

HOW TO BE AN ALLY

A GUIDE TO MARGINALISATION,
PRIVILEGE, AND HOW YOU CAN
MAKE A POSITIVE IMPACT.





CONTENTS

1. WHAT IS AN ALLY?

Building an understanding of what an Ally is.
Page 2.

3. DO I HAVE PRIVILEGE?

Exploring your relationship to privilege.
Page 6.

5. WHAT IS OPPRESSION?

Building an understanding of what oppression is.
Page 12.

7. ACTION!

Important steps for you to start your journey.
Page 54.

9. GLOSSARY

Page 58.

10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Page 64.

2. WHY READ THIS GUIDE?

A brief introduction on why this is important.
Page 4.

4. BUSTING MYTHS ABOUT PRIVILEGE

Things to keep in mind about privilege.
Page 8.

6. HOW TO BE AN ALLY

Introduction	Page 14.
BAME People	Page 18.
Disabled People	Page 24.
International Students	Page 34.
Jewish People	Page 38.
LGBTQ+ People	Page 42.
Muslim People	Page 46.
Women	Page 50.

8. ALLY SELF CARE

Action is important but so is looking after yourself.
Page 56.

10. EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

Page 62.

WHAT IS AN ALLY?

An ally is a person who actively supports and works alongside marginalised groups (such as women, LGBTQ+ people, people with disabilities, or BAME (Black, Asian, Middle Eastern) people) against systematic oppression. You can only be an ally to marginalised groups that you DO NOT belong to yourself.



An ally recognises the reality of systematic oppression and discrimination, and does their best to combat it day-to-day, without speaking over or ignoring the experiences of the people they seek to support.



If you face one form of oppression, that does not mean you should forget about being an ally to other marginalised groups. For example, you may be a woman and face sexism, but have white privilege, cisgender privilege, heterosexual privilege, and able-bodied privilege. You can (and should) be an ally to any marginalised groups you do not belong to.



It can sometimes require you to disagree with people who share your privileges; it can be difficult and uncomfortable to learn that you hold an unfair level of privilege over someone else, and many people don't want to accept that this is the case.



WHY READ THIS GUIDE?

This guide is for anyone who wants to learn more about sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia and Islamophobia.



Once you have learnt more about these forms of oppression, you will learn how to combat them in everyday life, whether that is something as simple as changing the way you use language, or something as active as attending a protest or demonstration.



Being an ally means something different to everyone individually, and hopefully by the time you've finished this guide, you will understand what allyship might mean to you.



Why be an ally? Because allies throughout history have supported marginalised groups in making significant political and social change. George Lansbury MP, a supporter of the women's suffrage movement in the UK, was arrested in 1913 for speaking out in support of suffragists' arson attacks. White celebrities from Justin Timberlake to Bette Midler have come out in support of the Black Lives Matter movement online, and a number of white activists have joined (and been arrested during) BLM protests in recent years.

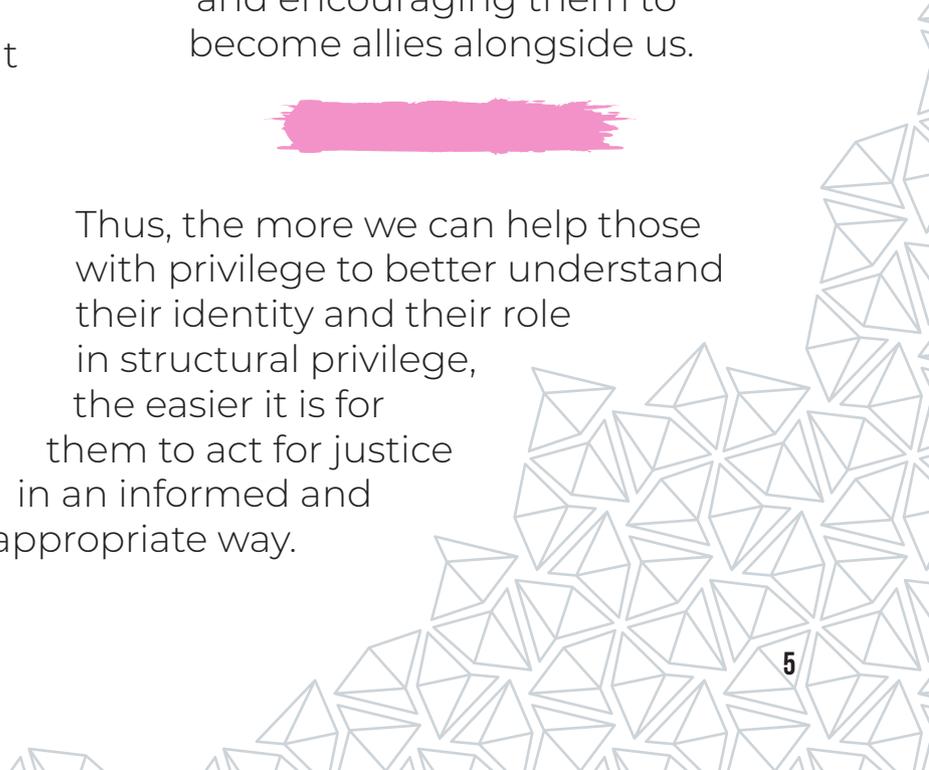
The support of allies can be crucial to the success of human rights movements, and that is something worth being part of.



As allies, our focus should be on challenging those who shared our privileged identity/identities and encouraging them to become allies alongside us.



Thus, the more we can help those with privilege to better understand their identity and their role in structural privilege, the easier it is for them to act for justice in an informed and appropriate way.



DO I HAVE PRIVILEGE?

Most people have some form of privilege. If you are able-bodied, you might take for granted that you will be able to get anywhere within a building without coming across inaccessible obstacles.

If you are a man, statistically you're more likely to be accepted for a senior position within the workplace. If you are cisgender, then you might expect to always have your gender and pronouns respected. These are all examples of privilege that some marginalised groups do not have.



