

# Introduction to Allyship in Action

**Jessica Havens**  
**Dr. Rana Razzaque**

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Strategists and Facilitators



Mountain Plains (HHS Region 8)

**MHTTC**

Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network  
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

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# The Mountain Plains Mental Health Technology Transfer Center

The Mountain Plains Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (Mountain Plains MHTTC) provides training and technical assistance to individuals who serve persons with mental health concerns throughout Region 8 (Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming).

We belong to the Technology Transfer Center (TTC) Network, a national network of training and technical assistance centers serving the needs of mental health, substance use and prevention providers. The work of the TTC Network is under a cooperative agreement by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA).



# Land Acknowledgement Statement

Today, the University of North Dakota rests on the ancestral lands of the Pembina and Red Lake Bands of Ojibwe and the Dakota Oyate - presently existing as composite parts of the Red Lake, Turtle Mountain, White Earth Bands, and the Dakota Tribes of Minnesota and North Dakota. We acknowledge the people who resided here for generations and recognize that the spirit of the Ojibwe and Oyate people permeates this land. As a university community, we will continue to build upon our relations with the First Nations of the State of North Dakota - the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation, Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate Nation, Spirit Lake Nation, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, and Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians.



The MHTTC Network uses affirming, respectful and recovery-oriented language in all activities. That language is:

STRENGTHS-BASED  
AND HOPEFUL

INCLUSIVE AND  
ACCEPTING OF  
DIVERSE CULTURES,  
GENDERS,  
PERSPECTIVES,  
AND EXPERIENCES

HEALING-CENTERED AND  
TRAUMA-RESPONSIVE

INVITING TO INDIVIDUALS  
PARTICIPATING IN THEIR  
OWN JOURNEYS

PERSON-FIRST AND  
FREE OF LABELS

NON-JUDGMENTAL AND  
AVOIDING ASSUMPTIONS

RESPECTFUL, CLEAR  
AND UNDERSTANDABLE

CONSISTENT WITH  
OUR ACTIONS,  
POLICIES, AND PRODUCTS

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# *Intersectional Solidarity*





# Independent Reflection



What is your “north star”?

What are some of your most closely held values? What experiences have led to these values, and what experiences have demonstrated your values in action?

