

Becoming an Ally

What Is an Ally?

An ally is typically a member of advantaged social groups who uses social power to take a stand against social injustice directed at targeted groups (Whites who speak out against racism, men who are anti-sexist). An ally works to be an agent of social change rather than an agent of oppression.

Characteristics of an Ally

- Feels good about own social group membership, is comfortable and proud of own identity
- Takes responsibility for learning about own and targeted group heritage, culture and experience, and how oppression works in everyday life
- Listens to and respects the perspectives and experiences of targeted group members
- Acknowledges unearned privileges received as a result of advantaged status and works to eliminate or change privileges into rights that targeted group members also enjoy
- Recognizes that unlearning oppressive beliefs and actions is a life-long process, not a single event, and welcomes each learning opportunity
- Is willing to take risks, try new behaviors, act in spite of own fear and resistance from other advantaged group members
- Takes care of self to avoid burn-out
- Acts against social injustice because it is in her/his/hir own self-interest to do so (as well as in the interest of targeted group members)
- Is willing to made mistakes, learn from them and try again
- Is willing to be confronted about own behavior and attitudes and consider change
- Is committed to taking action against social injustice in own sphere of influence
- Understands own growth and response patterns and when she/he/ze is on a learning edge
- Understands the connections among all forms of social injustice

- Believes she/he/ze can make a difference by acting and speaking out against social injustice
- Knows how to cultivate support from other allies