## Re-Writing the Man Code: Problem solving how we can develop more Gender-Inclusive Spaces
**Time Required – 1.5hrs**

**Objectives:** To help post-secondary and senior high school students develop an analysis of sexism and non-inclusive environments within the Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM) field.

**Materials –** Chalkboard, flipchart paper or poster board.

**Facilitator's Notes**:

> *"I don't think the impact of workplace culture can be overstated..." - Ryan Holmes, Hootsuite*

Science, Technology, Engineering and Math related fields have a reputation of not being the most inviting field for women.

A 2008 study by the Center for Work-Life Policy determined that more than 52% of women in private-sector science and tech-related careers leave and don't come back. The conversation is not about whether it is the fault of individual men in the field, but how we can promote safer and more gender equitable study environments and workplaces.

While there needs to be an focus on raising the interest, awareness of the reality of and retaining young women in STEM, we also need to reframe the conversation towards what is at stake if we don't seek gender balance and safer spaces within the field. To create and maintain environments in STEM where creative brilliance flourishes, we must be focused on nurturing inclusion.

**This exercise allows students to:**

- *Explore how impact of gender inequality plays out within the STEM field;*
- *Give some context as to what the impacts are for all genders;*
- *Increase awareness of the lived reality of life for various women in Tech;*
- *Have students build and grow empathy;*
- *Develop the ability to problem solve around every day experiences and embrace the impact their everyday choices and attitudes can make towards change.*

**Activity**

1. Have students read Hootsuite CEO Ryan Holmes' blog piece for the Wall Street Journal **'Culture or Nurture? Getting to the Bottom of Tech's Gender Imbalance'**

   > "Tech, for all of its obsessions with innovation, disruption and challenging stale ideas, remains in many respects an old boys' club. Even at some of the most progressive companies, the gender imbalance is pronounced."

2. Using the chalkboard or large sheets of paper, either break the class into groups or as a whole group, and begin a conversation that will fill in answers to the following questions:

   - What do you like about being a man in STEM fields, or how does the current state of the overall industry work to your advantage?

   - What do you not like about being a man in STEM fields, or how does the current state of the overall industry work to your disadvantage?

   - What do you like about being a woman in STEM fields, or how does the current state of the overall industry work to your advantage?

   - What do you not like about being a woman in STEM fields, or how does the current state of the overall industry work to your disadvantage?

3. 3) Gather the group together to collectively discuss and unpack the answers. How many of them are more fact versus myth? What is surprising for the group? How do limiting gender roles impact the answers for all genders?

4. Lead a conversation around how 'Diversity of Thought and Problem Solving Approaches', when they come from different perspectives and lived experiences (specifically from all genders), is a driver of innovation and makes for a leading environment in any industry.

5. What are some ways we can change the state of and perception of the industry? What would make STEM related fields more inclusive and dynamic spaces for all genders?

6. What are the different roles men can play to promote these goals (i.e. as students, educators, peers, managers, field leaders, etc.)?

**Conclusion**

By having these conversations where students of all genders can become more familiar with and discuss these issues, we can help raise awareness about the impact of gender inequality and unsafe spaces on women and help men understand how this is also to their disadvantage.  This dialogue can help nurture and create change among current and future leaders within the STEM community.

Visit **whiteribbon.ca** and **itstartswithyou.ca** for additional resources such as posters, digital stories, e-learning modules, and other social marketing tools to help you address gender equality and violence against women in the classroom and in the community.

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IT STARTS WITH YOU.
IT STAYS WITH HIM.