

AN ETHNICITY ALLY'S TOOLKIT



INVESTING
ETHNICITY

A sensible guide to
ALLYSHIP
FOR THE ENTIRE ORGANISATION

V3 2024 | [INVESTINGINETHNICITY.ORG](https://investinginethnicity.org)



This toolkit runs
alongside optional
workshops, please get
in touch to find out
more

CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Why Me?	4
We're ALL on a journey	5
ACKNOWLEDGE: The beginning	6
The power to create change	8
Explore live experiences	10
Bias	12
ACTION: What kind of ally are you?	14
Inclusive Behaviours	16
Conversations	18
ACCOUNTABILITY: How to intervene	20
Being corrected	21
CHECKLIST: What can you do to ally?	22
GLOSSARY	28

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

The toolkit aims to support you in understanding the intersections of being an ally in everyday workplace situations, communications and settings. It is by no means comprehensive or exhaustive, but it should give you a good starting point to build your understanding.

Throughout the toolkit, words highlighted will be found in the [glossary](#), which refers to a short explanation or description of the word.

There is an ongoing conversation about whether terminology such as ‘under-representation’ or ‘ally’ are still relevant or appropriate terms, we have the view that the main priority should be to dismantle discrimination, and therefore we will be using these terms, as described in the glossary, to help understanding and for ease of use.

The toolkit is a beginners guide and forms part of a series of videos, workshops and further advanced allyship tools. Please get in touch if you would like further information.



EXTRA RESOURCES THE ALLIES TOOLKIT

Click here:

[The Allies Toolkit: Videos, reading & resources](#)

INTRODUCTION

“We
don’t see
things as they are,
we see them as we
are.”

Anaïs Nin

We are all in it together

This toolkit was created on the premise that every person throughout an organisation should be working towards and feel accountable for their workplace’s culture. Whether you are a board or executive member, people manager, hiring manager or colleague, building up your **cultural intelligence** is key to future proofing your organisation and yourself.

Lasting and meaningful change can only truly take place when the whole organisation is focused on the same goal: an inclusive and diverse workplace where everyone can thrive equally.

Visit the checklist at the back of the toolkit, to see how we can create change.

Braver conversations

Until very recently it would have been rare to hear people talking openly about race in the workplace, and more importantly the different barriers that diverse ethnic groups face. Discussing race and ethnicity can be an uncomfortable subject, and has not been helped by polarised ‘culture wars’ and, in some cases, fear of being ‘cancelled.’ However these methods serve no one. Being scared to say something wrong, often prevents people from trying, and therefore learning or supporting progress.

Unfortunately, the lack of conversation around race has contributed to a lack of understanding and awareness and when fuelled by bias

prevents organisations from supporting colleagues to be their best selves, and a workplace where people feel they belong.



Truly inclusive companies can be difficult to find as the majority of organisations cannot yet claim to be representative of all ethnic groups. However, creating an inclusive workplace is possible, and it starts with everyone working together.

We’ve updated this guide to look at the most recent research, content from our programmes and listening session feedback. The toolkit will focus on the main barriers and how we can feel empowered to support an inclusive workplace for, but not limited to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic colleagues, and be an **ally** for your colleagues.

This guide is a starting point. The best way to jump start your **allyship** journey is by getting out of your comfort zone and doing this work yourself.

Written by

Sarah Garrett MBE

Contributions: Amir

Kabel, Rochelle

Bruce



WHY ME?...

Many organisations are working to future proof their business by becoming more inclusive, particularly as this has proven to improve the bottom line.

The population in Britain is changing, UK census data has seen an increase from 11% to 18% of minority ethnic groups in 2021, which is set to increase further. Aligning to your organisation’s goals; being inclusive and learning cultural intelligence will make you a better leader, people manager and decision maker, helping your interactions with colleagues, clients, customers and within society as a whole.

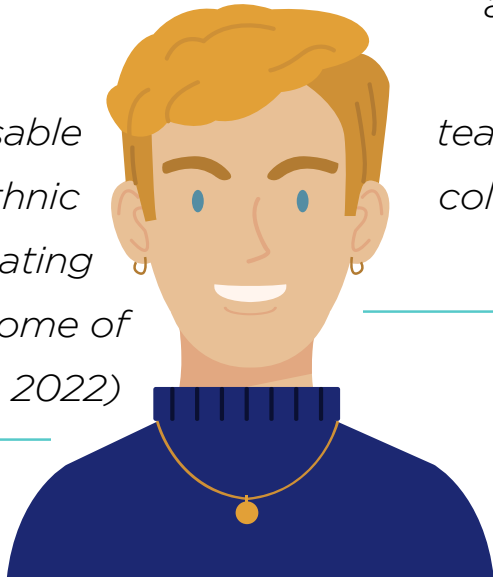


Organisations with robust ethnic-minority representation in leadership teams are 33 to 36 percent more likely to outperform their peers on profitability. (McKinsey, 2020)

Customers

Support your organisation’s goals to address the needs of a diverse customer base for better innovation of your products and service, and to build long-term customer engagement. This is done by understanding cultural differences to ensure they are reflective of Britain’s population. This will help future proof your organisation and mean you have the competitive advantage.

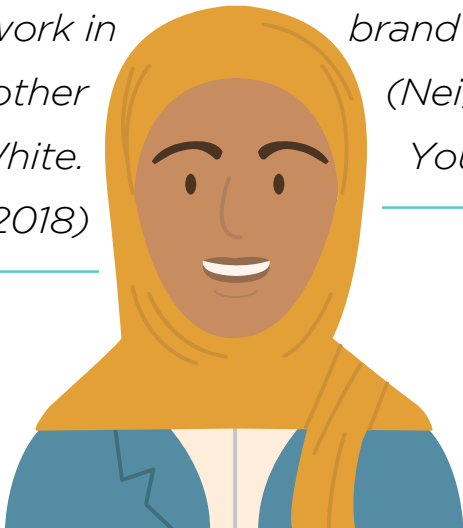
The average monthly disposable income of the minority ethnic consumers is £375 million, equating to an annual disposable income of £4.5 billion (Backlight, 2022)



Colleagues

Diversity in teams has proven to have supported innovation, productivity and collaboration. However, losing talent is costing your business, and this remains one of the key factors for under-representation of diverse groups.

29% of White employees work in all-White teams with no Black, Asian or mixed/multiple ethnic group people at all, while 7% of Black employees work in teams where all other colleagues are White. (BITC, 2018)



Communities

Showing up to support diverse communities, not only broadens your understanding but helps your organisation build trust. This has been proven to improve brand engagement and diverse talent attraction.

69% of people in the UK say they are more likely to trust a company that supports local charities and 89% more likely to buy goods or services from a brand they trust. (Neighbourly/YouGov, 2023)



WE'RE ALL ON A JOURNEY



Allyship is a vital component of any effective diversity, equity and Inclusion (DEI) strategy. Fostering a culture of allyship is not just beneficial — it is essential.

