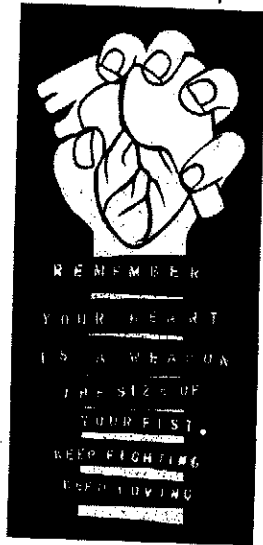


Co-ops, being grassroots organizations, have a rich history in developing economically and socially just spaces. Although we are making positive strides forward, anti-oppression and social change work is an active and ongoing process. We need to make decisions each day to make strides in the right direction. Let's start in our co-ops.

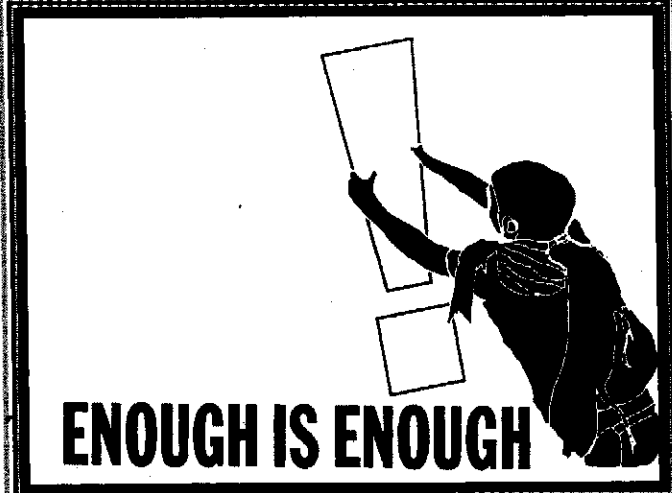


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Creating the Co-op We Want.. Creating the World We Want

An ally's guide to fostering anti-oppression
in housing cooperatives, collectives and
democratic communities



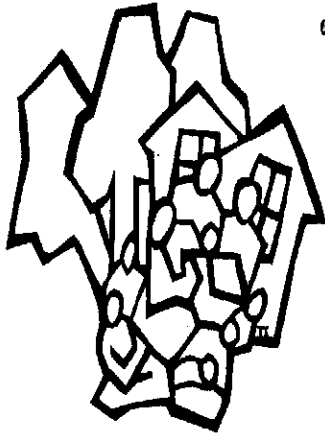
Brought to you by NASCO. Thanks to other
thoughtful organizations and brains who
made this possible.



The North American Students of Co-operation (NASCO) have gathered the following materials into this anti-oppression ally 'zine to be used by housing cooperatives, collectives and democratic communities.

We hope this resource:

- Brings attention to anti-oppression issues
- Supports allies towards making their co-ops more inclusive and accessible
- Supports diversity within co-ops



This 'zine has been compiled using materials from NASCO's Action Camp (a retreat exploring power, privilege and oppression). The art work comes from the "Reproduce and Revolt" publication. At the end of this 'zine, you will find the artist's name corresponding to the page number where the art is found.

**~Read, discuss, take action,
be an ally, spread the word~**

Resources/Further Reading

Bluestockings Activist Research Project

<http://bluestockings.com/>

Catalyst Project www.collectiveliberation.org

Challenging White Supremacy Workshop

www.cwsworkshop.org

Class Action www.classism.org

The Deaf Queer Resource Center www.deafqueer.org

Freedom Center www.freedom-center.org

Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation www.glaad.org

Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network www.glsen.org

Highlander Research and Education Center

<http://www.highlandercenter.org/>

The Icarus Project www.theicarusproject.net

INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence

<http://www.incite-national.org/>

Intersex Society of North America www.isna.org

National Center for Transgender Equality

<http://nctequality.org>

The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond www.pisab.org

Project South www.projectsouth.org

The Colorlines Blog www.raceWire.org

Right to the City www.righttothecity.org

Southerners on New Ground (SONG)

