

SOLIDARITY AND ACTIVISM STARTER KIT

SIUe Women's Studies Program



1) LISTEN to hear and understand, not to formulate a response. **BELIEVE** when people speak of experiences.

2) If you can find strength in numbers within your own group (or have privilege that makes people pay more attention to what you say), **AMPLIFY** the voices of those who might otherwise not be heard. **GIVE VOICE TO OTHERS** and **GIVE VOICE TO EACH OTHER**. But avoid speaking for or about others: “**nothing about us without us**” comes from the disability rights movement but is broadly good advice.

Juliet Eilperin, “White House women want to be in the room where it happens” *The Washington Post* 9/13/16

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/powerpost/wp/2016/09/13/white-house-women-are-now-in-the-room-where-it-happens/>

When President Obama took office, two-thirds of his top aides were men. Women complained of having to elbow their way into important meetings. And when they got in, their voices were sometimes ignored. So female staffers adopted a meeting strategy they called “amplification”: When a woman made a key point, other women would repeat it, giving credit to its author. This forced the men in the room to recognize the contribution — and denied them the chance to claim the idea as their own. “We just started doing it, and made a purpose of doing it. It was an everyday thing,” said one former Obama aide who requested anonymity to speak frankly. Obama noticed, she and others said, and began calling more often on women and junior aides.

3) Hold people accountable. **CALL PEOPLE OUT** when their actions or policies will result in injustice or are fundamentally unjust, but **ALSO CALL PEOPLE IN**.

Ngọc Loan Trần. “Calling IN: A less disposable way of holding each other accountable.” *Black Girl Dangerous* 12/18/13

<http://www.blackgirldangerous.org/2013/12/calling-less-disposable-way-holding-accountable/> and

<http://www.humanityinaction.org/files/567-N.Trn-CallingIN.pdf>

Mistakes are mistakes; they deepen the wounds we carry. I know that for me when these mistakes are committed by people who I am in community with, it hurts even more. But these are people I care deeply about and want to see on the other side of the hurt, pain, and trauma. I am willing to offer compassion and patience as a way to build the road we are taking but have never seen before.

I picture ‘calling in’ as a practice of pulling folks back in who have strayed from us. It means extending to ourselves the reality that we will and do fuck up, we stray, and there will always be a chance for us to return. Calling in as a practice of loving each other enough to allow each other to make mistakes, a practice of loving ourselves enough to know that what we’re trying to do here is a radical unlearning of everything we have been configured to believe is normal.

I don’t propose practicing “calling in” in opposition to calling out... However, I do think that it’s possible to have multiple tools, strategies, and methods existing simultaneously. It’s about being strategic, weighing the stakes and figuring out what we’re trying to build and how we are going to do it together.

Sian Ferguson. “Calling In: A quick guide on when and how” *Everyday Feminism* 1/17/15

<http://everydayfeminism.com/2015/01/guide-to-calling-in/>

4) REACH ACROSS DIFFERENCE. Talk to people you might rarely engage with. This will be a bit risky. Being uncomfortable? If we want justice, we accept some discomfort as a cost. Being unsafe? Not a cost you are required to take on, though you may if you judge it necessary.

5) If you witness someone being harassed, **BE AN ACTIVE BYSTANDER**.

If you don’t feel safe intervening, call someone else for help. There can be safe ways to intervene, including asking the person if they need help, letting the harasser know you are watching and not ok with this, or moving to engage the harassed person about something about daily life (weather, sports, that winter is coming) to reinforce common humanity. You can find an example of this technique here: <http://static02.mediaite.com/themarysue/uploads/2016/09/harassment-guide.png>

6) THINK ACROSS DIFFERENCE. Consider how actions or policies will affect members of different groups. Can you find a way that does as little damage as possible? The following source uses a racial equity lens, but you can think of other lenses. **USE AN EQUITY LENS.**

Forward Through Ferguson (formerly the Ferguson Commission). “Broadly Apply a Racial Equity Framework.” *Forward Through Ferguson.* <http://forwardthroughferguson.org/calls-to-action/apply-a-racial-equity-framework-across-region/>

Intentionally apply a racial equity framework to existing and new regional policies, initiatives, programs and projects in order to address and eliminate existing disparities for racial and ethnic populations. The following focus questions to be included at a minimum:

- *Whom does this benefit?*
- *Does this differentially impact racial and ethnic groups?*
- *What is missing that will decrease or eliminate racial disparities?*

7) FIND LOCAL GROUPS THAT ARE DOING THE WORK THAT MATTERS TO YOU. Give time or other support as you are able. Look for news stories about people helping out in your community. **Talk to elders or people who are connected deeply within your community.** Don’t reinvent the wheel. Invent it if there’s nothing there. **View each other as sources of knowledge!**

8) If you are in a mixed-privilege group, WORK TO ENSURE THAT THE MORE PRIVILEGED FOLKS DON’T DOMINATE MEETINGS, DISCUSSIONS, THE AGENDA, OR ACTIVITIES.

9) Check your own house. Does the place you work, go to school, or live have policies or procedures that are barriers to social justice and equality? Some of these may no longer be applicable or applied, yet their existence on the books is unacceptable (like an old law no longer enforced, as was the case with anti-sodomy and anti-miscegenation and eugenics laws in some states). Others may still be in practice and their removal or revision can liberate people. **WORK TO REVISE OR REMOVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES THAT ARE BARRIES TO SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EQUALITY.**

10) Get INVOLVED IN POLITICS, at the local, state, and/or national level, *as your time and energy allow.* **DON’T IGNORE MID-TERM OR MAYORAL OR CITY COUNCIL ELECTIONS.** Pressure your elected officials with phone calls or letters.

Tricia Tongco. “How to make your [congressional representative] listen to you.” *attn:* 11/13/16
http://www.attn.com/stories/12768/former-congressional-staffer-explains-how-to-make-congressman-listen?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=post&utm_campaign=internal

11) Develop the ability to CLEARLY COMMUNICATE YOUR IDEAS even to people who disagree with you. This is difficult without having first done 1), which can help you to know what people’s background assumptions are.

12) PRACTICE SELF-CARE. Activism, race, disability, sexuality, gender, and self-care are connected. Nobody benefits if you burn out. And you deserve better. That’s why you’re fighting.

Audre Lorde: “Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare.”

Angela Davis: “Self-care has to be incorporated in all of our efforts. And this is something new. This holistic approach to organizing is, I think, what is going to eventually move us along the trajectory that may lead to some victories.”

Evette Dionne: “...self-care is a series of intentional actions that increase mental, emotional, and physical health... We’ve borne witness to a cultural disregard for our pain and our losses and our burdens... We’re conditioned to believe that we’re obligated to nurture others at our own expense. With no regard for ourselves or our needs, [we] are often fed the crooked, and unfair, idea that our allegiance to those within our communities requires our needs to come last.”