



# Getting into Team - Leveraging Power & Privilege

AN ALLIES TOOLKIT

Produced By:



CENTRE FOR  
SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE

# Preface

The Centre for Social Intelligence, with support by White Ribbon, is pleased to provide this report (June 2021) for the Free to Grow in Forestry initiative - aimed at increasing diversity and inclusion in Canada's forest sector.

This is the third of three reports produced by the Centre for Social Intelligence for the Free to Grow initiative - 2018-2021. The first report entitled *"A Plan to Overcome Resistance to Diversity and Inclusion"* and the second report entitled *"Inclusive Leadership - Creating a Workplace Culture of Empowerment, Accountability and Belonging"*, along with more information about this initiative can be found at: [www.freetogrowinforesstry.ca](http://www.freetogrowinforesstry.ca).



# Executive Summary

Canada's forest sector has been in a constant flow of transformation for many years in an effort to be more resilient, dynamic and innovative - first with a focus on reducing the environmental impacts it has - and lately on how to maximize its social impact - through increasing diversity and inclusion of its workforce. The forest sector is on the leading edge of this effort and is seeking ways to improve the workplace culture such that it optimizes performance of its people and creates a competitive advantage in the global market.

The business case for diversity and inclusion has become more accepted lately by leaders - they are no longer debating why it is needed but are seeking greater understanding on how to make it happen in their organization. One key aspect of the "how" is being an ally to women and underrepresented groups including Indigenous, various ethnic origins/race, LGBTQS+, persons with disabilities, and new immigrants.

Those who are the most effective allies are those who hold positions of **power** and come from **privilege**. Privileges are unearned and are granted to specific dominant social groups such as those who are white, middle or upper class, heterosexual, and male. People from these dominant social groups can have the invisible power to access resources and exercise their position over others - they can be the decider between someone being hired or fired. They also have the ability to use their positions of power and privilege to be an effective ally - "getting into team" with those who are underrepresented.

This report walks through what an ally is, the various roles allies can play and provides both individual and corporate strategies to becoming an effective ally. Individual strategies are explained through an "ally journey spectrum" for both men and women - and take the individual through a process of recognizing they have a role to play to becoming an advocate for allyship. Ultimately by understanding how to be a better ally, individuals at various levels within an organization can increase their ability to attract a diverse and inclusive workforce.

White women have a role to play as allies too. Women in the workforce have historically dealt with barriers with their career advancement causing competition with one another. The time is now to have women recognize their role and move into visible and demonstrable action. By "getting into team", women can support one another, bolstering self-esteem and confidence, allowing more women to rise to leadership positions, should they wish to do so. Having white women lead by example, stand up for intersectional women, celebrate other women's accomplishments, and mentor them, will help all women to grow and reach their potential.

Allyship actions don't just rest with the individual, but also within the system of an organization. Like any team, it's critical to have a coach or leader to set the vision of allyship, create an ally strategy and be a role model for others to follow. Also like a team, captains play an instrumental role in ensuring the team succeeds. The HR and Communications departments are such



captains - who can strategically work across the organization to ensure the necessary skills are developed to successfully onboard this way of thinking and being. Key messaging is developed through effective allyship campaigns that help drive the leadership commitment home, making it real and tangible for all. Examples from other sectors are shared from the various sectors including sports, mining and communities, to give some insights into how to effectively implement an allyship campaign.

Recognizing allyship as a key component that helps individuals and organizations to create more openness toward a diverse and inclusive workforce, this report also looks at what allyship can bring the next generation - meaning allyship that translates not just into the workplace, but into the home front. Taking on new roles of equality both at work and at home creates a role model for the leaders of tomorrow to help create a society where all people can thrive.

The forest sector in Canada is embracing a diverse and inclusive workforce because it understands there is tremendous value in having multiple perspectives that shape their products and expand their target market reach. The challenge now is *how* to create inclusion - where all voices and people can feel comfortable bringing their whole selves to work and contribute in a meaningful way to the corporate objectives.

Becoming an ally is a key component of creating an inclusive culture. With this report, the forest sector can move from awareness to action with greater knowledge and skills to confidently walk forward as an ally and further strengthen its reputation and brand as being a sector that knows the power of supporting all people by *getting into team*.



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# 1. Introduction

## Power and Privilege

There is an increasingly louder voice emerging in Canada's forest sector and it is coming from men who are acutely aware of the need to shift the workplace culture to be more welcoming of women and other underrepresented groups. Leaders in this traditionally male-dominated sector who are looking for the next competitive advantage have absorbed the value proposition for diversity and inclusion and are now looking to go beyond standard human rights policies and a nod that action is needed, to rolling up their sleeves and seeking ways to make a sustainable difference. One such tangible way of positively contributing to this shift is to learn effective strategies on how to be an ally.

Leveraging both **power** - over what business priority should be pursued, who gets promoted, trained, and sponsored, how much a bonus an individual will receive based on a set of expectations they deem most important; and **privilege** - best defined as a special right, advantage or immunity granted to a particular person or a group of people - when applied to diversity and inclusion can create enormous benefits and impact. These benefits are not just focused on the financial returns a company will reap, but many social and personal benefits too.

Having a team mindset approach to the workplace culture creates a positive spin on allyship. Recognizing that leaders in organizations are critically important to implement a culture shift, being an effective coach that role models behaviour, understands "the play" and knows which team members need to upskill and train in their positions, ensures heightened collaboration and effective results. Whether a male or female ally, there are actionable ally-skills to be aware of and benefits that drive behaviour change, allowing for a winning end game on diversity and inclusion.

Good coaches, like effective leaders, know inherently that they can't sustain "talking the talk," that they have to move into "walking the walk". But just how to do that is the question. Being an ally goes beyond role modelling to harnessing the energy and strength of a couple of key captains to effectively keep the team motivated and on point, as well as having a plan on how to train "the team". This winning formula shifts things into high performance and a thriving workplace, creating an environment where team members are proudly raising the corporate flag up the pole for all to see. And in turn this flag operates as a beacon for new talent, attracting the best and brightest regardless of race, religion, gender or ability.



Understanding allyship is an important component of shifting a workplace culture from being on the sidelines and watching the game to being fully engaged and on the field. Knowing what an ally is in the diversity and inclusion context, the behaviour traits required, and the kinds of roles an ally can play provides the foundation for confidently stepping forward to become an effective team player.

#### How to Leverage Your Power and Privilege:

- Educate yourself about your privilege
- Advocate/sponsor others in the workplace
- Amplify voices of underrepresented groups
- Be assertive about challenging forms of discrimination such as sexism, racism, and homophobia
- Support businesses and colleagues of underrepresented groups

## What is an Ally?

An ally, ultimately from a Latin verb meaning “to bind to, unite, combine, form alliance or associate” is used to describe someone who supports disenfranchised and underrepresented groups of people, such as minorities, Indigenous, and those in the LBGTQS+ and disabilities (both seen and unseen) communities. Often used to describe support given from other countries during war times, in this context an ally is support given to those who have lesser access to resources or social power. Preference to certain groups of people (such as English speaking, white, able-bodied, heterosexual males) have been legitimized over time through socially constructed ideas and reinforced through dominant social, economic and political systems.

