



# Allyship

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a quick-reference resource

# A guide

## What is allyship?

An ally is someone who supports people from underrepresented groups even if they are not part of that group.

Creating a culture of inclusion within the workplace is vital in supporting people from all underrepresented groups, including neurodivergence.

Allyship helps to foster that inclusive culture, creating a space where neurodivergent individuals feel welcomed and accepted, reducing the pressure to mask their true personality or support needs and showcasing the unique skills and contribution that diversity brings to any workplace.

Simple daily actions will support these employees and allow team members and managers to demonstrate allyship.



# A guide

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## How can you become an ally?

- **Educate Yourself:** Learn about different neurodivergent conditions and their impact on individuals.
- **Listen and Learn:** Engage with neurodivergent individuals to understand their experiences and needs. Remember, everyone's experience is unique.
- **Advocate for Inclusion:** Promote inclusive practices in your workplace, such as flexible working hours, quiet spaces, and clear communication.
- **Challenge Stigma:** Speak out against stereotypes and misconceptions about neurodivergent people and encourage others to do the same.
- **Be Supportive:** Offer meaningful support, whether through mentorship, providing resources, or simply being a friend.
- **Recognise Barriers:** Understand that neurodivergent individuals may face unique challenges. Show empathy and patience.
- **Promote Awareness:** Organise awareness sessions to educate others about neurodiversity and allyship.
- **Be Accountable:** Take responsibility for your actions and commit to continuous learning. If you make a mistake, apologise and use it as an opportunity to grow.
- **Challenge Bias and Discrimination:** Actively address and confront biased or discriminatory behaviour whenever you encounter it, whether in personal relationships, the workplace, or society at large.
- **Be Respectful:** Always interact with neurodivergent individuals respectfully and avoid condescension.

## Challenges

**Lack of understanding:** Allies might struggle with fully understanding the experiences and needs of marginalised groups, which can hinder effective support.

**Resistance:** Allies may face resistance from colleagues who are not supportive or knowledgeable of diversity initiatives or who feel threatened by changes in the workplace culture.

**Fear of making mistakes:** Allies often worry about saying or doing the wrong thing, which can lead to hesitation and inaction. This fear can stem from a lack of confidence or knowledge.

**Emotional drain:** Constantly advocating for others can be emotionally draining, especially if allies witness or experience backlash or discrimination themselves.

**Balancing advocacy and work:** Finding the time and energy to be an effective ally while managing regular work responsibilities can be challenging.

**Complex dynamics:** Allies need to navigate complex social dynamics and power structures within the workplace, which can be difficult, requiring tact and diplomacy.

## Misconceptions

Allyship is synonymous with friendship. In fact, friendship is creating connection and **allyship is increasing equity.**

Once you “become” an ally, you’re always an ally. In fact, **Allyship is built over time**, not attained. It requires constant education and self-awareness

# How to support

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## Within your organisation

**Leadership commitment:** Ensure that leaders and managers are committed to promoting allyship. Their support can set the tone for the entire organisational culture.

**Training and education:** Offer regular training sessions on neurodiversity topics. This can help employees understand the importance of allyship and how to practice it effectively.

**Create safe spaces:** Establish a neurodiversity focused employee resource group, where employees can share experiences.

**Open communication:** Encourage active listening and respectful discussions.

**Recognise and reward allyship:** Acknowledge and celebrate the efforts of allies within the organisation. This can be through awards, recognition programs, or simply highlighting their contributions in meetings or newsletters.

**Provide resources:** Make resources on neurodivergence readily available. This can include policies, articles, videos, and access to external neurodiversity experts.

**Policy and practice review:** Regularly review and update organisational policies and practices to ensure they support inclusivity and do not inadvertently disadvantage any group.

**Set clear goals:** Establish clear, measurable goals for neurodiversity initiatives and track progress. This can help the organisation stay accountable and focused on continuous inclusion.

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