If you are white, you have
white privilege

If you are heterosexual, you have
heterosexual privilege

If you are able-bodied, you have
able-bodied privilege

If you are male, you have
male privilege

If you are cisgender, you have
cisgender privilege

This is not an exhaustive list of privileges, but some of the most commonly recognised. Having privilege doesn't make you a bad person, it is just a side effect of having certain identities, and can be used for good.

You might want to give your privilege away, but you can utilise it to marginalised groups' benefit - such as white protesters standing at the front of BLM protests to shield black protesters from police. Acknowledge your privilege and how it impacts your worldview when entering discussions about marginalisation/privilege.

4

BUSTING MYTHS ABOUT PRIVILEGE

1. "I need to get rid of my privilege"

Privilege can be useful. While the system of privilege is not a good thing, as it unfairly benefits some people more than others, those with privilege can use it to challenge oppressive behaviour. For example, able-bodied people can challenge ableism without fear of much anger from other able-bodied people, because they are more likely to be viewed as objective on the subject than a disabled person might.

By using your voice - which is considered more credible by some people because of your Privilege - you can be a useful ally to marginalised groups.



2. "I've struggled so can't have privilege"

Having any kind of privilege does not mean your life is perfect, it simply means that there are certain areas of your life where you face fewer barriers to success than someone without that privilege would face. For example, a gay white man will face homophobia, but he will also have white privilege; in comparison, a gay Asian man would face both racism and homophobia in his lifetime.



Having white privilege doesn't mean the gay white man has a perfect life, but it does mean he doesn't face the additional obstacle of racism that gay BAME men could face. Even when fighting your own cause, such as women's rights - acknowledge how people who are further marginalised, such as women of colour, face an even greater struggle than white women (such as pay gap).

4

BUSTING MYTHS ABOUT PRIVILEGE

3. "If I'm an ally, I won't have privilege anymore"

You can't get rid of privilege. You can work to bring down structures of oppression, but all the while systematic oppression of marginalised groups still exists, you still have privilege, no matter how good an ally you may be.



4. "I'm working class so can't have privilege"

Poor or economically disadvantaged groups can still hold other forms of privilege. For example, many homeless women face additional struggles such as 'period poverty' (a lack of access to sanitary products) which homeless men are less likely to face.



Marginalised groups - particularly BAME and LGBTQ+ people - are also statistically more likely to be in poverty than privileged groups.



5. "Your oppression isn't as bad as mine"

You can't compare privileges. Although it is tempting to simplify it by saying that one person has five privileges and another only has three for example, each form of privilege or oppression does not have equal or identical impact.



A black man and a white woman are not necessarily equally oppressed, because no oppression is the same - it can vary depending on someone's other oppressions, their economic status, the place they live, their familial relationships, and so on.

5

WHAT IS OPPRESSION?

Oppression comes in many forms, and on many scales.

Oppressive behaviours can range from subtle behaviours like questioning a person of colour about 'where they're really from' (which is inappropriate because it suggests that people of colour cannot be British), to systematic oppression, like denial of the right to vote.

While it's easy to dismiss the smaller instances of oppression as unimportant, we have to view oppression as one ongoing experience rather than isolated events: each oppressive incident piles up throughout a marginalised person's life, and sometimes it can feel as if it's reaching breaking point. This is why someone might respond in a way that seems disproportionate to a relatively minor incident (such as a stranger shouting a slur at them). Every oppressive incident is part of the structure of oppression.



Because of these shared experiences, many marginalised groups tend to band together. This is why we have liberation groups - so marginalised students can gather in understanding, safe spaces. Some people might think that identities 'aren't a big deal'; 'why do you need an LGBTQ+ group, being gay isn't a big deal anymore?'. But you don't know someone else's experience of their identity. You may think being gay isn't a big deal, but that person could have been kicked out of their family home after coming out, they may have struggled with their sexuality for years, or they may just be proud of being who they are.



Our identities are a big deal because - whether we realise it or not - they impact how we live and how other people treat us. Liberation-based communities are important because marginalised people get to celebrate their identities in a space where they feel comfortable, free from microaggressions or oppressive behaviours they might experience in the outside world.

6

HOW TO BE AN ALLY

“ Being a good ally often means not being included in the conversation, because the conversation isn't about you. It's good to listen. If you feel uncomfortable and excluded because you're white, you should own those feelings... Amplifying the opinions and ideas of other people is a way to participate without taking up space. ”

- **Another Round Producer, Meg Cramer.** ^[1]



1.

Listen.

This is one of the most important things you should be doing as an ally to anyone. You need to understand the people you aim to help. When a marginalised person voices a concern or issue, take notes and actively listen to what is being shared with you.



2.

Don't be defensive.

If someone trusts you enough to talk openly to you, make sure you're actively listening. Don't make defensive comments such as "not all white people". They are not personally attacking you, they are sharing their experiences. Don't try to absolve yourself of responsibility, because all forms of privilege come with responsibility to challenge the oppressive roots of that privilege.



6

HOW TO BE AN ALLY

3. **Elevate**

As an ally, it's important to use your own privilege to assist in efforts toward equality. It's great for allies to help organise protests and create safe spaces for marginalised people, but not when allies' voices are centered and elevated over marginalised communities. An ally's role is never to speak for others, but to take down the obstacles facing the oppressed to allow them to speak for themselves. One example is to act as a barrier for people of color at demonstrations and protests, as they are more likely to be the targets of police violence.

4. **Do your research**

You can't be an effective ally if you don't know what the issues are. You certainly can't help to deconstruct institutional oppression without first understanding how it is built.



5. Don't be complacent

Call out friends and family on their racist/homophobic/sexist/ableist comments and attitudes, even when it's uncomfortable or there are no people of color around to be personally affected. Your friends, relatives, and colleagues are likely be more open to listening to you, and it will give you the opportunity to affect real change.



6. Check yourself

No ally is immune from exhibiting oppressive behaviors or from being unhelpful even when their intentions are good. Be willing to listen openly. Refrain from centering yourself in a movement that deserves your support but is not about you and about which you are not an authority.^[3] If you are doing work as an ally to lessen your white guilt or as a way of seeking.

