

DOING BETTER

There are many ways to work towards allyship to Indigenous peoples. The term ally means that YOU recognize the privilege that settler cultures have and take for granted. It also implies that you challenge and work towards breaking down those barriers that continue to violate Indigenous communities. Being an ally requires social action, strength, courage, humility and a support network. A good starting point is to ask the question: "What biases do we carry; what learning do we need to do to better understand the true history of the country?" (SOURCE: <https://www.amnesty.org.au/10-ways-to-be-an-ally-to-indigenous-communities/>)

Listen to and follow the community

Who are the traditional owners and Elders of the land you are on? Find out and build strong relationships within the community and always involve Indigenous voice.

Centre the stories around community

Amplify the voices of Indigenous communities, don't make it about yourself. Share these messages in their words.

Know the historical and cultural context

Learn the history and become culturally competent. Take the initiative to educate yourself. It is not the responsibility of the community to educate you.

Never show up empty-handed

Make your support concrete - use your time, resources and skills.

Always seek consent and permission

Seek permission continuously (example: before taking part in community events).

Be responsible for yourself

Ensure you've given back to the community more than you've taken.

Know when to step back

Be aware of what space you are taking up because you are there as a guest in a supportive role - respect boundaries.

Saviours are not needed, solidarity is

This means showing up to support the community with your presence alone should be the baseline, not the end game.

Be mindful of others' time and energy

Indigenous people often have to be advocates on a wide range of issues that affect them and their community first-hand. They don't have the choice to switch off from being involved and can be spread thin in many directions.

Do no harm to the community

The community should be better off, or the same, because of your presence, not worse. Follow all of these suggestions and keep reflecting on your behaviour and you're on your way to doing your part in bringing down an unjust system.

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WHAT IF YOU...

- IDENTIFY THE TERRITORY YOU'RE IN & LEARN A GREETING IN THE LOCAL LANGUAGE
- SELF IDENTIFY
- RECOGNIZE YOUR PRIVILEGE AND TRANSFER THE BENEFITS OF THAT PRIVILEGE TO OTHERS WHO LACK IT
- RESPECT AND HONOR INDIGENOUS LEADERS AND RECOGNIZE THEIR AUTHORITY
- DON'T SUPPORT THE ERASURE OF HISTORY OR PROBLEMATIC REPRESENTATIONS OF THE PAST (IE - Be informed about the historical, socio-political context that frames our interactions with Indigenous peoples)
- REASSESS YOUR ENTITLEMENT TO THE LAND YOU LIVE ON – WITHOUT GETTING DEFENSIVE
- PURCHASE FROM INDIGENOUS ARTISTS
- TAKE A DECOLONIZATION WORKSHOP OR ANTI-OPPRESSION TRAINING
- ATTEND PROTESTS WITH A HUMBLE, HELPING SPIRIT
- FIND OUT WHY MARILYN POITRAS RESIGNED HER POSITION AS COMMISSIONER WITH THE MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS' INQUIRY
- CONSTANTLY RENEW YOUR COMMITMENT TO THE CAUSE, ESPECIALLY WHEN IT BECOMES UNCOMFORTABLE
- ACCEPT THAT NOT ALL INDIGENOUS PEOPLES WANT YOU AS AN ALLY
- ACKNOWLEDGE THAT WHILE YOU, TOO, FEEL PAIN, THE CONVERSATION IS NOT ABOUT YOU
- RECOGNIZE THAT IGNORANCE (YOU NOT KNOWING EVERYTHING) HAS A PLACE IN ALLYSHIP
- BE VULNERABLE – ADMIT WHAT YOU KNOW, DON'T KNOW AND WANT TO KNOW – BEING AN ALLY REQUIRES ALL PARTS OF YOU – YOUR MIND, YOUR HEART AND YOUR SPIRIT
- RESPECT AND ACCEPT THAT INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DETERMINE YOUR ALLYSHIP – NOT YOU

TO LEARN MORE, CHECK OUT THESE SITES:

<https://laurentian.ca/indigenous-programs/how-to-be-an-ally>

<https://guidetoallyship.com/>

