

Behavioral
Health
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Development



Allyship: Are you with me?

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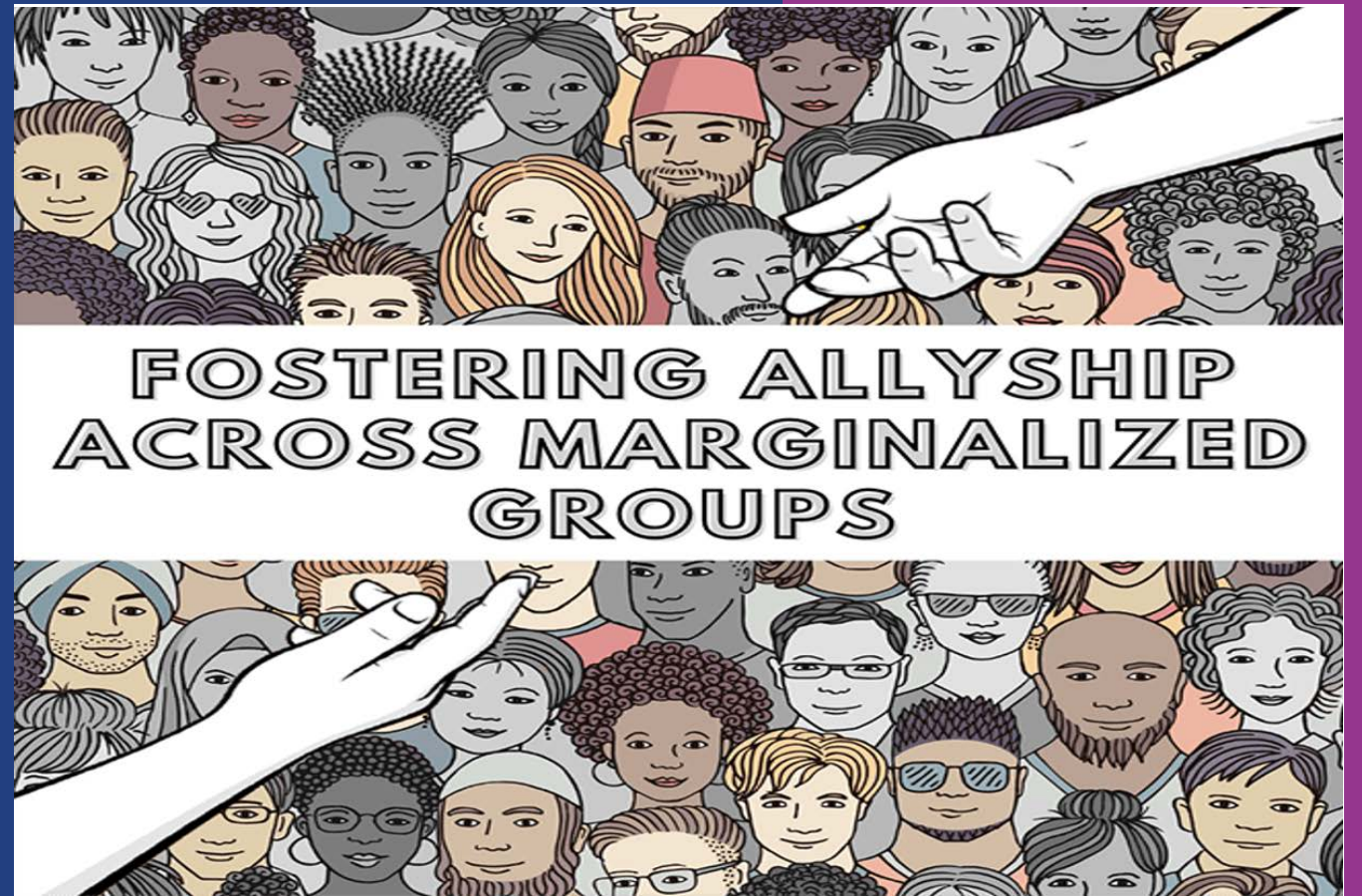
Objectives

After this session, participants will be able to:

- Identify the risks and the importance of being an ally.
- Describe
 - what allyship is - and is not,
 - how to act as an ally,
 - barriers to becoming an ally.
- Incorporate the language and practice of “Allyship” into your current work.

NOTE: Allyship and first-person language and practices are constantly evolving so this information is based on current understanding – it’s important to stay updated! Also, this webinar does not cover everything about allyship, but provides an entry point for those new to the topic.

DEFINING ALLYSHIP



FOSTERING ALLYSHIP
ACROSS MARGINALIZED
GROUPS

It's important to remember that “ally” is also
a verb, not just a noun

Allyship is an action, not an identity.



Ally

Allyship is a lifelong process of building relationships based on trust, consistency, and accountability with marginalized individuals and traditionally oppressed groups of people.

- Allyship is an active practice that requires action.
- Allyship requires an understanding and self-awareness around power and privilege.
- Allyship's purpose is to achieve equity and inclusion.
- Allyship requires us to hold ourselves accountable to advancing marginalized people's needs.

Video

[5 Tips For Being An Ally](#)



Acronym

- A - always center on the impacted
- L - listen and learn from the oppressed
- L - leverage your privilege
- Y - yield the floor



Allies act when...

- Microaggressions are present
- Sexual and gender harassment are present
- Someone is belittled, bullied, or disrespected
- General discriminatory, racist, sexist, etc. views or comments are said – regardless if they are said directly to someone
- Any time someone with a marginalized identity needs (and wants) to be supported!

