HOW TO BE AN ALLY

The Platinum Rule, established by Milton J. Bennett, says that we should treat people the way that they want to be treated. As more of us leave our screens behind to resume real-world interactions, we do so with better awareness around current social issues and a desire to foster more respectful personal engagements, which gives us a fantastic opportunity to put The Platinum Rule into practice.

Educate yourself

In our blog on Pride month, we talked about LGBTQ+ allyship, but allyship goes beyond one group. It's about using your personal power and privilege to be an ally to all people in historically untapped and excluded groups. By taking on their struggles as your own, educating yourself about what you don't know, and amplifying inequalities, you can foster opportunities for change.

There are many online resources available to help you get started, including:

- Creative Equity Toolkit
- Guide to Allyship
- PFLAG's allyship guide
- Helpful tips from consumer brands Ben & Jerry's and General Mills
- Our unconscious bias checklist for self-aware leaders
- Harvard University's Project Implicit

At BMC, we have created an Allyship Toolkit of resources to help our employees recognize and address bias. I've also assembled a YouTube playlist of helpful allyship and leadership video resources here. If you'd like to do a deeper dive on the foundational concept of allyship, Dr. Cathy

Royal is a must read. You can find content on her Quadrant Behavior Theory here and an excellent conversation with her on the subject is here.

Foster an inclusive environment

Diversity is a fact and inclusivity is an act. While many organizations have worked to correct their hiring, retention, and paths to promotion, inequalities still exist, and creating an inclusive workforce is an ongoing process, as we discussed here.

Building and maintaining inclusive environments can help correct and eliminate unconscious biases, but it can also stoke the fires of those who refuse to accept that diversity. If your organization needs help managing potential conflicts, try CulturePop, a self-paced, micro-learning app that encourages cross-cultural curiosity. Our BMC employees use it within their teams to help expand their cultural awareness. And this is a handy checklist on fostering more diverse and inclusive engagements every time you host a virtual meeting.

Turn to the experts

In a previous blog, we've talked about micro-aggressions in the workplace that pile up and take their toll. Maybe you're on the receiving end of that, maybe you've witnessed it—or maybe you're guilty of doing it and are actively working to improve yourself. Bystander intervention training is a foundation of allyship, encouraging and preparing people to take action when they witness harassing and discriminatory behavior—wherever it occurs.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) supports bystander intervention training as a way to create a "sense of collective responsibility motivates bystanders to step in and take action when they observe problematic behaviors the skills and confidence to intervene as appropriate."

While its origins stem from intervening in workplace sexual harassment, bystander intervention training has evolved to include all forms of discrimination and can help each of us be collectively better and learn to support one another in our professional and personal lives. The training helps remove the uncertainty of not knowing when or how to intervene safely, especially in uncomfortable situations. Beyond outlining steps to take in the moment, it also provides a deeper understanding of how to discourage and even prevent future incidents and promotes a respectful, inclusive culture in the workplace and the world.

Many free bystander intervention training classes are available that offer de-escalation techniques and guidance on when and how to safely help check others—and yourself—on bias. If you're a LinkedIn Learning subscriber, I recommend these courses on bystander intervention and allyship:

- From Bystander to Upstander
- Becoming An Ally to All
- Supporting Allyship and Anti-Racism at Work
- Inclusive Mindset for Committed Allies
- Becoming a Male Ally at Work
- Leading Your Org on a Journey of Allyship

To support non-profit bystander training, visit Hollaback! and Action Breaks Silence.

Conclusion

Everyone's path is different, but at the end of the day, we're stronger and better when we walk it together. Encouraging open, honest dialogue and recognizing personal privilege as an opportunity—and responsibility—to be an ally are important steps on that journey. At BMC, we believe the Autonomous Digital Enterprise includes everyone, and we strive to be better global citizens as we walk that path with you.

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