

Live Well to  
Learn Well

Web:  
[health.cornell.edu](http://health.cornell.edu)

Phone (24/7):  
607-255-5155

Fax:  
607-255-0269

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Monday–Saturday

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110 Ho Plaza,  
Ithaca, NY  
14853-3101

President Martha E. Pollack clearly stated in a message to Cornell students, staff, and faculty that *“Our community needs your help. Please speak out against injustice, racism and bigotry, and reach out to support one another. Ours must be a community grounded in mutual respect and kindness.”*

This fact sheet contains recommendations on how to be an effective ally. The information applies to advocating for the rights and well-being of people of different races, cultures, sexes, genders, abilities, ages, and other identities and affiliations.

## Educate Yourself

- Learn to actively listen.
- Observe dynamics of power and privilege.
- Pay attention to who does and does not get attention, space, and resources.
- Expand your knowledge and awareness of domestic and global social issues by taking courses or reading books and articles.
- Identify common micro-aggressions and eliminate them from your words & actions.
- Choose your words carefully and challenge oppressive language patterns.
- Learn about cultural appropriation and how to avoid doing it.
- Examine ways societal structures include and exclude groups of people.
- Question the perspective of stories.
- Ask about things you don’t understand, but do your own research first.

## Practice Accountability

- Focus on your impact, not your intent.
- Reflect on your social identity and social location and their associated histories.
- Ask for permission, not forgiveness.
- Develop authentic relationships.
- Lean into discomfort and consider new perspectives.
- Challenge assumptions, myths, and misperceptions.
- Recognize where you have privilege and how that shows up in everyday actions.
- Be empowered to intervene when you observe discriminatory or bullying behavior.



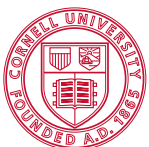
*Developing skills as an ally will make a difference in the overall campus environment and may positively impact the well-being of individuals from marginalized communities.*

## Be a Role Model

- Model inclusive language.
- Call in others who may be using oppressive language or actions.
- Resist stereotypes and acknowledge oppressive histories within and outside of your communities.
- Raise awareness around different social issues that are left out of discussions.
- Talk about the “isms” (e.g., racism, sexism, etc.) and the role they play in current issues, decisions, and events.
- Question and critique media bias and representation in news and entertainment.
- Create diverse leadership structures and pay attention to social identities represented in structures of power, such as campus administration and government.
- Encourage your clubs, classes and workplaces to use inclusive practices and policies.

## Support Other Identities and Communities

- Affirm identities when you communicate, such as pronouncing names correctly and honoring pronouns.
- Give marginalized communities the space and platform to say how they would like to be supported.
- Listen first or ask how you can support and help, and then work in solidarity with that community.



- Talk about self-care and share resources.
- Support and amplify the communities' work by leveraging your connections, resources, and access.
- Take up less space in conversations or events that are focus on issues with which you hold a privileged identity.
- Promote and attend community events that are open to you.
- Respect space intended specifically for different group identities.
- Give your time, energy, and efforts.
- Cite your sources and pay attention to who you are and aren't citing.
- Do not invalidate other experiences by centering yourself or your cause.

## Take Action

- Make the pledge to practice accountable allyship.
- Create collaborative events with other student organizations that are inclusive of different social identities.
- Vote in student, local, and federal government elections.
- Lobby policy makers.
- Volunteer with organizations led and supported by the community they're serving.
- Donate time, talent, labor, and financial resources if you are able.
- Participate in protests, rallies, and marches and be aware of risks that you and others can and cannot take based on your social identities.
- Sign petitions that advocate for socially-just policies.

## Words Matter

The words we use have an impact on individuals and on our community.

- If you're not sure what term or word to use in a situation, avoid guessing. Either ask directly, or do some homework later on. For example, if you're not clear what pronouns a person uses, you can say, "I use the pronouns she/her/hers. And you?"
- Avoid using slang terms or outdated language that either has negative connotations or that evokes pity or fear (e.g., "foreigner," "homo," "handicapped," "tranny," "retarded," "Oriental," "an illegal").
- Recognize that individuals within a group may use words related to their identity that those outside the group should not use. For example, an LGBT person may claim the identity of "Queer," but that is different than an outsider labeling them "queer." Similarly, a person with a disability may self-identify as a "crip," but that does not give permission for others to use the same term.
- Make it a practice to use "people first language" to encourage equality for everyone. For example, say "a person with a disability," not "a disabled person."
- If you make a mistake, apologize and try again.