6

HOW TO BE AN ALLY

HOW TO BE AN ALLY TO: **BAME PEOPLE**

1. **Don't be a "White Saviour"**

It is not your job to jump in and take action on their behalf without knowing what the community needs to begin with. It might be easy to succumb to the desire to do things that seem good for others because they make you feel good, but it's important to resist that urge and reexamine how to help.

Telling a person of color how to deal with oppression may seem like a helpful idea, but in reality, it's harmful. Offering advice implies that the onus is on them, and assumes they have not already made efforts to overcome racial injustice.^[4]

- #### 2. **Be aware of the power of language**
- Language influences how we think, and dehumanising language can subtly influence our attitudes and how accepting we are.



3. **Bring more allies on board**

White people are often assumed to be more 'objective' about race issues than people of colour, so correctly or not, many white people are subconsciously more likely to listen to other white people about race issues (because they do not see white people as having a vested interest or reason to be 'biased'). Because of this, it is a lot easier for white allies to convince their white family and friends to support anti-racist action than it might be for people of colour to do the same

4. **Don't touch people without permission**

While this may seem obvious, some people think it is appropriate to touch parts of someone's body that they find interesting - this relates especially to black people, whose hair is often touched by strangers. This is not only potentially uncomfortable because it crosses a personal boundary, but the more this happens to a person, the more it makes them feel 'other' or 'different'.

5. **Encourage your friends/family to watch/read/consume media with protagonists of colour**

This might seem like an unusual point, but watching more diverse and inclusive media also tends to make people more open-minded and likely to empathise with marginalised groups.

6

HOW TO BE AN ALLY:

BAME PEOPLE & STUDENTS

6. Cultural appropriation

Most cultures have events, practices, clothing, and objects that are specific and significant to the people who belong to that culture. Some examples might include wearing a bindi (if bindis are not a part of your culture), having dreadlocked hair (if you are not a black person), or getting henna (when henna is not a part of your culture).



7. Protest

Attend anti-racist protests and - where possible - protect your fellow protestors of colour. As people of colour are more likely to be the victims of police violence or harassment, white people can use their presence at protests to deflect police attention from people of colour (who may be targets due to unconscious racial bias).



8.

Don't call 'reverse racism'

Prejudice and structural oppression are not the same thing. This means that while people of colour can face racism (prejudiced comments that are supported and emphasised by the existence of structural racism), white people can only face prejudice, not racism.



This is because there is no structural power behind a prejudiced comment against a white person. For a more in depth explanation of structural racism, check our glossary toward the end of this guide. In short, 'reverse racism' or racism against white people does not exist, and criticism of white privilege or racist behaviour is not a form of oppression.

6

HOW TO BE AN ALLY:

BAME PEOPLE

9.

Don't fetishise people of colour

Sometimes in order to prove they are not racist, a white person might say that they are attracted to people of colour, or their partner is a person of colour. This doesn't mean that you cannot still be racist. In fact, being exclusively attracted to someone of another race can be fetishisation - this means that the reason you are attracted to them is not genuine, but relies on some kind of racial stereotype, or the sense that being attracted to them is somehow dangerous or wrong.

Of course this does not mean you can never be attracted to someone of another race, but exclusive attraction to a race that is not your own might suggest that you harbour racial stereotypes that inform that attraction.



10. Don't exoticise people of colour

Similar to fetishisation, exoticisation is treating people of colour like they are 'other' or 'different' because of their culture or skin colour. It's okay to be interested in other cultures, but it is important that you don't make anyone feel their culture is unusual or 'exotic' because this makes people feel alienated and unable to fit in



11. Don't assume

Just because that person is BAME, don't assume that they aren't the nationality of the country they're in. Often misconceptions are made about race and nationality and the two don't relate. You can be British and Afro-Caribbean, British and Asian or British and latinx, or any other race.

6

HOW TO BE AN ALLY

HOW TO BE AN ALLY TO: **DISABLED PEOPLE**

Most people don't understand what exactly 'disability' refers to. You might understand that a person who needs to use a wheelchair is disabled, but not know everything that 'disability' can cover.



A disability can be a long-term physical condition, mental illness, autism-spectrum disorder or learning difficulty - as the name suggests, it tends to refer to conditions or disorders that have a long-term impact on a person's life and activity. Some people however don't consider themselves disabled - whether autism spectrum disorders should be considered disabilities is under debate within autistic communities.



Some examples of disabilities:

Cerebral palsy

Anorexia

Spinal cord injury

Dyslexia

HIV

Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)

Depression

Ulcerative colitis

Bipolar disorder



There are hundreds of different possible disabilities, so being an ally to people with disabilities might mean rethinking your behaviour in lots of different ways.

6

HOW TO BE AN ALLY:

DISABLED PEOPLE

1.

Don't use people with disabilities as your own inspiration to rise above challenges

We've all seen those widely shared Facebook posts that marvel at people who "overcame" their disabilities — the girl drawing with her mouth because she doesn't have arms, or the little boy running with a prosthetic leg. These images are meant to inspire able-bodied people to see their challenges aren't so bad after all.

Disability rights activist Stella Young coined the term "inspiration porn" to refer to this kind of post. These images and messages often come at the expense of disability populations, making them pornographic because, as Young said, they objectify one group of people for the benefit of another.

2.

View aids that enhance the lives of people with disabilities as more than just devices

Some people living with disabilities require the assistance of wheelchairs, service animals, interpreters and other devices that help enhance their lives. These objects act as an extension of a person — and you should respect them as a part of that person.



"Oftentimes, people will lean on someone's wheelchair," Carol Glazer, president of the National Organization on Disability says. "What most people may not know is that a wheelchair is part of somebody's personal space. Leaning on a wheelchair is like standing on somebody's shoes. It's their belonging."

3. Understand a person's disability doesn't define them, but may be an important part of their identity

Changing your language to refer to people first is an important step toward inclusivity. Instead of using a person's identity as her defining characteristic, refer to her disability only when necessary to the conversation. "Is the meeting space is accessible? My coworker, Chloe, is coming to the meeting and she uses a wheelchair."

