

# Be a REAL Ally

Effective allyship is authentic and intentional. Whenever you ally, make sure to be **REAL: Reflect, Empathize, Act, and Learn.**

REAL is a tool to help you apply the principles of effective allyship all the time, no matter the situation.

You can be REAL during a short conversation in which you reflect, empathize, take immediate action, and learn in the moment from what you did. REAL allyship should also become how you approach your ongoing Allyship Journey as you reflect, empathize, act, and learn through every experience, over many years. Apply it during your daily practice as you build and maintain a culture of belonging, at work and beyond.

Keep in mind, practicing REAL allyship won't prevent you from making mistakes—mistakes are inevitable and essential to growth. REAL provides a practical guide to help you navigate mistakes (and breakthroughs!) as you progress in your unique Allyship Journey.



## R

### Reflect

Understand your own experiences. Own your relationship to privilege and marginalization. Find your blind spots. Be aware of your unique perspective on a given situation. Notice instances of inequality of and exclusion in your surroundings.

*What makes me uncomfortable? What assumptions and behaviors will I have to confront? What resources can I use to help those around me?*

## E

### Empathize

Recognize that everyone has a unique experience. Try to feel what others feel. Accept and respect other perspectives. Harbor sincere curiosity to seek out and listen to new and different points of view. Extend kindness and understanding to everyone, including yourself.

*What do others feel or need in this situation? What motivates their words and actions? How might my words or actions affect those around me?*

## A

### Act

Stand up instead of standing by. Create a safe space for others to express themselves. Vocally support the work of your marginalized coworkers. Amplify underrepresented voices in every way you can. Use your influence to advocate for others. Actively seek to learn as much as you can about the challenges faced by your marginalized peers. Proactively expand your network to include more perspectives and experiences.

*Who needs support? Is there an action I can take to change the situation? What can I do immediately? What can I do in the long term? Who can I speak to in order to figure out how best to help?*

## L

### Learn

Pay attention to the impact of your words and actions. Learn from these moments. Remember that every action you take contributes to your Allyship Journey. Take initiative to do your own research; online resources make it easier than ever to educate yourself about concepts like prejudice and systemic oppression.

*How can I broaden my perspective? How might my background and previous experiences influence my perspective? How is my worldview different from those around me? What are ways I can educate myself about oppression without putting undue burden on marginalized individuals? What can I do differently and better tomorrow?*

# Need a REAL Ally

It's important that you get the support you need. When you need an ally, make sure to be **REAL: Reflect, Empathize, Act, and Learn.**



REAL is a tool to help you apply the principles of effective allyship all the time, no matter the situation. Apply it daily as you build and maintain a culture of belonging, at work and beyond.

When you find yourself in need of an ally, ask yourself:

## R Reflect

- What do I want or need in order to feel like I belong in this environment?
- What obstacles do I face that could be removed if there were specific changes to culture or patterns at work? What would those changes look like?
- What kind of support from others would improve my work experience?
- Are there ways in which I can be an ally to those who share aspects of my identity?

If someone is treating you unfairly or making assumptions based on your identity:

## E Empathize

- Give yourself the same empathy you give others. Allow yourself to feel how you feel.
- Be patient with yourself; don't be afraid to express your emotions openly, even if it makes others uncomfortable.
- Feel empowered to ask for support.

Empathy is the basis of effective, authentic communication. Practice empathy when starting a conversation with someone about changing their mindset or behavior. Empathy is also how you can give grace to with others' mistakes as they learn the best way to ally with you.

If you feel unwelcome or overlooked due to aspects of your identity:

## A Act

- Don't hesitate to ask others to change their behavior.
- Call attention to beliefs and behaviors that are leading to exclusion. Suggest alternative approaches and behaviors.
- Ask others to ally with you by inviting them to act. Talk to them about how they can use their privilege to partner with you to build a culture of belonging.

Ally with those who experience marginalization. There may be times when you need an ally, but there may be other times when you can be the ally that someone else needs.

## L Learn

Strive to learn from your experiences. Recognize that you deserve the same dignity and respect as anyone else, even if biases in the culture around you don't reflect it yet.

If you experience marginalization, you can learn from other marginalized groups with experiences that differ from your own. You may find similarities and differences in your experiences that can help you in your journey of empowerment and allyship. You can learn to guide and encourage your allies to become better supporters. Learn to ask for what you need from your allies.