Education and Training

● Learn! Through regular training on racism, bias and the importance of allyship. Educate yourself, build understanding and stay informed about DEI initiatives.

● Create Safe Spaces for Dialogue

Join established forums or network groups where employees can share their experiences and discuss issues related to racism and discrimination. Foster better relationships by ensuring your interactions

are open with respectful conversations to promote understanding and empathy.

Encourage Active Participation

● Take part in DEI initiatives, such as mentoring programs, diversity committees, and community outreach. Allies should use their voices to advocate for colleagues from under-represented groups.

Hold Leadership Accountable

● Colleagues should model allyship behaviours and be held accountable for fostering an inclusive environment. For organisations this includes setting clear DEI goals, tracking progress, and ensuring transparency in reporting.

**REUEL ABRAMS**

Director Arcadis

“A race ally for me is someone that does not give me any special treatment, someone who treats me just like someone else. I want anything I achieve to only ever be on merit. To be an advocate all you have to do is be respectfully curious and try to understand your colleagues who may not be like you - actually that is something we should all do anyway. If you see talent in someone who hasn't promoted themselves and you're in a position to highlight their ability or their potential then do so.”



I am Jewish and was born and live in the UK

STARTING THE JOURNEY

The word 'ally' is primarily thought of as a verb rather than a noun, as it's something everyone must do rather than be.

Mistakes are an opportunity to learn

The more you engage with conversations about race and ethnicity in a receptive manner, the more frequent they'll become, and the more comfortable you'll feel allying in this space.

Avoid 'centering' yourself

Part of being an ally is recognising that it's not about you. Often, people

can feel overwhelmed with a sense of fear, guilt or shame for being unaware of how **systemic** discrimination is. This sometimes leads to derailing the conversation, comparing it to your own personal experience, or talking about a time you were a good ally. If you're recounting a time that you were a good ally, you're asking to be thanked, rewarded or acknowledged. These are examples of **centering** yourself, also connected to **performative allyship**. A common example of this is when someone is vocal about the issues surrounding racism, but stops doing so when it's no longer a popular topic.

Exercise: Identities 1

Do you understand the difference between RACE, RELIGION, ETHNIC GROUP, HERITAGE, NATIONALITY?

Look at the speech bubbles and think about what type the descriptions fall into.

Fact File

- Discrimination does not affect all people from one minority ethnic groups in the same way.
- Inter-racial discrimination does exist, that is why we have positioned this guide for everyone, and believe everyone has an opportunity to ally and improve their cultural intelligence.

Drilling down

Discrimination experienced by different ethnic communities can vary quite dramatically. Referring to all Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic people as one homogeneous group, trivialises individual barriers. An English-Pakistani man will not have experienced the same types of discrimination as a Scottish-Chinese woman, for instance. Each ethnic minority community's experience of racism is unique, and thus each has its own unique battle for equality.

Unique barriers

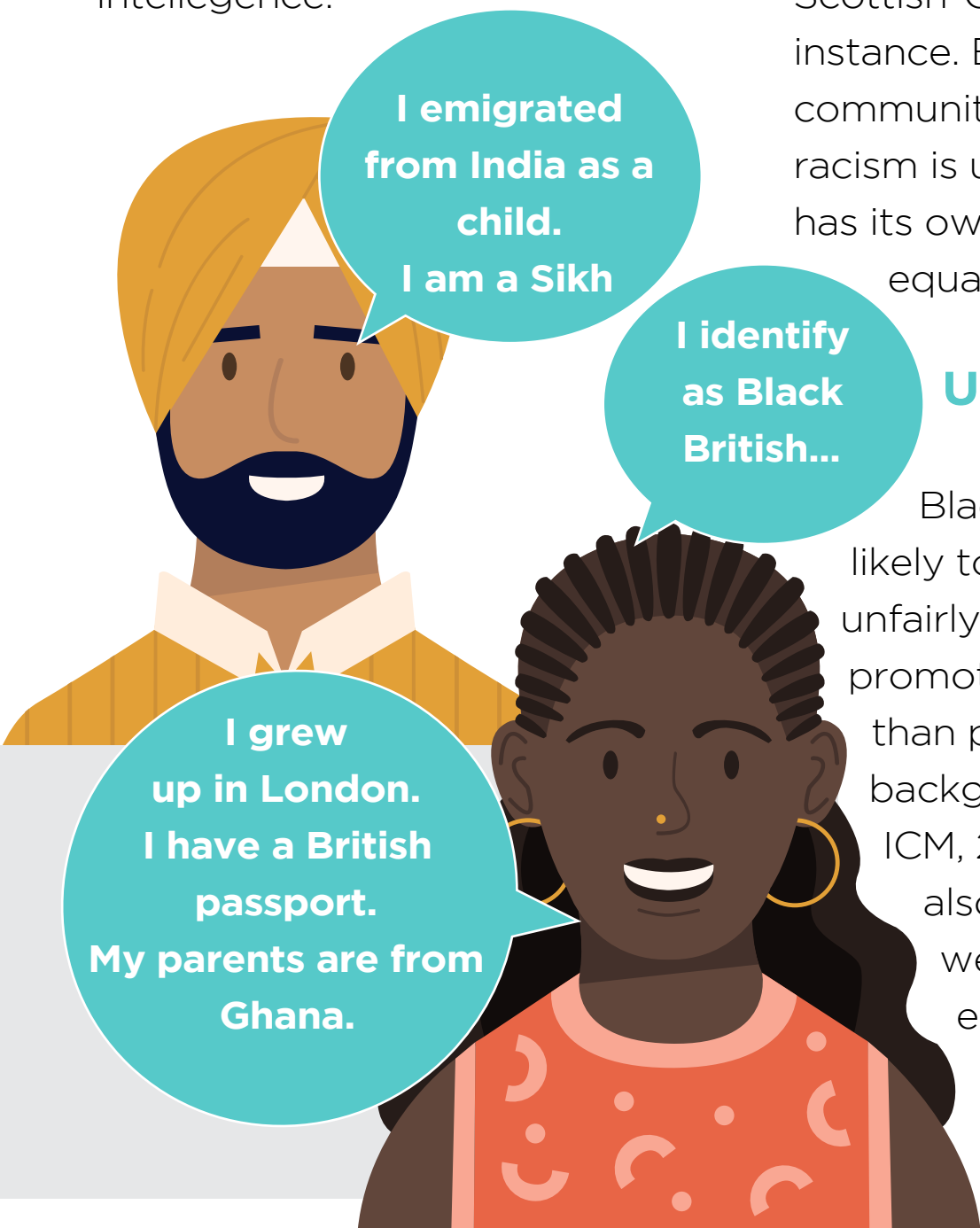
Black people were more likely to feel they had been unfairly overlooked for a promotion or job application than people from Asian backgrounds (*Guardian/ICM*, 2018). The same survey also found that Muslims were more likely to have encountered racist experiences than other religious groups.

