

Post-Election Ally Skills Workshop

Using your societal advantages for good

Based on slides and materials developed by Val Aurora, CC
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Agenda for today:

Introduction to shared terminology

Empathy building strategy

“Normal” ally skills

Bystander intervention skills

Defensive people skills

Wrap-up

Who am I?

- Out non-binary person (they/them please!).
- “Day job” as a technology lawyer
- Trans and feminist activist
- Since 11/9, matched trans folks for \$70,000 in documentation fees



What is an ally? Some terminology first:

Privilege: an unearned advantage given by society to some people but not all

Oppression: systemic, pervasive inequality that is present throughout society, that benefits people with more privilege and harms those with fewer privileges

What is an ally? Some terminology first:

Target: someone who suffers from oppression (also called "a member of a marginalized group")

Ally: a member of a social group that enjoys some privilege that is **working to end oppression** and **understand their own privilege**

Actions

Example

Privilege: The ability to walk into a convenience store and have the owner assume you are there to buy things and not steal them

Oppression: The self-reinforcing system of stories, TV, news coverage, and legal system stereotyping Black people as criminals, that benefits non-Black people and harms Black people

Example

Target: Any Black person who wants to enter a convenience store

Ally: A non-Black person who donates to legal system reform organizations, actively objects to racist stories, votes in anti-racist ways, and reads news articles about this privilege

Can you act as an ally? Categories of privilege:

White	Not a mother
Male	Not a caregiver
Cisgender (more later)	Educated
Straight	Technically experienced
Not disabled	Wealthy (can be earned)
A legal resident or citizen	From an upper class family
Specific ages	And many more...
Certain height/size/shape	

Why should allies take action more than targets?

"[...] Ethnic minority or female leaders who engage in diversity-valuing behavior are penalized with worse performance ratings; whereas [ethnic majority] or male leaders who engage in diversity-valuing behavior are not penalized for doing so."

David Hekman, Stefanie Johnson, Wei Yang & Maw Der Foo,
2016

Does valuing diversity result in worse performance ratings for minority and female leaders?

<http://amj.aom.org/content/early/2016/03/03/amj.2014.0538.abstract>

More reasons allies should act more often

Allies have more power,
influence, money, and energy

Allies may be in the majority

Allies can't be accused of
jealousy

Allies are often less likely to
be put in physical danger



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Format of the rest of the workshop

Some terminology

Empathy exercise

Discussion guidelines

Ally Skills basics + scenarios

Bystander intervention basics + scenarios

Dealing with defensive people + scenarios

Wrap-up

What if I make a mistake?

Apologize, correct yourself,
and move on.

Terminology: gender

Cis: your gender is the same as the gender that was assigned to you at birth

Trans: your gender is different than the gender that was assigned to you at birth

Non-binary or genderqueer or agender: "male" or "female" doesn't describe your gender accurately, or you don't identify with a gender at all

Terminology: gender

Use **they** instead of "he" for third person singular pronoun of unknown gender (used by Austen, Defoe, Byron, Ronald Reagan...)

Terms for groups of people of particular genders:
men for cis and trans men, **women** for cis and trans women, **non-binary people/folks, cis men, trans men, cis women, trans women, people of all genders, folks, people, everyone, all, y'all, all y'all...**

Please don't use:

Girls for women 18 years of age and over.

Guys for groups that are not all men (say "everyone" or "people").

Ladies - associated with "proper" (i.e., subservient) behavior.

Females for humans - used for animals and plants too, so it is dehumanizing.

Please don't use:

Transsexual - not inclusive of all trans people

People with [BODY PART or CHROMOSOME]

instead of "men" or "women"

Exception: members of any marginalized group
can agree to call themselves whatever they want
(outsiders should not assume they can use the
same terms)

Terminology: sexuality

Straight for women attracted primarily to men or men attracted primarily to women

Gay for men or women attracted primarily to people of the same gender as themselves

Lesbian for women attracted primarily to women

Terminology: sexuality

Bisexual or **pansexual** for people attracted to people of any gender (debate on-going)

Asexual for people with little or no sexual attraction to people of any gender

Queer is a useful catch-all term for people who don't fit easily into "straight cis woman" or "straight cis man"

Discussion guidelines for race and ethnic group

Use the term(s) for each ethnic group or race that the majority of that group prefers that outsiders use.

Avoid abbreviations - just say or write the full name.

Don't make generalizations about food, jobs, religion, citizenship, immigration status, languages, hobbies, etc. based on race.

Distinguish between citizenship and descent.

Some commonly used terms for North Americans

People of color, white, Black, Latina/Latino/Latinx, Asian, Asian & Pacific Islander (API), south Asian, east Asian

Use specific tribe name if possible, otherwise:

- Native Americans for indigenous peoples of mainland U.S.
- First Nations for indigenous peoples of Canada
- Native Hawaiians for indigenous peoples of Hawaii
- Alaskan Natives for indigenous peoples of Alaska

Discussion guidelines for race

Dog whistles: dogs can hear them but people can't

Don't use "dog whistle" terms to refer to an ethnic group indirectly - e.g., "ethnic" or "urban"

If uncertain about term to use to refer to a specific ethnic group,

ask!



