Being an Ally to Communities that Aren’t Your Own

What Can You Do?

- Learn about yourself, oppression, privilege, entitlement, inclusion and difference in regard to your University, community, or area.
- Challenge prejudice or exclusionary beliefs held by your friends, family, co-workers and peers through open and honest dialogue.
- Talk with your friends about your differences and similarities.
- Consider what messages you are expressing through the language you use, make intentional choices about your language use that reflect your values.
- Build self-awareness in regard to your thoughts and behaviors as they relate to oppression.
- Promote and develop allies whenever possible.
- Find ways to support inclusive community events creatively – volunteer for childcare, run errands, sell t-shirts at conferences, set-up, clean-up, decorate, and help out.
- Take political action – this may be in support of a campaign, cause, or simply thinking carefully about where your money goes and making choices about your spending that reflect your values.
- Start an affinity group with others who share an experience or identity you’d like to discuss.
- Learn from your discomfort, be curious, explore and set aside defensiveness when you can.
- Strive to create and support a strong, safe, welcoming, equitable community for all people.

People Who Are Allies...

- Take the initiative to find the information and resources they need to grow and learn more, rather than depending upon the community they are working to support for their education.
- Believe that the campus and community is enriched by the presence of a wide range of experiences, perspectives, identities and beliefs.
- Work hard to develop a sense of compassion for all people, and diminish their prejudices, assumptions, and any anger towards those who hold different values, beliefs or identities.
- Work within their own community and/or identity group to create and sustain meaningful change.
- Discuss issues in a non-judgmental manner and develop a sense of curiosity.
- Have a great sense of humor.
- Display a visible sign of their support.
- Know which battles to pick.
- Assist with support and informational resources whenever possible.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Use inclusive language and avoid stereotyping.
- Work both to interrupt prejudice and discrimination in the moment, but also work strategically for long-term social change in a variety of ways.
- Respect the space of the community they work to support – they know when it is appropriate to join in and participate, and when it is appropriate to respect and stay out of ‘community only’ space which is necessary for support and survival.

Written & Compiled by Erin M. Pullin, M.S.O.D. & Christina Davis, M.Ed.
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Some Suggested Readings to Pick Up:


Some Suggested Websites for Allies to Various Communities to Check Out:

AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) – www.actupny.org
American Association of People with Disabilities – www.aapd.com
American Civil Liberties Union – www.aclu.org
Amnesty International – www.amnestyusa.org
Black Radical Congress – www.blackradicalcongress.org
Campus Hate Crimes Prevention Program – www.stophate.org
Challenging White Supremacy – www.cwsworkshop.org
Colours of Resistance – www.colours.mahost.org
Fight Hate, Promote Tolerance – www.tolerance.org
Gay & Lesbian Anti-Defamation – www.glaad.org
Gay, Lesbian, & Straight Education Network – www.glsen.org
Global Exchange – www.globalexchange.org
Human Rights Watch – www.hrw.org
Intersex Society of North America – www.isna.org
LGBT Community Site – www.planetout.com
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) – www.naACP.org
National Organization of Women – www.now.org
National Transgender Advocacy Coalition – www.ntac.org
Oxfam International – www.oxfam.org
Social Justice Training Institute – www.sjti.org
The American Anti-Slavery Group (AASG) – www.iabolish.com
The People’s Institute for Survival & Beyond – www.pisab.org
Training for Change – www.trainingforchange.org
United States Student Association – www.ussa.org
White Anti-Racist Community Action Network – www.wacan.org
White Privilege – www.whiteprivilege.com
White Privilege Conference – www.whiteprivilegeconference.com

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