Understanding **privilege** is key to becoming a better ally. It is attached to historical structures of beliefs that have been cemented over time in our social hierarchy. People who have privilege are often blind to see it and can require some concrete examples to bring it into focus. Those in a privileged position can often become the best allies because once the blinders are lifted, they can see opportunities to shift their behaviour and make a positive impact. Below are common examples of privilege:



- If you have never feared for your life or your safety when being pulled over by the police for a traffic violation.
- If you have never thought twice about getting into an elevator with a man you don't know.
- If you have never had someone ask you, "Where are you from?" meaning what is your ethnic heritage.
- If you have never had someone say "get over yourself, we all have problems", diminishing mental health issues.
- If you've travelled for work at night and not thought twice about commuting on foot or local transit.

Understanding the impact of these statements and situations requires people to draw upon their ability to be compassionate and empathetic, "soft" skills that aren't taught in any classroom setting. This missing ingredient to the workplace is just one of the many skills needed to be a good ally.

Similar to individuals with privilege, people who are in positions of **power** have considerable weight to either support or diminish women and other underrepresented groups. These are the people who can decide who to hire and fire; determine pay and bonuses, and holiday allotments; who gets promotions or sponsorship; and recognition for a job well done.

Once these individuals recognize their ability to leverage their position of power and privilege to help women and underrepresented groups, they can often turn into the best allies. They are now beginning to "walk the talk" on allyship, meaning putting action behind the words. In a sense, this is where the lightbulb goes off and they start their journey to "go pro" on allyship.

### **Intersectionality**

Intersectionality is the understanding of how social categories such as race, gender identity, class, sexual orientation, and diverse identities overlap and create compounded layers of oppression.

Having greater awareness for example that some people can have two or more levels of oppression in their world, broadens the ally's thinking to be more compassionate and empathetic about all facets that person is facing. (e.g. Indigenous woman with mental health issues faces three social oppressions).





## Allyship Behaviour Traits

There are certain foundational building blocks on allyship behaviour that help allies to know they're on the right track. There are a lot of people who pretend to be allies but don't have a compass on what to actually do and how to behave. Although not exhaustive, the list below captures key traits to pay attention to:

**Active listening /Proactive engagement** - many underrepresented groups are not inclined to speak up about their differences because they already feel different and don't want to draw any further attention to themselves. Seek out the quiet people on your team, give them air time to raise their points of view. Some cultures allow for people to be interrupted all the time in a conversation while other cultures are accustomed to remaining quiet until asked. Knowing these cultural differences is a game changer - instead of perceiving a team member as disengaged, think about their backdrop and make a point of giving them space to speak.

Overcoming the knee jerk reaction of solving problems for others and shifting to active listening mode goes a long way for those sharing their experiences in the workplace that are unjust or inappropriate. People who confide in allies do not always want a solution, sometimes they need a compassionate ear. The best way to provide help is to listen and ask questions, seek long term solutions and ask confidants what they need. Offer support without expectations of appreciation and acknowledgement.

### Benefits of Getting into Team

**Build a stronger workplace:** when everyone feels empowered and supported, there is increased trust in co-workers, management, and leadership and increased employee productivity, retention and sense of belonging.

**Strengthen emotional intelligence (EQ) skills:** EQ skills affect your happiness and success. Through allyship, emotional intelligence can be boosted to build stronger bonds with others, help manage your emotions in a positive way and strengthen your leadership skills.

**Learning opportunity:** allyship is a continuous learning journey - opportunities for self-reflection and learning about others, expanding our capacity to understand and embrace differences.

**Increase confidence:** knowing the skills to apply to allyship creates confidence as you know how to properly address people and situations in a constructive manner, increasing the likelihood that others will take it seriously.

**Create a more accepting world:** by rejecting discrimination and forms of oppression.

**Improve mental health:** individuals feel less isolated and have better mental health when they feel safer and supported.

**Improved workplace culture and employer reputation:** when equality is embraced, everyone feels more valued, respected and has a greater sense of loyalty and commitment.



**Not being an accomplice/complicit** - as the forest sector evolves into a higher level of awareness about behaviour norms that are acceptable to all Canadians, it will become clearer that staying quiet when hearing a racial slur about Indigenous, LGBTQS+ or new immigrants, or a derogatory comment about a woman (eg. “she’s so emotional”) is similar to being complicit to unacceptable behaviour. Programming new thinking that says “if I see something, I must say something” without worrying about alienating from peers will be the new norm.

**Embrace being uncomfortable** - it’s okay to not know everything about all cultures or circumstances pertaining to underrepresented groups. Having a safe space to make mistakes and learn from them is all part and parcel with allyship. People on the receiving end will be more understanding if you are trying to engage, embracing differences with curiosity and generally comfortable with being uncomfortable.

**Practice rapid disruption techniques** - when you are witness to someone saying something inappropriate, intervene with a rapid response. A simple “ouch” intervention can trip up the stream of communication and give an opportunity to say “that isn’t really appropriate here.”

**Being mindful of the “how”** - It’s important to be mindful of how you raise interventions publicly. Nobody is comfortable with looking bad and often people are operating with good intent but can stumble along the way. Reinforcing that “we are all learning” helps soften the pending intervention.

## Ally Roles

Allyship shows up in different forms. Below outlines the main roles allies can play in an effort to bring clarity to what they are and what an individual can elect to do:

**The Sponsor:** Sponsors vocally support the performance and expertise of their colleagues by highlighting the performance, expertise and goals of others to boost their reputation and access to opportunities they might not have otherwise (e.g. sponsors provide references or arrange for a learning opportunity).

**The Champion:** Champions are like Sponsors but they advocate more publicly and in broader audiences (e.g. advocate for underrepresented group members to chair a meeting or publicly celebrate someone’s work).

**The Amplifier:** The Amplifier helps to ensure the underrepresented group members’ ideas and voices are heard and included in workplace communication (e.g. invites and visibly supports an idea or point put forth by a member of an underrepresented group).

**The Advocate:** An advocate utilizes their power to bring people into exclusive circles (e.g. advocates for their involvement in high profile projects).

An ally can ultimately be strategically thinking of team members who are shining brightly, regardless of race, religion, gender or disability, and put the effort and time into learning more about that person – using their leadership skills to the fullest and making a meaningful difference in someone else's career and life.

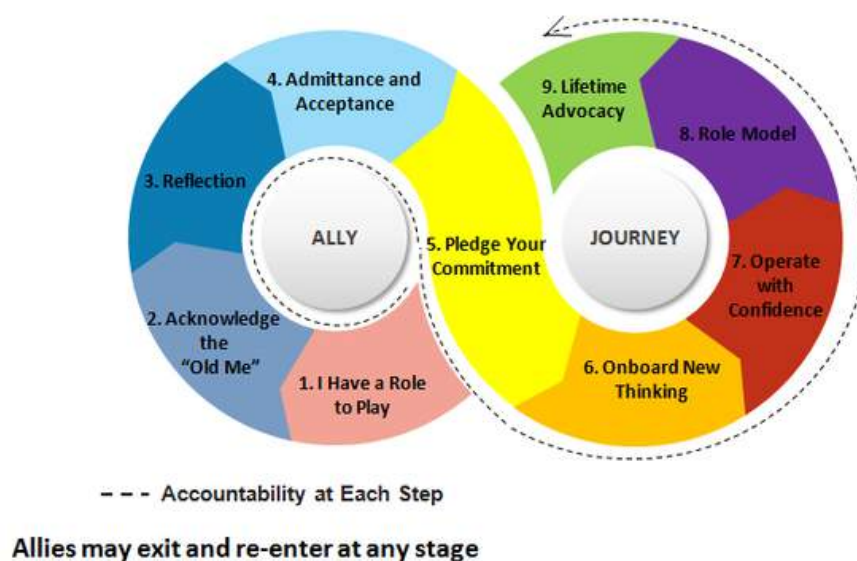
## 2. Turning the Game Around Like a Pro - Individual Actions

### 2A. How to Become a Pro – the Ally Journey Spectrum

Being an ally is a journey in and of itself and should be seen as an ongoing commitment to personal and professional development. It is a fluid process along a spectrum of learning that allows for a safe space to make mistakes and personal forgiveness. At times the journey may seem daunting, and a pull to old familiar ways can emerge. Anyone who has committed to a new way of being knows that change takes repetition to establish new patterns of thought, reaction and subsequent pro-action. With time it gets easier until ultimately it becomes second nature.