Colourism

According to a report undertaken in the USA, darker-skinned people consistently report higher levels of discrimination from people of their own ethnicity. This is called **colourism** and is a legacy of lighter skin tones being valued more than darker skin tones. People with lighter skin tend to receive preferential treatment than those with darker skin due to historical (and ongoing) colonial mentality.

Intersectionality

When we describe a person's intersecting identities, for example race and gender, this is called **intersectionality**. Discrimination is compounded for people at the intersection of multiple under-represented identities. For example, someone who is South Asian and straight is likely to experience different discrimination than a person who is South Asian and LGBTQ+.



THE POWER TO CREATE CHANGE



CORAL TAYLOR
Head of Diversity &
Inclusion
HSBC UK

“As an ally, I don’t just listen to my colleagues from diverse backgrounds, I open doors so that their voices can be heard and influence the future of our business. Because we will only be inclusive and diverse if we all play our role.”

We all have privilege, just some have it in different spaces and some more so than others. For example, within ethnicity, those who identify from groups who have historically been in positions of power or are in the majority, often don’t face the same barriers or experiences as other under-represented groups.

By understanding parts of our identities where we hold the bigger influence in that space, we can learn where we have a louder voice to ally for others.

The term privilege does not intend to erase the existence of any person’s struggles, or imply that some groups of people are better off. It is merely meant to highlight that due to a person’s race or ethnicity, or other identities, there are additional unique barriers that they face.

In a workplace context, privilege can be seen in the lack of representation of Black, Asian

and Minority Ethnic groups reaching senior levels or challenges within inclusion.

We all experience privilege in some form through our different intersectional identities, whether that be down to race, skin colour, gender, sexuality, age, ability, religion, socioeconomic, nationality, appearance, weight... the list goes on. By identifying the areas we hold privilege in, these are generally spaces where we have the most power to create change.

EXTRA RESOURCES



PRIVILEGE VIDEO

Click here:

[What is Privilege](#)

EXAMPLES



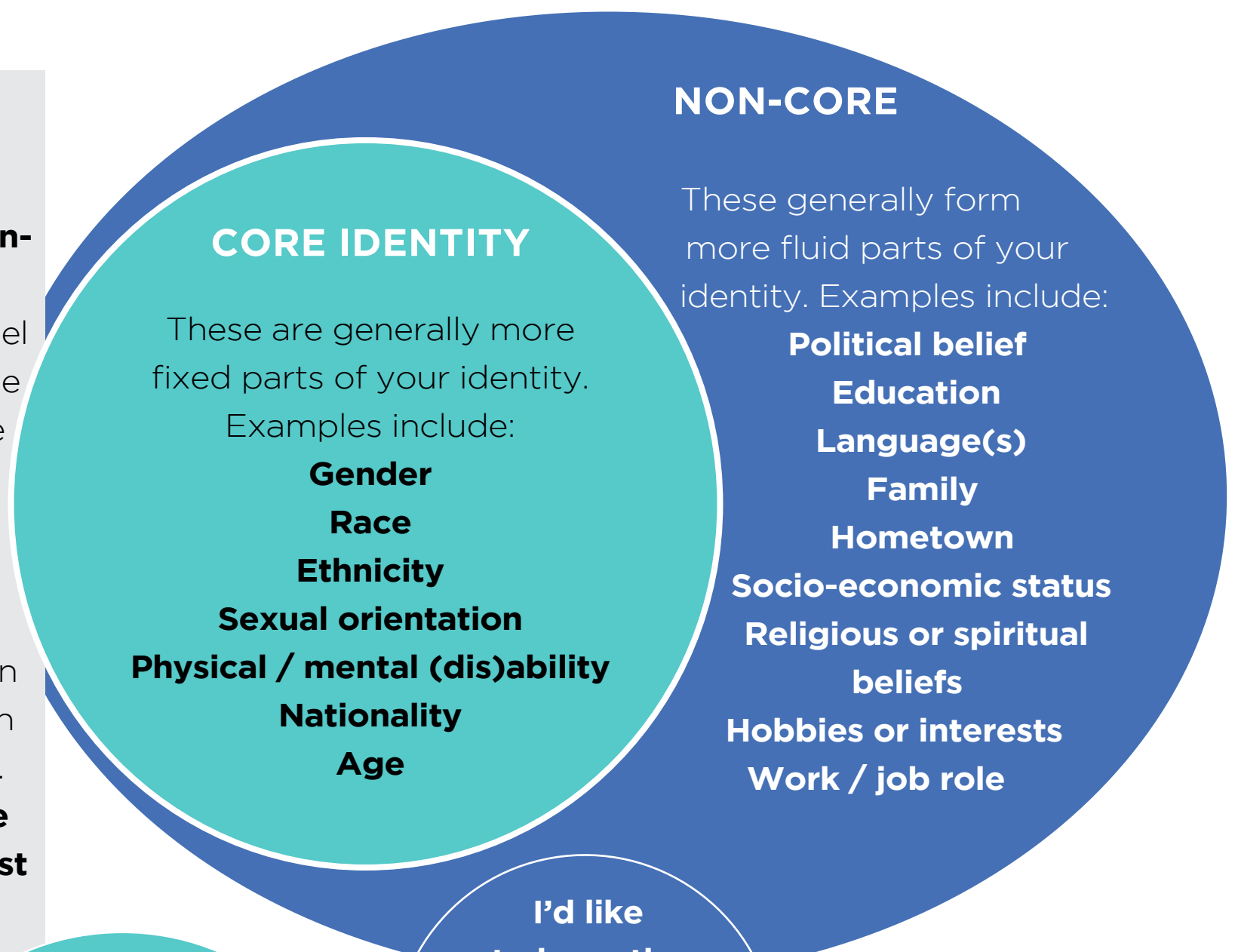
Exercise: Identities 2

Think about the Core and Non-Core Identities you hold.

The core areas: Where you feel an area gives you an advantage in the workplace, these are the areas you hold a greater voice and are able to influence and create the most change.

The non-core areas: Identify the areas that also give you an advantage or disadvantage in the workplace, or even both.

What areas do you have the most power in; or the greatest voice to create change?



I'd like to understand more about the challenges around having a disability in the workplace

I'd like to support as an ally by aligning our practices to the ethnicity and race agenda here

I'd like to learn the correct way to use pronouns to be inclusive of gender

I'd like to have more inclusive policies by hearing from people from different religious backgrounds

Exercise: Identities 3

Start to think about who you can use your power to ally for

Think about your role in the organisation.

