

# Be an Ally

As discussed earlier, you are likely to be among the majority of people today who believe that others should be treated with respect and dignity regardless of the numerous dimensions of diversity that make up individuals. As a Stony Brook student, you have the unique opportunity to become an ally for members of our campus community who are not treated with respect.

An *ally* is broadly defined as a member of a dominant group who works to end oppression in his or her personal and professional life as an advocate for the oppressed population. It is important to note that an ally to any oppressed group or individual aims to serve as an open-minded friend and listener. However, an ally is not a spokesperson for the entire oppressed group. An ally is not a counselor, nor are they trained to deal with crisis situations. Rather, they connect individuals who are members of oppressed groups with support and help further their interests as they are able. An ally advocates with peers, leaders and even people in authority for fair and equitable treatment for all groups when faced with instances of injustice.

## How to Become an Ally

There are four key things you can focus on to better prepare yourself to become an ally for any member of an oppressed group:

**Awareness:** It is important to become more aware of your identity and of the differences and similarities you share with members of the oppressed group.

Strategies to do this include:

1. Conversations with members of the oppressed community
2. Attending awareness building workshops
3. Reading about the history, lives, and cultures of the oppressed group
4. Self-examination and exploration

**Knowledge/Education:** You must begin to acquire knowledge about the oppressed group, such as what their individual experience is in our society/community and on campus.