

Allyship

Guidance

You are not alone. You matter.



Contents

	Page No.
Co-Chairs foreword	3
Introduction to this guide	4
What is allyship?	5
The Allyship Continuum	6
Understanding your biases	7
Types of biases	7
Overcoming your biases	8
The 8 A's of allyship	9
Do's and don'ts	10
How to handle mistakes	11
Allyship actions	12
How to be an effective Muslim ally	13
Revisiting the Allyship Continuum	15
Further information and references	16
Join the National NHS Muslim Network, website, and social media	17

Co-Chairs foreword

We are so proud to be launching our Allyship Guidance for all our Muslim colleagues, allies and friends.

Allyship is vital to every NHS organisation and helps to create innovation along with helping to reveal unconscious and conscious biases. It helps with thinking about all of our behaviours, and what we should be saying, along with the policies that should be in place, and practices that need to be encouraged. This will ensure the NHS is able to make sustainable changes.

Throughout all of our journeys we have been blessed to have been surrounded by allies that have made such a wonderful difference to our lived experiences. We believe that compassion should be the primary driver for ensuring more inclusive workplaces, built on the principles of fairness, transparency and equity.

An individual who differs from the majority should not be affected negatively, instead we should strive to benefit from the beauty of diversity and celebrate differences so that all of our NHS people are treated with respect.

We must all collectively stand together to eradicate discrimination from our beloved NHS. A key factor in doing this, will be to increase the number of allies we have across our NHS organisations.

One of the pillars of the NHS People Promise is that **We are Compassionate and inclusive**, this means that *'we do not tolerate any form of discrimination, bullying or violence, we are open and inclusive, and we make the NHS a place where we all feel we belong'*.

Actively addressing Islamophobia and discrimination is everyone's business. We must empower all our colleagues so they are able to use their voice, and feel safe in their working environment. However, we know this is not always possible, which is why allies are even more important. It is clear that organisations need to do more to ensure inclusion of Muslim colleagues, and wipe out discrimination to create more inclusive and psychologically safe workplaces.



Shohail Shaikh



Halima Dagia



Riyaz Patel

Co-Chairs of the National NHS Muslim Network

Introduction to this guide

“The purpose of this guide is to explain what an ally is, how you can be one, and specifically how you can show allyship towards Muslim colleagues.

Everyone has the potential to be an ally. Allies recognise that although they are not a member of the under-represented community, they support and champion them. They make a concerted effort to better understand the struggle, every single day.

Allyship is not a status or a title. It is about taking personal accountability, and then taking action, to work alongside marginalised communities to help achieve the shared goals of equity, inclusion and justice for all people.

One of the pillars of the NHS People Promise is that **We each have a voice that counts**, which is all about us feeling safe and confident to speak up. It is also about taking the time to really listen, to understand the hopes and fears that lie behind the words. We also need to amplify the voices of the under-represented, which is what being an ally is all about.

The journey of being an ally is not always easy, and this guide is designed to assist you, as you develop your allyship skills and progress on your allyship journey”.



Helen Campbell
Head of Allyship, Wellbeing
and Talent Development

If you can't fly then run, if you can't run then walk, if you can't walk then crawl, but whatever you do, you have to keep moving forward.

Martin Luther King Jr.

What is allyship?

A good place to start in your allyship journey is to ensure that you properly understand the term.

An ally is often defined as someone who is not a member of a marginalised group but wants to support and take action to help others in that group. An ally is any person that actively promotes and aspires to advance the culture of inclusion through intentional, positive and conscious efforts that benefit people as a whole.

To be an ally is to:

Take on the struggle as your own.

Transfer the benefits of your privilege to those who lack it.

Amplify voices of the oppressed before your own.

Acknowledge that even though you feel pain, the conversation is not about you.

