

# Diversity and Inclusion

## Best Practice Guide: *Being an Ally*

An ally is a person who advocates for the human rights of marginalized and vulnerable people by challenging discrimination and stereotypes.

Allies are needed. Allies are essential. This is especially true with vulnerable populations whose voices are often ignored or drowned out.

### Who is an ally?

We can all work towards being an effective ally to your colleague, friend, family member or neighbor.

### What is an ally?

The word ally is a verb, not a noun. It is a continuous action, an ongoing commitment to standing for and with vulnerable individuals and communities.

### Remember!

It's always their story to tell.

- An ally never shares any part of the story of the individual unless they say it's ok.
- An ally never outs (discloses) someone else's sexual orientation or gender identity.

Besides being disrespectful, sharing such details about another person could put them at risk of harassment, discrimination or physical / psychological harm.

### How do I become an ally?

There are ways to be an effective ally by remembering:

- An ally begins by asking ... "how can I be an ally?"
- An ally listens without judgment and is open to continually learning about others and themselves.
- An ally is always keenly aware of the space they take up where other voices should be instead.
- An ally is one who listens to what the individual or community is saying.
- An ally takes the time to educate themselves on the terms, definitions and language used by the individual or community. It's not the job of the individual you are advocating for to always be educating the ally. It takes considerable energy for a member of a vulnerable group to educate.
- An ally listens.
- When an ally learns what is offensive, they don't say it or do it.
- Be aware that, as an ally, you may be exposed to backlash directed at you.
- Never make assumptions. If you don't know? Ask.
- Be humble. There is always more to know.
- An ally is always listening.