What areas do you have the most power, the greatest voice to create change?

1

ACKNOWLEDGE

EXPLORE LIVED EXPERIENCES



Recruitment

Bias was the main factor as to why organisations were seeing representation drop off during the recruitment stages for minority ethnic groups. When you have a job interview, your chances are increased if the recruitment panel looks like you. Since people tend to employ others in their own image, this automatically puts Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic people at a disadvantage.

Psychological safety

Psychological safety, coupled with non-inclusive behaviours, we found that minority ethnic colleagues felt less likely to be able to speak up, disagree with colleagues or share their thoughts in meetings. We found through listening sessions with minority ethnic colleagues that there was a consistent theme around: Being interrupted or overlooked to give their opinion.

I don't think they would be a good cultural fit for the team

Almost a quarter of job applicants from white Western backgrounds received a call back, but only 15% from minority ethnic application (University of Oxford, 2019)

65% of minority ethnic colleagues felt comfortable expressing controversial opinions or disagreement, compared to 76% of White colleagues. (Bank of England, Cognitive Diversity and Inclusion Survey. (2018).

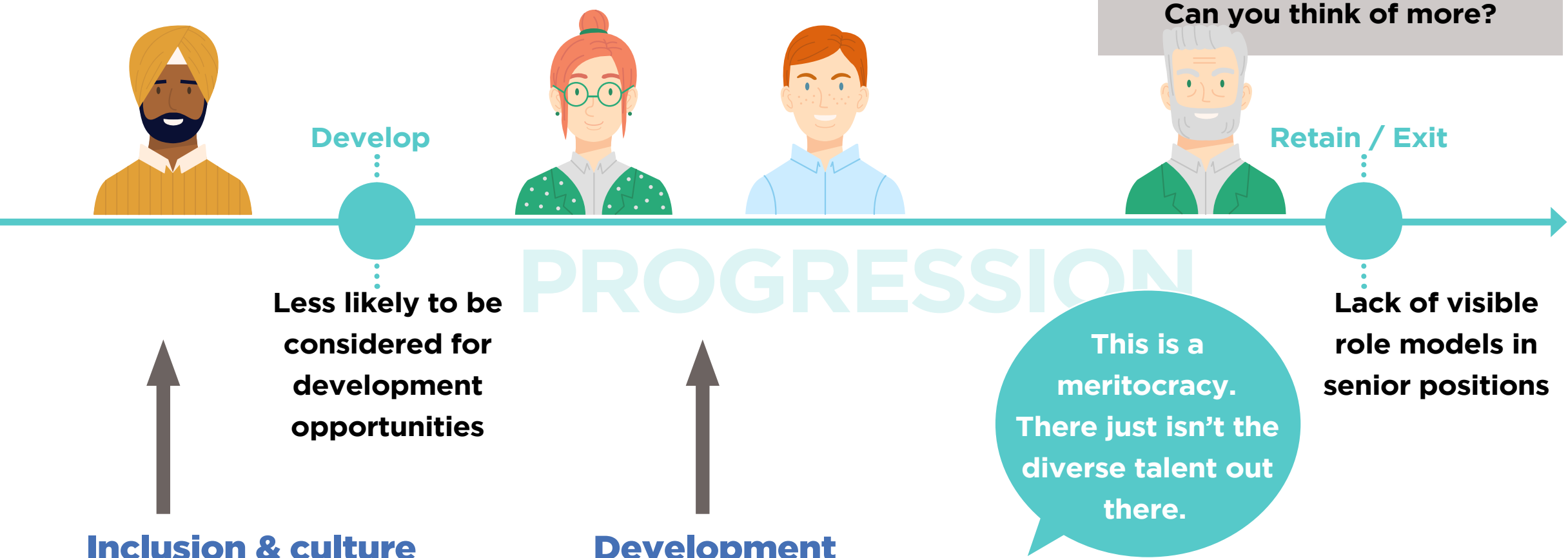
Despite organisations trying to break down some of the barriers to support diverse representation, retention or attrition rates in many organisations show that people from certain under-represented groups, leave organisations early. This has been attributed to, not just one thing, but many over the entire colleague journey.

Exercise: Spot the barriers (part 1)

Acknowledge: Learn to identify the unique barriers

There are some in the guide.

Can you think of more?



Inclusion & culture

Non-inclusive behaviours (including micro-aggressions) were a key contributor to why people felt they didn't belong within an organisation. (Page 16)

A third (34%) believe ethnic minorities are treated worse than White people by institutions because of a mix of prejudiced individuals working within them and the way things work within the institutions, 26% place the blame purely on individuals while 15% place it with the institutions.

Development

Access to development was found to be one of the main causes of lack of representation in senior positions, this was largely due to bias and inequalities within systems.

We found through listening sessions with minority ethnic colleagues that key barriers to development included: lack of people manager support; lack of visibility with senior stakeholders and being overlooked for stretch assignments, resulting in diminishing the ability to naturally gain sponsors or mentors; unfair performance ratings or lack of feedback resulting in less access to development opportunities.

Ethnic minority employees hold only one in 16 top management positions in the UK. (BITC and YouGov, 2021)

Exercise: Who do you gravitate to?

Imagine you walk into a networking event and are faced with a diverse group of people...

Who do you usually gravitate to?

You have a work emergency

Who do you usually call for help?

You go into a meeting

Who are you sitting next to?

From the line-up below...

Who is most likely to go home early to pick up their kids from school?

Who is most likely to be the next CEO?

Think about who you chose and why you chose them, and how this manifests in the workplace

BIAS

Fact File

- **Unconscious bias⁴** (also known as implicit bias) can result in an unconscious form of discrimination and stereotyping based on a quick, snap decision.
- Unconscious racial bias leads to discriminatory or non-inclusive behaviours that often don't align with our personal beliefs.
- Although it's something that everyone has, you will probably be unaware of your unconscious biases unless they are pointed out.
- Unconscious biases are learned from a young age and are heavily influenced by the messages, attitudes and stereotypes we

are exposed to as we grow up. Factors include, representation in media, storybooks, education and history, family perspectives, societal views and laws.

How bias manifests

Unconscious bias influences our behaviours and everyday decision-making processes in a way that we're not necessarily aware of. Bias takes many forms, but here are the main examples.

Recruitment and promotion

In the workplace this shows up in giving recruitment opportunities and job offers. Feedback from listening sessions include a woman of Black heritage being turned down for a role because they were "too aggressive", when



they felt they were animated.

Applicants with a ‘foreign sounding’ name were 60% less likely to get a job interview (Oxford University, 2019)

Building networks

Visibility in an organisation is key to getting noticed for career opportunities. However **similarity bias**, which means that people naturally gravitate to people similar to themselves, means that under-represented groups tend to not get the same opportunities.

