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Allyship and Inclusive Leadership Tips

Everyday Allyship

Supporting Marginalized People

- De-center yourself
- Educate yourself about the experiences of marginalized people via research and observation (and not by “interrogating” marginalized people)
- Validate and normalize experiences of marginalized people
- Intervene when someone is a target of microaggressions or other exclusionary behavior
- Make contributions of marginalized people visible
- Mentor and sponsor marginalized people
- Nominate marginalized people for desirable roles, awards, and recognition
- Co-author with marginalized people

Educating Others

- Provide accurate information/correct misinformation about equity and inclusion issues and experiences
- Address sexist, racist, homophobic, ableist, and other marginalizing comments and jokes
- Ask for a pause – “hang on a minute, I need to process what was just said”
- Call people “in” rather than “out” – invite them to work with you to resolve the issue
- Name the problematic behavior and express what you’d like to have happen
- Highlight dissonance between a person’s espoused and enacted values
- Acknowledge intent versus effect – it is effect on the target that matters
- Help them identify how they will benefit from greater equity and inclusion
- Help them identify valued others (i.e., those whose opinion they respect) who work for inclusion
- Accept that resistance is a natural part of the learning process as people learn to recognize and confront their own privilege and complicity in systems of oppression and exclusion
- Acknowledge that people can be at different stages of learning how to act in support of equity and inclusion but all can improve

Changing Policy and Practice

- Identify ways that current policies and practices inhibit the advancement of marginalized people
- Share information about problematic policies and practices with those in your networks
- Share information about problematic policies and practices with decision makers
- Refuse to participate in programs that do not include or support marginalized people

Inclusive Leadership

- Exhibit self-awareness and acknowledge individual and organizational biases
- Align your personal values and those of your organization
- Listen attentively
- Seek to understand how others experience the world
- Develop ground rules for engaging in difficult conversations and hold the group to them
- Role model respectful behavior and inclusive language
- Align time, effort, and resources to effectively support equity and inclusion
- Empower individuals and groups through process and communication
- Work intentionally to expand and diversify your networks of support, influence, and power
- Challenge yourself and the system and be willing to take risks

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Mentoring and Sponsoring Tips



Definitions

- Mentoring is “a reciprocal learning relationship characterized by trust, respect, and commitment, in which the mentor supports the professional and personal development of another by sharing [their] life experiences, influence, and expertise” (Zellers et al., 2008, p. 555)
- A sponsor is someone with influence and authority who acts to empower and advance a colleague’s professional success (Kanter, 1977)
- An advocate also acts to publicly support and advance a colleague’s career (Bruce 2017) but need not be in a position of power
- “While a mentor is someone who has knowledge and will share it with you, a sponsor is a person who has power and will use it for you.” (Ibarra, 2019)
- Not mutually exclusive – effective mentors also engage in sponsoring activities

Strategies

- Become familiar with your mentee/sponsee’s (M/S) credentials and experiences, as well as their values and career plans
- Don’t project your own experiences, values, or career goals onto your M/S
- Think outside the “pipeline” model of what a career path looks like; identify alternative paths
- Ask your M/S what they feel they need to be successful, and listen non-judgmentally as they describe the barriers they are facing
- Share your own experiences and the strategies you took to overcome barriers
- Share your successes and your failures, lessons learned
- Introduce your M/S to others in your institutional networks, including other influencers, academic leaders, and those who will be making admissions, hiring, promotion, and tenure decisions
- Introduce your M/S to others in your professional networks, including program officers at funding agencies, journal editors, and officers of your professional societies, as well as colleagues outside of traditional academic-oriented careers
- Help your M/S identify and connect with a variety of mentors that meet different career and personal needs
- Talk up your M/S’s accomplishments with others at your institution and in your discipline at every opportunity
- Identify venues where your M/S can showcase their work, including to the public (e.g., social media, science or knowledge cafés)
- Help your M/S write press releases highlighting successes (e.g., research paper, grant, teaching award).
- Identify and nominate your M/S for career-advancing opportunities, such as research collaborations, grant opportunities, conference roles, professional development programs, leadership positions, awards, honors, and prizes. Don’t wait to be asked for a recommendation letter – proactively seek out opportunities for your M/S.
- Protect your M/S from bad actors, ensure they get credit for their ideas and accomplishments, speak up and intervene when you perceive bias or inequity

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