

Practicing Allyship

Purpose

This document provides guidance about how to be an aspiring ally and actively support the rights of a minority or marginalized group without being a member of it. Strategies include self-reflection and taking accountability, educating yourself, prioritizing the perspectives of those with lived experience, and take action/advocate/empower.

To learn more, please review examples of allyship throughout history and additional resources.

Self-reflect and take accountability

- Recognize that privilege is power. Take time to identify the privileges you have and how they have benefitted you in different situations
- Reflect and acknowledge how inaction is part of the problem

Educate yourself

- Attend a Business Resource Group (BRG) meeting or event
- Read, listen or watch books, documentaries, or podcasts to learn about people's unique identities and their strengths
- Learn about intersectionality and how identities can interact and overlap

Prioritize the perspectives of those with lived experience

- Show up with humility; resist assuming you know what others need. Ask instead.
- Understand you are not there to save or rescue anyone. As Lilla Watson, indigenous Australian, said, "If you have come here to help me you are wasting your time, but if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together."

Take action/advocate/empower

- Reflect and confront your biases
- Consider how to leverage your privilege to elevate or amplify the words and perspectives of people without those same privileges
- Don't let the fear of saying the wrong thing keep you from trying

Examples of allyship throughout history

- Stonewall riots - In 1969, Black Panthers, civil rights activists, and LGBTQ+ people joined forces to protest police brutality.
- Men's League for Women's Suffrage - Founded in 1909, men used their positions of power as lawyers, legislators, and professors to give women a platform to speak and gain a better place in society.
- After experiencing discrimination, fighting for self-determination, and establishing the Physically Disabled Students Center at the University of California Berkeley, Ed Roberts, Hale Zukas, Jan McEwan Brown, John Hessler, Phil Draper and Dick Santos joined forces to lead a movement that made university life accessible to all in the 1970's.
- Civil rights movement - White allies, such as Leslie W. Dunbar, Virginia Durr, and Anne Braden, used their privilege to push against institutional racism and organize in their communities.

Additional Resources

- WA State Business Resource Groups (BRGs) - <https://inside.ofm.wa.gov/equity-and-belonging/business-resource-groups>
- Link to DEI glossary from State HR once updated: <https://ofm.wa.gov/sites/default/files/public/shr/Diversity/SubCommit/DEI-Glossary%20of%20Equity%20-%20Related%20Terms.pdf>
- Ally vs Accomplice <https://www.ywcaworks.org/blogs/ywca/tue-12212021-1103/whats-difference-between-ally-and-accomplice>