www.southernersonnewground.org

Tim Wise Essays on Racism www.timwise.org

Western States Center www.westernstatescenter.org

The Blackstripe

<http://www.qrd.org/qrd/www/culture/black/index2.html>

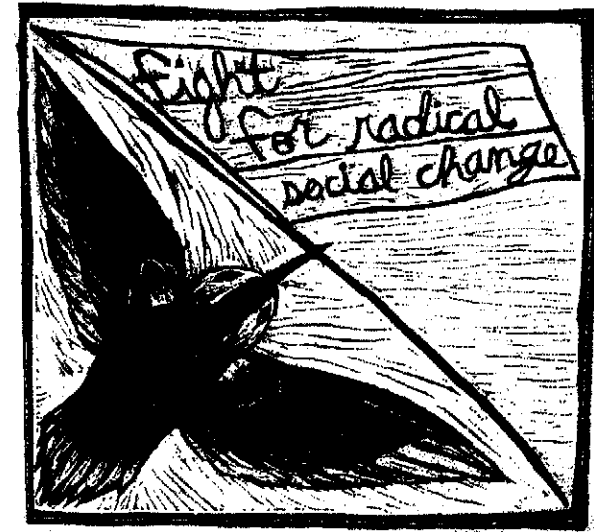
Questions for Reflection and Discussions in Your Co-op:

- ◆ How do you fit into the community where you live? Do you have a family and cultural history in the area?
- ◆ How have you internalized oppression in your life? What assumptions do you make about how the world works and how you should live that has been influenced by oppression?
- ◆ How do you already promote inclusion and accessibility in your life/in your co-op?
- ◆ Where have you witnessed oppression and who was the target group? How could you have acted to challenge that oppression?
- ◆ What is something you can commit to that will help promote a norm of anti-oppression in your normal circle of friends/family?
- ◆ Is there strong diversity in your membership and on your board? How could you promote strong diversity (further) within your co-op?
- ◆ How can you make your co-op a more inclusive and accessible place to be?

TIP: When starting these discussions, be open about your own need to be more aware and to work harder to be an effective ally.

What you'll find in the following pages:

Assumptions
What is an Ally?
Become an Ally
Being an Ally: Action Ideas and Tips
Checklist for White Allies Against Racism
Being an Ally for Differently-Abled People
Being a Class Ally
Tips on Being a Male Ally
Ways to Be a Straight Ally
Ways to Be an Ally for Trans People
Getting Past Ageism
List of Artists for enclosed artwork
Questions for Reflection/Discussion in Your Co-op
Resources/Further Reading



Assumptions

- Because racism, sexism, classism, ableism, ageism, heterosexism, and other forms of oppression are so widespread, we have internalized negative beliefs, prejudices, stereotypes about groups of people in our communities. This began to happen when we were young, and now we all have a responsibility for looking at what we have learned and making a commitment to dismantle oppression in our lives.

- Dismantling systems of oppression and unlearning the oppressive attitudes we have learned is a lifelong process.

- We cannot dismantle oppression in a society that exploits people for private profit. If we want to dismantle oppression, then we must be about building a movement for social and economic justice and change.

- While single individuals can inspire change, individuals working together as an organized whole, in groups, communities, and organizations make change happen.

Adapted from a publication of
changework, 1705 Wallace St.,
Durham, NC 27707



Page where art is found (by article title)

Page where art is found (by article title)	Artist
Cover	Tom Civil
Inside cover	Tiffany Sankary
What you'll find in the...	Meredith Stern
Assumptions	Miriam Klein Stahl
What is an ally?	Tom Civil
Being an ally: action...	Etsetera
Being a class ally	Clifford Harper
Tips on being a male ally	Pete Yahnke
Ways to be a straight ally	amy woloszyn
Getting past ageism	Estria Miyashiro
This page (below)	Susan Simensky Bietla
Back page	Sigue Peleando-Sigue Amando



Getting Past Ageism

Identify the myths and mis-information.

Recognize the myths about aging and negative attitudes about older adults. Start challenging the myths. Challenge the language.

There are many erroneous beliefs in our society - e.g. that older adults' lives are less valuable and older adults are less deserving of having their rights respected; that older adults feel emotional pain less or do not have sexual feelings; or that older adults are largely responsible for growing health care or other social costs.