Stretch assignments

An example is favouring someone who had a similar education background to yourself, above who is the best person for the project. This is known as **Halo and Horns effect**, where one positive or negative element outshines all else.

Language and behaviours

Stereotyping can be a key form of bias that perpetuates this form of discrimination. (See page 16)

Tips: Interrupt the cycle

Challenging your bias is a long-term commitment and takes practice. Be patient with yourself and remember that everyone holds unconscious biases.

- Question why you made an immediate decision about a person. Was it based on a stereotype? Where did you learn about that stereotype and why? What impact does having this bias mean for the person it was directed towards?
- If you don’t quite understand why a specific term or word holds bias, you should research or have an open conversation with another ally to learn more.
- If you usually gravitate to the same person, or don’t check in with certain people, do something different.

**EXTRA RESOURCES**
THE BIAS TEST
Click here:
[The Harvard Review Implicit Bias Test](#)



DAVID ALDRICH
Managing Director
Commercial Group EMEA
Moody’s Ratings

“**Making myself uncomfortable is a key part of being an ally. Talking about race in the workplace when you are a white middle-aged male is extremely uncomfortable... and necessary... and impactful. My top tip is to follow your gut instincts and do what is morally and ethically right, because this is also optimal for the economic performance of your company. When you put yourself in the shoes of another, you soon realise that speaking up and being active is so much more impactful and beneficial than being a mere passive observer.**”

WHAT KIND OF ALLY

Allyship is the commitment to learn, unlearn, and re-learn what you know to be an active agent for change. Amir Kabel tells us the different types of allyship. What kind of ally are you? Maybe you're a mixture of them all



1. Advocate

Sharing to build awareness across the organisation

An advocate is someone who publicly supports the D&I agenda and publicly supports underrepresented groups. An advocate works to get others to support the agenda and helps raise awareness across the company. When an ally takes on the role of advocate, they use their power and influence to bring peers from underrepresented groups into circles where those individuals may not normally be. The advocate recognises and addresses unjust omissions and makes the case for change.

2. Scholar

Learning, unlearning and relearning to build understanding

We all think that when we work hard, we will have the opportunity to succeed and that our hard work will pay off. This isn't true for everyone. Some barriers that mean an individual will have to work twice as hard to get to the same place include: race, ethnicity, gender, class, religion, disability, sexual orientation. All of these factors can affect an individual's opportunities for success. A knowledge seeker is someone who actively seeks to learn, unlearn and relearn what they know. In the workplace they seek to understand the experiences and challenges of others.

3. Sponsor

Opening doors and supporting on career opportunities

Don't confuse this with mentorship. A mentor will talk with you, but a sponsor will talk about you. A mentor gives you perspective, while a sponsor give you opportunities. There are overlaps and these roles complement one another, but ultimately a sponsor is someone who will use his or her internal political and social capital to move your career forward within an organisation. See this person as your on-the-job guardian. A good sponsor defends your actions, often behind closed doors. They provide visibility to, and endorsement of, your work.

ARE YOU?



4. Amplifier

Ensuring other voices and ideas are heard

One of the reasons the Obama administration was the most diverse, was because of its ‘amplification strategy’. In meetings, women’s voices were often being ignored, spoken over or interrupted, so the female staffers adopted in meetings the ‘amplification strategy’. When a woman made a point, other women would repeat it, giving credit to its author. This forced the room to recognise the source of the contribution and amplified the idea and its voice. For women and ethnic minorities, this phenomenon is all too familiar. Research shows these interruptions do happen and that using the amplification strategy can help.

5. Upstander

Interrupting non-inclusive behaviours

An upstander is a person who speaks out or intervenes on behalf and in support of someone when they see or hear something is wrong, no matter how small the act or word is perceived to be. These can be everyday microaggressions or micro-inequities.

Microaggressions are small behaviours which happen every day, but their cumulative impact on the individual experiencing them can be detrimental to inclusion. They create a toxic workplace culture and undermine an organisation’s commitments to fairness and opportunity. It’s often not about an individual who fails—it’s the culture around them which fails them.

These behaviours have an impact on underrepresented people, the workplace culture and the creativity and innovation of the company. Speak up and call things out; passive silence can often turn out to be active complicity.



AMIR KABEL

Vice President, Head of International Equality
Salesforce

6. Champion

Increasing the visibility of others

Champions are people who help provide you with opportunities and visibility in the company. This can be in many ways, such as recommending women and people of colour for speaking opportunities, or sitting in on a meeting or projects that they wouldn’t have been involved in, and referring to them when you are asked help answer a question or find a solution to a problem.

INCLUSIVE BEHAVIOURS



EMMA THERASA HOWARD
Operations manager for
Qualitative Research
Tesco PLC



I actively support and advocate by listening to their experiences, educating myself on their cultures life experiences , history and issues, using my privilege to amplify their voices, and taking concrete actions to promote equality and justice. Personally the biggest tip is to be open, listen and be prepared to feel uncomfortable ask questions and be supportive.”

It's not what you don't do, it's what you do DO...

Within interactions on race, ethnicity and other under-represented groups, there's so much fear of saying or doing the wrong thing, or worse, being 'cancelled' from the allyship journey. As a result, acts of inclusion can become counter-intuitive, for those wishing try to authentically ally, which is never the going to give space for progress. Feeling empowered to ally, comes with practice, and also part of that journey is being able to learn. Here's some examples of how we can start.

Aid inclusion and belonging

Start conversations with people you don't think you have much in common with, you might learn something new.

Tips

- Try checking on

members of the team you wouldn't usually and asking them how a project is going or for work advice.

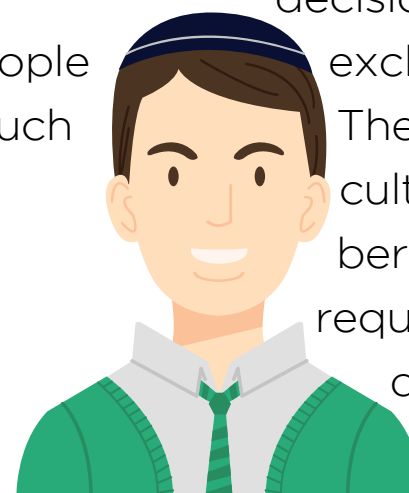
- Ensure everyone's voice is heard in meetings.
- Ensure colleagues are recognised for the work they do, it's reported that under-represented groups often do not receive the same level of recognition for work done.

Support understanding

Be mindful of different cultures and the challenges faced in the workplace. Research religious areas that affect the workplace, particularly if this might involve

decisions that maybe exclusionary.

These can include cultural holidays, bereavement requirements within different cultures.



Tips

● Think about different cultures when arranging a work event, this could mean being considerate of alcohol, diets of days for religious customs that might exclude colleagues.

