Creating a Thriving Ecosystem for High-Achieving Women

Understanding and Challenging Tall Poppy Syndrome

What prevents us from creating workplaces for unique, bold and talented women to grow, flourish and thrive?

A harmful constellation of beliefs (both unconscious and conscious), behaviours, cultural messaging, and micro-aggressions is undermining women’s success, growth and achievement in workplaces across Canada and globally. An analysis of data gathered from a 2018 study points to a significant set of challenges facing women, with an overwhelming 87% of respondents indicating that they have felt their achievements at work undermined. This phenomenon, known as ‘Tall Poppy Syndrome’ (TPS), affects mental health, self-confidence, teams and organizational success. TPS is a toxic organizational virus that has far-reaching and devastating impacts if left unaddressed. This silent systemic syndrome needs to be acknowledged and challenged. Organizations can be transformed by strengthening equitable, inclusive, and productive workplace behaviours and building cultures of trust that genuinely encourage high achievers to grow, flourish and lead.

Creating a Thriving Ecosystem for High-Achieving Women includes two workshops and resources designed to help organizations tackle TPS.

By addressing this silent systemic syndrome, dynamic and healthy workplaces can be created where the insights, potential and achievements of women can flourish. Confronting this issue is critical to harnessing women’s talents to best serve an organization’s goals.

In this transformative program, participants will:

• Gain an ability to identify and recognize the indicators and patterns of TPS
• Understand the impacts of TPS at personal, organizational and societal levels
• Develop clear insights into culturally imprinted beliefs that form bias (such as resistance to women’s authority)
• Learn to recognize harmful microaggressions (such as withholding praise)
• Identify the underlying feelings (such as envy, scarcity, insecurity, and mistrust) that fuel TPS
• Learn how to best create and shape professional interactions, cultures and communities that embrace successful and high-achieving women
• Consider the critical importance of leadership in transforming cultures where TPS exists
• Identify and prepare actionable steps and strategies that target TPS
Module One: Understanding Tall Poppy Syndrome

Duration: 3 hours

This module draws on the data and research from The Tallest Poppy as participants explore their own experiences with TPS, as either targets, witnesses or cutters. Participants will have the opportunity to clearly recognize the pervasive extent of TPS in the workplace and identify the corrosive impacts of TPS at personal, organizational and societal levels. They will develop clear insights into the beliefs, behaviours and feelings that fuel TPS and reflect on what can be done to transform mindsets, behaviours and workplace cultures so that women can fully thrive.

Module Two: Creating Healthy Workplace Ecosystems

Duration: 3 hours

This module builds on the personal and organizational awareness work of Module One and integrates principles of trust, equity, diversity, inclusion, mental health and strong leadership to support participants in transforming workplace cultures. Participants will learn how to best create and shape professional interactions, cultures and communities that embrace successful and talented women. In addition, participants will identify and prepare concrete actionable steps to target TPS and assess the health of their workplace for fueling women’s empowerment, confidence and achievement.

Course Content

Each module includes a presentation of the material (PPT, videos, and/or text), interactive learning experiences to deepen participant understanding of key concepts and principles, reflective exercises to nurture heightened awareness, and templates for planning actionable steps to tackle TPS.

For further information, please contact:

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