The diagram below outlines the ally journey spectrum. Starting with individual recognition that each ally has a role to play and moving through a series of nine subsequent steps, to a place of lifetime advocacy. Accountability is involved at every step – to oneself and to others. Each step in the journey is explained below in Diagram 1.

**Diagram 1: The Ally Journey Spectrum**



**1. Recognizing “I have a Role to Play”** - Each person’s journey can look different from another, but typically it begins with acknowledging “I have a role to play” in promoting diversity and inclusion. Being an ally in the workplace or at home is the key to eliminating the gap for women’s advancement and equality. This role begins with having a solid foundation of self-awareness, self-actualization, empathy and social responsibility. It’s through developing these attributes in oneself that trust, respect and support among colleagues in the workplace is created. Below is an explanation of each term<sup>1</sup>:



◇ **Self-Awareness** - the ability to recognize your feelings, differentiate between them, know why you are feeling these feelings and recognize the impact your feelings have on others around you.

◇ **Self-Actualization** - the ability to realize your potential capacities. It is manifested by becoming involved in pursuits that lead to a meaningful and full life. It is an ongoing, dynamic process of striving toward the maximum development of your abilities and talents to persistently trying to do your best and to improve yourself in general.

◇ **Empathy** - the ability to be aware of, understand, and appreciate the feelings and thoughts of others. Empathy is “tuning in” (being sensitive to what, how, and why people feel and think the way they do. It is a skill that allows you to see and experience the world from another person’s perspective. Putting that understanding into words solidifies your relationship with that other person, and shifts it from an adversarial into a collaborative relationship.

◇ **Social Responsibility** - is the desire and ability to willingly contribute to society, your social group, and generally to the welfare of others. This component of EQ involves acting in a responsible manner, even though you might not benefit personally, doing things for and with others, accepting others, acting in accordance with your conscience, and upholding social rules.

By learning to use each of these EQ skills above, an ally can begin recognizing the role they can play, leveraging their privilege or position of power to help underrepresented colleagues in the workplace. This in turn allows these individuals to operate with confidence and greater certainty that they are doing their part to attract and retain a diverse and inclusive workforce.

**2. Acknowledge the 'Old Me':** This step involves acknowledging past discretions, biases, beliefs, and actions that you may have had due to social conditioning which is often tied to generally approved thought and actions (e.g. group think). Identifying personal values such as respect for all people and holding oneself accountable to shed old ways of being is part of the ally journey.

**3. Reflection:** Reflect on the unjust forms of discrimination that exists to recognize how you can embrace allyship and use your power and privilege for good. Moving from the "old me" to the "new me" and make deliberate thought and intentions on what that looks like. Reflect on the benefits the organization has by embracing a diverse and inclusive culture. If unaware, brush up on the business case and seek out greater understanding of the value of diverse teams to allow for greater traction on allyship in the workplace.

**4. Admission and Acceptance:** Admit to any mistakes you have made in the past. Hold yourself accountable to build your capacity to learn and grow and take steps to make amends when possible. Accepting your responsibility and role as an ally establishes your ability to learn and be a better team player. Deliberately seek feedback from marginalized groups and accept that there are things you might learn or hear that may make you uncomfortable. Through acceptance you can start to establish trusting relationships with your colleagues in new ways.

**5. Pledge Your Commitment:** Make a commitment and take the pledge to be an active ally and role model by committing to work against systems of oppression and using your privilege or position of power to help women and underrepresented groups. This is the beginning of the "new me." This step is a conscious choice toward a bigger outlook on society - recognizing each individual has a role to play in reducing the divide between the "haves" and the "have-nots."

### **Exercise: Addressing Past Mistakes and Moving Forward**

**Question:** Can you recall a time when you willingly or complicity participated in discrimination against someone? (*This could be using gendered language, a discriminatory joke, joined in harassment and/or bullying, or any other situation where you might have used your privilege or power to inadvertently cause harm. These instances may or may not have been intentional*).

**Action:** Reflect on this instance and how you might act differently as an ally in the future. Do you need to admit this out loud? Is there someone you need to apologize to and make amends?



## Commit to Being an Ally – Take the Pledge: An Example

**I pledge to be accountable** for my actions and words to create a positive and inclusive working environment;

- To learn about my privilege.
- To be curious about other cultures, not make assumptions, and initiate conversations with team members and others to learn about issues that impact their community, even if it may feel uncomfortable.
- To be aware of how I can leverage my privilege and position (power), advocate and amplify the voices of women and underrepresented groups.
- To share the benefits of being an ally with others.
- To never be complicit, support or stay silent about discrimination and violence against others.
- To help create safe and supportive spaces for team members by practicing active listening
- To continue personal efforts and self-education about diversity and inclusion issues that affect underrepresented populations.

**6. Onboard a New Paradigm:** Understand that we will feel uncomfortable, challenged, and hurt at times but we can lean into this knowing that we are evolving and learning. Engage in new media information to learn about underrepresented groups and how they can work effectively in your organization/sector. Seek out new people/organizations that can inform new insights on what it is like for Indigenous people, women, LGBTQS+, and disabled persons. Shift your paradigm on who you can work with to who you can learn about.

While this might seem counterintuitive, educating ourselves about racial awareness should not lie solely on turning to colleagues, trusted confidantes, and or family members to get answers about becoming more racially, and culturally aware. Even if you identify yourself as part of a social grouping and/or community, it is important to recognize that individuals have their own experiences of inequality and discrimination.

Without intending to, asking or requesting for others to teach you about awareness of issues can place a burden on the shoulders of others. While it is healthy to have open dialogue and listen to others, we should remember that educating ourselves is our own responsibility. Becoming an ally requires that we roll up our sleeves and it is vital that we also do our research and educate ourselves about how policies, patterns, language, and comments can impact those affected.



**7. Operate with Confidence:** With the knowledge and awareness of what it takes to be an ally secured, and a commitment to a “new me”, it’s easier to operate with confidence and move through conversations with underrepresented groups with greater ease. Starting new employees out with a conversation about the workplace culture being welcoming to all Canadians, that there is a safe space to learn and make mistakes, and that there is an interest in welcoming new ways of doing business, will create an immediate sense of belonging as well as trust.

An example could be with the LGBTQS+ community and the increasingly notable discussion on pronouns. According to a recent study conducted by an advertising insights agency called Bigeye, roughly 50% of millennials and generation Z’s feel that the gender binary roles (i.e. male - female) are outdated. Recognizing this view is increasingly prominent, instead of rolling one’s eyes, embrace this new form of introducing yourself with confidence, this will not only impress some people but comfort those who have yet to come forward and share their stance on LGBTQ2S+.