Go beyond the stereotypes of aging.

Recognize that a label like "elderly" or "seniors" tells us little about what to expect from the person. These labels do not tell us whether the person is kind or uncaring, healthy or with diminishing health, mentally capable or mentally incapable, a reliable or an unreliable worker or volunteer. Labels do not tell us about the person's capacity for friendship or creativity or accomplishment.



Address ageism by highlighting older adults' individual, collective, and lifelong contributions to our society.

What is an Ally?

An ally is a member of the "majority" group who works to end oppression in his or her personal life though support of and as an advocate for the oppressed population.

- "An ally validates and supports people who are different from themselves."

- "An ally examines their own prejudices and is not afraid to look at themselves."

- "An ally works with the oppressed group, offering support by being accountable to, but not being responsible for, the oppressed group."

- "An ally is an advocate by challenging [mis]conceptions when the oppressed group is absent."

- "Being an ally means: sharing the power, taking a risk, taking responsibility, opening yourself up to the unknown, realizing that you are a part of the solution, leveling the playing field, accepting differences, making allowances, and leading by action."



Become an Ally

Becoming an ally is a process. Take time to think about the process outlined below and about where you are and where you would like to be.

Step One: Be Aware

Who are you? Understanding your viewpoint and its origins in gender, religion, ethnicity, race, physical and emotional abilities, class, etc.,

Step Two: Educate Yourself

Challenge yourself to learn about persons, cultures, and groups that you do not identify with.

Step Three: Gain the Skills

In order to be an effective ally, you need to develop skills to communicate the knowledge you have gained about yourself and others. This may seem frightening at first, since it involves taking steps towards action.

Step Four: Take Action

It is only by participation that we become involved in the struggle to end oppression in our communities. Yes, it is challenging. Yes, it can be frightening. However, if we keep our knowledge, thoughts, skills, and awareness to ourselves, we deprive others not only of our own gifts, but of a life of richness and equality. Share your knowledge.

Ways to be an Ally for Trans People

1. I use the right pronouns. When I am unsure, I ask.
2. I think about what, if anything, makes me feel uncomfortable and why. I work to expand my comfort boundaries.
3. I don't ask trans people what their "real" (birth) name is.
4. I do ask trans people when and where it is safe to use their chosen name and pronouns so that I do not accidentally "out" them around people to whom they are not yet ready to come out, or in a situation that is unsafe for them.
5. I don't out a trans person. If they are living as a woman, I refer to them as a woman, rather than a trans woman.
6. I don't confuse gender with sexual orientation, and realize that trans people can be straight, gay, bisexual, pansexual, asexual, etc.
7. I take responsibility for educating myself on trans issues, and do not ask transpeople to educate me.
8. I recognize that transwomen deserve access to "women-only" spaces, programs, and shelters.
9. I don't assume that all trans people identify as either "man" or "woman".

Ways to be a Straight Ally

1. I take the time to examine and understand my own personal feelings around LGBT issues.
2. I understand why I feel it is important to be an ally.
3. I understand how heterosexism and homophobia affect both LGBT people and straight people.
4. I am aware of my socialization, prejudices, and privileges.
5. I take responsibility for educating myself by attending LGBT events, attending or renting films featuring LGBT characters or issues, talking to LGBT people, reading about LGBT issues, etc.
6. I notice my heterosexist language and work to change it. (I use partner instead of boy/girlfriend, and use neutral pronouns.)
7. I talk with friends informally and openly about LGBT events or issues in the news.
8. I don't "out" people unless given permission to do so.
9. I ask about things and issues I don't understand. I ask such questions at an appropriate time and in a respectful and non-judgmental way.



Being an Ally: Action Ideas and Tips

I know when to step back. I make space for the oppressed person/people to speak out, share, lead, and validate one another.

I remember that members of target groups are survivors (not victims) and have a long history of resistance. I celebrate instances of resistance. I learn and talk about forms of resistance and instances of successful struggle, not just instances of oppression.

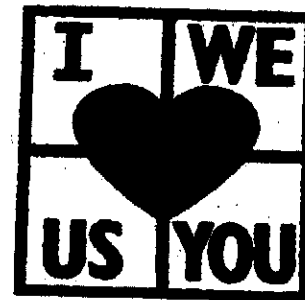
I speak up when I hear people implying that target groups are powerless or deserving of pity. I remind them that being oppressed does not mean being powerless.

