



How Can I Be An Ally?

Discussion Guide

Discuss

Alicia defines an ally as someone who is willing to act with and for others in order to end prejudice and oppression and advance equity. She goes on to say that allies use their privilege to take responsibility for changing patterns that produce inequity.

Do you see yourself as an ally for a particular group or cause? How have you used your privilege to advance equity for a minoritized group?

If you want to be an ally, what are the areas of growth you most need to work on?

Has anyone ever served as an ally for you? What was it about this person's words and actions that earned them recognition as an ally?

What are three things you can do to learn more about identities and experiences different from your own?

An ally "walks the talk." How can you show up in your everyday life as an ally? When might you need to step out of your comfort zone in order to show up for someone else?

Practice

In today's meeting, we were discussing who should be promoted to assistant manager. Kendall, a trans woman, was mentioned for consideration. One of the directors said, *'Is that the image you want for a manager? We need someone, you know...'* Kendall's name was dropped from consideration. Eventually, Kendall heard about the comment and became angry and hurt. She said: *'I've been working toward this promotion for a while. I wasn't in the meeting to defend myself and no one spoke up for me. Nobody. Makes me wonder if I have a future here.'* What is the impact of silent collusion in this situation? How would an ally have responded?

At a quarterly staff meeting, one of the department managers welcomed a new employee, Tanya, to the team. The manager said, "We finally got a Hispanic AND a female on our staff. We've been committed for a long time to becoming a more diverse company and now we've met our goals." Most people nodded with enthusiasm, but Tanya looked uncomfortable. Later, she confided in someone that being singled out as the "diversity hire" felt awkward. She's

concerned some people with think she was hired only because of her ethnicity and gender. She doesn't want to bear all the responsibility for being the "diverse" person on the team. Demonstrate at least one way you could speak up to be an ally for the targeted person.

Sometimes well-intentioned allies say things from their position of privilege and it comes across as unsupportive. Analyze the statements below and describe why the advice given is not very helpful:

- Advising a student to come out as queer to their family during the holiday break and to just be themselves.
- Advising a friend who is upset by a remark made to them to just let it go—the other person didn't mean anything by it.
- Advising a colleague with a grievance to make their request in a different tone of voice so they don't come across as aggressive.

Can you think of other examples of well-intentioned advice gone wrong? What are some more supportive responses?

Learn More

Check out the **Guide to Allyship**, (<https://guidetoallyship.com>), an open source resource for becoming a more effective ally.