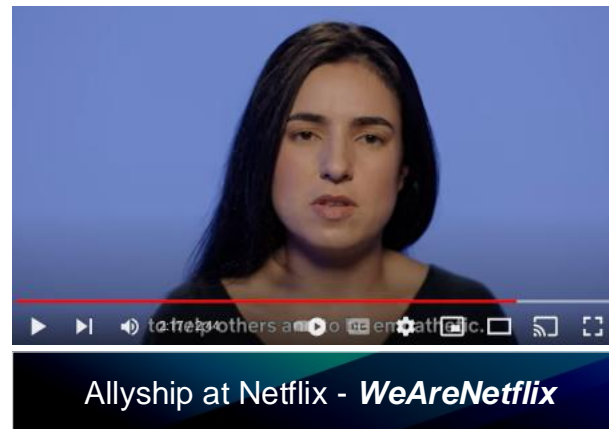
Stand up, even when you feel scared.

Own your mistakes and biases.

Understand that your education is up to you and no one else.

You could be an ally to anyone for whom society has created barriers.

These short videos explain more about allyship and why it is important (click on the image to watch):



The Allyship Continuum

It is useful to benchmark yourself at the start of any learning journey. The Allyship Continuum below is a framework to help you understand where you are now as an ally, and how you can develop to move further along the continuum.

Reflect on where you are on the continuum and make a note of this.



Ally Continuum – developed by Jennifer Brown

Where are you on the continuum?

Understanding your biases

We all have unconscious biases as result of our limited cognitive capacity. The brain's automatic, unconscious sifting and sorting of visual, verbal and behavioural cues to determine whether people are friendly or not means that we all develop unintentional people preferences.

Over time, our brains associate things. They form neural pathways, which become stronger every time these associations are recognised and unconsciously affirmed.

Our unconscious associations and unintentional people preferences come from our socialisation and experiences, including:

Family

Work culture

School

Experiences

Media

Friends

Types of biases

Halo and horns

Shorthand for positive or negative first impressions. Halo around the head, the person can't put a foot wrong, horns, they can't do anything right.

Affinity bias

Favouring people who share the same social background, who look and sound like 'one of us.' We ignore the faults of people we like and notice the faults of those we don't.

Confirmation bias

Noticing or looking only for evidence which confirms our ideas, good or bad, and ultimately reinforces our original viewpoint.

Social comparison bias

Having feelings of dislike and competitiveness with someone, or groups of people, that are seen as physically, or mentally, better than you.

Stereotype threat

Fearing being viewed through the lens of a negative stereotype and of doing something that would confirm it.

Gender bias

Including being viewed as less competent, over protective, and asserting dominance over genders.

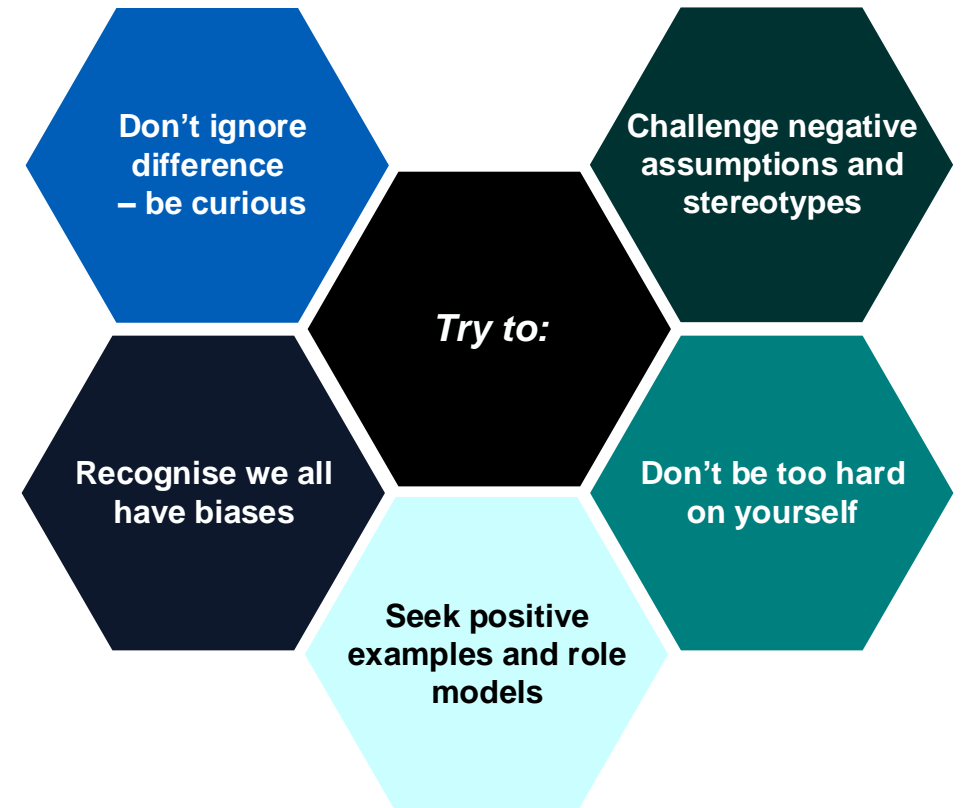
To learn more about your own biases please click [here](#).