Most importantly, talk to people about what their disabilities mean to them. They could be their connections to community and activism, or they could be relatively unimportant. But talking to them is the only way you'll know. Let them define themselves on their own terms.

6

HOW TO BE AN ALLY:

DISABLED PEOPLE

4.

Never have low expectations for someone with disabilities

Assuming someone's levels of ability — whether intellectual or physical — before you actually get to know that person is a problem Glazer calls "the tyranny of low expectations." Expecting minimal achievement from people living with disabilities is a disservice their ability to succeed.

5.

Don't assume people living with disabilities are miserable, unhappy or less fulfilled than you

Just because someone has a disability doesn't mean he or she is living a life that's any less than an able-bodied person's.

"[Some able-bodied people] say things like, 'You have to rise above your disability. You have to overcome your disability,'" Glazer says. "But most people with disabilities just think of themselves as normal people."

Like any able-bodied person, people with disabilities adapt to accommodate their own experiences. But that's not something that makes a person living with disabilities less fortunate or clearly miserable.



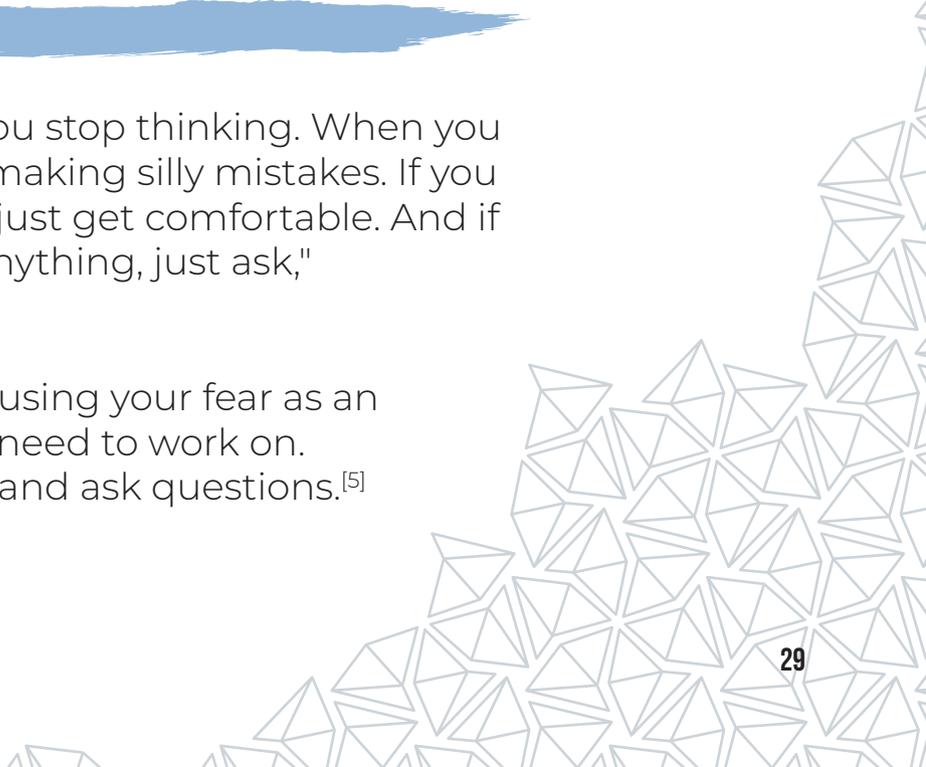
6. Stop being afraid of disability

Able-bodied people don't often talk about disability, and the fear of getting something wrong or offensive keeps us from addressing it. We might even accidentally point out that we aren't as comfortable with disability as we want the world to believe. But these fears shouldn't stop us from confronting our own biases.



"When you are afraid, you stop thinking. When you stop thinking, you start making silly mistakes. If you calm yourself down, you just get comfortable. And if you ever wonder about anything, just ask," Glazer says.

Become a stronger ally by using your fear as an indicator of the things you need to work on. Confront your discomfort, and ask questions.^[5]



6

HOW TO BE AN ALLY:

DISABLED
PEOPLE

7.

Don't ask people about their disability, however if appropriate, ask about any possible accessibility needs

Not everyone will feel comfortable disclosing their personal medical history or experiences. For some it will be more comfortable for their first interactions with you to not be about their medical background. However some people might feel comfortable for you to ask questions! It would be better to not ask unless told otherwise. If someone does decide to open up to you, you should listen to them without assumption and without reservation.

Due to an ableist society, once someone 'outs' themselves with their medical condition, they will often then be treated differently. Even if you've known them a long time you will intrinsically start to respond differently.

The only time you should ask, and only if it is appropriate, is if they have any accessibility needs to make things easier for them. However this should not then be a stimulant to enable you to question their disability.

If you know someone's disability, rather than asking them, take the opportunity to educate yourself and not rely on the person to explain their disability to you.



8.

Don't assume people's disability / Not all disabilities are visible

You can't assume someone's disability based on their appearance, there are many different types of disability both visible, invisible both of which can be physical and mental.



9.

Pay attention when in public

Like any interaction with a stranger, we never know what they are going through. Remember to be patient and kind. Be thoughtful of how people interact with you.

Do not interrupt or push someone with a speech impediment or someone who seems anxious in conversation. Do not talk down to or patronize others who communicate in these different ways.

6

HOW TO BE AN ALLY:

DISABLED
PEOPLE

10. Pay attention to your language

People still comfortably use ableist language like “crazy,” “insane,” “blind,” “deaf,” “stupid,” “bipolar,” and “retarded”.^[2]

Come up with better metaphors than “they’re off their meds” or “I could kill myself” when describing situations. These words are both hurtful and triggering for people who are living with these identifiers.



11. Keep an open mind

Only the person who is close to you and living with an invisible illness can tell you what it is like for them. What they describe may not match what you have heard in the past about their specific condition. Illnesses manifest themselves in a variety of ways, many of which don’t match the textbook description. Try to keep an open mind and believe what your friend confides in you about how their illness or condition affects them. Imagine what it would be like to be in their situation, and what you would want if it was you!