I talk to other members of my privileged group about privilege and oppression. I make these conversations part of my daily life.

I connect with other allies.

I am friends with people from groups with whom I do not personally identify.

I know that a target group may question my motive for being an ally. I know that this doubt is valid.



Checklist for White Allies Against Racism

Is this true for me?	✓
I am present at meetings to make sure anti-racism is part of the discussion.	
I demonstrate knowledge and awareness of the issues of racism.	
I use the language and political worldview of anti-racism.	
I continually educate myself and others about racism.	
I can identify racism as it is happening.	
I strive to share power with people of color.	
I use my privilege to communicate information from the dominant group to people of color.	
I reach out to initiate contact with people of color.	
I listen carefully so that I am more likely to understand the needs of people of color.	
I can accept leadership from people of color.	

Adapted from John Raible, 1994
 Source: <http://web.cortland.edu/russellk/courses/hdouts/raible.htm>

Most people get involved as a result of being hailed by a visible political movement...If there had been no movements to hail me, I have no idea what I would have done or would be doing today. If you are one of those **organizers capable of pioneering initiatives**, and we need such organizers in women of color movements today, and you want to activate youth, make sure you combine the political content with forms and styles of presentation that can dramatically hail young women and men.

--Angela Davis, "Coalition Building Among People of Color"

Tips on Being a Male Ally

1. I understand that empowerment of non-male identified people does not threaten my strength as a man.
2. I am willing and able to call other men out on their actions, words, and issues.
3. I model positive behavior for my friends and other men by setting an example.
4. I demonstrate knowledge and awareness of the issues of gender oppression.
5. I raise issues about gender oppression over and over, both in public and in private.
6. I can identify sexism and gender oppression as it is happening.
7. I can strategize and work in coalition with others to advance anti-sexist work.
8. I understand that non-male identified people often have valid experiences that cause them to feel distrustful, wary, or angry at men. I do not take it as a personal attack. Nor do I try to make them feel guilty for feeling these things about men. I remember that "it's not all about me."



In every age, no matter how cruel the oppression carried on by those in power, there have been those who struggled for a different world. I believe this is the genius of humankind, the thing that makes us half divine: the fact that some human beings can envision a world that has never existed.

-Anne Braden,
anti-racist activist

NASCO staff are happy to provide resources and support to organize anti-oppression training that meets the needs of your community. Contact us at info@nasco.coop for more information.

Being an Ally for Differently-Abled People

When interacting with someone who has a disability that affects learning, intelligence, or brain function... I speak slowly and clearly and allow the person time to tell me what they want.

When interacting with someone who uses a wheelchair... I ensure that my organization holds meetings in ramped buildings, with entrances and bathrooms stalls at least 32 inches wide. I try to put myself at eye-level when possible.

When interacting with someone who is deaf, uses a hearing aid, or has trouble hearing... I let the person take the lead in establishing the mode of communication. In conversations, I work to ensure that only one person is speaking at a time.

When interacting with someone who has a disability that affects speech... If I can't understand what someone is saying, I tell them what I heard and then patiently ask them to repeat or re-phrase, or offer them a pen and paper.

When interacting with someone who has a disability that affects vision... When greeting someone, I identify myself and introduce others who are present and the layout of the room.

Being a Class Ally

1 I understand that knowledge from books is never as valid as knowledge based on personal life experiences.

2. I make an effort to use inclusive language, because I understand that education and overly academic language are often inaccessible to working class/working poor/poor people.

3. I realize that class is not a defining marker of intelligence and don't "talk down" to a working class/working poor/poor person.

4. I recognize how classism interacts with and is complicated by other systems of oppression: racism, sexism, ableism, oppression of parents, etc.

5. I work to make meetings and events accessible by considering where they are held, when they are held, whether or not child care is available, etc.

6. I respectfully interrupt classist jokes, slurs, comments, or assumptions when I come across them.

7. I offer alternatives and/or accurate information when I hear classist stereotypes or myths.