**8. Role Modelling:** Lead by example by recognizing and visibly demonstrating that everyone has an important contribution to make. Role models inspire, motivate, and take proactive steps to ensure that everyone’s experiences and contributions are fully valued.

#### Qualities of a Good Role Model

- They make a commitment to the ally role. They are not self-focused and believe in the strength of team-based initiatives and the impact beyond self.
- They overcome obstacles without compromising their beliefs and values.
- They accept others for who they are, even when it may seem difficult due to their own biases and emotions.
- They have confidence in themselves and boost others’ self-esteem. They acknowledge others’ achievements and successes and provide a lending hand to help them reach their goals.
- They have visible respect for others and present a non-prejudiced view of those who come from different social categorizations. They take part in lifelong self-education to continue their awareness of different discriminations.
- They acknowledge their own power and privilege.

**9. Lifetime Advocate:** This step is the recognition that allyship is a lifelong commitment to work, defend, and support others by advocating for equal rights for all and systemic change. This is done by standing in solidarity with those who are oppressed and create spaces and supports where everyone can reach their potential.

**10. Accountable:** Being an ally means being accountable for your actions that have subsequent consequences. Too often training is conducted but there is very little enforcement or accountability. An ally holds themselves accountable to his/herself at each step. Mistakes are a part of the learning journey. Seek feedback from others and review what happened and move forward with deliberate intentions to do better.

Table 1 provides actionable ally tips for how to be an ally like a pro versus pitfalls to watch out for that make any well intended ally be seen as “going down.”

**Exercise: On Accountability**

**Question:** Think of a time when you’ve seen on tv or social media, someone who has been inappropriately discriminated against. What could you do as an ally the next time you speak with someone from that underrepresented group at your workplace?

**Answer:** Reach out to a colleague and say “hey - I heard in the news that [fill in underrepresented group] were being harassed and I just want you to know that **I disagree with that behaviour**, and that I’m looking out for you and **will speak up** if I hear about anything like that here at our workplace.

**Table 1: Actionable Ally Tips<sup>2</sup>**

Going "Pro"	"Going Down"
Notices a colleague’s point was ignored, stops the conversation, and asks that they repeat themselves	Wears the ‘Allies Hero badge’ and looks for opportunities to be in the spotlight
Creates practices such as: codes of conducts, no interruptions rules, meeting etiquette standards	Tries to rescue others, for instance may paraphrase an unheard colleague
Advocates for colleagues’ accomplishments and needs	Sees allyship as a task rather than a way of living
Uses inclusive language that avoids the use of certain expressions or words that exclude particular groups of people	Asks others about their experiences of discrimination. Rather than self-education, the person relies on others to learn
Uses their power and influence for high visibility projects to sponsor and advocate for team members that are underrepresented	Assumes one person’s experience is identical to another because of their similar social identities
Provides fair and frequent high-quality feedback to others and accepts feedback in return	Congratulates themselves for supporting causes and movements and does not feel like an ally if their work is not noticed or given praise
Responds to acts of micro-aggressions, offensive jokes, and physical harassment by calling it out and taking action	Addresses micro aggressions, offensive jokes and physical harassment only in certain circumstances, such as outside the person’s circle of friendship



## 2B. Moving From Cheerleader to Pro – Women as Allies

### Leveraging White Women Privilege

Just as white men are considered privileged relative to all others in society, so too are white women privileged among all other women in underrepresented groups. This distinction is important to highlight so that we can engage women as allies too in a constructive way and move them from cheering other women on from the sidelines to fully acting out an allyship role. Being aware of this privilege and how it comes with power to access mentoring and sponsorship opportunities as well as promotions is important for white women to recognize.

Putting a spotlight on white women as allies is part of the overall storyline of shifting the workplace culture to being more accepting of women of all race and religions. It requires these women to shift their mindset from quietly agreeing in the hallways – “yes we’d like to have all women represented”, to actually engaging as “ally-pros” and committing to fairness for all women by following the ally journey spectrum. “When women aren’t allies we are in fact contributing to injustices that exist”.<sup>3</sup>

The lack of visible and vocal support only serves to contribute to underrepresented groups feeling “unseen” and disadvantaged. More awareness, education and skills need to be developed to have white women cross this divide to allow these underrepresented women to get equally “into team”, allowing them to have the same access to decision makers and opportunities, and ensuring they are valued for their contribution. At the root, all women want to be in their position based on their merit, not on a quota of representation. More often than not however, it is white women who are given opportunities for career training and upward mobility. According to a recent study, equal opportunity for growth is perceived differently for women based on ethnicity. White women perceive there is equal opportunity for growth as their peers at 59% in comparison to Asian women at 55%, Latina 55%, and Black women 48%.<sup>4</sup> It is long overdue to create a fair and open space for all women to get a chance at the tryouts for the team so they too can prove they have what it takes to make the cut.

By leveraging a woman’s privilege and engaging in a continuous effort to learn and grow, organizations can engage women as allies alongside their male counterparts. Creating a safe space for this honest talk about those who have been privileged versus those that have not – to share experiences that breakdown any misperceptions or misinformation, allows the “old me” to fall into the rearview mirror and allows white women to set their sights on embracing a new way of being with other women in the workplace – as well as in their personal lives.



There is value in having women looking out for each other. It allows all women to find strength in numbers in the workplace, regardless of their race or religion, and provides a psychological safety that they can be their authentic selves – and are in fact rewarded for that distinction. It shifts the mentality of “there’s no one to look for me but myself” to “I have the backs of my female colleagues and they have mine.”

## Why Aren’t All Women “In Team?”

Why do some women create barriers for other women, especially in the workplace? <sup>5</sup> According to organizational psychologists, women are often reluctant to support other women because of their own fears, envy, jealousy, suspicion, resentment, rage, anxiety, or lack of self-esteem and confidence. Men have often seen this and commented that women are harder for other women to work for than men. It is time for women to reflect on these behaviours and do their part to set them aside to allow for a healthier and more productive workplace culture. White women also can be quite ill-informed about other cultural perspectives and fundamentally lack awareness of the circumstances that other women face and have to contend with in the workplace. Beyond these unhealthy psychological attitudes that some women may demonstrate in the workplace, there are several other notable contributing factors that create barriers for women’s full participation as allies:

- **Workplace culture:** A male dominated workplace culture can contribute to female rivalry. Why? It’s typically a more competitive environment than when the workplace is balanced between genders. Women are forced to compete with not only men, but other women, to increase their chances at leadership positions and success.
- **“One of the boys”:** There are also those strong resilient women who have stuck it out – digging in with stellar persistence and toughness from years of working almost primarily with men. To compete they may have felt the need to distance themselves from others – especially women and to be more comfortable as “one of the boys,”<sup>6</sup>. This approach, while effective for themselves, leaves other women behind blocking the acceptance of other women’s team contributions.
- **Inequities at home:** Another challenge to women’s allyship is grounded in their reality of inequitable responsibilities at home. To manage, they may find themselves doubling down on the tasks at work which can be another added pressure due to the disproportionate amount of responsibility leaving little, to no room, for allyship in the office.
- **Potential versus accomplishment:** Lean In co-founder and CEO Rachel Thomas pointed out that “men are typically hired based on potential and what we believe they can do, while women are typically hired and promoted based on what they’ve already accomplished”<sup>7</sup>. This pressure can result in women feeling a constant need to show that they are worthy of taking on leadership positions and more responsibility and are not looking to help other women who may get in their way.

