

ALLYSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY GUIDELINES

Written and compiled by Levana Saxon from various sources, including Andrea Ayvazian, Peggy McIntosh, Love, Race and Liberation, OpenSource Leadership, Challenging White Supremacy, Isaac Giron, Joshua Kahn Russell, Wahleah Johns, White Noise Collective, Rockwood, White Noise Collective,

Follow the leadership and organizing culture of front line communities. Those most impacted by a particular issue (historically, systemically, currently) have the expertise, strategy and long-term commitment necessary to win. Ask what support looks like, and do that.

Build Relationships: Build authentic relationships based on mutual trust and respect - *real* relationships, not *token* relationships - which means investing in building relationships overtime. Don't disrespect people and abuse their time, energy, or resources for the sake of a one-time action or campaign. Also, don't assume a partnership exists simply because someone was nice to you and seemed interested in working with you. Partnerships require clear agreements about how you will work together and often protocols for working together to be decided by specific people.

Be Accountable: Develop and practice community-based accountability systems. Get feedback on the work you are doing. Developing a consultation process takes time, clarity and mutual agreement of the time and labor being asked of those who are willing to provide consultation. Ensure that those providing consultation can actually represent the community or organization they represent, otherwise you are tokenizing them.

Get out of the way of People Speaking for Themselves: Instead of telling or interpreting the stories of affected people through your websites, art, communications and media, work to ensure that people directly affected are heard. Offer support for spokespersons to represent their own constituencies.

Show up intersectionally: connect your issue to other social justice movements for collective liberation; show up at to support those movements (immigrant rights/ migrant justice, housing/anti-gentrification, community safety/anti-police brutality, end to prison industrial complex, etc.)

Don't impose your cultural habits: Things like bringing a sense of urgency or too much patience, prioritising your preferred form of communication, dealing or not dealing with conflict. Even imposing your preferred way of connecting and appreciating. Spend time getting to know the pace, communication styles, ways of handling conflict and connecting within the organization or community you would like to be in solidarity with.

Respect leadership structures: Don't make assumptions about who is in leadership, and how forms of accountability and representation operate within the community or organization you are trying to work with. Find out. If you are an organizer, don't try to become an official

partner with the Executive Director of a smaller organization you are working with. Your ED should reach out to their ED.

ALSO

- ★ Recognize that “solidarity” itself can be a relationships of domination. Disrupt your internal hegemonic tendencies and seek liberatory horizontal relationships. Allow others to be in solidarity with you.
- ★ Break down the narratives, beware of ‘nice white lady,’ ‘white savior’ and other colonial impulses; overcome any beliefs that you are more valuable or have more valuable knowledge than others.
- ★ Recognize the tendency to compartmentalize your identities, to visibilize your oppressions and invisibilize your privileges; start to see the full picture and make yourself at home at the intersections; learn to hold both your privilege and oppression *at the same time*.
- ★ Listen to other people’s experiences with an open heart and mind, even when what is being said is hard to hear; dare to feel uncomfortable.
- ★ Learn what it means to have privilege based on your social identities; continue to deepen your understanding of social power and oppression;
- ★ Learn to recognize forms of oppression: avoidance, exclusion, rejection, unequal access to resources/rewards, and violence.
- ★ Recognize that “you can’t be neutral on a moving train” - the moving train/ “business as usual”/“the grain” *is* racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, ableist, agist, anti-immigrant and so on. Actively work against the grain in your spheres of influence and start the difficult conversations.
- ★ Understand the impact of cultural appropriation; if you are socially or economically benefiting off of using the clothes, jewelry, music, dance etc. of others, ask yourself “why?”; learn your own history.
- ★ Don’t try to be a Super Hero Ally or Anti-Racist; develop humility and keep your sense of entitlement in check - “You won’t be needed by the movement until you understand you’re not needed by the movement.”
- ★ Don’t be afraid of making mistakes; seek support in processing shame, guilt and other roadblock responses while finding ways to build confidence, trust and forgiveness in self and others.
- ★ Remember that impact is generational; let go of the idea that change doesn’t happen unless we’re around to see it happen.
- ★ Don’t work in isolation; remember impact is collective and identify communities to support you and hold you accountable; constantly renew your commitments.
- ★ Respect spaces reserved for marginalized communities and know that sometimes solidarity means not showing up