



Making Workplaces Truly Equal, Not Just On Paper

Right now, most workplaces focus on surface-level inclusion - hiring more women or ticking the POSH compliance box.

A truly gender-transformative workplace asks a bigger question: Why is there inequality in the first place, and how do we fix the system that causes it? It's not about helping women fit into the old system. It's about changing the system so it works for everyone. What does that actually mean?

We need to change three things:

1. Change the unwritten rules: We all have invisible rules like "leaders should always be available" or "mothers can't handle tough projects" or "caregiving is women's work." A transformative workplace questions these rules –

- Leadership is not about long hours, it's about good decisions.
- Caregiving is not just for mothers - it's for all parents.
- Power is shared, not held by a few people at the top.

2. Change the HR systems: Good intentions don't work if the systems are biased.

- Pay: Check salaries regularly to find and fix pay gaps. Pay for skills, not for negotiation.
- Language: Check your job ads and appraisal forms. Words like "aggressive" or "nurturing" push people away. Keep it neutral.
- Parental leave: Give equal leave to all parents, and make sure fathers / partners have to take some of it. If only mothers take leave, only mothers get penalized.

3. Change the daily culture to make it safe:

Safety: Zero tolerance for harassment, and not just in policy - in action. Plus basic things like safe transport, well-lit spaces, and inclusive washrooms.

Learning: One training session doesn't change mindsets. We need regular, honest conversations where people can reflect on their own biases without fear.

How do we know it's working? Don't just count heads. Track these three things:

Growth: Are women getting promoted and staying at the same rate as men?

Pay: Is there still a pay gap for the same work?

Feeling of safety: When you ask staff anonymously, do they feel safe, respected, and heard?

In short: Counting women is inclusion. Changing the rules, systems, and culture so that everyone can thrive - that's transformation.