Active Allyship

Alexia Hudson-Ward
Associate Director of Research and Learning
Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Libraries
Academic Library Association of Ohio
November 4, 2022
4 COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS OF ALLYSHIP

1. PERFORMING: “Performative Allyship”
2. PLATITUDES: Empty Gestures
3. POSITION: Having a Title
4. PERFECTION: Getting it Right Every Time

Center for Creative Leadership®
Active Allyship is…

✓ An authentic support system for colleagues in marginalized groups
✓ A genuine attempt to transfer the benefits of privilege to those who lack it
✓ A commitment to addressing systemic/root cause issues that stymie and block our efforts toward meaningful organizational change

Performative Allyship is…

○ A desire to be recognized and congratulated for supporting colleagues in marginalized groups
○ Rhetorical support for diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) efforts without substantive efforts
○ A conditional, reactive response to systemic matters that require strategy and long-range focus
A Good General Definition of Allyship

“An active, consistent lifelong practice of unlearning and re-learning in which a person in a position of privilege and power seeks to operate in solidarity with a marginalized group.”

Ollie Hartsfield, Managing Director of SPI Group for Staffbase.com
Active Allyship is a personal commitment to:

- Continuously address one’s personal bias

- Reconcile how privilege is a workplace dynamic that often impacts BIPOCs and others from marginalized communities

- Tackle systemic organizational issues that serve as impediments to equitable treatment

- Foster sense of belonging among staff
An Operational Framework for Active Allyship

- Leadership
- Ethics
- Organizational Development
- People Development
People Development
Emphasis on personal learning objectives, goal setting and action plans

Leadership
Building capacity to advance our libraries' missions and vision

Organizational Development
Staff at every level contribute to and support efforts that impact organizational change

Ethics
The meaningful way in which our libraries align behaviors with operational activities
Operationalizing Active Allyship

- Go to the place that your heart leads you as your intuition is correct
- Start small with plans to incrementally scale up
- Be open to failing forward with intention
- Seek additional support outside of your library and institution if possible
- Recognize that we are all growing
Thank You