

Black Lives Matter - Advice On Being An Ally

Learn. Listen. Check yourself. Take action. Be Brave



Photo: Sarah Smith Wills

Acknowledge your own privilege

White privilege is a term used to describe the way that being having white skin gives you an advantage in life. The word may cause you discomfort. But the reality is a person who is white generally has far more advantages over a person of colour, irrespective of your social economic background, purely because of the colour of your skin.

“White privilege does not mean your life is not hard. It means that your skin colour won’t be a reason your life could be hard.” Joe Sanberg, Co-Founder Aspiration

Be humble. Accept there is a difference. Think about how you can use it in a positive way to support the work of those who are “other” than you.

Do your anti-racism research – don’t expect black people to explain it to you

You can’t be an effective ally if you don’t know what the issues are. Read up on black history and inequalities. Be mindful that explaining racism can be emotionally tiring and draining for black colleagues, especially when people react with shock or with tears at the racism they learn about for the first time. That’s why it’s important to do your own homework.

Talk

We need to really open up and talk to each other, even when it’s difficult, even when it’s something we’re not comfortable with, particularly white people.

That sometimes means talking about how you are complicit in the systemic racism that exists in the UK, particularly in our very own NHS. You may think of yourself as anti-racist, but unless you’re actively talking about it your silence may be viewed as compliance.

Talk about the effects of a biased system, talk about what you can do to change things.

Listen more. And don't get defensive

Academic [Robin DiAngelo](#) says we tend to think of racists as people who consciously and intentionally seeks to be mean to people of colour. But we all have unconscious biases, whether we like to admit it or not. Don't try to prove you're 'one of the good ones', or dominate the conversation with your disbelief, shock and tears. Just listen and learn.

"It's incumbent on us to stop doing that, because that doesn't move us forward when we do that. That's part of having a courageous conversation." [Dallas Mavericks owner Mark Cuban](#)

Amplify the words of others

As UK campaigner [Gina Martin says](#): *"It's not hard. Repost other people's writing, posts, information. Give your platform to their words. If you're not doing the work don't speak on it. Further others' messages."*

Think about how you can amplify the words of black colleagues at work.

Figure out *where* and *how* you can do the most good.

Everyone can do something. Whether pushing out positive messages on social media, joining BAME Network meetings, speaking up when you see a black colleague being belittled, ignored or racially abused; or including more BAME colleagues in decision making, we can all push for change. All of us working together will lead to systematic change.

Start with your own circle

Call out friends and family on their racism and micro aggression, even (especially) when it's uncomfortable. They'll likely be more open to listen to you, giving you the opportunity to effect real change.

Be strategic in your activism

Being an ally is more than just joining protest or marches, it is using your institutional power to change the structure and system if you are in a position to do.

Be brave

Doing anti-racism work is not always comfortable. But commit to pushing past the point of comfort to take effective and impactful action to change things.

Information provided by:

The joint BAME Network and allies at The Royal Bournemouth and Christchurch Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust Poole Hospital NHS Foundation Trust



BAME (Black Asian and Minority Ethnic)