Overcoming your biases

Know your triggers -
there can be many triggers for our unconscious biases:



Manage your biases -
some ideas to try to avoid biases:



The 8 A's of allyship

Developed in 2019 by Yvonne Coghill, this simple model helps people to understand the components of effective allyship. Originally launched as the 7 A's of allyship, the model was revised in 2022, at which time the author commented; ***'I have spoken to many people about the 7 As and found that there was an obvious and glaring 'A' missing, that of appreciation. Before starting to work your way around the model it is essential that the individual firstly appreciates that there is a problem with race equality in society and believes that diversity and inclusion are valuable assets in our world. The appreciation would then lead to asking the question about appetite to do the work necessary to become a true ally in the fight against racism, discrimination and injustice.'***

The focus here is on race, but the approach can be applied to all marginalised groups.

- 1 Appreciate** To be an effective ally, you must first fully appreciate and value the benefits diversity and difference can bring, then genuinely and demonstrably work towards making the workplace more equitable and fair.
- 2 Appetite** Do you have the appetite to immerse yourself in the complex, emotive world of race equality?
- 3 Ask** Ask questions about race, be curious, read, learn and educate yourself.
- 4 Accept** Accept there is really a problem. More data isn't needed.
- 5 Acknowledge** Acknowledge that the problem needs to be dealt with.
- 6 Apologise** Express sympathy that racism is affecting people of certain races.
- 7 Assume** Don't. Instead develop informed views by seeking to understand individuals.
- 8 Action** Take demonstrable action steps to establish equality and be accountable.

Do's and Don'ts



Do

Do

- ... be open to listening and actively listen when colleagues share experiences
- ... be aware of your implicit biases
- ... research to learn more about the history of the struggle you are participating in
- ... understand and use your privilege to amplify the voices of under-represented groups
- ... attend staff network meetings and events to listen to discussions and lived experiences
- ... work to unlearn things that you think you know
- ... work hard every day to learn how to be a better ally
- ... learn how to *listen* and accept criticism with grace, even if it's uncomfortable



Don't

Don't

- ... expect to be taught or shown – seek out learning
- ... assume that every person from an under-represented group feels oppressed
- ... make yourself the centre of the conversation
- ... just talk - take action
- ... tell others how they should feel
- ... think you know all there is to know
- ... participate for the gold medal in the “Oppression Olympics” (you don't need to compare how your struggle is “just as bad as” a marginalised person's)
- ... take credit for the labour of those who are marginalised and did the work before you stepped into the picture

How to handle mistakes

Most of us know the right way to react when we make a mistake. We can use that to help us learn how to react when we commit microaggressions. Here are useful tips:

- **Centre the impacted. Check if they are ok**
- **Listen to their response and learn**
- **Apologise for the impact, even though you didn't intend it**
- **Stop the instance** i.e. if you have stepped on someone's foot - move your foot!
- **Stop the pattern:** be careful where you step in the future

Reacting in a fair and equitable way isn't about learning subjective rules or being a doormat. Rather, it's about restoring and maintaining dignity and respect for everyone involved - both the person who is hurt, and you. It may be helpful to reframe the situation so that you don't feel defensive.

