

URL: https://ecorner.stanford.edu/?post_type=snippet&p=57017

Tracy Chou, a prominent advocate for increasing diversity in tech companies, shares advice that can serve as a powerful tool for recognizing when inclusiveness might be an issue: Ask yourself, "Who's not in the room?" She also warns people not to expect members of underrepresented groups to do all the work of raising awareness about diversity and inclusion, such as event organizing and program implementation.



Transcript

to advocate for others.. One of the most powerful things is thinking about who's not in the room and advocating for them.. And I see this even in our diversity and inclusion circles and the people that I work with, sometimes we get very fixated on the particular groups we are advocating for.. So, there's women in tech.. There's Black and Brown people in tech.. And I also realize there's many people who are not even represented in the room because they're so marginalized.. There's no native people in many of these rooms.. We don't have a lot of diversity of religion.. We're not talking about, what is the experience like to be Muslim in our tech companies.. So there's so many other people who are not even in these rooms..

So that exercise of thinking about who's not here, and can I try to at least give them a little bit of a voice, or at least call attention to the fact that they're not here.. How can we start to solve these problems? I think it's important that we don't just let the people who are from underrepresented groups do all the work of trying to push for diversity and inclusion.. It often happens where, the one woman in the room will be asked to do the work of diversity, plan this panel, or to invite the speaker, or mentor the younger people.. And, I think that a lot of times those people from underrepresented groups will feel some of that burden to do that work and they want to do it.. But it's also unfair to ask those people to do all that work all the time.. And so, for those people who have more bandwidth, aren't necessarily from those groups, to be able to spend that time to advocate for others is really powerful.. It's a bit tricky sometimes because you want to amplify these voices that aren't heard as much, and help to bring people into the room, but you also don't want to take up the space there.. So there have been some cases of people who wanted to be helpful, but ended up hogging all the limelight.. Instead of giving the stage to people who are traditionally underrepresented, or aren't getting that stage time.. Another thing that all of us can do is push for just better processes in general..

In startups in particular, it's pretty easy because there are often no processes at all.. So, introducing some basic ones can be very helpful.. Around things like hiring, for example,..