

# HOW TO ALLY

By Marie Beecham · @MarieBeech



**D O**

## C H E C K   Y O U R S E L F

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Racism is indoctrinated and systemic. In a white supremacist society, everyone is susceptible to harboring prejudices against BIPOC. Even if you're actively combating racism in your sphere of influence, you continue to benefit from centuries of oppression. Refrain from centering yourself in a movement that deserves your support but is not about you and in which you are not an authority.

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**D O N ' T**

TALK TO US ABOUT  
YOUR WHITE GUILT

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While you may think this is helpful, realize that you feel guilty because of how badly we are persecuted. This helps you feel better at the expense of my emotional well-being. If you think racism is upsetting, imagine how we feel. Why are we spending time working through your guilt instead of working to fight my persecution? Doing this prioritizes white feelings over Black lives.

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**DO**

TALK ABOUT RACISM WITH  
OTHER WHITE PEOPLE

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Have uncomfortable conversations about prejudice with other white people in your life. Realize that in these social situations, you hold power and privilege. Don't know what to say? Learn about racism by listening to Black voices. Initiate these conversations with other white people so that race isn't a topic only addressed after a Black person has been persecuted. Be proactive rather than reactive.

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**D O N ' T**

EXPECT BLACK PEOPLE  
TO EDUCATE YOU

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The expectation for Black people to explain themselves and their suffering to you is an example of white supremacy. This upholds the ideology that Black people are to serve you, and that we owe you something. Don't demand that emotional labor from Black people in your life. Learn from Black people in a way that doesn't require anything from us. Read our books, follow us on social media, etc. If you learn from a Black educator, pay them.

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**D O**

**ACT WITH URGENCY**

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To the Black man, "Wait" has always meant "Never." Understand that for generations, we have been told to wait. Our grandparents were told to wait, our parents were told to wait, and now we're being told to wait. As James Baldwin said, we are tired of waiting for your so-called "progress." Clearly, there is no "quick fix" for racism. We must move quickly to lasting reform.

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**D O N ' T**

COMPARE RACISM TO STRUGGLES  
YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED

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While it may be a well-intentioned attempt at empathy, this conversational pivot prioritizes your struggles over racial discrimination. In drawing comparisons to your own life, you're putting yourself at the center of an issue that has nothing to do with you. This mental comparison can help you empathize, but it takes away from conversation about race. You'll never feel the burden of racism.

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**DO**

CALL OUT AND REJECT WHITE  
PRIVILEGE THAT YOU WITNESS  
OR EXPERIENCE

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Notice that the answer isn't regarded as correct until the white person reiterates it? You're offered awards or jobs that only go to white people? Call these things out and reject them. With equity as the goal, you have to give up your privilege to level the playing field. If you don't notice these things, start paying attention.

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**D O N ' T**

P R A C T I C E   W H I T E   S A V I O R I S M

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White saviorism "helps" non-white people in a self-serving manner; white saviors feel that they rescue people of color from their own situation. White saviorism is white supremacy. It has ulterior motives, it's harmful, and it's not praise-worthy. You are benefiting from the very systems that are hurting me, and you're taking small steps to lessen that disparity, as you should.

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**D O**

HONOR THE FEELINGS OF  
BLACK PEOPLE

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Addressing your own racial prejudices should be uncomfortable. While your instinct may be defensiveness, listen earnestly to Black voices and black stories. Put Black people's feelings ahead of your own. Start giving black people the benefit of the doubt. Do not tell Black people how to mourn, feel, or protest in response to their oppression.

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