You may have noticed it's easier to handle being corrected about something you didn't know as long as you're open and grateful for the opportunity to learn, rather than embarrassed to have been wrong. Being able to let go of your ego is an incredibly important skill to develop.

Try starting with "Thanks for letting me know" to put yourself in a better frame of mind. If after you say that, you need to take some time to think about the situation, that's fine, too. Just remember that this isn't about changing the other person's frame of mind. They're allowed to be upset.

How to apologise - You've made a mistake and you want to apologise. Where do you begin?

Before you can apologise, you need to know what an apology is. Apologies are social contracts that hold you accountable. They tell others that you are taking responsibility, are open to the consequences of your actions, and plan to do better in the future. **Bad apologies** are performances meant to protect pride and ego. They exist to make the apologiser feel and look good, while defending their intent. **Good apologies** are heartfelt acts that let go of pride and ego. They centre the pain of the impacted, regardless of the apologiser's intent.

Attributes of a good apology:

Timely

Delivered at the right moment in the right place and time.

Respects boundaries

Given when the person receiving the apology consents to it.

Self-aware

Know that the act of apology may not lead to the closure you expect.

Reflective

Signals that the apologiser is taking full responsibility for their actions.

Allyship Actions

Allyship actions can be divided into three categories: individual, interpersonal and structural:

Individual

Individual actions are the steps you take to educate yourself, model good behaviour or change your mindset about others experiences.

Examples:

- Understanding your own biases
- Recognising your privilege
- Listening to and learning about other people's experiences
- Using inclusive language

Interpersonal

Interpersonal actions involve supporting others and advocating for equity in your day-to-day interactions.

Examples:

- Speaking up when you notice inequity
- Ensuring that colleagues from under-represented groups are given credit for their work
- Acknowledging a person's experience of inequity
- Recognising that people with similar identities can have very different experiences, needs and expectations

Structural actions

Structural actions involve pushing for more equitable norms, policies and systems.

Examples:

- Advocating for objective criteria in hiring and promotions
- Encouraging your organisation to use software and other tools that are accessible to people with disabilities
- Ensuring that your organisation's promotional images are diverse and inclusive in their representation

Adapted from the *Lean In* toolkit

How to be an effective Muslim ally

- Take the time to understand Islam. View our **Basic guide to Islam** [here](#).
- Learn about Ramadan and Eid. View our **Ramadan and Eid Guidance 2023** [here](#).
- Understand what it is really like for Muslim women who wear the Hijab. View our **New to Hijab Guidance** [here](#).
- Signpost Muslim colleagues to support and development available. View our **Support Package** [here](#).
- Unlearn what the media propagates, understand what Islamophobia is, and raise awareness of the impact of Islamophobia.
- Support Muslim colleagues with prayer times, and ablution facilities.
- Speak out against any type of discrimination that you see – be an active bystander.
- Support people, whether you know them or not - show compassion and encouragement to those who are the targets of discriminatory behaviour by asking if they're okay, going with them to get help and letting them know you are there for them. Ask what else you can do and make sure they know they're not alone.
- Tell aggressors to stop - if it feels safe, stand tall and call out discriminatory behaviour. You can let them know you don't approve on the spot or later during a private moment. Whenever you do it, letting aggressors know how hurtful discriminatory behaviour is, which may cause them to think twice before repeating this behaviour.
- Inform your Muslim colleagues of the support available - sometimes you may need extra help to stop the discriminatory behaviour. It's important to tell someone you trust so that this person can be an ally to you as well as the target. Getting someone out of trouble is never "tattling" or "snitching". Don't think twice—reach out to your HR/OD/EDI team, senior manager, Freedom to Speak Up Guardian, Wellbeing Team, Chaplaincy Team, or staff networks.

If you see someone facing difficulties at work, please view our **Guidance – if you are facing issues at work** [here](#).

