

Tips for Being an Ally

TO YOUR COLLEAGUES

A series of tips from across the BPDTS Naturally Inclusive & Wellbeing Group on how we can all be Allies to our colleagues, day-to-day, helping to make everyone feel included and valued for who they are, celebrating differences, and supporting all to bring our authentic selves to work.



BPDTS Ltd

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Disability

Respect

Treat disabled people as you would nondisabled people. If you think someone needs help you should ask before acting; a disabled person will know their abilities far better than you.



Consider your language

Saying someone 'suffers with disability' or is 'confined to a wheelchair' implies that disability is a burden that prevents a person from living a whole and fulfilling life. A disability is a part of someone's identity, but it's not a negative thing, and it doesn't define them.



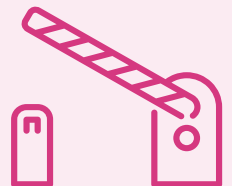
Education and awareness

Not all disabilities are visible. Try not to make assumptions about why someone is taking time off work or needs the priority seat on the bus. Everyone's experience of disability, their conditions and symptoms are different and complex. Be wary of ableism; ableism can manifest itself into physical actions, verbal interactions, or less obvious prejudice. Learn by listening to the person don't patronise and advise on their condition.



Social model of disability

The Social Model looks at ways of removing barriers that restrict life choices for people with disabilities. When barriers are removed, a person can be independent and equal in society



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Intergenerational

Ideas and experience

We all have different ideas and experiences we can contribute. Avoid stereotyping people based on their age and listen to what they have to say.



Consider your language

Make our workplace inclusive for people of all ages. Make people feel comfortable avoiding ageist terms or banter.



Do you need to know?

Ask yourself why you need to know a person's age and what difference it makes; like and respect them for who they are. Take age out of the equation.



Training

Training is for everyone. If you are in training or coordinating training, age doesn't matter.



Recruitment opportunities

If you can give someone an opportunity or you're involved in recruitment, widen your network of people to represent people of all ages.



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LGBTQ+

Listen

If a colleague chooses to confide in you, listen. They're trusting you with an important part of their identity. Support your LGBTQ+ colleagues to be their full authentic selves.



Speak up

If you hear anti-LGBTQ+ slurs, jokes or misinformation, say something. For example, you could lead with why you are an ally and that we are all responsible for creating a welcoming and inclusive workplace.



Stay informed

When you can, take some time to understand the realities, challenges and issues affecting the lives of the LGBTQ+ communities.



Avoid assumptions

Not all your co-workers are heterosexual or have the same gender identity they were assigned at birth (cisgender).



Respect your colleagues

Respect your colleagues regardless of their sex, gender expression, gender identity and sexual orientation.



Be inclusive

Use language in conversation that's inclusive, for example, use 'partner' or 'spouse' rather than 'husband' or 'wife'. Use the correct pronouns when referring to them, she/her/hers, he/him/his or they/them/theirs. And if you're not sure, ask!



Celebrate

Support and participate in annual Pride celebrations and other LGBTQ+ community events.



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RACE 4WARD

Go beyond words

Saying you're not racist is not enough. Go beyond words and look at your friends, groups and associations to see how they might be influencing you subconsciously.



Challenge

If you encounter a trait of racism within your networks, be brave enough to challenge those behaviours. Speaking up can change mindsets.



Don't be shy

Don't be shy or uncomfortable to discuss or talk about a difficult issue like race and privilege. It can open your eyes to a whole new world.



See the person

See beyond the colour and see the person behind the colour. What you find might pleasantly surprise you and challenge or change your assumptions.



Be immersive

Immerse yourself in knowledge. Learning about the plight of colleagues from Ethnic Minorities can help you gain a better understanding of their experience. For example, learning how the slave trade in the 1800s has and still impacts generations of descendants.



Be empathetic

Put yourself in your Ethnic Minority colleagues' shoes. Understand what they feel like; it might help you to know where their shoes hurt. Although you might not be the person experiencing racism that doesn't mean it's not your problem. Small changes can make a big difference.



Be aware of your language

Remember that language matters. What might be acceptable where you're from might be offensive elsewhere. Educate yourself on what language is acceptable.



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Mental Health

Language matters

How we talk about mental health is important. Avoid talking in ways that belittle or downplay the courage it takes to live with mental illness. Suicide is not a crime and suicidal thoughts are common, so use “died by suicide” not “committed suicide”. If you don’t know what to say, listen.



Listen with empathy

Providing a safe space for someone to share without being judged is one of the most valuable things you can do for another person. Be patient with someone sharing their experiences. Keep their confidentiality and don’t share information without their permission.



Signposting

Unless you’re a professional, signpost to appropriate professionals, support, and helplines. In the workplace, this includes Employee Assistance Programmes (EAP).



Get involved

Talking about mental health helps counter the stigma associated with mental illness. Your attitude and openness could change someone’s life, maybe even save a life.



Engagement

Ask how you can help, especially if someone is behaving other than they usually do. People sometimes say they are okay when they’re not, so ask twice if you’re unsure. Practice kindness.



Education and awareness

Understand that mental illness can affect anyone at any time. You don’t have to fully understand someone’s situation to acknowledge and respect their lived experience. If someone you know lives with a mental health condition, be the friend, loved one, or colleague who takes the time to learn what that might mean for them.



Tips for Being an Ally

Women in Digital

Listen

Listen to the challenges women are raising in the workplace. Support them as they overcome these challenges.



Create

Create an environment where women feel included and respected.



Consider

Consider your behaviour. Are your words alienating or marginalising women?



Listen to ideas

Listen to the ideas and advice from women in the workplace; help champion them when you believe their ideas are valid and worth consideration.



Support

Support women through mentoring, coaching and buddy schemes; help more women aspire to work in digital work spaces.



Collaborate

Collaborate with the Women in Digital group to organise, promote, and participate in events and activities.