Margaret Mead, American Cultural Anthropologist (1901-78) “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

**Questions on accountability:** What women leader has inspired you? What were her characteristics? What made her a good leader? How did she treat others? Where have I created or contribute to barriers for other women? What could I do differently now that I better understand how to be an ally?

Few workplaces enable solely independent work. Helping women see that they have a role in allyship in the workplace can alleviate their stress, provide an opportunity to create a supportive environment, and create room for others to shine. Specifically, women can expect to see less burnout, and greater job satisfaction. Having a default practice of showing compassion and empathy for the differences among women and finding ways to actively support each other can go a long way of creating trust, allowing all women to feel supported and comfortable bringing their whole selves to work.

### Tips For Women Allies:

◊ **Lead by example.** Set a great example by approaching women in meetings who don't look like you. Introduce yourself and engage them in conversation.

◊ **Allow other women to have space to talk if you notice they are not speaking up** by saying "we haven't heard from \_\_\_\_\_ perhaps she/they would like to weigh in on this...."

◊ **Stand up for intersectional women.** If someone is speaking derogatorily to someone from an underrepresented group, inject the "ouch" comment and then proceed to say that this workplace culture doesn't operate that way.

◊ **Celebrate other women's accomplishments.** Women are often not supporters of each other. Perhaps feelings of insecurities or jealousy pop up and they don't want to be giving anyone else but themselves the limelight for fear of "not being good enough". Lift other women up by highlighting their successes whenever possible and highlight their accomplishments.

◊ **Look for opportunities to boost other women's confidence.** If there is a key assignment, promotion, and/or raise, think about other women for the opportunity. If they express fear or doubt in applying for key positions, offer an ear and support her to take the leap.

◊ **Mentor and sponsor other women.** Mentorship is a key driver of success. Allies make time to commit to being a mentor for other women, especially if they are in a more senior position. Mentors use their influence to not only provide great tips but also speak out and advocate for mentees to reach the full potential of their career.



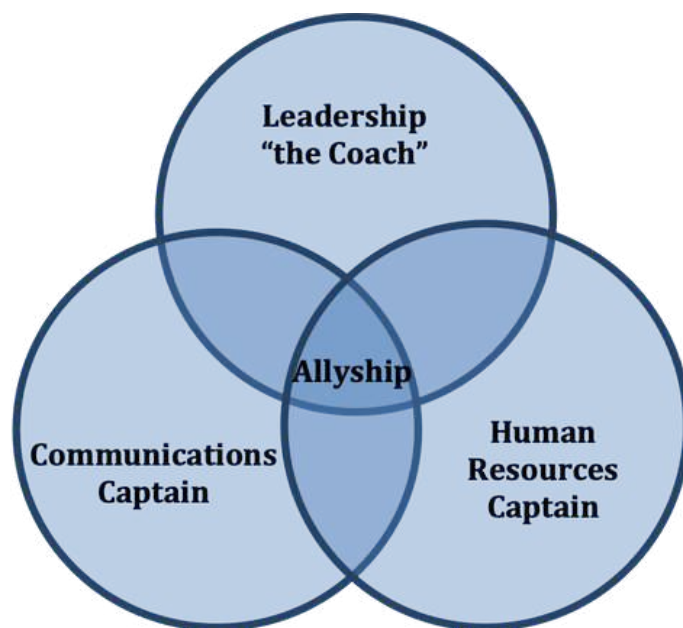


### 3. Getting into Team with Confidence – Organization Actions

Creating a workplace environment that sets the stage for easy uptake of allyship actions requires a combination of the leadership, communications and human resources departments to work together. Collectively they can create an ally strategy that will ultimately enhance employee performance and innovation and subsequently increase the bottom line. Think of it as having a coach with two team captains - with the leadership as the coach who is supported by Human Resources and Communications as the two team captains:

- Human Resources focus on knowledge and skills development for the team.
- Communications focuses on sharing the right messages to the team to optimize their performance.
- The winning combination of all three leadership roles will help companies reach the largest fan base possible demonstrating the team values and “walking the walk” on allyship.

Each role is key to making a shift in the workplace culture on allyship and it requires all working together to be successful.



#### Leadership – ‘The Coach’

Like coaches, leaders are the role models who know how to make “the play” and have incorporated allyship in the overall vision of the organization. They look for ways to make their workforce diverse by deploying key parts of the organization as their “key captains” who help weave allyship into the social fabric of the workforce and ensure transparency and accountability with every action and step. The leadership in the organization has three critical roles for driving allyship within the organization:<sup>8</sup>

# 1. Setting Clear Expectations

Setting clear expectations for allyship is a critical part of successfully engaging team members in the journey. It will develop a culture of accountability so that all parties are on the same page about what it means to be an ally.

- **Set a standard of ally criteria:** Undo bias in the workplace by setting clear criteria and rules at the workplace. By doing so, it will set clear expectations of what is expected based on work ethic, professionalism, skills and more, versus stereotyping due to social grouping and personality (e.g. implement a code of conduct into team management).<sup>9</sup>
- **Provide consistent feedback to ensure accountability:** Ensure that employees are provided with consistent feedback to keep up with allyship expectations and practices (e.g. similar lengths in written feedback, using the same language with all team members, and written in a constructive, positive manner).<sup>10</sup>
- **Hold yourself and others accountable:** Accountability plays a role at every step of the allyship journey. It is natural for coaches to make mistakes along the way. No one is perfect. However, it is important for coaches to take the responsibility to thoughtfully invite feedback on their own actions and implement it to teams.<sup>11</sup>



# 2. Using Their Influence

Coaches will use their influence to strategically launch allies in the workplace. This will ensure that all team members work together toward a common goal.

- **Be an agent for change:** Look for ways to include women and underrepresented groups in work initiatives and leadership roles. “Walk the talk” by speaking up during speaking engagements to promote allyship in the workplace by discussing the importance of gender diversity and inclusion. This will help influence others with power to drive allyship in the workplace and understand the importance of diversifying all company initiatives (e.g. give up your spot on a “homogenous panel” to someone from an underrepresented group).<sup>12</sup>
- **Advocate for others:** Talk to others in upper management about the great work other employees have been doing. Utilize one’s personal influence to build footbridges to open the doors for underrepresented people. Their work may go unnoticed or unappreciated and it is up to you to speak out and advocate for them.
- **Publicly advocate for others:** Publicly demonstrate support for others in all organizational levels,<sup>13</sup> (e.g. attend a wide range of organizational events, team gatherings, and conferences to look for opportunities to publicly support others).

### 3. Being Intentional

Allyship is an intentional lifelong journey. There are many ways a Coach can intentionally set the stage for what an ally is and to ensure underrepresented groups are included in team initiatives which will contribute overall to the success of the team.

- **Involve experts from underrepresented groups:** When coaches speak at an event or team meeting they can share the role and responsibility with an expert from an underrepresented group and help them demonstrate their knowledge and capacity.<sup>14</sup>
- **Champion initiatives:** Look for ways to support workplace initiatives that focus or benefit different groups of team members (e.g. Black, Indigenous, and people of colour, or women's groups).
- **Use the right language:** Coaches can become allies by intentionally using inclusive language to avoid "unconscious demoting".<sup>15</sup>

## Human Resources – A Key Captain of Allyship

The captain of human resources role is to ensure that all team members have the knowledge and skills to become an effective ally. The HR role is about making it concrete, functional, easy to understand and personal. Teams thrive when others are able to be personal and see their fellow allies being authentic. Shifting the thinking of allyship from being a burden to demonstrating the benefits of being an ally for all, allows those with power and privilege to embrace their role as part of the systemic change.

