p>	
3	<p>Voiced that she went to college in the early 70s and there has been a huge swing since then and it is radical to see. She has a sister 12 years younger and 3 sons, and gender is a non-issue for them. It is a question of capable or qualified or not. She was a stay at home mom and considered not fulfilled; she was against the cause by raising her own children. She took heat for making those choices. Women are feeling free and a lot of women are doing both. She described moving here in a male dominated industry and being the only female in manufacturing which was not female friendly at the time.</p>	
6	<p>She doesn't think about it and works in an office of mostly women and only two men. There is a generational difference, and she was interested in how others feel.</p>	
5	<p>Studied women's studies in college, and women were the subject in her artwork. She comes from a female household. Her mother was raised to be very traditional</p>	

	stay at home, but she raised her daughters to do what she did not.	
4	Interested in others' perspective. She can relate to her work, and in five programs, she is the only female CFO; however, division directors are all female.	

What brought you here today?

Participant	Comment	Note-taker observation
	Jokes of a "threatening e-mail." Mostly everyone agreed they were interested in the topic as a female and were interested in other's perspectives.	

How to define gender equality?

Participant	Comment	Note-taker observation
4	It goes back to being capable or can they do the job? Is this person capable and that would be gender equality?	
5	Defined it as is it fair for men and women?	
2	Asked, "Who sets the standards for capability?" She works in a male dominated field and finds that if she gets emotional, the standard is that she is not recognized as capable.	
3	She doesn't like the term gender equality. It should be about capabilities and qualifications. The reality is slanted because women in jobs in general are checking on kids and making special	

	trips. In general women have to do more; however, women multi-task better than men do. "We're not equal, we're better."	
6	It's gotten better in the work place but is lost in the home part of that.	
7	We've come a long way as women in the workplace. There is a shift that says sit back and be who we want and doing have to be strong feminist more interested in raising children. Someone is going to raise our children. Come so far, strong and sit back to let men take an upper seat. Don't know if it's so wrong. Balance our lives. Don't know men and women are different. I want to be appreciated for woman that I am.	
2	She likes to be able to storm off and for it to be ok...	
1	Doesn't like the term and doesn't feel it is the right question. Too much about trying to get equal and there were a lot of inequalities. Not completely addressed. She feels it more about how women see themselves and claim who they are. Trouble with gender equality.	
8	Attended women's college and resisted any courses had to do with women. She wrote a book about women as mountaineers. She has been in the construction trades and running crews of males; she	

	has long resisted gender difference and gender equality. Goal is transcending in the box. Whole people male and female try to find what is common and take what is best from male and female. She did note that there are differences in way paid and treated.	
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In NH have you observed gender equality or inequality?

Participant	Comment	Note-taker observation
4	She would go back to work and look around, and it seemed her work, which focuses on social services the bulk of the work which the backbone of the organization, is the women division directors.	Many felt this question was making assume something they aren't sure is still the same issue.
2	She isn't sure when she is the only girl in the room if that is really gender equality.	
7	Felt the come far questions are dated; 30 years ago.	
1	She can be easily irritated by irritating men about gender issues but that it happens just as often with women too.	
7	Daughter is in 8th grade, and she would like to see the class taking care of each other...it has to start way back. Don't see any problems in day to day life but seems as though we are genetically wired to pit against each other. How did we learn to support each other when we started out as these 7th & 8th graders? How can be we be sure young	

