

Checklist for white allies against racism

How often do you behave as an ally to people of color? Adapted from notes from John Raible: "I devised this checklist after thinking, as a person of color, about the white people I know with whom I have developed some degree of trust. I wanted to articulate the specific behaviors I see them engaging in which lead me to appreciate their actions on behalf of students of color and against racism in general."

Read through the checklist to get a feel for what constitutes "ally behavior" on the part of white anti-racists. How many apply to you! Use this scoring scale: 4 = all the time 3 = most of the time 2 = some of the time 1 = rarely 0 = never

Part I

1. I am present at meetings to make sure anti-racism is part of the discussion.
2. I demonstrate knowledge and awareness of the issues of racism.
3. I use the language and political worldview of anti-racism.
4. I continually educate myself and others about racism.
5. I recognize my own limitations as a white person doing anti-racist work.
6. I raise issues about racism over and over, both in public and in private.
7. I realize "it's not about me." I can be objective and avoid over-personalizing issues that people of color raise.
8. I can identify racism as it is happening.
9. I can strategize and work in coalition with others to advance anti-racist work.
10. I attend to group dynamics to ensure the inclusion of people of color.
11. I support and validate the comments and actions of people of color and other allies. (But not in a paternalistic manner!)
12. I strive to share power with people of color.
13. I take a personal interest in the lives and welfare of individual people of color.
14. I use my privilege to communicate information from the dominant group to people of color.
15. I hold high expectations for people of color.
16. I reach out to initiate contact with people of color.
17. I listen carefully so that I am more likely to understand the needs of people of color.
18. I can adopt and articulate a person of color's point of view when it may be helpful.
19. I can accept leadership from people of color.

Part II (Includes the characteristics in Part I)

1. I work side-by-side with people of color on tasks, projects, and actions.
2. I can debrief with people of color to give and receive "reality checks" and affirmations after meetings, events, and actions.
3. I readily understand—with no explanations necessary—a person of color's position or perception.
4. I have joking relationships with individual people of color.
5. I can vent with and be present for people of color when they need to vent feelings about racism.
6. I debate issues with people of color and take their ideas seriously.
7. I take risks in relating to people of color and take their ideas seriously.
8. I demonstrate shared values with people of color, for example, impatience with the rate of change, anger and injustice, etc.
9. I know the private lives and families of friends who are people of color.
10. I can relax and socialize and be at ease with people of color.

Part III - The following are some problematic areas where white people seem to get stuck. Do they apply to you?

1. I am not clear on the words people of color prefer to use to identify themselves.
2. When people of color point out racism as it is happening, I feel personally attacked.
3. I rely on people of color for education about my own (& institutional) racism.
4. I use meetings and organizing time to establish my anti-racist credentials.

5. ____ It is important to me to point out examples of "reverse racism" when I see them.
 6. ____ I have been told I act in a racist manner without knowing it, but I think I'm being an ally.
 7. ____ I speak for people of color and attempt to explain their positions.
 8. ____ I focus on mediating between people of color for other whites.
 9. ____ I see my role as interpreting the behavior of people of color for other whites.
 10. ____ I prefer to spend anti-racist time & energy dealing with my personal feelings and issues rather than moving the anti-racist agenda forward.
 11. ____ I intellectualize about the struggle rather than live it daily.
 12. ____ I wait for people of color to raise white people's awareness.
 13. ____ I know well fewer than five individual peers who are people of color.
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sycorva.cortland.edu/~russellk
Created by Kathryn Russell
SUNY Cortland - Philosophy
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