

Illinois Diversity Council
13th Annual IL Women's Conference
Concurrent Session 2 from 10:15 – 11:00 am

Birds of a Feather: Professional Association Organizations

We've earned straight A's: Achievement, Acceleration, Adaptability & Advancement and much of that is attributed to those persons, networks, and professional organization affiliation that we are aligned with. We'll hear from leaders and members of Professional Association Organizations on the value proposition of their mission, vision, and values. This supports creating opportunities where we soar and where our capabilities are colorful because "Birds of the Same Feather, Flock Together!"

We Found A New Route! Advancing & Growing in Alternate Careers

According to the 2020 Women in the Workplace study, co-authored by McKinsey and LeanIn.org, 1 in 4 women are now considering leaving the workplace or downshifting their careers. Some of these women seeking to transition out of the workplace post the pandemic are turning to entrepreneurship as an opportunity to pivot. A research survey from Gusto found that approximately 40% of female entrepreneurs launched their businesses as a direct result of the pandemic. In an interconnected digital world, what are ways in which entrepreneurship and globalization connect women? How can women find adequate resources to not only survive as entrepreneurs but flourish? How can we open doors to women to enter into alternative and "non-traditional" careers and roles in the workplace?

Healthy Women, Healthy Communities

Considering that 1/3 of our life is spent at work, many are beginning to explore how our work can impact our mental health. Research has shown us that almost half of women believe that work is a contributing factor to their mental health and wellness. Furthermore, women who work full-time are 25% more likely to experience anxiety and 38% more likely to experience depression.

Women are also at a much higher risk of developing a mental illness due to gender bias and gender-based harassment. 87% of women believe that mental health is their sole responsibility and only one in three women have offered to help another colleague with a mental health issue. Mental Health is becoming a more prominent topic throughout the world as we continue to see an increase in mental illness. While it is satisfying to see this type of dialogue is now more accepted in the workplace, organizations need to think beyond just supporting their employees' need to take a mental rest day.

Beyond our personal lives, work stress is a large contributor to overall mental stress. Companies need to look for ways in which they can reduce work stress and burnout and actively support their employees' mental health. How can companies strive to create initiatives or policy changes that result in less work stress on employees? What conversations can we have with our managers, coworkers or direct reports to ensure we are fostering an environment that promotes mental wellness? How can employers assist in creating an environment that can improve our mental health and address potential mental illness? How can women build each other up and provide positive relationships that encourage positive mental health?