

## Appendix 6G

### Characteristics of an Ally

#### Becoming an Ally/What is an Ally?

An ally is a member of the advantaged social group who takes a stand against social injustice directed at targeted groups (Whites who speak out against racism, men who are anti-sexist). An ally works to be an agent of social change rather than an agent of oppression. When a form of oppression has multiple targeted groups, as do racism, ableism, and heterosexism, targeted group members can be allies to other targeted social groups they are not part of. (Lesbians can be allies to bisexual people. African American people can be allies to Native Americans. Blind people can be allies to people who use wheelchairs.)

#### Characteristics of an Ally

1. Feels good about own social group membership; is comfortable and proud of own identity
2. Takes responsibility for learning about own and targeted group heritage, culture, and experience, and how oppression works in everyday life
3. Listens to and respects the perspectives and experiences of targeted group members
4. Acknowledges unearned privileges received as a result of advantaged status and works to eliminate or change privileges into rights that targeted group members also enjoy
5. Recognizes that unlearning oppressive beliefs and actions is a lifelong process, not a single event, and welcomes each learning opportunity
6. Is willing to take risks, try new behaviors, act in spite of own fear and resistance from other members of advantaged groups
7. Takes care of self to avoid burn-out
8. Creates images of how they wish to relate and work for social justice
9. Acts against social injustice out of a belief that it is in her/his own self-interest to do so
10. Is willing to make mistakes, learn from them, and try again

11. Is willing to be confronted about own behavior and attitudes and consider change
12. Is committed to taking action against social injustice in own sphere of influence
13. Understands own growth and response patterns and when she/he is on a learning edge
14. Understands the connections among all forms of social injustice
15. Believes she/he can make a difference by acting and speaking out against social injustice
16. Knows how to cultivate support from other allies