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How to be an effective Muslim ally *continued*

- Get to know people instead of judging them - appreciate people for who they are and don't judge them based on their appearance. You may even find that they're not so different from you after all.
- Be an ally online - discrimination happens online too. Forwarding hurtful messages is just like laughing at someone or spreading rumours in person. It is just as hurtful, even if you can't see the other person's face. All the rules, are just as important to follow when texting or emailing. So online and offline - do your part to be an ally to others.
- Do something to actively demonstrate your allyship. For example taking part in the #NHSRamadanChallenge. To view more information click [here](#).
- Muslim women sometimes are singled out. Therefore please see video below:



Revisiting the Allyship Continuum

Now that you have viewed our allyship guide, it is important to reflect on where you are now on the Allyship Continuum, and what commitments you are making to develop further along the continuum and become a better ally.



Ally Continuum – developed by Jennifer Brown

Where are you on the continuum now?

What is your commitment?

Further information

Ally and Allyship video

Implicit Bias - how it effects us and how we push through | Melanie Funchess | EDxFlourCity

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fr8G7MtRNIk>

What if White people led the charge to end racism? | Nita Mosby Tyler | TEDxMileHigh

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VQSW5SFBsOg>

Want to be an ally? Steps to true allyship

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=59ydGd_E98o

How to be a good ally during Ramadan

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OYhaAh7s5_o

Further reading on allyship

A Guide to allyship - NHSE NW Region – Click [here](#) to view.

Advice for being an ally, Dr Muna Abdi (BAMEed) – Click [here](#) to view.

How to be a true anti-racist ally – Click [here](#) to view.

How to be a White ally – Click [here](#) to view.

How to be an anti-racist and White ally – Click [here](#) to view.

References

The following sources have been referenced throughout this guide:

- Toolkit: Being an ally – Imperial College Healthcare
- Allyship at work – Lean In
- Guide to allyship - Amelie Lamont
- Workforce race inequalities and inclusion in NHS providers – The Kings Fund

Join the National NHS Muslim Network

Do not miss out on any of the fantastic offerings we have in store for our Muslim colleagues, allies and friends, join our network today!

SCAN ME

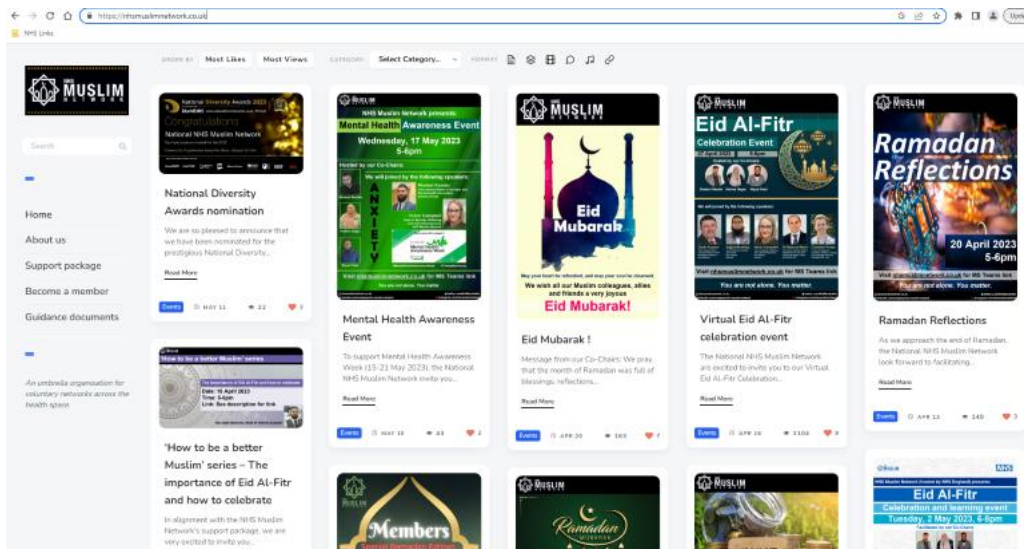


- or
1. Go to our webpage - nhsmuslimnetwork.co.uk
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Thank you

For more information please visit our website:

nhsmuslimnetwork.co.uk

For further support, please contact us via email:

england.muslim1@nhs.net

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