	<p>girls are smart and supportive of each other? If we don't all learn skills of looking out for each other we are screwed. Women have to be strong but she sees strong girls get slapped down all the time. People will perceive they are a show off because strong personality. No energy in young girls, ok to be strong.</p>	
8	<p>Has friends who teach and hears kids - young males call women bitches. What does that mean? Amazement and what that means? Can see why it is not ok. Culture images objectifying of women. Images no better than when questions were written.</p>	
1	<p>Said that in media clothing people buy for little girls.</p>	
4	<p>Clothing for the age would not fit and for it is for 18 to 20 year olds.</p>	
7	<p>That is definitely a step backwards.</p>	
5	<p>For instance, if one is in charge of unit in marines that is impressive, but you have to look a certain way... Being blasted and have to be sexually appealing for husband.</p>	
7	<p>All advertising is sexist.</p>	
3	<p>Brought the conversation back to women doing great things. A role that mothers were not in when she was young is empowering today to have so many working mothers. She did mention</p>	

	though that through TV she finds some shows are so disgusting. Abercrombie and Fitch commercials look like porn, and she is sure that means she is showing age more than anything.	
7	Next generation everything fighting for could be going backwards.	
3	Girls still dress for boys. Hours spent on “getting ready” that is a strong message for young women and how they are raised - too much focus on looks.	
2	Pointed out that she thought it was crazy to see women cops in movies or on TV running around in non-sensible shoes.	
5	She would like to show how she can run in those shoes.	
1	Asked if we are really talking about going on in our country are really cultural differences and values differences. Not all about gender.	
8	She has seen wage differences. Being paid less than equivalent male. Hard to know that because she doesn't always know equivalent salaries.	Facilitator noted that there weren't many experiences the group was sharing that were gender inequalities. She sees it a lot in economic development. And with contractor locally, and male/female aren't treated as equals.
5	Wage - directly had experience. Husband works at same place. She makes less, and he had been there 2 years less. She did something about it though and was justly	

	compensated. Happy for household and happy for self.	
7	Doesn't want to think about it. Do a great job the best you can and then there is no baggage of inequality. Creative and love what you do. Encounter all the time. Opening her restaurant was bit of a joke in certain circles and she knew she would prove people wrong and she did. Know to stay positive and fill steam ahead.	
4	Wages and work non-profit looked up all 90's and found all salaries and paid the same and had to fight and show and put foot down. If allowed would act that way. They know not to treat me like that.	
1	You need the resources and the ability to view the situation neutrally.	
3	She hated that often played card of women and whining and detest. Women should just prove themselves and hopefully be noticed. In 90's she worked for company as assistant plant manager. She knew what the previous assistant had been paid, and she was being offered half of the pay. There was a high level of responsibility but she was asked, "Doesn't your husband work?" And she replied, "What does that have to do with it?" Appreciated the work but had to pay accordingly. She has met women that would whine but	

	not stand up. Opposite experience here and thought would not be looked at. Non-issue. Both sides. Deal with idiots some men and some women. Focus on what do well.	
4	Noted there is more pressure to prove self.	

What issues need to be addressing. Discussed with the group that we would be looking for the top three issues that NHWI should be working on and the issues to lobby for...

Participant	Comment	Note-taker observation
7	Failing young girls and going backward in terms of advertising...	
6	Access to women's health; wages.	
3	More convenient opportunities for education, difficult here in the North Country; physical emotional and mental spiritual health of the woman.	
2	Wages; family and affordable day care; incorporate less hyper sexualized imagery. Not just biological sexual; appropriate sexual awareness.	
5	Wage; education; in general and reproductive health for women	
4	Women's health and especially pregnant women access to care in North Country; wage equality analyze culture vs. old; define gender equality. What is the meaning of gender equality?	
8	Access to nutritious foods in a food desert; wage and benefit	

Participant	Comment	Note-taker observation
3	<p>Liked big picture ideas – finding the smartest funniest innovative person is a focus of more than gender equality. Vision for all should be healthy communities. Much more important. Man’s world will get comments and but we need to let go. Respectful to them and focus on doing job well to help community go forward. Thinking bigger things that those. How to effect change in community. Job creation, environment to live in take care of bodies and selves. How do I effect change as person?</p>	
4	Pressures in school.	
1	<p>Articulated the question is about gender inequality is limiting and bring different pieces to work together. There should be a bigger question.</p>	
7	Stated that was nicely said.	
3	<p>Husband appreciates her business and that has a powerful impact. Do it in a way to look at a broader picture. Want to affect the whole planet. Energy to do good things. Thinking way past issue of gender equality. Don’t want to stick and have not grown if still thinking.</p>	
8	<p>Knows many ignorant women and men who usually act in their own self-interest. But overall NH is known for being compassionate community where people help each</p>	

