

Steps You Can Take To Be A Better Ally In The Workplace

Do the work yourself

Don't expect marginalized people to always educate you; work on educating yourself. Find people having the conversation and *listen*.

Believe them

When someone tells you an event or behavior occurred and made them feel a certain way, believe them. Do not dismiss it, do not excuse it, do not say 'I'm sure they didn't *mean* it that way'.

Foster a culture of respect

When someone is interrupted, redirect back to them.

"Greg, I'd like to hear the rest of what Tonya had to say."

Give credit where credit is due.

"I'd like you to meet Samira. She was key in making that show you liked a success."

Do not allow biased or disrespectful speech to stand unchallenged.

"Why would you say such a thing?"

"That is not appropriate."

"I'm not sure where you got that idea, but here, we respect everyone- regardless of religion, race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, ability."

Center marginalized voices

Make sure they physically have a seat at the table. (not in a chair in the corner)

Do not ask them to act as the representative for everyone from their group.

"Stacey, you're a woman- what would moms think of this?" "What do you think 'urban' audiences would like?" Don't do that.

Don't have a 'lone representative' on a team.

Respect their agency

Don't assume. Ask in a non-gendered, non assumptive way.

"This project requires significant international travel- are you interested? If you are, but you're concerned, what are the challenges and how can we help?"

Follow up.

"That was a rough meeting and Jack was aggressive to you, which is why I spoke up to him. I'm sorry. How are you doing? I am willing to bring his behavior up with HR."

Put an end to the likeability problem

If a woman or person of color is critiqued as bossy or aggressive, ask for an explanation.

"Well, Maria is the team lead- she *should* act like a boss. Can you explain what you specifically mean by 'she's too bossy'?"

"You say she's aggressive. Would you say the same thing of a man behaving the same way?"

Support mentorship and coaching

Give specific, detailed coaching or make sure those who are coaches do so.

"Good job is nonspecific. What about it was good? What should Kaia keep doing?"

Encourage women to reach higher

Studies show men will apply for higher positions if they feel they hit 60% of the criteria, women wait till they're closer to 100%.

Be an ally up the org chart, too

It might feel awkward, but it's important to mentor peers and superiors in allyship, too.

"Phil, you may not have noticed this, but your project manager kept interrupting Denise in the brainstorming session. Behavior like that is damaging – if you need pointers on how to address it with him, I've got some resources."

"Bob, I really need you to model for the junior employees how we can involve a variety of voices around the table. It's good for the projects and the right thing for our company culture."

"Tim, I know you've been thinking about how we grow the company from here. I've got some resources on meaningful diversity and inclusion that I think would be beneficial."

Build a culture of sharing articles and information you find to keep the conversation moving.

"That's How It's Always Been" is unacceptable

Call out harassing or derogatory speech/actions clearly and firmly in the moment, and follow up with the person who's been targeted afterwards.

"She's a member of the team like anyone else and I expect everyone on the team to be treated respectfully."

"That is unacceptable." "That attitude has no place on this worksite."

"That's sexist/racist/homophobic/transphobic/ableist and it will not be tolerated."

(Notice these statements identify the *action* as being unacceptable or inappropriate and thus, by extension, make it clear it will not be brooked from anyone.)

Do not 'other' people

Especially when it comes to race, gender identity, sexual identity, and ability, 'othering' (making assumptions about what their life must be like, presuming stereotypical behavior, fetishizing them) people is unacceptable.

Call it out clearly and firmly in the moment, and follow up with the person who's been targeted afterwards.

Don't Be a Bystander

Stick up for others. Martin Luther King said, "In the end, what will hurt the most is not the words of our enemies but the silence of our friends."

