

Becoming a Strong Ally 101: Guidelines for Dealing with Oppression in Community

- ◆ Assume that oppression in some form is everywhere, everyday.
- ◆ Notice how oppressions are denied, minimized, and justified.
- ◆ Read books and articles to increase your understanding of, and sensitivity to, the needs, aspirations, and concerns of others.
- ◆ Understand and learn from the history of racism, heterosexism, ableism, ageism, etc.
- ◆ Understand the connections between oppressions, economic issues, and other forms of injustice.
- ◆ Take a stand against injustice.
- ◆ Be strategic. Decide what is important to challenge and what is not.
- ◆ Intervene when someone disrespects or demeans another because of their race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age, economic status, etc.
- ◆ Support the leadership of people who have historically been oppressed.
- ◆ Don't do it alone. Build coalitions and networks, work with already established groups.
- ◆ Talk with your children and other young people about oppression.
- ◆ Work to bridge differences rather than insist on similarity of views.
- ◆ Learn as much as you can about the shifting tactics of hate groups.
- ◆ Don't assume you know what's best for an individual or group.
- ◆ Listen to the stories, experiences, and voices of others.
- ◆ Reflect on the impact of your own background and challenge your own cultural assumptions.
- ◆ Notice who is the center of attention and who is the center of power.
- ◆ Eliminate outdated and unhelpful terms such as "minority, oriental, handicapped, homo, etc."
- ◆ Write letters to the editors and management of newspapers, television and radio stations expressing support for efforts to reduce prejudice, discrimination, and oppression.
- ◆ Notice and name dynamics of privilege and oppression that occur in coalitions.
- ◆ Form partnerships with communities and congregations of color.
- ◆ Work with advocacy groups for bisexual, gay, lesbian and transgender people's rights.
- ◆ Connect service efforts with advocacy for economic justice.
- ◆ Create accessible spaces and communities.

For more information contact socialjustice@uua.org. Last updated on Friday, April 18, 2008. Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations | 25 Beacon Street | Boston, MA 02108 | 617-742-2100 | info@uua.org

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