

Becoming an Ally and Practicing Allyship

There are some key issues to consider in becoming an ally in anti-oppression activism and labour. The first is that the term “ally” does not denote an identity – **it’s not who you are, it’s what you practice**. Being an ally means practicing, daily – often hourly- acts of support and solidarity with marginalized groups, whether or not you personally belong to or identify with the group.

Being an ally- involves moving from a role as an actor in the status quo of oppressive systems and structures, to **active allyship**. **Allyship involves:**

Action- allyship is constant and committed practice, not identity. Allyship involves action, support, and solidarity with marginalized groups and anti-oppression moments and movements.

Listening- we respectfully listen to marginalized persons and groups. We work to build mutual trust and consent through our actions, listening, learning, and yielding.

Learning – we do the research and the work of learning about privilege and positionality and historical and contemporary struggles. We work to reveal and challenge our assumptions, our long-held narratives, and to build our understanding of the systems and structures of oppression so that we may work to confront and eradicate them.

Yielding- Allyship involves both action and yielding; in the sense that practicing allyship means that we are careful to avoid monopolizing, overtaking, speaking *for*, patronizing, romanticizing, agenda-setting, and so forth. We act, listen, learn, and yield.

Actions of Allyship: There are many ways and forms to practice allyship, and all are important:

- **Protest:** Show your support and solidarity by joining a protest, supporting protesters with materials or supplies, and assisting protest organizers.
- **Advocacy:** Use your social media and your public platforms to circulate learning materials, messages, events, news media, etc. of anti-oppression movements and groups. Join/follow social media of marginalized groups and anti-oppression movements and amplify their voices to your public platforms.

- **Interrupting and countering oppression:** Speaking out when persons (even strangers) and organizations speak or behave in ways that are racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, xenophobic, ableist, ageist, and misogynist.
- **Volunteering:** Join an organization or community group and offer your time in support and solidarity of anti-oppression work.
- **Your vote/electoral politics:** Wherever possible, volunteer your time and/or public platforms to campaigns of progressive candidates with explicitly anti-oppression records and aims. If you're not able to campaign, you can help with fundraising and other means of supporting candidates.
- **Learning:** Attend, support, and/or coordinate anti-oppression trainings, workshops, and conferences for yourself and your communities (schools, workplaces, family and friends).
- **Working with children:** Take your children and/or students to events, artistic exhibits, historical sites, etc. where speakers and facilitators explore topics around equity, inclusion, and anti-oppression. Provide children with books, media (TV, digital and social media), and movies that feature members of equity-seeking groups in meaningful, empowered, and protagonist roles.
- **Money:** Donate money or help raise money for anti-oppression groups, movements, and organizations.

Video Resource:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dg86g-QlMO>