12. Don't take it personally

Still, inevitably there will be times when no matter how flexible you were, or how many accommodations you were willing to make, we just can't do whatever it is that we had planned. Try to understand that we aren't unreliable, our bodies are. We really want to spend time with you, and although I know it's disappointing when someone cancels plans, try not to take it personally. Do your best to be understanding and get excited about next time. If you really miss your friend, you could offer to come over and relax together. Sometimes showing up says more than you know.



13. Believe (in) Your Friend

This one is pretty simple, but very important. Make the choice to believe what your friend tells you about their life. Understand that while some people will always suspect that they are faking or exaggerating their condition, in actuality they just spend a lot of time faking well.

Believe that with the right accommodations, they still have great potential.^[6]

6

HOW TO BE AN ALLY

HOW TO BE AN ALLY TO: **INTERNATIONAL PEOPLE**

1. **Reach out to offer support, not to complain**

Reach out to them to offer your support and a listening ear. And if citizenship or migration is something you've never had to think about, resist the temptation to take up the space you've just offered. Make sure the support is about your friend and not about you.

2. **Educate yourself on what it takes to get into your country**

When it comes to immigration, the length and expense of the process makes it unattainable to some of the people who want and need it most. It's worth reading up on your history about periods where people may have been banned from entering the country or how the laws have changed over time.



3.

Learn about support and resources in your community

Research organizations in your area that advocate for refugees and immigrants and support international students, documented and undocumented. And many can offer resources on issues specific to people in your community. And if you have the ability to do so, consider volunteering to reciprocate the support, opening yourself up to learn even more.



4.

Speak up

This point is pretty self-explanatory, but important. Speak out against xenophobia in any way that you can, even if it means having an awkward interaction with a racist relative. If someone makes a "joke" at the expense of your International colleagues, tell them it's not funny. If you are in a group and someone says something xenophobic, don't wait for the friend it may have hurt most to speak up. You say something first. ^[7]



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HOW TO BE AN ALLY: INTERNATIONAL PEOPLE

5.

Don't judge International students based on their ability

Often to get into another country, you have to prove that you are skilled enough. In the media, the discussion is always around the value of International students and how much they contribute to the economy. These discussions are harmful, objectifying and dehumanising because they are being judged on economic contribution and not on their humanity. We should be looking to welcome International students that bring with them a diverse culture and opportunity to learn.





6.

Don't assume

Just because they are international doesn't mean they will always be BAME. You can still be White and international.

7.

Do your research

Just because that person is in a different country, doesn't mean they don't have emotional and physical ties to their home country. There could be something going on politically, personally or environmentally that could cause stress or anxiety. Look into the problems arising in other countries so you can begin to understand some of the things that they might be going through.



6

HOW TO BE AN ALLY

HOW TO BE AN ALLY TO: **JEWISH PEOPLE**

Being an ally for Jewish students, especially at an institution with a very small Jewish student population and no Jewish Society can be challenging. But just because there may be a very small Jewish student population is no excuse for not trying to be supportive towards Jewish students and fight antisemitism.



Incidents of antisemitism in the UK, although comparatively low compared to the rest of Europe, have been increasing since 2009 according to the Community Security Trust which records incidents of antisemitism. Antisemitism at UK universities and in the British student movement has been a particular cause for concern. With holocaust denial literature being circulated, National Action (a proscribed Neo-Nazi group by the Government) present on some campuses and



multiple incidents of students on the far-left engaging in antisemitic rhetoric, it's vital that students are allies for Jewish students. Always listen and treat incidents of antisemitism with care, consideration and act with true conviction.



Allyship doesn't just mean combatting antisemitism in society. It is equally as important to understand Jewish students and the Jewish faith. There are many ways that you can do this, especially at a campus with a small Jewish population and in the UK where Jews make up 0.5% of the population. In this context doing your research is a must, especially through online sources like the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Union of Jewish Students. Taking the time to understand Jewish students will ultimately make campuses a more supportive environment for Jewish students and Jewish student life.

6

HOW TO BE AN ALLY: JEWISH PEOPLE

Tips for being an Ally

The **Union of Jewish Students** is the national representative body for the 8500 Jewish students at British universities. It supports 60+ Jewish Societies across the UK, running national events and supporting local activities. If you're ever in doubt about Jewish student issues, UJS is your go-to organisation for this. They're always happy to answer questions about Jewish student issues and are a good port of call if there are any antisemitic incidents on campus.



Familiarise yourself with **CST (Community Security Trust)** who are a charity that monitors antisemitism and provides security for the Jewish community. If you ever see anything antisemitic or hostile to Jewish students, contact them immediately as they're the best group to liaise with on this.



There are multiple things you and your Students Union can do **tackle antisemitism**. Passing the IHRA Definition of Antisemitism at your SU is a good first action, as well as inviting UJS to run training sessions on engaging Jewish students and tackling antisemitism at your campus.



Actively **listening** and reaching out to Jewish students is so important when being an ally. Always ensure that your actions are being directed by Jewish students. For example, if Jewish students are running a Holocaust Memorial Day event, let them lead on it and supportive them in the ways they see most helpful.



Education is also vital as an ally. Make sure you're reaching out to representative Jewish organisations like UJS, the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Jewish Leadership Council when there's an issue that you and your Students Union is unsure of how to resolve.

6

HOW TO BE AN ALLY

HOW TO BE AN ALLY TO: **LGBTQ+ PEOPLE**

UCASU's LGBTQ+ Students group came together to devise a list of tips for cisgender and heterosexual allies on how best to support the LGBTQ+ community, as well as some things to remember when talking to LGBTQ+ friends and family.

1. **Don't deny someone's experience**

If an LGBTQ+ person tells you something is homophobic/transphobic/somehow offensive to the LGBTQ+ community, their complaint is valid. If you don't experience a particular form of oppression, you can't define what is and isn't offensive or oppressive behaviour toward that group.



2. Always be inclusive

You should make sure your language/behaviour is always inclusive, whether or not you're around someone you know is LGBTQ+. You don't necessarily know how everyone identifies, and you could upset someone or make them feel uncomfortable without realising.



