



Blind spots

Women in leadership

Discussion guide

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This discussion guide can be used in large and small group meetings and events to generate dialogue and self-awareness on the issue of women in leadership.

Please note

In order to save the text being typed into the guides, save a copy of the pdf to your computer first and then add text to the file.

15
mins.

Getting started

In April 2014, PwC delivered Aspire to Lead—its first-ever global forum focused on women and leadership. The event featured Sheryl Sandberg, Facebook COO, author, and founder of LeanIn.org, who spoke about her views on women, work, and the will to lead.

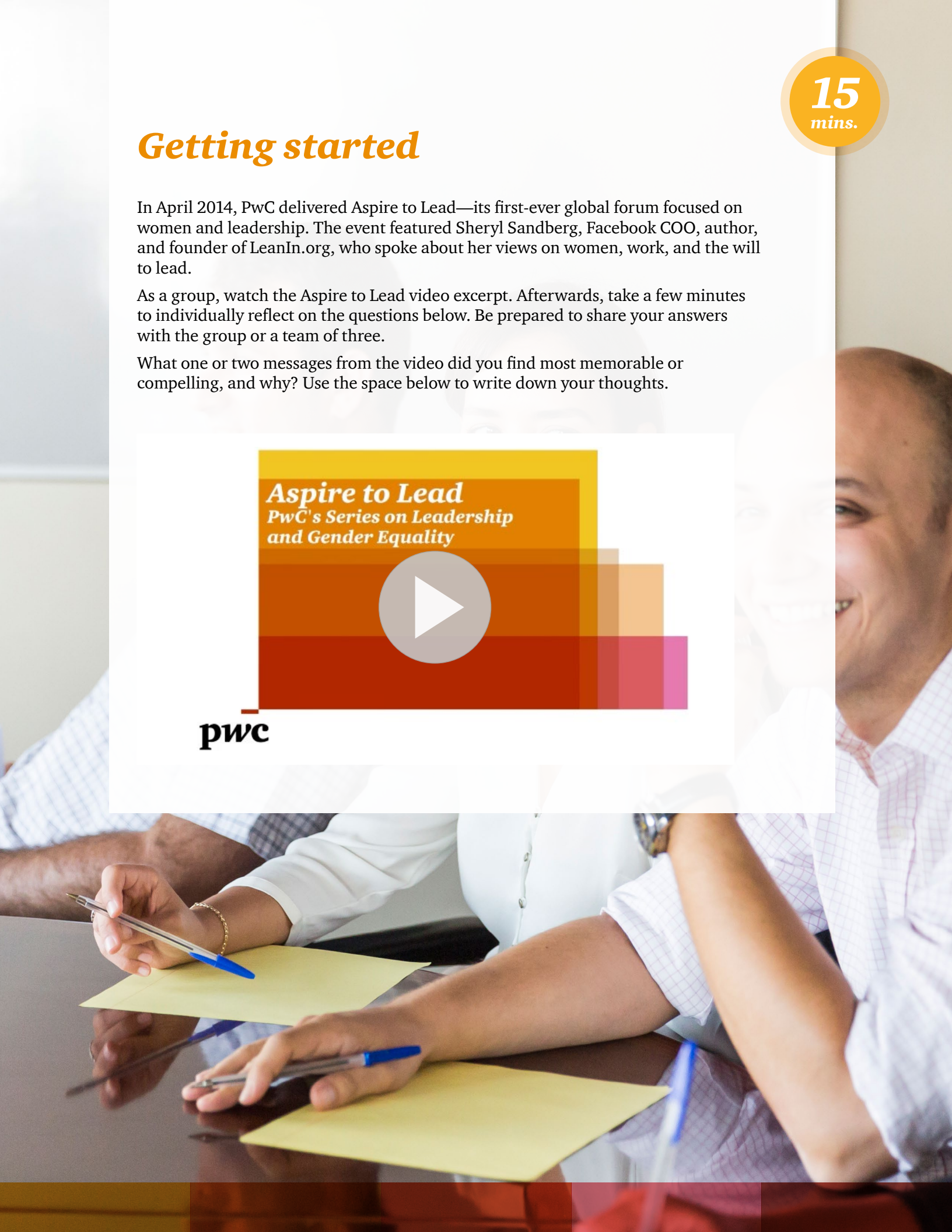
As a group, watch the Aspire to Lead video excerpt. Afterwards, take a few minutes to individually reflect on the questions below. Be prepared to share your answers with the group or a team of three.

What one or two messages from the video did you find most memorable or compelling, and why? Use the space below to write down your thoughts.

Aspire to Lead
*PwC's Series on Leadership
and Gender Equality*



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Discussion questions

Gender and leadership: 10 minutes

Sheryl opened her speech by saying “Men still run the world.”