### Getting Started - Ally Action

Not knowing where to start? Create a list of little actions to get you moving forward. It can be anything you believe to be important, whether it be in your domestic life or in the workplace. For example, it could include being more aware of micro-aggressions and to speak up when you see or hear it happening; or when meeting someone new, asking if there is a pronoun they prefer using. Reflect on the steps of the ally journey.

There are several notable areas for onboarding new knowledge and skills training on allyship:

**1. Allyship education and training:** Engage employees in ongoing education and training about misperceptions and barriers often experienced by underrepresented groups. This helps all people to be more aware and respectful of others and not trip on inappropriate language or unacceptable behaviour. Of course, no one can fully understand other cultures, but we can have humility and do our best. According to research, companies who are more diverse have 19% higher revenue and are 1.7 times more likely to capture a new market.<sup>16</sup> So getting 'into team' is definitely an effective rationale for being an ally to others.

**2. Team building exercises:** Using team building exercises, such as personal storytelling, purposeful mingling (helps to create an open and friendly environment), and creating a team charter which outlines team goals and purpose, can be a simple way of creating opportunities for connection. Fostering allyship by creating bonds with team members enables trust, openness and moves beyond workplace formalities.<sup>17</sup> As HR representatives, setting the tone for how to create professional relationships that respect and value others as humans can inspire other employees to do the same.

**3. Foster active allyship with mentorship:** Mentor and sponsor new team members so that they have a workplace buddy. HR can create allyship opportunities by connecting a senior staff member with a new team member. This action step can help new recruits, as well as those that have moved to another department, feel like they are immediately welcomed into the team. The sponsor can set the stage for good role modeling and ethical behaviour.<sup>18</sup>

**4. Support and champion employee resource groups:** It is natural for people who share similar social grouping to come together and form communities within the workplace to form bonds and find support in one another. By supporting women and diverse underrepresented employees to create connections, HR can ensure that team members feel supported within the workplace and with those who have shared identities and experiences. HR can even highlight these groups in company-wide initiatives and engage them in diversity and inclusion strategy building. By doing so, new employees will also feel more confident about the company's strong allyship approaches.<sup>19</sup>

**5. Engage everyone in allyship:** New team members as well as existing team members can be encouraged to be part of the allyship journey. As the company continues to change and evolve, calling people 'into team' means keeping everyone engaged and respecting those that have been working long and hard in the change process. Allyship actions should reflect the needs of every employee in the company.

**6. Advocate for those not in the room:** Support team members from underrepresented groups who are not part of the conversation or invited to meetings. Being a voice for others who are not in the room can start to influence others to take notice of colleagues who go unappreciated. Ensure that underrepresented groups get the opportunity to participate in team initiatives and feel included.<sup>20</sup>



# Communications – The Other Key Captain in Allyship

Communications plays a critical role in promoting allyship in the workplace. As the “other key captain,” communications can flesh out the full meaning of allyship, who can be an ally, and how being an ally benefits the individual and the organization. This can be done through the development of allyship campaigns. Best practices in campaign development are included below, along with successful campaigns used in other sectors.

## How to Create Successful Allyship Campaigns

Starting a workplace allyship campaign is a great way to raise awareness and influence change within a corporate culture. Campaigns can demonstrate commitment from all levels of the organization, promote a fair and equitable workplace, and increase corporate goodwill. If necessary, they can seek to correct past mistakes or short-comings through demonstrating positive, strength-based messages that envisions the organization. An example of a strength-based message could look like, “Get into Team-Allies in Action”. They also help to amplify and validate positive messages that have been conveyed within the organization and create a sense of social cohesion and common purpose.

Allyship campaigns can be comprehensive to include community partnerships that can offer support and services such as a local sexual assault centre or a women’s shelter, or strictly stay within a corporation and including a main slogan message as the brand with a call to action using a high-profile resource (ie. video or an ad), social media assets, a website that lists more information. Some organizations use public relations firms to really bring home the message.

Using allyship campaigns can be highly persuasive and have a significant impact on the culture within an organization, sector and the broader community. It can be used as a tool to present a new image; raise awareness and create cultural changes and demonstrate a new vision.

### Tips to get everyone engaged in allyship:

- ◆ Invite people who are experts and actively engaged in allyship to speak to staff members to inspire and engage them in the allyship journey.
- ◆ Amplify and advocate for women and underrepresented groups in workplace meetings.
- ◆ Create a list of everyday allyship actions and put it in a visible place at work so everyone can see it. Team members can get involved and help to create the list.
- ◆ Have more open dialogue with other staff members and invite people to engage in discussions to actively listen and learn. Dialogue can improve automatic responses of defensiveness and end prejudices.<sup>21</sup>





Although the impact can be felt immediately with the campaign launch, more impactful results are achieved when the campaign is sustained over time. Typically, changes take time and it is important that the audience receives the messages repeatedly, over an extended period of time, or until the messages have been fully embraced.

Highly effective campaigns are based on best practices, including social marketing approaches that aim to change social norms, attitudes and behaviours by helping the audience know what to do and where to go for more help or information.

### Best Practices in Creating Allyship Campaigns

- **Strength-based approach:** Positive strength-based messages help to '*call men in*' to participate in the solutions. Conversely, ostracizing, blaming and publicly '*calling men out*' often leads to greater resistance.
- **Utilize social norms theory:** People are influenced by the actions and perceptions they have of their peers. New social norms (e.g. healthy masculinities) can be promoted and adopted when peer pressure is applied from within the group.
- **Use emotional persuasion:** Few people change their values, attitudes and behaviours based on information alone. Change happens when empathy is felt by the audience members. Effective campaigns use a strong '*emotional hook*' to appeal to the audience members' hearts. Use real stories or issues that affect the sector to take the heat off of the organization itself. But make the story real and relevant.
- **Focus on key messages:** Ensure you give the audience a clear take away message. Articulate a succinct call to action that envisions the outcome you want the campaign to achieve.
- **Role modeling:** Effective campaigns show the targeted audience the desired end result through modeling appropriate actions and behaviours.
- **Partner with others:** Ensure you partner with local community organizations that can provide services and support so that people know where they can get additional help. Make sure the services are prominently displayed in the campaign materials.





## Effective Allyship Campaigns from Other Sectors

Below are successful examples of allyship campaigns taken from three different perspectives – the sports; community; and public advertising sectors:

### Sports Sector - Toronto Maple Leafs - “Men of Quality” Allyship Campaign

**Slogan: “Men of Quality lead by example. They speak out. Ask first. Wear a white ribbon. Embrace their role as an ally, and commit to action.”**

White Ribbon and the Toronto Maple Leafs teamed up to create this high-profile campaign to end gender discrimination, racism and gender violence. In the award-winning video, the Leafs’ President, Brendan Shanahan, Captain John Tavares, and other hockey players publicly commit to gender equity. They encourage men to support gender equality at home and in the community and teach their children about healthy relationships and consent. Men of Quality are allies not only to the women they love, but to all women.