3. Don't assume

Don't assume that if someone isn't straight, they must be gay or a lesbian. Sexuality exists on a spectrum: bisexual, pansexual and queer people exist. Never assume someone's identity; don't assume someone's gender just because you think they look feminine or masculine; don't assume someone is straight simply because they are in what appears to you to be a heterosexual relationship - they might be bisexual, pansexual or queer.

6

HOW TO BE AN ALLY: LGBTQ+ PEOPLE

4. Don't forget about context

Remember that while as a society we have made a lot of progress in LGBTQ+ rights, this doesn't mean that homophobia/transphobia/other LGBTQ+phobias have ceased to exist. Your university might be a very liberal environment, but that one particularly liberal space isn't representative of national or international attitudes toward LGBTQ+ people.



5. Don't minimise the importance of coming out

When someone comes out to you, your instinct might be to minimise what's happening to make the person feel more accepted. Coming out is a big deal - by the time someone comes out to you, they have gone through an emotional process of coming out to themselves, and their self-perception might have changed. So even if you think coming out - or even being LGBTQ+ - is not a big deal, be aware that for many, it is an important part of their identity, and they want their journey to be validated rather than downplayed.



6. **Support LGBTQ+ spaces**

This is also why LGBTQ+ groups and communities are still so important and relevant to LGBTQ+ people. As these identities have only recently become more widely accepted, many LGBTQ+ people still seek the safety and comfort of LGBTQ+-only spaces. This is for their own well being, and not for the sake of excluding cisgender and heterosexual people.

7. **If you are LGBTQ+ & religious**

If you are affiliated with a religious institution such as a church, synagogue, or mosque, in which the religious leader has shared openly LGBTQ+phobic ideas, seriously consider finding a more accepting religious community and make clear to your previous one why it was that you chose to move on.

8. **Learn about LGBTQ+ internationally**

Even if you believe Western countries are accepting of LGBTQ+ people, you should broaden your knowledge of how LGBTQ+ people are treated around the world; homosexuality is still punishable by death in some countries

6

HOW TO BE AN ALLY

HOW TO BE AN ALLY TO: **MUSLIM PEOPLE**

Although religious minorities aren't formally considered 'liberation groups', Muslim and Jewish people have been the target of rising hatred and violence in the UK over the last few years. Zara Mohammed, 2016/17 President of the Federation of Student Islamic Societies (FOSIS), had this to say about being an ally to Muslim students:



“ 'Sadly, we are seeing the rise of islamophobia on Campus both direct and indirect, this relates the experience of Muslim students feeling alienated or discriminated against on the basis of their faith and how they express their faith at University. This can amount to verbal abuse, physical abuse and aggressive behaviour, for example hostile incidents at events hosted by the Islamic society, females having scarf pulled or even ripped off and most commonly comments being made about terrorism directed at Muslim students.



To be an ally means speaking out, calling out and acting against Islamophobic behaviour, if you see a Muslim student who has endured this to be a source of support and comfort. Affirm the behaviour is wrong and support the student to report it to the University/Students' Union.



To be an ally also means to learn more about Muslims, attend activities/talks by the Islamic societies, the more you understand the faith the better you are equipped to support Muslim students and their needs. Building relationships and friendships are at the key of anyone wishing to be a real ally as we are a stronger force of good when we work together.



We need to have zero tolerance for any form of hate. ”



6

HOW TO BE AN ALLY: MUSLIM PEOPLE

Nashwa Khan wrote a piece for Everyday Feminism about a few of the daily oppressive behaviours she experienced as a Muslim women. These were:

Loaded assumptions about clothing

‘Not all Muslims wear the hijab, which is a head covering. This seems simple, yet the minute the topic comes up, non-Muslims seem to have some interesting thoughts on how Muslim women dress, and how I don’t necessarily fall into their image of what a Muslim woman should look like. Similarly, when I actively choose not to wear shorts, crop tops, or tube tops, further loaded assumptions are made about how I must be hindering my own liberation.’

It’s best to assume that people don’t want to hear negative or invasive comments about the way they look and dress, and to keep such comments to yourself, particularly if your opinion might be influenced by ignorance about Muslim practices.

Every person is different. Not all of these will apply to every Muslim person, but can be used as examples of ways that we, as allies, can aim to be more inclusive.



Alcohol based events

'The social isolation and feeling of being "othered" due to not drinking, when attached to my Muslim identity, becomes a point of contention that seems to take a toll on people's fun. So, think of new ways to include non-drinkers in events. It's super simple. For example, when events give attendees drink tickets, make sure they're valid for non-alcoholic drinks, too!'

This is something to keep in mind when organising any kind of social event - try to find a way to include people that don't drink, and ensure your event isn't so alcohol-focused that it excludes non-drinkers!

Expecting everyone to be sexually active

Nashwa says, 'There's an evasive presumption that Muslim women aren't liberated if they're not sexually active or public about sexuality. Not being sexually active – whether a decision based in religion or a sexual orientation, like asexuality – should be just as respected a form of bodily autonomy...At the same time, I've also found moments where Muslim women who are sexually active are also left out and treated as either deviant or "not actually Muslim," while those who choose to withhold information about their sex lives are called "prude." Sex positivity doesn't mean that everyone has to be talking about and having sex – and subsequently shaming anyone not doing either.'

6

HOW TO BE AN ALLY

HOW TO BE AN ALLY TO: **WOMEN**

1. **Hold others accountable**

Hold your friends accountable for the jokes they make, including rape jokes and sexualised/sexist slurs such as 'bitch' or 'whore'. Whether you're alone, in the street or at home with family. Of course only when this is relatively safe to do so - don't start a physical fight with a stranger over a sexist comment.

2. **Challenge**

Challenge your instinct to disbelieve survivors of sexual assault/rape. This point doesn't just apply to women as many men and non-binary people are also sexual assault survivors, but women make up the majority of survivors and - aside from cases where their story can be corroborated by men, like the Brock Turner case - are rarely believed.