# Foundational Concepts:

Diversity

Social Identity

Privilege

Marginalization

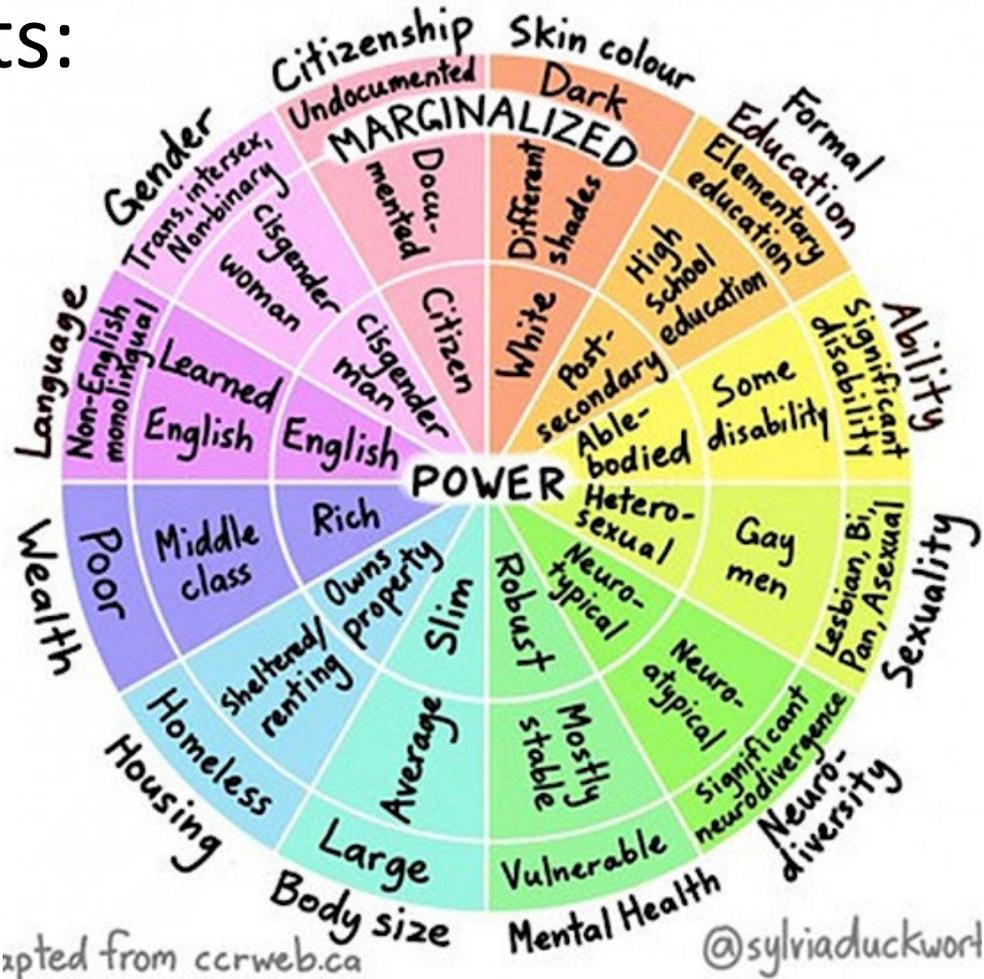
Intersectionality

Systemic Oppression

Equity (and Equality)

Inclusion

Belonging



# What exactly do we mean when we say systemic oppression?

The systematic mistreatment of people within a social identity group, supported and enforced by the society and its institutions, solely based on the person's membership in the social identity group.

Institutional/Systemic Oppression occurs when established laws, customs, and practices systematically reflect and produce inequities based on one's membership in targeted social identity groups. If oppressive consequences accrue due to institutional laws, customs, or practices, the institution is oppressive whether or not the individuals maintaining those practices have oppressive intentions.

# Privileged/Centered Identities

Social identities granted unearned systemic advantages or lack of barriers.

- Gives advantages and benefits (and lack of barriers) to dominant identity groups
- Privilege is characteristically invisible to people who have it
- Privileges are unearned and they are granted to people in the dominant groups whether they want those privileges or not, and regardless of their stated intent

*Definitions abridged from: © Leaven 2003 Doing Our Own Work: A Seminar for Anti-Racist White Women and © Visions, Inc. and the MSU Extension Multicultural Awareness Workshop*

## Targeted/Marginalized Identities

Social identities that face systemic barriers, exploitation and often increased violence.

- Targeted identities are often subjected to exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence. Targets of oppression are often kept in their place by dominant ideology, which supports oppression by denying that it exists and blames the conditions of oppression on the oppressed
- Privilege is often more visible to those with oppressed identities

