IMPACT RESEARCH SAYS

Can put women in a stressful double-bind where they are either too soft or too hard and never just right.

“She comes across as abrasive.”

To be perceived as competent leaders women are expected to be both assertive and warm.¹

WHAT TO DO INSTEAD

Shift attention away from style and focus on her work performance.

IMPACT RESEARCH SAYS

Diminishes women’s contributions, relegating them to “supporting” rather than “central/leading” roles.

“She’s so helpful.”

When women are praised for their supportiveness, they are less likely to be thought of as leaders.²

WHAT TO DO INSTEAD

Describe her contributions to the project or team.

IMPACT RESEARCH SAYS

Puts unfair pressure on women to monitor and manage their emotional expressions.

“She gets overly emotional.”

Women are seen as less competent and less deserving of high status positions when they display anger.³

WHAT TO DO INSTEAD

Describe the consequences of her behavior without using labels.

Words reflect workplace culture and can reinforce negative gender stereotypes.

Stop using these common words and phrases, which harm women’s advancement opportunities, and focus on performance and outcomes instead.
Undermines women's identity and perceptions of their leadership abilities.

"SHE LACKS LEADERSHIP GRAVITAS."

Women are often not perceived as capable leaders, despite qualifications and performance.4

WHAT TO DO INSTEAD
Stop using code and explain what you mean other than "not her."

Undermines and discredits women’s competence and qualifications to offer critical feedback.

"SHE SHOULD STOP BEING SO JUDGMENTAL."

When a woman gives critical feedback, people may brush her off as being incompetent.5

WHAT TO DO INSTEAD
Don’t make it about leadership style, but whether she is demonstrating good judgment.

IMPACT

RESEARCH SAYS

PAY ATTENTION
Is the language you use different for women and men?

QUESTION YOURSELF
Are you unintentionally holding women to a higher standard?

ASK FOR HELP
Ask someone you trust to review your work for gendered language.

FLIP THE SCRIPT


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