3. Don't interject your own thoughts and experiences as fact

Don't interject your own thoughts and experiences as fact. Often women's experiences of sexual assault or harassment are doubted, or the woman is portrayed as hysterical/lying. It is important to believe women when they tell you about their experiences of womanhood and not to disagree simply because you have not witnessed such things.



4. Educate others

Educate your friends, family and children about rape culture, about the feminist movement, about toxic masculinity and about the patriarchy.^[8]



5. Sit back and listen

You have to learn to sit back and listen . Ask questions if you must but for the most part the struggles that women face will be foreign to you.

6

HOW TO BE AN ALLY: WOMEN

6.

Sometimes you will hear things from women that seem hurtful, angry, or targeted towards all men

In reality, when women talk about 'hating men', rather than saying 'not all men' we should understand what has driven women to say that. Often what they mean is that they hate patriarchy and the men who uphold it. If you feel hurt or criticised by such comments from women, perhaps you should consider whether this is because you know that you sometimes perpetuate patriarchal behaviours or ideas.

7.

Don't expect special treatment

Sometimes you'll find yourself feeling offended or affronted. You'll find yourself wondering why you even bother if people aren't going to acknowledge your efforts. That's your privilege talking, and you need to learn to set all of that aside. If someone was beaten up in front of you.



8. **Work through your internalised sexist beliefs and behaviours**

Everyone, because of the society we were raised in, has internalised some negative, patriarchal ideas. They become ingrained in you as you grow up simply because we live in an inherently sexist society. If you have a sexist thought about someone - for example, if you think a woman is a 'slut' for having a one night stand - then you should challenge it, rather than trying to pretend you don't have them. Ask yourself what that thought means and why you have it. If you can make yourself confront sexist ideas, your behaviours will change, and you can lead by example amongst your friends.



9. **Anyone can perpetuate misogyny**

Anyone who is not a woman or a trans-femme person can perpetuate and benefit from misogyny.

ACTION!

To summarize we've identified 3 key actions that everyone should take moving on from here to start making changes to your world and the world around you.

1. **Do your research**

It's important for you to have a good understanding when making choices and changes that will impact you and those around you. It will educate you and enable you to make informed decisions and build more structured and well-rounded arguments. It will also mean you can understand the things that other people face on a day-to-day basis.

For more information, a list of resources can be found on page 61.



2. Consider your language & behaviour

This may take a little while but as long as you're actively thinking about the language and behaviour you are using then you're making progress. Once you identify the areas of your language and behaviour that should develop, it will help you build better relationships with people from different backgrounds.



3. Influence and challenge those around you

If you've done your research, and you've thought about your language and behaviour, you'll be better equipped to start informing, educating and challenging those around you. Whether it's by calling out inappropriate language of a family member or standing up for your friend, they will be your tools to success. It takes time to develop confidence to do it but once you're there, you will start influencing those around you and then they too will be able to help take action.

ALLY SELF-CARE

Self-care is vital to the sustainability of a movement, or of an individual's work within a movement. Radicalism is more 'popular' or tenable in youth because burnout is real. Nonprofits that don't enable and encourage their employees to practice self-care see debilitating levels of employee turnover.^[9]

“ Caring for my self is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation and that is an act of political warfare. ”

- Audre Lorde

No matter how tough you may be, there's a toll to this work. **Self care isn't just important, it's crucial.** It's easy to neglect taking care of ourselves because when we're busy and overwhelmed, even a small reprieve feels like a luxury. So actually taking time to eat lunch, exercise, and hang out with friends? That just feels like slacking.^[10]



- 1. Prioritise sleep** A lack of sleep leads to a buildup of stress!
- 2. Remember to eat** Not eating enough or not eating a balanced diet can lead to mood swings.
- 3. Talk to your friends** If you have friends that belong to the same groups as you, talk things through with them.
- 4. Treat yourself well** You don't need to make it harder by beating yourself up for not knowing certain things, or for acting out of emotion. Let your actions go too. Surround yourself with people who you can be real with, who won't judge you, and will hopefully get you to grow further.
- 5. Let it go** If a person says something and after someone has called out or questioned the meaning of their offensive actions or words, let it go. They have just outed themselves on their ignorance, and it is theirs to work on. Not yours.
- 6. Be patient** It can take a long time to make change happen.
- 7. Be realistic about your limits**
Do not speak up or participate if it is going to hurt you.

GLOSSARY

Ableism - discrimination in favour of able-bodied people.

Agender – someone who does not identify with a gender.

Ally – supporting and working towards the end of oppression for a group other than one's own.

Anti-Semitism - hostility to or prejudice against Jewish people.

Asexual – someone who does not have sexual attractions or desires towards anyone. This does not mean they don't have sex.

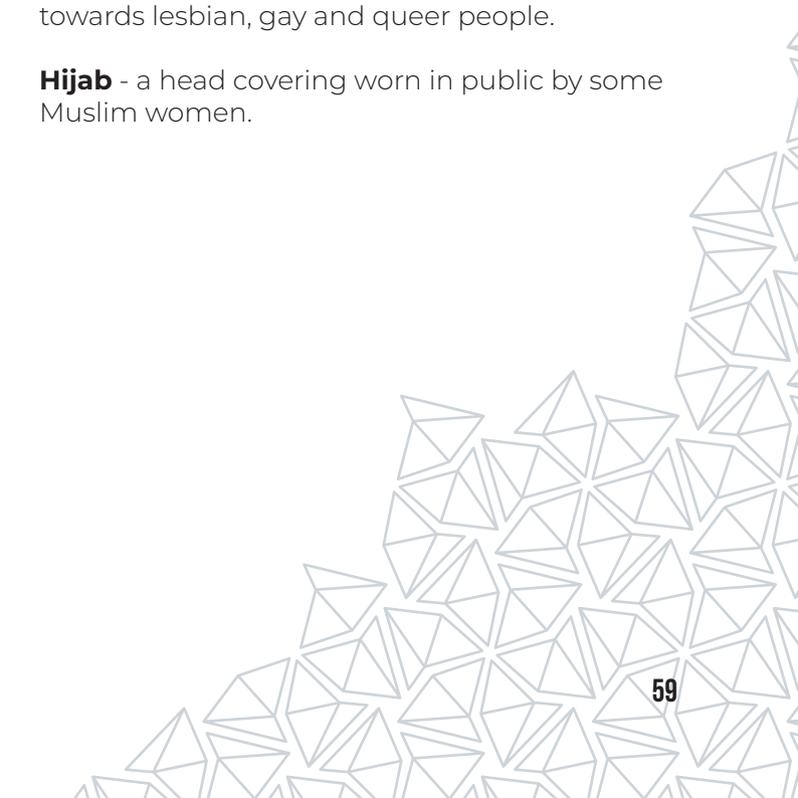
BAME - Black, Asian, Middle Eastern (preferred by UCA students) or Black, Asian, and minority ethnic, (used to refer to members of non-white communities in the UK).

