

## SOLIDARITY LOOKS LIKE...

Solidarity is the process of understanding the intersecting layers of oppression faced by marginalized identities, embracing our differences, and actively extending whatever power we may hold to advance the work of our interconnected/collective liberation.

“True solidarity, one that is rooted in alliance building, must be grounded in a politics and practice of intersectionality... If solidarity feels easy and comfortable, you are not doing it right. If your intersectionality politics amount to an account of your identify and nothing else, you have not gone deep enough. Intersectionality is about shifting power to create just and equitable communities, irrespective of our identities, and it says we can begin to do that by starting with an account of those on the margins or those who experience multiple, compounded forms of oppression. But it demands that we utilize that analysis in order to understand the operation of power and begin to strategize in ways that put those people and their experiences of oppression at the center of our human rights analysis and movement.”

-Yolande Tomlinson, PhD, National Education Coordinator for US Human Rights Network

“Solidarity is not the same as support. To experience solidarity, we must have a community of interests, shared beliefs and goals around which to unite, to build... Support can be occasional. It can be given and just as easily withdrawn. Solidarity requires sustained, ongoing commitment.”  
-bell hooks, PhD feminist, activist, writer

Sources:

<https://www.newtactics.org/blog/intersectionality-tool-realizing-human-rights>

<http://www.coloursofresistance.org/769/moving-beyond-a-politics-of-solidarity-towards-a-practice-of-decolonization/>

[http://ldir.org/community\\_building/](http://ldir.org/community_building/)

### FOUR PRACTICES FOR BUILDING SOLIDARITY

Building solidarity across communities is an ongoing journey and life commitment. It requires that we examine how we experience privilege and oppression, how we relate to histories and current experiences of oppression, how to extend this process to other spaces we are a part of, and how to take risks to shift power to targeted and marginalized communities.

**Instructions:** The following four practices help describe how we can begin to identify and understand the many ways that we can address our roles in building solidarity across communities. For each practice please identify ways you currently use the practices and new opportunities to utilize the practice.

## **AWARENESS**

- ❑ Develop awareness of self as well as issues of oppression, and how these two are interconnected.
- ❑ Acknowledge your assumptions and ask how these assumptions have formed and contribute to your biases.
- ❑ Examine the personal characteristics and perspectives that make building solidarity easy or difficult.
- ❑ Identify ways to self-reflect and learn without requiring marginalized people to do the extra work of providing education.

What are areas of my identity that I am aware of experiencing oppression?

What are areas of my identity where I experience privilege?

## **EDUCATION**

- ❑ Recognize that many types of exploitation, marginalization and oppression have been documented or written about extensively by the people who experienced them. Find and learn from these resources as the foundation to building solidarity.
- ❑ Learn about issues and histories of marginalized groups according to those groups and reflect on how these issues and histories relate to your own.

What are issues and histories of specific oppressed groups that I am more familiar with?

What are issues and histories of specific oppressed groups that I am least familiar with?

## CREATE BRAVE SPACES

- Acknowledge and differences among individuals and within groups.
- Speak openly about the challenges and opportunities that our differences bring.
- Be open to criticism of yourself, organization, workplace, family, etc. And actively create space to receive them.
- Listen carefully and thoughtfully.
- Take it upon yourself to figure out what you can do to move things forward, instead of expecting marginalized people to take the lead.
- You will make mistakes. Learn from them.
- Do not speak or do things **for** marginalized groups you are not a part of or **instead** of them. Speak for yourself, from your own social location.

What spaces am I currently part of where I speak openly about challenges and create opportunities?

What are spaces can I create to address challenges and create opportunities?

## TAKE RISKS

- Use your privilege and power to shake up your personal and institutional spaces, push for changes that create equity.
- Share knowledge and work with other privileged people to help them understand your framework and process.
- Create partnerships and collaborate with other privileged people to develop plans committed to shifting power and resources to marginalized people.
- Show up in everyday ways.

How can I personally take risks to build solidarity?

How can I collaborate with others to take risks?