

Women's wellness



"If you prioritise yourself, you are going to save yourself."

Gabrielle Union

Historically, women may have been pitted against one another in professional environments. There was a view that there weren't enough roles for women, particularly in leadership, so it became every woman for themselves.

However, research shows that women are more likely to succeed when they surround themselves with a close network of women, while the same link doesn't exist for men. Why? It's no secret that women face more challenges on the road to success than men, but when they form close network connections and are able to share their skills, experiences, and expertise, they learn from each other and are more likely to succeed as a result.

You might recognise the term 'girl power' from a Spice Girls album in the nineties, but beyond that, it refers to the power and impact that women and female-identifying individuals have when they support each other and work together.

It doesn't matter who you are or what stage of life you're in – perhaps you're single and just starting your career, working a full-time job as well as your side hustle, divorced and returning to university, a brand-new mum, a mum with four children and juggling work, just married, or about to retire – we are all on different journeys. By supporting each other, we lift each other up and which can help us to achieve our individual and collective goals.

How to support women professionally and personally

1 Encourage them to go for it
 Women are less likely to go for opportunities, even if they are well-qualified for them. Remind them of their accomplishments and encourage them to back themselves.

2 Amplify women's voices
 Women are generally given less credit for ideas and are more likely to be interrupted when talking. Make sure women's voices are heard – if they are interrupted, ask for them finish what they were saying. Champion women's ideas and make sure they are given credit.

3 Give constructive feedback
 Women receive less constructive and specific feedback that can be transformed into actions in comparison to their male counterparts. Find opportunities to give helpful and specific feedback that will enable development. Don't forget to seek feedback for yourself as well.

4 Challenge bias (unconscious and conscious)
 If you see bias impacting the women around you, challenge it – this includes your own bias. If someone describes a woman as being rude or bossy, ask them if they would describe a man in the same way for doing the exact same thing? Chances are they wouldn't, and this will challenge their bias.

5 Expand your network and make meaningful connections
 Prioritise making meaningful connections with likeminded people and keep communication open. Like all relationships, these connections need to be nurtured so that all parties get maximum value from them.

6 Celebrate success
 Celebrate each other's success often, both in formal and informal settings. Success comes in many forms and will look different for everyone – celebrate the big milestones and the smaller achievements.

7 Know when to reach out
 Some things we can manage on our own, but there are some things we can't. Knowing the difference is another important skill.