Be Uncomfortable

As we've explored so far, allyship is about going outside your comfort zone to support others. When considering action as an ally, try to think about going one step further, or making one more statement, than you usually would feel comfortable doing in order to stand up and support others.

Responding to Microaggressions

As an ally you can:

- Repeat back what is said
- Ask for more information (can you elaborate on that?)
- Play dumb; challenge the stereotype (e.g., I don't understand your joke. Can you explain it to me?)
- Separate intent from impact
- Tell them they're too smart to say something like that
- Point out policy/law that prohibits such conduct

Responding to Harassment

- Most harassment is not at the tip of the iceberg and egregious
- Gender harassment, the foundation of the iceberg, is more difficult to “see” but is the most common form
- Allies can point out more subtle “below the surface” examples of gender harassment to make it more visible
- Allies doing this validates others’ experiences



The words we use are important

- Quite often we are unaware that the language we use is laced with oppression
- Don't use "empower" – suggests individuals never had power. They have always had power, so use "activate" or "amplify"
- Don't strive for "equality," strive for "equity." Equality is treating everyone the same, whereas equity is giving everyone what they need to be successful
- Don't call people addicts, crazy, mentally ill, ex. con, prostitute, or homeless. Person first language **emphasizes the person before the disability**, for example "person who is blind" or "people with spinal cord injuries." Identity first language puts the disability first in the description, e.g., "disabled" or "autistic."

Activity: Person First Language

Determine which of the terms below are acceptable and which are not.
Suggest appropriate replacements for those that are unacceptable.

- Students with disabilities
- Wheelchair users
- A mentally retarded child
- A child with a visual impairment
- A developmentally delayed toddler
- A hearing-impaired infant
- Individuals with autism
- The deaf person
- Crippled students
- An epileptic
- A student with a speech impairment
- A student with ADHD

Why is allyship important?

- You are letting people know they are not alone
- You are letting others know that what's happening is not acceptable
- Individuals in oppressed groups may not have the power, status, or opportunity that you have to influence institutional and systemic change
- No one is free, free to be themselves and free to live up to their potential, when others are oppressed – we are all responsible

Traits of effective allies

- Using your privilege to take the struggle on as your own
- Learning and using inclusive language
- Practicing cultural humility
- Listen to the experts
- Know the politics of past struggles
 - People from marginalized communities know their history and where it intersects with other communities – good and effective allyship means you should know this as well
- Ask – don't make assumptions

Risks of being an Ally

- Make a lot of sacrifices such as your comfort, reputation, energy, time, and more.
- It is inconvenient.
- You have to constantly attack the very systems that benefit you.
- Making mistakes. We will ALL make mistakes, and that is not a reason not to take action.
- Physical risks.
- *These struggles are real & allies should understand these risks. However, if you're ever grappling with these struggles, remember people with marginalized identities have faced greater risks in a society that continues to oppress them. These risks can even be matters of life & death.*
- Being an ally is an intentional choice.
- This is a privilege in and of itself!

Importance of Allyship

- By using the power and privileges of our different social identities, we are able to level the playing field.
- Marginalized people will not get as far speaking solely for themselves because they lack certain powers and privileges. Nor is it fair to expect oppressed groups to fight for their liberation alone.
- None of us are free until we all are free.
 - Ex. Both the oppressed and the oppressor suffer from the oppression, albeit not to the same extent. Women battle misogyny, men battle toxic masculinity, but stem from patriarchy. Black people battle racism, white people battle white guilt, but stem from White Supremacy.

Allies beware of:

- Being an ally/accomplice/co-conspirator is not an identity
- Performative Allyship & Ally theater, which increases one's social capital by doing the bare minimum rather than one's devotion to a cause.
 - Ex: posting a Black square but not doing anything active, such as donating, signing petitions, & educating yourself
- People with marginalized identities do not need saving
- Not stopping if you make a mistake



Addressing Contradiction

Knowing when to step up and step back takes practice & reflection and depends on context.
Here are some tips:

Step Up

- When you hear inappropriate comments made about marginalized groups
- When you hear racial slurs or derogatory term
- When you hear or see a microaggression or macroaggressions
- When a marginalized person is being excluded or harmed
- Before asking questions, assess if it is the right time to ask

Step Back

- When oppressed groups are speaking about their experiences
- When it is a topic or subject you know nothing or very little about
- When your questions are being answered, be engaged

Allyship in Practice

Ex. of Allyship

- 1859 John Brown's Raid "dress rehearsal for the Civil War"
- 1940s Germans hiding Jews from Nazis
- 1968 Olympics Black Power salute 1977
- Disability Rights sit-in, the Black Panthers (having little resources themselves) provided protestors with food
- 2015 Bree Newsome & James Tyson removing Confederate Flag over South Carolina's State House

Questions to consider

- Who is missing from the "room" or conversation and why is that a problem?
- How can I amplify folks who hold marginalized identities?
- How can I work with folks who share my privileges to do the same?

References

- [Allyship \(& Accomplice\): The What, Why, and How](#)
- [Black Girl Dangerous](#)
- [Evolving Allyship Workshop: Recap](#)
- [Molly Q. Ford + Willie Jackson: Steps to Being an Ally](#)
- [ReadySet Ally Skills Workshop](#)
- [Ally, Accomplice, Co-conspirator](#)
- [Allyship \(& Accomplice\): The What, Why, and How](#)
- [Ally or Accomplice? The Language of Activism](#)