# Foundational Concepts

Diversity

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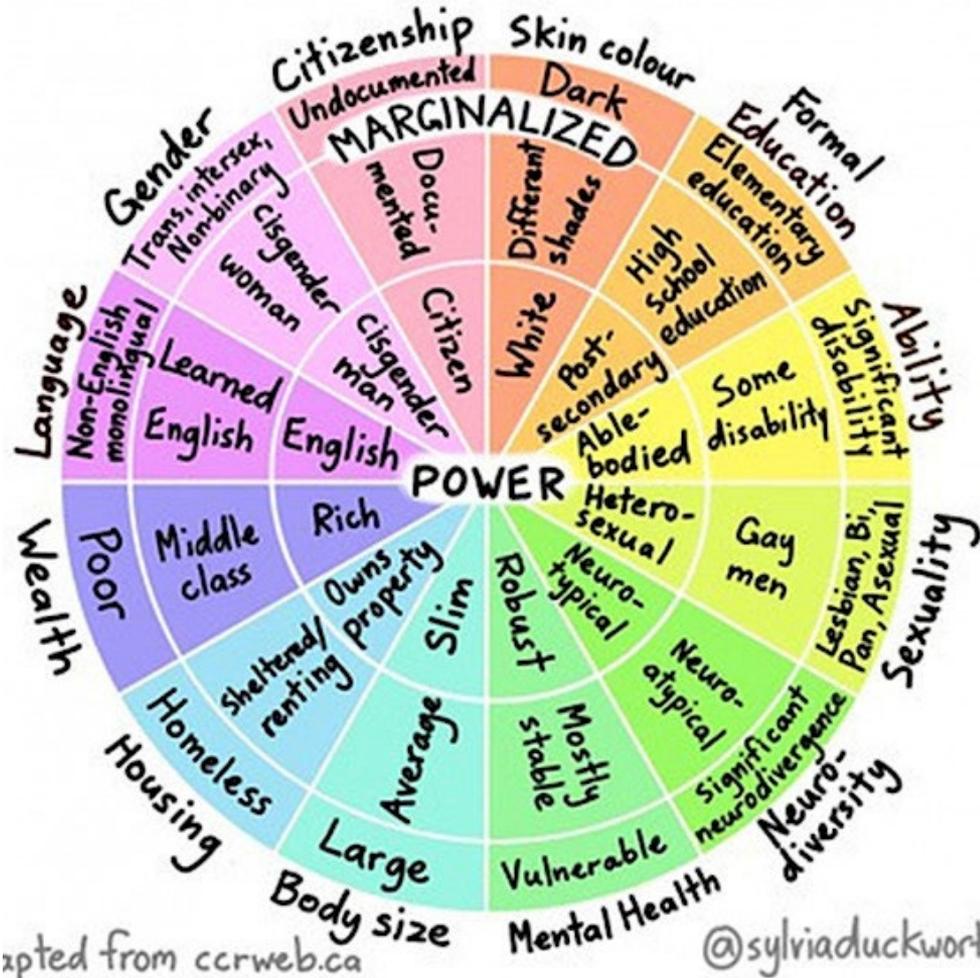
Intersectionality

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**WHEN WE  
IDENTIFY WHERE  
OUR PRIVILEGE  
INTERSECTS  
WITH SOMEBODY  
ELSE'S  
OPPRESSION,  
WE'LL FIND OUR  
OPPORTUNITIES  
TO MAKE REAL  
CHANGE.**

– IJEOMA OLUO



# Being an Ally: A Starting Point

What is allyship?

*an active, consistent (and arduous) practice of unlearning and re-evaluating, in which a person in a position of privilege and power seeks to operate in solidarity with a marginalized group*



What is NOT allyship?

allyship is not an identity: *it is a lifelong process, it is action-oriented*

allyship is not self-defined: *it is determined by the communities you support*

allyship is not performative: *it is defined through actions, not what is signaled*

# Ally, Co-Conspirator, Accomplice

I've heard terms like **accomplice** and **co-conspirator**. What does that mean?

These terms refer to (1) the partnership that must be in place between an ally and the group they are seeking to serve, and (2) taking on the struggle as your own.

## How can you be an ally?

- De-center yourself.
- Educate yourself. It is up to you and no one else.
- Be willing to own your mistakes
- Transfer benefits of your privilege to those who lack it.
- Stand up, even when you feel scared.



# When to Speak Up... and When to Listen...



Image Credit: [Nastya Varlamova for OBI x Fine Acts](#)

# Allyship at Work

- Sponsor: *vocally support minoritized folks and their work to amplify their credibility/reputation*
- Champion: *champion underrepresented groups in public advancement spaces*
- Advocate: *use your privilege to invite underrepresented groups to exclusive circles*
- Amplifier: *ensure that marginalized voices are both heard and respected*
- Scholar: *seek to learn as much as possible about the challenges faced by colleagues and clients from marginalized groups*
- Upstander: *stand up when you witness prejudice, disrespect, microaggressions*
- Confidant: *create an environment that makes people from minority groups comfortable enough to express their needs, frustrations, fears, and challenges*

# Our Roles in Social Change

Deepa Iyer on the various roles people play in a *Social Change Ecosystem*:

“In our lives and as part of movements and organizations, many of us play different roles in pursuit of equity, liberation, inclusion, and justice.”



Which role(s) in the social change ecosystem resonate most with you?

What are some examples of how you have done this work?

Reflect individually,  
then share in small groups.





Thank  
You

Rana Razzaque:  
[RazzaqueConsulting@gmail.com](mailto:RazzaqueConsulting@gmail.com)

Jessica Havens:  
[www.jessicahavens.com](http://www.jessicahavens.com)