Bigender – identifying with two genders.

Bisexual - refers to an emotional and/or sexual orientation towards more than one gender.

Black - A person with African ancestral origins, who self identifies, or is identified, as Black, African or Afro-Caribbean. The word is capitalised to signify its specific use in this way. In some circumstances the word Black signifies all non-white minority populations, and in this use serves political purposes.

Cisgender - denoting or relating to a person whose sense of personal identity and gender corresponds with their birth sex.



Cultural Appropriation - Wearing or owning items associated with a particular culture that is not your own, or participating in an event or activity associated with a culture that is not your own, and that you have not been invited to participate in. This borrowing of another culture is usually characterised by a lack of understanding or contextual knowledge around the significance of the object or practice in question.

Discrimination - the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people, especially on the grounds of race, age, or sex.

Ethnocentrism - The tendency to perceive and interpret from the standpoint of one's own culture. The tendency is reflected in the practice of using the White population as the norm or standard.

Exoticise - portray (someone or something unfamiliar) as exotic or unusual; romanticize or glamorize.

Fetishise - make (something) the object of a sexual fetish.

Gay – sexual attraction for one's own gender. Not gender exclusive.

Gender - often expressed in terms of masculinity and femininity, gender is largely culturally determined and is assumed from the sex assigned at birth.

Gender fluid – someone whose gender presence and identification shifts.

Gender identity - A sense of one's self as non-binary, woman, man, or some other identity, which may or may not correspond with the sex and gender one is assigned at birth.

Heterosexual - sexually attracted to people of the opposite sex.

Homophobic – oppressive or hatred behaviour towards lesbian, gay and queer people.

Hijab - a head covering worn in public by some Muslim women.

9

GLOSSARY

Intersex – someone who is born with sex characteristics of more than one biological sex.

Islamophobia - dislike of or prejudice against Islam or Muslims, especially as a political force.

Jewish - relating to, associated with, or denoting Judaism.

Lesbian – an attraction for one's own gender. Can only be used by women and women-aligned non-binary people.

LGBTQ+ - an acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer/ Questioning, and others. It refers to a population of people united by having gender identities or sexual orientations that differ from the heterosexual and cisgender majority.

Liberation - To be or seek freedom of oppression and discrimination.

Marginalise - treat (a person, group, or concept) as insignificant or peripheral.

Muslim - a follower of the religion of Islam.

Non-binary – someone who does not fit into the binary gender expressions of male or female.

Oppression - prolonged cruel or unjust treatment or exercise of authority.

Pansexual - refers to a person whose emotional, romantic and/or sexual attraction towards others is not limited by biological sex, gender or gender identity.

Queer - in the past a derogatory term for LGBT individuals. The term has now been reclaimed by LGBT young people in particular who don't identify with traditional categories around gender identity and sexual orientation but is still viewed to be derogatory by some.

Racial prejudice - Negative beliefs, perceptions, or attitudes towards one or more ethnic or racial groups.

Racism - prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against someone of a different race based on the belief that one's own race is superior.

Safe Space - Typically refers to an autonomous space for individuals who feel vulnerable or marginalised who need a space to access support. This could be in the form of liberation groups and social groups or physical spaces

Sexism - prejudice, stereotyping, or discrimination, typically against women, on the basis of sex.

Sexuality - a person's sexual orientation or preference.

Sexual orientation - experiencing emotional, romantic, sexual or affectional attraction or non-attraction to other people. Sexual orientation is fluid and people use a variety of labels to describe their sexual orientation.

Transgender (often shortened to 'trans') – someone whose gender does not align with the biological sex they were assigned at birth. Someone does not have to begun a medical transition in order to be trans

Transphobia - dislike of or prejudice against transsexual or transgender people.

Trigger Warnings - A warning at the beginning of something highlighting that it contains things that typically trigger common phobias or symptoms of mental illness.

Xenophobia - dislike of or prejudice against people from other countries.

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

BAME

No Borders: The Politics of Immigration Control and Resistance (15 Oct 2016) by Natasha King

Race: Vintage Minis (8 Jun 2017) by Toni Morrison

There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation (11 Jul 2002) by Paul Gilroy

LGBTQ+

Queer: A Graphic History (8 Sep 2016) by Meg-John Barker

Trans: A Memoir (15 Nov 2016) by Juliet Jacques

Women

Eve Was Framed: Women and British Justice (7 Oct 1993) by Helena Kennedy

Feminism is for Everybody: Passionate Politics (20 Oct 2000) by Bell Hooks

We Should All Be Feminists (9 Oct 2014) by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie



Disability

Disability Politics and Theory (1 Jan 2012) by A J Withers

Intersectional Topics

Bad Feminist (21 Aug 2014) by Roxane Gay

Exile and Pride: Disability, Queerness, and Liberation (7 Aug 2015) by Eli Clare

Feminism is Queer: The Intimate Connection between Queer and Feminist Theory (15 Jun 2016) by Mimi Marinucci

Hunger: A Memoir of (My) Body (7 Jun 2018) by Roxane Gay

The Minority Body: A Theory of Disability (Studies in Feminist Philosophy Series) (7 Apr 2016) by Elizabeth Barnes

The Politics of Everybody: Feminism, Queer Theory, and Marxism at the Intersection (15 Jan 2016) by Holly Lewis

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