



5 Ways To Be an Active Ally In Your Workplace and Community

In today's polarized world, it has become increasingly crucial to offer support and understanding for various communities. Being an ally to different marginalized groups – including individuals with disabilities, racially and culturally diverse individuals, veterans, and members of the LGBTQ+ community – is the right thing to do, but there are also tangible benefits. Active allyship enables business leaders to cultivate inclusion and belonging within their workplaces, promote better collaboration, and foster happier employees.

But being an ally involves more than good intentions—it requires active involvement and a genuine desire to help historically marginalized groups. Stepping into the role of an ally can also be easier said than done. People often don't know how to get started or ensure they are having an impact. Below, we've outlined five key actions you can take to start making a difference in your workplace and the community.

1) Listen. One of the best things you can do when trying to be an ally is make sure you are actively listening to those you are trying to be an ally to. In order to help, you should understand their experiences and their needs. Provide safe space for sharing and be courteous of what they say. Remember, someone's lived experience isn't up for debate. Also, never assume you know what someone else needs – ask if you aren't sure and listen to what they have to say.

2) Learn. A lack of education is one of the largest barriers to allyship. Make sure you are knowledgeable about the issues facing the communities you want to serve. Allyship must begin with education, because you can't change what you're unaware of, nor can you effectively help other people when you don't understand what they are facing. Without education, you risk taking the wrong action and, potentially, making the issue even worse.

3) Speak up. As educator and activist Jackson Katz states, "your voice is your vehicle." Don't be afraid to use it. If you have privilege, you can use your power to advocate for



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those who might not have as strong a voice. Some key conversation starters include “I’ve been noticing that...” or “A trend I’ve been seeing in our company is...”

You should also seek to amplify underrepresented voices. Sometimes the best thing you can do is make space for others to use their own voices. Rather than voicing your opinion or thoughts, reshare those of someone within the community you are supporting.

Finally, invite constructive dialogue when you hear or see something non-inclusive. Probing questions are especially helpful when you want to speak up to someone who is acting disrespectfully or discriminatorily. Some prompts include, “What do you mean by that?” or “Tell me why you think that.”

4) Mentor and sponsor. One of the most valuable actions that allies can take, especially those who are in positions of privilege or power, is to mentor and/or sponsor folks from underrepresented or marginalized communities. Be an advocate for young women’s success and promotion in your company, tutor students at HBCUs, or teach interview skills to folks on the autism spectrum.

5) Invest resources. You can make an outsized impact by patronizing local businesses owned by individuals from historically underrepresented groups. Consider where you buy your groceries, who you hire to renovate your home, where you purchase gifts, and so much more. Use your spending power to give back to the communities you aim to serve. In embracing the role of an ally, individuals embark on a journey of understanding, action, and empowerment. The outlined steps serve as guiding principles toward meaningful engagement and support for marginalized communities. Allyship isn’t based on intentions; it requires deliberate and sustained effort. It’s essential to remember that allyship is an ongoing commitment to challenging systemic inequalities and fostering an inclusive environment.

Being an active ally has a tremendous impact on the workplace and your community. For more details on how to show up as an ally, read our guidebook [How to Be an Active Ally](#).