- Do you believe that it matters that men hold a majority of leadership positions in the world? Why or why not?
- What potential personal or professional barriers do you feel might be impacting women from reaching the highest levels of leadership in the corporate world?
- In a *Study in Leadership—Women Do it Better than Men*—by Zenger and Folkman, they examined the 16 competencies that top leaders exemplify most. Their results showed that men and women were almost equally represented in each competency. Do you believe that men or women make better leaders, or do you believe that leadership is gender neutral? Explain your response.

What makes a good leader?

Top 16 competencies top leaders exemplify most

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Takes initiative | 9. Establishes stretch goals |
| 2. Practices self-development | 10. Champions changes |
| 3. Displays high integrity and honesty | 11. Solves problems and analyzes issues |
| 4. Drives for results | 12. Communicates powerfully and prolifically |
| 5. Develops others | 13. Connects the group to the outside world |
| 6. Inspires and motivates others | 14. Innovates |
| 7. Builds relationships | 15. Technical and professional expertise |
| 8. Collaboration and teamwork | 16. Develops strategic perspective |

Source: Zenger-Folkman (2012) A Study in Leadership – Women do it Better than Men, <http://www.zfco.com/media/articles/ZFco.WP.WomenBetterThanMen.033012.pdf>



Discussion questions (cont'd)

Gender norms: 10 minutes

Sheryl said, “We never really call boys bossy, or very rarely, because when a boy leads, it’s expected. But when a girl leads, it’s negative.” This is an example of gender norms and stereotypes.

- Gender norms start early and often carry through many stages of one’s life. How might the gender roles we see at home shape children’s thoughts?
- What messages are boys and girls given at school? How might they be treated differently?
- According to research from The Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media, “the more hours of TV a girl watches, the fewer options she thinks she has in life. And the more hours a boy watches, the more sexist his views become. So clearly, there’s a very negative message coming through for kids.” How do you feel media impacts the options boys and girls see for themselves?

Gender in the workplace: 15 minutes

Studies show that men will apply for a role when they meet 60% of the criteria, whereas women will often wait until they feel they meet 100% of the criteria before applying.

- Why do you think this might be happening?
- Consider a time when you or someone you know may have passed on an opportunity—what might have influenced your/their decision? What was the short and long term impact?
- What can be done to encourage women?



Discussion questions (cont'd)

Gender in the workplace: 15 minutes (continued)

A 2012 Brigham Young study found that men dominate the speaking time in conference meetings—talking 75% of the time while women speak only 25% of the time. Another study found that both men and women interrupt women more often during conversations.

- Have you observed this in your interactions?
- What can you do to encourage equal contributions during meetings?

A Harvard Business School case study illustrated the likeability/competency trade off in the workplace. They found that success and likeability were positively correlated for men; men who were successful were also well liked. On the other hand, success and likeability were negatively correlated for women; women who were regarded as successful were viewed as unlikeable.

- Where have you seen this dynamic—at school, at work, in politics, etc.?
- What do you believe might be causing this?



10
mins.

Self-reflection and action planning

Use the questions below to gain clarity on your behaviors and mindsets. Be honest with your responses. This is for your reference only.

How often do I...

1: Almost always

5: Almost never

• Work to better understand any potential blind spots as it relates to gender?	1	2	3	4	5
• Ask questions to understand other people's experiences?	1	2	3	4	5
• Seek gender diversity when assembling a team or planning a meeting?	1	2	3	4	5
• Avoid stereotypical language when making introductions?	1	2	3	4	5
• Assign tasks based on skills versus gender stereotypes?	1	2	3	4	5
• Look objectively at performance (e.g. I judge the same behavior equally when exhibited by a man vs. a woman)?	1	2	3	4	5

How comfortable am I with...

1: Very comfortable

5: Very uncomfortable

• Speaking up when I'm the only man/woman in the room?	1	2	3	4	5
• Encouraging everyone to share his/her perspective during a discussion?	1	2	3	4	5
• Listening to someone's perspective even if it doesn't match my own?	1	2	3	4	5
• Providing feedback to people who are a different gender from me?	1	2	3	4	5
• Mentoring, or asking for mentoring from people who are a different gender from me?	1	2	3	4	5
• Speaking up if I observe a lack of diversity?	1	2	3	4	5
• Networking/socializing with people who are a different gender?	1	2	3	4	5

continued



Self-reflection and action planning (cont'd)

Based on your responses to the items on the previous page and to the earlier discussion questions, identify key action items that you will commit to working on as part of your goal of help close the leadership gap. Share your commitment with your group and others to help you stay accountable.

Actions I will commit to:

1.

2.

3.



To learn more, visit:

<https://www.pwc.com/us/blindspots>

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