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Discussion guidelines for disability

Use **abled person**, **disabled person**, or **person with disabilities**.

Don't use names of specific disabilities as metaphors or similes to indicate badness (**deaf**, **blind**, etc.).

Don't use at all: **lame**, **dumb**, **stupid**, **crazy**, **retard**, etc.

Only use respectfully in cases of self-disclosure:

ADD/ADHD, **OCD**, **autism spectrum**, **schizophrenic**,
bipolar...

Discussion guidelines for disability

Instead use "**foolish**," "**thoughtless**," or "**inconsiderate**."

Or a specific adjective like "**crowded**," "**disorganized**," or "**annoying**."

It's generally fine to use figures of speech like "see what I mean" or "I hear you."

Discussion guidelines for religion, class, age, etc.

Speak respectfully about religious or spiritual beliefs (but you don't need to be respectful of bigotry or intolerance)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paradox_of_tolerance

Don't use stereotypes about people with lower class jobs (e.g. janitor), adults of particular ages, family role (mother, grandparent, etc.)

Treat caregivers of all sorts respectfully, including mothers

Help us create a safer space

You may leave or return at any time, for any reason, without explanation.

This workshop is not recorded.

Everyone is here voluntarily.

Please anonymize when you repeat sensitive stories.

Share at the level of people you just met at a conference.

Awkward...





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Jocelyn K

Content warnings

The scenarios contain discussions of: racism, Islamophobia, street harassment, discussion of undocumented people, misgendering/deadnaming, and police interactions with black people.

Note: neither the scenarios nor I will use specific slurs, but some may use uncomfortable language.

Absolutely do not speculate about what language might be used or reproduce slurs in the context of your answers.

Allies post-election: deploying empathy

Not all but some ally strategies rely on successful cultivation of empathy.

You may not be there right now! That's okay.

Let's talk about how to get there, if you want help.

Why and how to develop empathy?

“...Put simply, the broaden-and-build theory states that positive emotions widen people’s outlooks in ways that, little by little, reshape who they are.”

Fredrickson BL, Cohn MA, Coffey KA, Pek J, Finkel SM. Open Hearts Build Lives: Positive Emotions, Induced Through Loving-Kindness Meditation, Build Consequential Personal Resources. *Journal of personality and social psychology*. 2008;95(5):1045-1062. doi:10.1037/a0013262.

Exercise 1a: Developing empathy

Think of a person you're close to. Think a kind thought about them.

- “My partner is always so thoughtful in the morning, even when I’m cranky!”
- “My child makes the cutest faces.”
- “My friend always looks at the world in such a positive way.”

Exercise 1b: Developing empathy

Pick five people in the room. Purposefully think a kind thought about each one of them.

Examples:

- “Their haircut looks excellent on them.”
- “That person has a kind face.”
- “He has such excellent handwriting.”
- “She did such a good job of making me feel welcome in the space.”

Exercise 1c: Developing empathy

Think of a person you had a negative interaction with this week. Think a kind thought about them.

- “Although Sam pissed me off this week, they always are so good at organizing their work.”

Wish them well.

- “I hope Sam has a good weekend.”

DREADED GROUP CHOOSING TIME

Form groups of 4 - 6 people.

Groups that are more diverse have better discussions.

Introduce yourselves BRIEFLY (1-3 sentences) and include your pronouns.

At the breaks, please volunteer to change groups.

Preparing for group discussion

If everyone in the group has the same pronouns, tell the instructor.

Choose a **gatekeeper** to interrupt people who are speaking too much and ask people who aren't talking as much if they want to speak.

A few more tips for group discussion

At the beginning of each scenario, choose someone to report out at the end (this person can change)

Avoid rules-lawyering: "But what if there was some specific highly unlikely circumstance in which this situation was not actually bad?"

Focus on **how to respond to incidents as an ally** in this specific incident, not as the target or in the general case

Basics of ally skills (responding to comments)

Be short, simple, firm.

Don't try to be funny.

Play for the audience.

Practice simple responses.

Pick your battles.

While you're trying to help one group, don't be:

sexist,

homophobic,

transphobic,

racist,

ableist,

classist,

ageist, and don't make fun of people for being sexually undesirable, unattractive, etc.

Scenario 1:

In an email thread, you refer to a trans man colleague using his preferred name and pronouns (he/him/his, in this case).

Another person replies using his previous name (a.k.a. “dead name”) and she/her/hers pronouns to refer to him. He is not on the thread.

Tips: pronouns dos and don'ts

Do: check in if you're unsure about pronoun use or how to navigate a transition. To be clear, a person's personal wishes override this list or any other advice.