As allies, those engaged in this campaign work to encourage others and act as leaders. More information can be found at: [www.menofquality.ca](http://www.menofquality.ca)





## AN ALLYSHIP STORY...TORONTO MAPLE LEAFS.

As a former professional ice hockey player, and now President and Alternate Governor for the Toronto Maple Leafs, Brendan Shanahan has witnessed the power of collaboration, hard work, and passion that can happen not only on the ice but off the rink as well. Teamwork and being a good team player is the fundamental element to any sport and successful endeavour. Over his many years as serving President and being part of the culture in professional sports, he witnessed how gender roles and discrimination can create unhealthy perceptions of masculinity and perpetuate gender stereotypes.

Looking back and reflecting on his younger years as a player in the NHL, his focus was on being a professional athlete and narrowing his focus on the task at hand – the next game, the next challenge. As a young, single man, Brendan had the privilege of not recognizing issues going on in the world, including matters of gender equity. When Brendan got married and became a father, he gained some perspective on his privileges compared to others and his outlook changed. He began to recognize the importance of being an example of male allyship to his children.

His own father was a good example and made such an impression in his life of what healthy masculinity could look like. Brendan describes health masculinity as a host of characteristics and not just one definition. He hopes that discussions around gender stereotypes will lead to the recognition that there are positive attributes of masculinity. Yet, society should progress and evolve such that young men and boys understand that showing vulnerability is a strength. Brendan has been vocal through his work with White Ribbon that men and boys can make amends and own up to their mistakes; conversations and efforts towards gender equality is not about being perfect and highlights being a good human being. “Quality is not simply how you show up on the ice, but how you live off the ice.”<sup>22</sup>

Brendan saw an opportunity to strengthen his role as a leader and utilize his power and privilege to speak out against gender-based violence and inequality. His allyship journey evolved over time as he grew into being a father and parent, going from being silent to playing a positive role and using his power to create transformation. His desire to strengthen the role that sports and athletes have as role models is also what pushed him and his team to become part of the lifelong allyship journey. By taking action for the cause, Brendan and his team hope to inspire fellow athletes to do the same.

Brendan has made significant impact since he became aware of his privilege and began his allyship journey. He rolled out the Men of Quality Campaign in 2017, where he and Toronto Maple Leafs players publicly dedicated themselves to being allies and leading by example of what healthy masculinity looks like as an athlete, and as a human being. The Men of Quality PSA has been viewed over 10,000 times on Youtube and Brendan has been continually vocal about mens’ roles as allies. In 2020, Brendan joined White Ribbon in a webinar with Sophie Gregoire Trudeau to talk about his personal journey as a man, a hockey player, leader, and role model. He highlighted the importance of having conversations about sexism and gender stereotypes at a young age. While he was learning about these issues at age 30, he was discussing them with his children when they were teenagers. He also makes an impact as an ally as the President of the Toronto Maple Leafs by setting a standard that ‘locker room talk’ is unacceptable and taking a specific stance against derogatory language toward women, he models allyship from his leadership position. These efforts have solidified the Toronto Maple Leafs’ commitment to allyship through continued learning opportunities, involvement with gender equity initiatives, and using their power to speak out against inequality.



## **The Community – “It Starts with You” Allyship Campaign**

**Slogan: It Starts With You. It Stays with Him.**

This English and French language campaign was developed by White Ribbon and Le Centre ontarien de prévention des agressions to inspire men to have healthy relationships and be role models for the boys in their lives and communities.

It calls in men – men that are fathers and father figures, educators, community leaders, coaches – to teach about consent, gender equality and healthy relationships. Boys and young men are watching so teach them well. More information can be found at: [www.itstartswithyou.ca](http://www.itstartswithyou.ca)

## **Public Broadcasting – Ad Council – “Fatherhood Involvement” Allyship Campaign**

**Slogan: #Dadication.**

The Fatherhood Involvement Campaign was created by the Ad Council to bring awareness to struggles and victories that fathers face every day. The campaign seeks to encourage dads and men to be good role models by committing to actively working to solve social issues in the health and education sectors.

It highlights the importance of dads playing an active role in their children’s lives through healthy parenting, and it engages them in discussions about the responsibilities of being a parent. The campaign includes resources to help fathers manage stress, succeed in being a stay-at-home dad, build relationships with daughters; and highlights supports for new fathers.

More information can be found at: [www.adcouncil.org/campaign/fatherhood-involvement](http://www.adcouncil.org/campaign/fatherhood-involvement) and [www.fatherhood.gov](http://www.fatherhood.gov)



## AN ALLYSHIP STORY...SUNWING TRAVEL GROUP

Sunwing travel group prides itself on high quality customer service including travel logistics but also the safety of their people. Women and underrepresented groups have traditionally been a higher risk customer and team demographic when it comes to safety, both within the corporate culture of Sunwing and as travel guests at its various vacation properties. Prior to 2019, Sunwing triaged complaints from those that had safety risks and concerns (derogatory comments, harassment, and various forms of discrimination or gender-based violence) but did not have a targeted approach to increase their safety or prevent the risks from happening. But in the climate of the #MeToo movement – where women across the world were coming forward in the media with their lived experiences of harassment or assault – their awareness grew and they realized they needed to do better. The company's triage support process needed strengthening.

The management took action in 2019 and tasked key HR leaders to implement immediate changes. From there, the company's People and Talent HR leads developed a diversity and inclusion workplace culture strategy that included allyship and violence prevention training across all levels of Sunwing and reached all Canadian and overseas employees. This allyship component focused on the role that all staff play in creating a safe workplace for all people.

These efforts articulate the shift in corporate culture, first through leadership acknowledging their role to spearhead an ally-focused initiative – starting with their staff but then extending it to be a part of their brand and image so that all customers understood the care and attention they paid to this issue. This resulted in a two-pronged culture shift outcome:

First – within the corporate culture itself – awareness of the ally journey steps created an increased sense of safety and belonging for all employees. This increased sense of security had a direct correlation to retention of high-quality talent and attracting new talent too.

Secondly – by incorporating allyship messaging into the brand of the company, Sunwing was able to signal to all customers that they pride themselves in looking out for its customers' safety and will be holding their staff accountable with their behaviour through their zero tolerance policies.

These two key allyship outcomes not only improved the workplace culture for staff but it created a beacon for customers to choose their company over their competitors.



## AN ALLYSHIP STORY...BARRICK GOLD CORPORATION

At Barrick Gold Corporation, the corporate social responsibility leaders dedicated resources and made a commitment to address the pandemic of violence against women. As a mining company with 13 operations in diverse regions across the globe, they recognized how gender-based violence not only affects the success of operations, but the livelihoods of employees, women, and surrounding communities.

In 2011 Barrick Gold Corporation addressed incidents of sexual violence that took place in Tanzania and Papua New Guinea. According to reports, local women experienced sexual violence from members of the police force and company security. After reflection and acknowledging that the issue of gender-based violence is everyone's responsibility, Barrick tasked its Corporate Social Responsibility team to improve the culture and conditions within the workplace and beyond.

Barrick responded immediately and launched a full internal investigation about the incidents, and since then has worked hard to make restitution for the survivors and to engage in human rights training for the company's security forces and all other employees.

The company committed to preventing harm against employees and community members by enhancing security, hiring additional female security staff, and working with third-party experts on strengthening policies. Barrick also put in place training programs to increase accountability, compassion and empathy for women employees.