Combat stereotyping

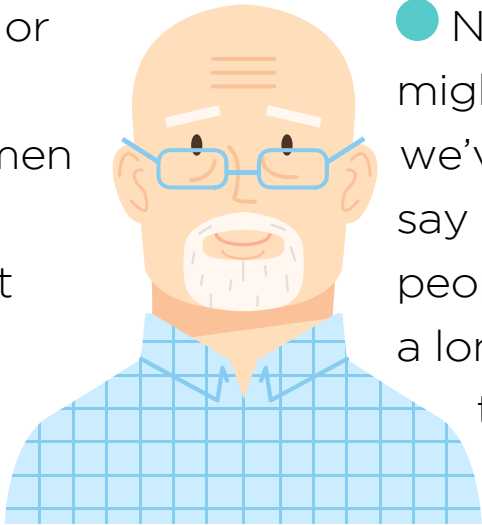
Educate yourself on common stereotypes and question yourself on how these have led to non-inclusive behaviours.

Tips

● Think about any assumptions you might be making, For example thinking someone is less intelligent due to their accent, or a colleague being mistaken for hospitality or someone more junior at a work event.

● Flip the script: Would I you act this way toward someone of a different race or ethnicity?

For example, Women of Black heritage reported back that colleagues had touched their hair without



Exercise: Address the barriers (part 2)
Action: Create equity by intercepting the unique barriers
Refer back to ‘Exercise: Spot the Barriers’,
Think about how you can take action to intercept some of these areas. On this page there are some examples to get you started.

permission, ask yourself, would you touch a man’s bald head?

Acknowledge identity


People are generally proud of many aspects of their identity, but there are instances that the cultural differences have meant that the effort isn’t made.


Tips

● Names we’re not familiar with might be hard to pronounce, but we’ve taken the time to learn to say ‘Tchaikovsky’, so using other people’s names properly will go a long way, and if you’re not sure then ask.

Microaggressions

Microaggressions are everyday, and have an impact on psychological safety over time. They have become a topical subject, but are only part of the contribution to negative colleague experiences. If we take action, over time we start embed more inclusive behaviours unconsciously. It’s simple, building **cultural intelligence** takes being considerate of diverse needs and perspectives, and learning as you go by asking people, is the best and only way to truly understand difference.

 **EXTRA RESOURCES**
MICROAGGRESSIONS
Click here:
[Common microaggressions](#)



Video link. Click here:
[The effects of microaggressions](#)



NAISON CHITIYO

Financial Controls Manager
Cadent Gas



For me,

Diversity and

Inclusion is not about giving people a ‘free pass’ in life, nor is it about viewing or treating them as victims. It is about striving to create an environment in which everyone, from any walk of life, may reach their fullest potential, by being willing to identify and eliminate any hindrances that may prevent someone from being able to do so.”

CONVERSATIONS

Tips: Race fluency

Practice makes perfect.
Here's some tips to get you started.

Establish the purpose of the conversation

- Be mindful of what someone is looking for from a conversation, is it to fix a problem or just listen with empathy.

Knowledge is power

- Education and building understanding is key to feeling more confident in having conversations. There is a wealth of books, podcasts on our site and at the back of this toolkit to help empower you to have better conversations.

Be brave

- Doing something different takes an element of bravery. Practice leaning into the discomfort and making a conscious effort to build new relationships.

Acknowledge and accept

- Be ready and open to accepting feedback. Listen and acknowledge historical factors and unique challenges.

It's OK to ask

- Most minority ethnic people we question said they didn't mind sharing their heritage and would welcome being asked. Be specific in your questions and accept the answer. "Where are you from?" is quite a broad question for some people, so you can see when people say they are British, and they are further questioned, how this can challenge their feeling of belonging. Similarly, asking how to pronounce names you aren't familiar with, is always a good thing.

I'm scared to talk about anything, through fear of getting it wrong

Difficult conversations

- Try where possible to set the purpose, context or intention of the conversation. For example, "I'd like to have a meeting with the intention of improving how we work on the next project."

Exercise: Conversations

Check out the tips on this page and practice, practice, practice!

Try and check in and have a conversation with someone you wouldn't usually, today.

- Ensure you go into conversations giving the full picture, and not fixating on one negative element.

- Use positive language where possible and back up anything else with factual examples.

Stereotyping leads to assumption

- Use open ended questions or statements to avoid assumption. Even if it's well intentioned.



You're really well spoken for an Asian person... I assumed you'd be good at tech

KIM THOMSON
Diversity & Inclusion Manager Kier Ltd

“An ally is someone that demonstrates active inclusion by using their voice to support, elevate and empower others from marginalised groups in society. Being an ally also means having difficult conversations with people and not being afraid to call-out inappropriate or poor behaviour.

I learnt to acknowledge my privilege fairly early on in my career thanks to a colleague at the time who challenged me in ways I hadn't previously been challenged, because of my privilege I was protected or ignorant to a lot of these things.

People can often be defensive of accepting their privilege, but



once you acknowledge how society has benefited you over others you can see the barriers that have been created and work towards pulling them down.

I want to see people thrive and sometimes that means taking a back-seat and motivating and encouraging them to go after what they want, or helping to facilitate opportunities that they would have missed out on. Other times it might be a more direct approach, actively and openly challenging discrimination and bias.”



The aim is
to educate and
engage, not to
name and shame

HOW TO INTERVENE

When you've discovered where you have the most power to ally, you have the ability to support others. If something doesn't feel right that is being said or a behaviour, then question why, it's likely that something isn't right.

Dr Derald Wing Sue and colleagues used the term **micro-intervention** to describe the act of interrupting a microaggression. Dr Sue and his colleagues suggest that the intervention of allies can have a profoundly positive effect in creating an inclusive and welcoming environment.

When intercepting a non-inclusive behaviour, bear in mind that the person committing it is unlikely to be aware and maybe showing positive intent, although the resulting impact on the recipient may still be detrimental, particularly over time. By highlighting the comment, you're giving the opportunity for

better understanding for future interactions.

How you confront the microaggression will be determined by your relationship to the person. It's important that the person does not feel under attack for their comment. Think of it as an open conversation, rather than confrontation or an argument. This could mean taking someone to one side after a meeting to address what they have said, rather than holding them to account in front of everyone to make a point.

Examples

Ensure they are in the right space for feedback.

"Is this a good time to give you a bit of feedback?"

Kindly ask the person to clarify what they meant by that phrase.

"Could you please explain that more fully?"

"I don't understand. What do you

mean by that?"

"Could you please repeat that?"

Separate the intent of the phrase from the impact.

"When you said _____, you probably didn't realise it but it might have come across like this _____."

Saying _____ might make someone feel _____."

Empathise and humanise by comparing the situation to your own learning process.

