



General Council for  
Diversity & Inclusion

# Disability Community

Allyship toolkit

How to be a better ally to people with disabilities



Being an ally is more than being sympathetic to a cause or a group...  
**It's doing whatever you can to promote someone else's rights.**



# How to be a better ally

## Awareness is key

It's essential to raise awareness of visible and non-visible disabilities.

### *Be aware:*

- Not all disabilities are equal
- People have different opportunities – “hard work” is not always enough
- Acknowledge and value individual / lived experience
- People living with disabilities have agency as well - they don't need to be saved!

## Get learning

We all have an opportunity to invest time to learn and educate ourselves.

### *Ask yourself:*

- What are the different disabilities out there?
- How can I support my disabled colleagues?
- What are the key terms I should learn when talking about disability?
- What constitutes inclusive/non-inclusive language?

## Talk about it!

Conversations **reduce stigma**, encourage a **more open culture**, and create space for **further improvements** to occur.



# How to be a better ally

## Words matter

*Language shapes society...  
and vice-versa*

- Non-inclusive language includes words and expressions like “turning a **blind** eye to something”, “it fell on **deaf** ears” or “having a **bipolar** day”.
- Even though they seem harmless, they can feel like micro-aggressions to disabled people. If you think of the intention behind them, you will realise why.
- When in doubt, use synonyms!

## Make concrete changes

What adjustments would help you realise your full potential in terms of equipment and office environment?

- **Change the layout:** changing the colour palette, the colour contrast or even just a font in a document can mean a lot to someone who is visually impaired.
- **Turn your camera on:** Doing that during online meetings can be a game changer - you never know what the person on the other side of the screen might need.
- **Use inclusive language**

## Speak out

And challenge the norm. Speak out if you:

- See or hear abuse going on
- Hear non-inclusive/ableist language being used
- Have an offsite with your team and no one has checked the venue's accessibility
- See an unwillingness to make working adjustments for someone that needs them

Real change comes from challenging what we see as "normal".

**Be kind** - Being an ally is a process and a journey. Be kind to yourself and to anyone else who is on this journey with you.

Be comfortable being uncomfortable - being humble, curious and open are the first steps.

# How to be a better ally in the legal profession - things to think about



- What are you doing to **actively promote disabled rights**?
- What are you doing to **actively promote disabled job applicants**?
- What policies, procedures and processes do you have in place for disabled employees? Are they being effectively communicated?
- What are you actively doing to make disabled people feel **comfortable** in the **workplace** and **application process**?
- Think outside the box: Is your workplace/Away Days accessible to everybody? Is your recruitment and onboarding process fit for purpose? Is your panel of law firms diverse enough for disabled people to relate to?
- Is the advice that you are providing/are the instructions that you are giving **accessible** to everybody? Think about colour contrast, font size, subtitles and switching your camera on.
- Think about the culture in your workplace: is it diverse, inclusive and open and are there **role models** for disabled people in your organisation?
- Can you include disability awareness as part of your annual mandatory training?
- Do you have a **safe space** where disabled people can confidently share their views and report concerns **without judgment**?



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