Barrick launched a multi-year partnership to help prevent gender-based violence at four of the mine sites and host communities in Zambia, Nevada, Papua New Guinea, and Dominican Republic. Comprehensive prevention and education training programs were developed to equip all staff with the education, active allyship steps, and tools necessary to prevent workplace harassment and gender-based discrimination. Community-based programming included engagement with women's organizations, local Indigenous communities, youth, and educators to learn about how to implement equitable policies that meet the needs and rights of folks from various communities and lived realities. Providing culturally appropriate programming that is rooted in the local context was necessary to respect the wide range of diverse cultures, practices, and languages spoken at each location.

Each employee was educated about the role they play in creating a safe and inclusive workplace, how to respond to harassment and discrimination, how to take action to prevent violence, and how to support those who have experienced violence, harassment, and discrimination. The programming also extended to spouses who, together with employees, benefited from gender-sensitive financial literacy training as a way to address and prevent one of the root causes of family violence attributed to a lack of education due to financial means.





## 4. Leading the Way for the Next Generation

Shifting the perception of underrepresented groups in Canada's forest sector from not being the "right fit" to being accepted can seem like a daunting task, however, when those in positions of power and privilege have a clear road map on how to be an effective ally, that shift can happen quickly. Having the knowledge and skills to help guide this new way of thinking, to create a workplace culture where all people can be represented and comfortable being their true selves, is a step forward not just for the forest sector, but for our society overall.

What it comes down to is raising the bar on awareness and curiosity about others, and making that the new norm. The workplace is shifting from looking out for oneself to looking out for others. Moving from the "I" to the "We" - the idea that the sum is greater than the parts. Allyship is a relatively new frontier of thinking in the workplace - it can be learned and readily applied with due diligence until it becomes second nature. The time is now to embrace these skills and knowledge so we can lead the way for the next generation.

Part of this new knowledge is understanding healthy versus unhealthy masculinities and learning about direct links between allyship at home and at work. Once that foundation is built, organizations can create sustained change by beating the allyship drum - uniting enhanced individual behaviours with internal/external communication and outreach campaigns that create a sustained change in the workplace culture.





## Understanding Healthy vs Unhealthy Masculinities

Part of being an ally is making the commitment to yourself and encouraging others to **adopt healthy masculinities** that are positive. Men have an inherent power and privilege due to their gender. Today's society is slowly raising the bar on behaviour - deconstructing old ways of thinking about gender to making room for diverse representation in the workforce. Understanding the difference between healthy versus unhealthy masculinity is a part of the process of allyship - being aware of the "old me" and carving out a path toward a new way of being that is healthier for all.

From a societal perspective unhealthy masculinity is a system, built over time, that has reinforced attitudes of male superiority, and often behaviours of intimidation, violence, domination and abuse have been used to maintain that sense of power and hierarchy. It is often associated with 'strength' and rigid thinking. This limited view of masculinity keeps men trapped in a void of emotion, which can create personal health (both mental and physical) and relationship issues. It can lead them feeling alone, unable to have close relationships and out of touch with their own emotions. Worse, their sense of superiority can cause them to treat others as less important and potentially cross the line with acts of violence or breach of workplace policies.

Healthy masculinity requires self-reflection which is a conscious effort to have an awareness of how culture, others, and self-perception has contributed to your understanding of what it means to be masculine. Along with this, male leaders should understand how unhealthy masculinity can lead to biases and privileges within the workplace and personal life. By being conscious of emotions and unfair expectations that have been placed on men, there can be a new born sense of empathy for oneself and others. In effect, women and underrepresented groups will start to feel safer around men - both physically and psychologically - and in response, start to feel more comfortable and safer with reaching out to them as allies.







Table 2 below identifies different terms used for healthy and unhealthy masculinities. Sometimes the same person can exhibit healthy and unhealthy characteristics at different points in their lives. Masculinity is a fluid concept - it has been created socially over time. Sometimes peer pressure can recycle unhealthy masculine behaviours. This keeps them from living their authentic selves and leaves them ill equipped to lead meaningful and healthy lives. Increasingly however, more and more men are shedding the old-fashioned unhealthy masculinity thinking and seeking and embracing the benefits of healthier traits.

**Table 2: Healthy vs Unhealthy Masculinities**

Healthy	Unhealthy
Expresses full range of emotions	Manipulative
Compassionate	Shows few emotions
Validates others' feelings	Demanding
Supportive	Rigid
Respects other and oneself	Makes racial/gender jokes
Collaborative	Aggressive
Understanding	Controlling
Empathetic	Unable to ask for help
Honest	Critical
Treats others equally	Insensitive
Engaged with family/friends/community	Violent
Flexible	Lacks empathy
Nurturing	Impatient
Mindful	Interrupts
Capable of apologizing	Bully
Patient	Unapologetic

## Ties to Personal Life

Think about your life outside of work. Do you believe that you are an ally to women and other underrepresented friends, family, and intimate relationship partners?

It is important to recognize that allyship is part of a lifelong commitment that extends outside of the workplace. Modeling allyship can begin at home. No matter what the make-up of the family home - children as well as women and underrepresented people - all deserve to be treated with respect and dignity. A great example of putting this awareness into action is with the Maple Leafs Campaign. Below are some daily ally actions to consider:

### Daily Actions

◆ Actively try to consume more media that is equitable in gender and racial representations. Whether recognized or not, the media that is consumed plays an important role in how people learn about others' experiences and gender and racial biases. Equal representation in media is important to recognize and gender biases are often perpetuated by Hollywood and news outlets.

◆ Think about an interpersonal relationship you might have with someone. Openly role model and share your allyship behaviours that you are learning at work with those in your personal life and demonstrate through your actions and words about healthy masculinities, power and privilege. Sharing knowledge and demonstrating new skills is key to allyship practice.

◆ Help out with the household chores, without being asked. There is an increasing amount of evidence that women still do more housework, childcare, and elderly care even in the 21st century. Inequity and gender expectations can happen in the home which can result in increased burnout, physical exhaustion, decreased productivity, and poor mental health. By pulling your weight at home, you can perform allyship daily. "Pulling your weight" might look different in every household. Ask others in the household how you can contribute and acknowledge the work and that each contributes. Having open communication and working together can help facilitate allyship in the home.<sup>23</sup>





## 5. Conclusion

Leaders in the forest sector are evolving their understanding and knowledge on diversity and inclusion from not paying attention to it or resisting it altogether - to understanding the value of having diverse teams - to now seeking ways to make their workforce more inclusive of diverse teams. Becoming an ally to women and underrepresented groups is a key component of how to create a workplace where all people feel included and able to reach their potential.

By walking through the ally journey spectrum - both for men and women - individuals can gain an ability to know what to do to contribute as a team player in their organization to create a more diverse and inclusive culture. Individuals recognize their role as allies and are empowered to hold themselves and others accountable at each step as they move from awareness to action.

Workplaces of today demand a new set of skills and knowledge to allow for a diverse and inclusive workforce to exist. Everyone has a role to play to learn and apply their allyship knowledge and know-how.

Knowing how to be an ally as an individual makes the shift all that much easier for those affecting change at the corporate-wide level. Together, individual and corporate actions can make a difference. Flanked by the knowledge of what healthy masculinity is and ties to one's personal life, allies are able to fully embrace a new way of being as a role model for the next generation of leaders.

There is power in being united in allyship within an organization. It creates a workplace environment where all people feel valued, fuelling them with high octane for higher performance. The forest sector is now armed with this knowledge - it's time to put it into action and make it real.

# Notes

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