"I noticed you said _____. I used to say _____ too, until I learned _____."

It might be that the comment was by a person in a more senior position and you feel uncomfortable having the conversation directly. In this situation, you could interrupt and redirect the conversation. At a later point, you could discuss your observation with another ally and form an approach that will bear positive outcomes.

BEING CORRECTED

Remember, this is a journey and there will always be times when we will be given feedback, this is a great opportunity to learn.

If a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic person or someone tells you about something linked to their identity that they wanted to point out or they found upsetting, even if your first reaction is to feel you've done nothing wrong, you should always believe how they are telling you they feel. It's normal to feel affronted and defensive in this situation, but, as an ally, you'll know to separate intent from impact.

The following is a great way to utilise learning about different perspectives from unintentional interactions:

Exercise: Intercept

Think about real scenarios

How would you deal differently?

[Email us to find out more about our scenario-based workshops](#)

1. Accept

Take ownership. Apologise

Example response: "I didn't mean to make you feel that way, I will be more mindful in the future".

2. Review:

Listen to the reason why you are being corrected. If one is not given, take the time to think about your words or actions from the other perspective.

Example response:

"I didn't know that before. Thank you for telling me."

If you are still unable to pinpoint why you were corrected, turn to another ally for peer support.

3. Resolve

Once you've thought about things from the other perspective, keep it in mind for the future, and put what you've learned into action.



KATE BUTLER

Inclusion and Diversity

Lead Bank of Ireland



Anyone can be an ally – allyship should be accessible, visible, inclusive and ideally simple to do. Being an ally is a journey to greater inclusion for everyone, regardless of race, background or circumstances.

Being an ally is commitment to understanding different experiences and perspective while also accepting that sometimes I get it wrong and might need extra help and supports and that is ok! Storytelling around visible allyship has helped bring to life meaningful examples for colleagues and drive action.

1

ACKNOWLEDGE

The following is based on feedback from organisations and other allies but are merely examples. There maybe others that create equity within your workplace

THE ALLIES CHECKLIST

IF EVERYONE DID JUST
THREE THINGS ON
THIS CHECKLIST, TODAY...
WE COULD CHANGE
CULTURE TOMORROW

ACKNOWLEDGE: BUILD UNDERSTANDING & AWARENESS

The start of your journey may be uncomfortable, but the more you learn and understand, the more empowered and confident you'll feel

● Learn where you have most the power for change

Recognise the various areas where you benefit from privilege, these are the areas you have the most power to create change.

☐

● Don't know? Do the research

Do the research (See Further Reading on our [website](#)). If you don't understand the terminology or why someone might be offended by what you've said, then there's lots of resources online, and you won't of been the first, or the last.

Some organisations offer e-learning or training sessions, story-telling or allies network group events or profile stories of colleagues from diverse backgrounds through videos, articles or other communication to improve understanding of different backgrounds and cultures.

☐

● Conversations to build understanding

Listening to other people's perspectives or experiences can help understanding, practice empathetic listening Learn how to feel comfortable talking about race by engaging in conversations about it. If you are talking with a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic person. Always ask if it's OK to talk about race or other subjects that may feel personal to them, acknowledge the toll that the discussion may take on them.

☐

● Acknowledge the barriers and challenges for other groups

Acknowledge you are an active participant in a systemically discriminatory society, which means that we are all have a part to play in creating change.

☐

● Consciously interrupt your bias

Accept that we all have bias, and understand your own. Think about how this manifests . (See Page 12)

☐

● Identify non-inclusive behaviours

Notice inequities in behaviours, examples include 'othering', micro-aggressions or not having people speak in meetings. Check on who you usually call or sit with in a meeting, and do things differently.

☐

CHECKLIST

ACTIONS

Once you’ve reached a basic level of understanding around allyship, consider beginning to take actions which will further your growth as an ally in the workplace.

<p>● Join a network</p> <p>Join your organisation’s multicultural network and donate your time or resources to furthering its goals.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>● Review your organisation’s resources</p> <p>Check which resources on ethnicity your organisation has made available, and give feedback if you feel they aren’t adequate or missing some areas you or others might need.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>● Build better diverse networks and broaden your circle</p> <p>Find out if your company or the network have events you can attend to build diverse networks and improve understanding. Practice inclusive behaviours and try once a day to connect with a colleague whom you might not ordinarily engage.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>● Support different ideas, perspectives and voices being heard</p> <p>Actively ensure that all colleagues have an opportunity to give their opinions in meetings. Amplify voices that aren’t usually heard, making sure you credit them for good ideas or work.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>● Support diverse communities</p> <p>Use your volunteer day or support a charity or initiative that supports Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic people.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

ADVANCED ACTIONS

You recognise that utilising your position in your organisation can help to create culture change.

<p>● Share understanding</p> <p>Give peer support to other allies. Some organisations have provided focus groups for allies to understand better from each other.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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<p>● Interrogate systems</p> <p>If you encounter unfair practices or processes within your organisation, challenge them. This could be done individually, with another ally, or through your organisation’s ethnicity network or DEI lead.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>● Utilise opportunities to amplify messaging</p> <p>If you have the opportunity to speak at a company event, discuss your ally journey and how others can be a better ally. Utilise other forums or comms to share diverse perspectives.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>● Representation optics</p> <p>Ensure that career development opportunities, forums or groups (on any topic) are representative of all areas of diversity where possible.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

PEOPLE MANAGERS & RECRUITERS: ADVANCED ACTIONS Being in a people manager or recruitment role has it’s own set of responsibilities.	
<p>● Take time to learn the skills to lead a diverse team</p> <p>Convey that you are an approachable manager who empathetically listens, and check in with members of staff. Role model inclusive behaviours and language to the rest of your team and wider networks. Bridge any skills gap by actively seek out training on leading diverse teams.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>● Coach your team to be more inclusive</p> <p>Articulate behaviours that are accepted. Ensure you stamp out unwanted behaviour or microaggressions when you see them or they are reported.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>● Interrupt your bias when regarding development opportunities</p> <p>Question your biases when offering stretch assignments, doing appraisals or putting members of the team forward for training or promotions. If you usually are choosing someone similar to yourself, objectively ask yourself, ‘why’.</p> <p>If you are a recruiter or hiring manager, challenge your bias in the recruitment process</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>● Mitigate bias in the recruitment process</p> <p>If you are a recruiter or hiring manager, interrogate each step of the recruitment process to ensure that it lends itself to having diverse representation within the candidate pool at every stage</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

CHECKLIST

ACCOUNTABILITY: HOLDING YOURSELF, OTHERS AND THE ORGANISATION TO ACCOUNT

The actions you undertake can create real and lasting change within your organisation.

