

# SO YOU WANT TO BE INCLUSIVE?

By LaToya Drake, Keenan Bishop & Bethany Pratt

APRIL 2023

We can all think of a group setting where someone has said something “cringe worthy” about another person or group of people. Oftentimes, we all look around after those comments and silently say, “can you believe they said that?!” and then we all wait for someone in the room to do something. This publication is intended to help YOU be that someone. The someone we’re all waiting for in those situations is an ally.

## WHAT IS AN ALLY?

Allies stand with and up for marginalized groups whether or not those groups are present. Being an ally is about creating a space where all voices including the voices of women, black and brown people, LGBTQIA+ individuals, people with disabilities, and other marginalized peoples are respected for their thoughts and opinions. **It IS NOT the responsibility of the marginalized person(s) to educate others or stand up for themselves, it is the responsibility of allies.**

Allies create inclusive environments that give value and respect to everyone for their unique talents, experiences and perspectives. Being an ally can enhance your Extension Programming by helping you build a stronger and more caring community—creating spaces where everyone feels welcomed and respected.

## HOW TO BE AN ALLY:

ALLY is a verb, not just a noun. You become and continue to be an ally by building trust with others. Trust is earned through action and by establishing a mutual respect towards one another. You can’t just believe you’re an ally—you must show it. Allies don’t take breaks, even when it’s tough or uncomfortable. So, how do you know if you’re doing it right?

### 1. Start with Yourself.

- Be aware of the social dynamics of power and privilege. Know where you fit in.
- Ask clarifying questions from a place of learning and do your own research.
- Pay attention to who or whom is often overlooked, ignored or left out.
- Acknowledge differences and different experiences as unique and valuable.
- Become an active listener.
- Expand your knowledge of social and cultural groups. Explore outside your comfort zone.



- Become comfortable recognizing and discussing the various “isms” (sexism, ageism, racism, ableism, etc) and “phobias” (transphobia, xenophobia, homophobia, etc). Check out: *What Does it All Mean? Understanding terms & acronyms utilized by people to describe themselves, others, and situations* (Drake, Pratt & Bishop, 2023)

## 2. Actions Matter.

- LISTEN. Listen harder if the speaker is someone with a different identity from you!
- If you see something, say something.
- Ask how you can help and then DO IT!
- Amplify the voices of marginalized groups. Give credit where credit is due.
- Build a community of allies.
- Make genuine connections with people from different cultures, lifestyles, and backgrounds.
- Recognize when and where your power and privilege can be used to support people with less power or privilege.

## 3. Words Matter.

- If you're unsure of what term or word to use, ASK!
- Speak up when you hear biased language.
- Stay plugged into evolving terminology and language; adapt your vocabulary to meet the times.
- Be aware of who and how language is used amongst & between different groups.

## 4. Keep Learning.

- Accept feedback and criticism thoughtfully and reflect on those critiques.
- Be aware of how society changes and be ready to adapt.
- Acknowledge past misunderstandings and be ready to do better.
- Keep up to date with how language changes over time.
- You will make mistakes! Recognize when it happens and be ready to apologize!

The Extension mission, simply stated, is to make a difference in the lives of ALL Kentuckians through research-based education. As an ally you can expand your reach past traditional Extension audiences. Being an ally is about creating a welcoming space for everyone in your Extension Programming. **It starts with us.**

## REFERENCES

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Utt, J. (November 8, 2013). *So You Call Yourself an Ally: 10 Things all 'Allies' Need to Know*. Everyday Feminism. <https://everydayfeminism.com/2013/11/things-allies-need-to-know/>

## RECOMMENDED READING & WATCHING

Cornell University. Ally Up! Practice Effective Allyship. Accessibility Information. <https://accessibility.cornell.edu/diversity-includes-disability/be-an-ally/>

Mosquito Bite video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hDd3bzA7450>

*This Book is Anti-Racist. 20 Lessons on How to Wake Up, Take Action, and Do The Work*. Tiffany Jewell. 2020. Frances Lincoln Children's Books.

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Issued 04-2023