

How to Be an Ally

What is an ally? An ally is a person who actively promotes and advances a culture of inclusion. In particular, allies use their own privilege to advance the causes of groups or individuals who do not come from the same place of privilege. Anyone can be an ally because those who lack privilege in one context may have it in another.

Listen & Learn: To be an ally, it is crucial to educate yourself, listen to others, and learn from them.

Listen to what marginalized people tell you.

- If your friends or colleagues who are a part of marginalized communities decide to engage with you on the subject of discrimination, listen and offer support where appropriate.
- Believe underrepresented people's experiences. Don't assume something couldn't happen just because you haven't personally experienced or witnessed it.
- Listen and ask questions when someone describes an experience you haven't had. Don't jump in with your own stories.

Learning is your responsibility.

- Don't rely on people from marginalized groups to teach you or tell you how to find the information you seek.
- Do your own research: investigate and read publications, podcasts, or social media by and about underrepresented groups within your field. Follow an array of voices.
- When you have built a relationship of trust, you can ask co-workers from marginalized groups if they are comfortable talking to you about their experiences.
- Confront your own prejudices and biases, even if it is uncomfortable to do so.

Use Your Privilege: Transfer the benefits of your privilege to those who lack it.

Speak up and call out inappropriate behavior

- Always speak up if you witness behavior or speech that is degrading or offensive. Explain your stance so everyone is clear about why you're raising the issue.
- In meetings, shut down off-topic questions that are asked only to test the presenter.
- Don't be afraid to intervene; take action if you see someone being bullied or harassed.

Advocate for or sponsor those with less privilege.

- As a person of privilege, you have access to social circles that marginalized people do not. Offer to introduce colleagues from underrepresented groups to influential people in your network.
- Share growth opportunities or recommend people for stretch assignments and learning opportunities.
- Become a sponsor; talk about the expertise you see in others, especially during performance calibrations and promotion discussions.
- Advocate for more women, people of color, and members of other underrepresented groups as keynote speakers and panelists.

Amplify underrepresented voices.

- Ensure that marginalized voices are both heard and respected.
- Promote others' voices and don't center yourself in the conversation.
- When someone proposes a good idea, repeat it and give them credit.

Be visible and model inclusion.

- Participate in events and activities when asked or invited.
- Model inclusive language and behavior.
- Show your allyship (e.g., by using pronouns even if you are cis gendered).