<p>● Weave inclusive decision making into both big decisions and the every day ones</p> <p>Whatever your role or function, whether a people manager or in leadership, ensure you are addressing everyday decisions to ensure they are inclusive, if you are not sure, then research or introduce listening sessions with diverse cohorts. If you play a part in developing policy, try and get input from under-represented voices and use your influence to ensure they are fair and inclusive.</p> <p>Learn more about what your organisation is doing on the ethnicity agenda and find ways to align and embed inclusive strategy within your particular area of business</p> <p>Ensure you are involving diverse voices in the decision making process. If you haven't got good representation on your team, try using your network group.</p>	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div>
<p>● Intervene for others</p> <p>Speak up and support colleagues in situations where you see wrongdoing or problematic behaviour. (See Page 20)</p>	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div>
<p>● When you do say something that offends, apologise and see it as an opportunity to learn</p> <p>Learn how to be okay with being uncomfortable. Getting it wrong, apologising and accepting feedback should not be taken as criticism, this is not easy and takes practice (See Page 21)</p>	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div>

LEADERSHIP: CHAMPIONING ALLYSHIP FOR THE ORGANISATION AND OTHERS

The actions you undertake can create real and lasting change within your organisation.

<p>● Make a company-wide pledge</p> <p>Use your influence to help your organisation, board and CEO make a company pledge</p>	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div>
<p>● Drive comms and model behaviours for others</p> <p>Speak about allyship in a meeting, write an article, record a video and Improve accountability by sharing your experiences of allyship</p>	<div><input type="checkbox"/></div>

<p>● Support the network</p> <p>Actively support the network by opening doors to leadership or even sponsor your organisation’s ethnicity network (with budget or resources)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>● Sponsor someone who may not have visibility</p> <p>Formally or informally sponsor a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic member of staff, and put equity into the lack of career opportunities afforded to some staff. This is also a great way to learn more about the challenges and build understanding of cultures</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>● Under-represented leaders - keep the door open for others</p> <p>If you are Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic, be transparent about your journey to leadership, including the opportunities and the challenges so that others can learn from your experiences</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>● Collectively formulate strategy</p> <p>Form a committee task force with other stakeholders to tackle barriers. Hold regular meetings and decide which equity measures will help level the playing field</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>● Help your organisation achieve ethnicity data</p> <p>Diversity data and metrics will help inform on where support is needed the most, and also areas of success. Encourage teams to disclose their ethnicity and why, support transparency through ethnicity data and help the executive team reference the steps they are taking around the ethnicity agenda in your annual report (or similar)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>● Help educate peers</p> <p>Use your influence to help others understanding. If the organisation doesn’t already, request that your organisation initiates a reverse mentoring programme or listening sessions between managers, executives and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>● Keep up the momentum and hold your organisation to account</p> <p>Ensure that your organisation completes the annual Investing in Ethnicity Maturity Matrix, a tool which aims to help companies with their ethnicity agenda</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

GLOSSARY

A Note on Terminology

Throughout our time working within equality, diversity and inclusion we have found issues with almost every term used in social justice. This is heightened within ethnicity and race, where there is no agreed consensus on wording used to describe ethnic minorities. For example, the term, B.A.M.E., “Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic” to describe non-White ethnic minorities, is no longer favoured.

Similarly, the word “ally” has been recognised to be problematic, for good reason. However, for ease of understanding, we have used it to describe any person wishing to combat discrimination towards any ethnic or under-represented group.

We believe that the more comfortable people feel in discussing ethnicity, the more language can evolve and help to build awareness against all forms of discrimination.

Ally / Allyship - The term should be used as a verb, i.e. to ‘ally’ for someone, which is something we all should do to build understanding of difference.

Bias / Unconscious bias - The automatic and unintentional assumptions we make about people based on stereotypes learned from birth. Everyone possesses unconscious biases.

Centering - (In relation to race) The act of putting your own feelings, experiences and expectations above those of the person you’re in conversation with.

Colourism - The prejudice against darker skin tones, due to stereotyping and bias.

Cultural Intelligence - The ability to understand and be aware of other cultures to support working with diverse teams

Intersectionality - A term coined by American civil rights advocate Kimberle Crenshaw,

which describes how different characteristics “intersect” with one another and overlap, to produce unique barriers.

Microaggressions - Incorporated within non-inclusive behaviours. A term coined by American psychiatrist, Chester M. Pierce to describe the everyday verbal and nonverbal acts (conscious or unconscious), that communicate derogatory, negative, dismissive or hostile attitudes. Microaggressions are subtle, normalised and therefore often go unnoticed.

Micro-intervention - A term coined by Dr Derald Wing Sue and colleagues to describe the positive act of interrupting a microaggression.

Othering - Treating someone as though they are not part of a group, ‘less than’ or are different in some way

Performative Allyship - When

a person's support of an under-represented group revolves around being rewarded or recognised for their efforts.

Privilege – The automatic benefits or right of one particular group over others based on a social characteristic. E.g. Age, gender, race, sexual orientation, physical ability, education etc.

Systemic – The discrimination that is present and runs throughout institutions and society, which is so ingrained that it is seen as 'normal'.

Under-representation - When a group is treated in a way that is less inclusive, gives them less opportunities or gives them less importance than other groups.

CONCLUSION

As an ally, you should continuously be questioning whether bias, behaviours, systems and structures in the workplace are fair and inclusive. Unlearning, learning and accepting your bias is a lifelong commitment, but will become more natural with practice. Creating change will not be easy and will take time and effort, but each step taken is a step in the right direction - just remember, you aren't alone, we're all in this together.

'Micro' terminology

Three different types of microaggressions have been identified:

Microinvalidations are the subtle denial or exclusion of the thoughts, feelings, or experiences of a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic person.

Microinsults are verbal or non-verbal comments which demean or insult a person's racial heritage or identity.

Microassaults are the most overt type of microaggression. They are explicitly intentional actions or verbal slurs, which are more deliberate. For instance, telling a joke that is obviously racist.

QUICK LINKS

Check out our other resources and articles to find out more about how your organisation can create sustainable change.

● [The Maturity Matrix](#) - The Matrix has been developed with the input of over 200 organisations to help implement sustainable change within strategy.

● [Ethnicity leaders & Allyship programmes](#) - Find out about our programmes for leadership, people managers or the entire organisation.

● [Membership](#) - Join supporting organisations. Get access to resources, sessions and training.

[Email us to find out more or to set up a meeting](#)

A sensible & simple Guide to

ALLYSHIP

FOR THE ENTIRE ORGANISATION

This toolkit runs alongside optional interactive sessions for the entire organisation.

We also run tailored programmes for leadership, people managers or recruiters

ACKNOWLEDGE

1

Awareness & power

Mitigating bias



ACTION

2

Inclusive behaviours

Conversations

3

Inclusive decision making

Accountability



AN ETHNICITY ALLY'S TOOLKIT

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