	<p>other. What we are about as a state. Consistent with values. Differences about cultural divide. Class issues or inability to listen. Give space to express them. Take what women's social expectation are and model good listening and caring as how to building community and social capital.</p>	
7	<p>Listening to the women present speak shows how to look at good qualities of gender. Was not me, me, me, through the questions. Feminism was about women that were not going to be equal unless we were going to be men. It should be about everyone making the world a better place. Thoughtful.</p>	
2	<p>She likes to work in dirt, read Harper's Bazaar, practice dog sledding and can blend her experiences and apply to her life style.</p>	
5	<p>It is refreshing to ask whether I want to say home or not and have option to do what I am comfortable with...</p>	
4	<p>Enjoyed and learned; all agree they enjoyed the discussion and that it was interesting.</p>	
6	<p>Interesting, liked hearing good to see how things have changed.</p>	

Closing remarks from participants:

Limitations:

Facilitator and Note-taker observations and concluding thoughts:

Appendix A: Listening Session Script

I. Welcome and Introductions

- Thank participants for coming
- Distribute participant information sheets (and agendas if using)
- Introduce facilitator and note taker
- Overview of New Hampshire Women's Initiative
 - The New Hampshire Women's Initiative is a new non-profit organization
 - A unification of:
 - The Commission on the Status of Women
 - The Women's Lobby and Alliance
 - The Women's Policy Institute
 - ***NHWI Mission: To advance social, economic and political opportunity and equality for women in New Hampshire.***
 - Has a Board of Directors and two advisory panels
 - Founding Mothers
 - Gender Ambassadors Panel
- Objective of Listening Sessions & GAP
 - Gender Ambassadors Panel will support the mission of the NHWI through researching and better understanding the gender equality issues that younger women and men identify as important to them.

- Members of GAP will host a series of Contemporary Gender Equality Listening Sessions in various geographic locations around the State.
- Introduction of participants: *First name, age, town, occupation*

II. Overview of the Process

- Description of plan for Listening Session by facilitator
- How discussion will be documented during the Session
- How a report will be prepared after the Session
- Assurance of confidentiality (inform participants that any report will only identify participants by age, zip code, and industry/occupation)

I. Establishment of Ground Rules

- Ground rules encourage active and honest participation and a safe discussion environment.
- If a participant violates a ground rule, they will be politely reminded of the ground rule.
- If a participant continues to violate a ground rule, they will be asked to leave the group.

Ground Rules (The 5 A's)

Participants of this group...

- Agree to maintain confidentiality
- Agree that there are no “right or wrong” answers to the questions
- Agree to speak honestly based on our own experiences
- Agree that only one person will speak at a time
- Agree to respond to one another politely and respectfully

II. Discussion of Contemporary Gender Equality

1) What made you interested in attending today's listening session on gender equality?

2) How do you define the term gender equality?

What does gender equality mean to you?

What does gender equality not mean to you?

What issues or subjects do you think about when you think of gender equality?

3) In New Hampshire, have you experienced or observed gender equality or inequality?

III. Post-it Note Exercise

What issues relating to gender equality do you think are most important for the New Hampshire Women's Initiative to address?

(Each participant receives 3 standard yellow Post-it notes and a black sharpie; they must write their top three issues, one per Post-it note. Ask them to put the Post-its up on a white board or wall. Then each person gets one red dot. They must place their red dot on their top issue, which doesn't have to be one of the ones they originally wrote.)

** Facilitator must collect the Post-its and return to the GAP Committee when complete*

IV. Wrap-up

- Do you have any other thoughts or ideas that you really want to share about gender equality in NH?
- Thank you to participants by facilitator
- Collect participant information sheets; distribute NHWI information sheets

V. Adjourn