Do: assume retroactivity unless told otherwise.

Do: use current preferred pronouns for famous trans people (like Chelsea Manning).

Absolutely don't: ask about transition logistics or surgery.

Absolutely don't: out the person.*

*Unless they're already publically out or you've been given express permission.

Things to pay attention to

Who is speaking most in your group?

Is someone having difficulty being heard?

Are there patterns related to gender, race, age, or anything else?

How do these discussions compare to ones you have in other contexts?

Scenario 2: Addressing problematic behavior

You're in an airport, waiting for your flight. A badged airport employee, wearing a headscarf, is pushing a man in a wheelchair to a nearby gate. She accidentally hits a garbage can with the side of the chair. The man in the chair calls her an Islamophobic slur. She seems to respond politely.

Break



Basics of bystander intervention (behavior)

Be aware.

Assess personal safety.

Focus on the target.

Consider five options: delay, delegate, distract, document, directly intervene

Based on the 4Ds of Bystander Intervention by Hollaback!
<https://www.ihollaback.org/responding-to-harassers/>

Scenario 4: Addressing harassing behavior

You are on a public bus. A butch woman is sitting in the row across from you. A man behind her starts talking to her, but she ignores him.

He taps her on the shoulder, and she says something to him. He then begins swearing loudly at her.

Scenario 4: Addressing harassing behavior

Delay – apologize to the woman and say what happened wasn't okay, offer to help after harasser has moved on.

Delegate – ask someone around you to do any of these things, go talk to the bus driver or transit authority.

Distract – go talk to the woman about something unrelated, like the time or the weather. Get her consent and then pretend to know her.

Document - start filming the interaction or take pictures of the harasser. (USE WITH CAUTION.)

Directly intervene – tell the man to knock it off, or otherwise engage him directly.

Scenario 5: Developing intervention skills

You are walking on the street in an area you frequent. There is a young black man who is being put in handcuffs in front of a nearby store. The two cops involved in the interaction are not paying attention to you.



Criminelle Law

@CriminelleLaw



Following

Black teenage driver. Not leaving until he does.
#BlackLivesMatter 🤝



Tip: if you don't know what to do, learn

Ask yourself “What would it take for me to feel comfortable reacting to this situation in the future?”

Resolve to learn that information.

Google it!

Use guides produced by reputable organizations. The SPLC Stand Up guide is fantastic.

Basics of dealing with defensive people

Invoke shared values.

Express compassion.

Make yourself vulnerable.

Share what changed your mind.

Help them have compassion.

Scenario 6: addressing harmful stereotypes

Your nephew, who you like a lot but don't know well, is talking to just you at a small family event. He says something like "I don't like Trump as a person, but I'm glad he will kick out illegals. At least our family came here legally."

Tip: read Captain Awkward

Advice blog that answers questions on social interaction from an awkward, geeky perspective

Great for "How do I get someone to stop doing something without upsetting anyone?" type of questions (hint: someone is already upset)

<http://captainawkward.com>

Scenario 7: standing up for folks with concerns

You work at a tech company. You are part of a 10-15 person meeting on a new feature, that could be used to track users by particular characteristics without their specific consent.

A subordinate of yours expresses concern about how the Trump administration might use the data from the feature. A white male coworker of yours is very dismissive.

“Don’t you think they’re overreacting?”

Resist the impulse to validate this viewpoint.

Instead, concentrate on the validity of the experiences that lead people to be concerned about the rise of creeping fascism.

Non-situational best practices

Don't expect praise and credit for fighting inequality.

Follow and support leaders from target groups.

Assume targets are knowledgeable about their oppression.

When you make a mistake, apologize, correct yourself, and move on.

This workshop is not a certification

Don't be Kool Aid Man.

Ally is a thing you do (sometimes), not a thing that you are.

We will all continue to make mistakes, what counts is how you react.

Resources

Julie Pagano's "So You Want to Be An Ally"

<http://juliepagano.com/blog/2014/05/10/so-you-want-to-be-an-ally/>

GLAAD's "Tips for Allies of Transgender People"

<http://www.glaad.org/transgender/allies>

Mia McKenzie's "The Difference Between Real Solidarity and Ally Theater" <http://www.blackgirldangerous.org/2015/11/the-difference-between-real-solidarity-and-ally-theatre/>

Val Aurora's "Guest Post: A Post-Election Guide to Changing Hearts and Minds" <https://captainawkward.com/2016/11/21/guest-post-a-post-election-guide-to-changing-hearts-and-minds/>

SPLC's "Speak Up! Responding to Everyday Bigotry" -

https://www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/d6_legacy_files/downloads/publication/splcspeak_up_handbook_0.pdf

Questions and feedback

Thank you!

If you have questions that you feel are group appropriate, I'm happy to take them now. If you have questions you'd prefer to ask privately, talk to me after or email me directly at:

kendra.serra@gmail.com

I'll send out an anonymous survey to folks who attended in a couple of days.