Supporting Inclusive Communities

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MODULE 3A: "ALLYSHIP" AND TAKING ACTION: AT THE INDIVUDAL LEVEL

As mentioned in last week's module, inclusive practise involves both individual actions towards treating one another justly and collective efforts to support diversity and inclusion in our workplaces, organizations, institutions, households, and neighbourhoods.

You may hear people say that they are an "ally," which typically would mean that this person views themself and would possibly like others to know that they somehow believe in challenging injustice. While in some ways a positive sign, in a social context this isn't helpful on it's own. For example, someone can consider themself an "approachable person" but how is that made known to others? Just like it's not particularly helpful to be approachable if no one knows it, Dr. Makini King exclaims (in this compelling 2018 article) that "Ally' is Not a Noun," and that being an Ally "requires that a person not simply notice an injustice, but also take action by bringing attention to the injustice and requesting that it be corrected." A recent local example of such action taking place occurred when thousands of people gathered for a Fight For Equity anti-racism protest at the Alberta Legislature grounds on June 5th, 2020 (CBC News Article here). People from many backgrounds were in attendance and this embodied amélie lamont's (in the open source <u>Guide to Allyship</u>) statement that "to be an ally is to take on the struggle as your own."

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With all that in mind, let's take a pause here and consider a few questions:

- Have you witnessed/experienced racism in Edmonton or has someone else told you about their experience? When you hear people speak up about systemic racism or inequality in the criminal justice system, do those experiences match with your own? If not, how can you demonstrate empathy for lived experiences that are different than yours?
- Please watch this brief video of Jesse Lipscombe, a fellow Edmontonian and Be The Change Rally organizer. What struck you most about his words? What is Jesse asking for? What did you think about his suggestions for taking action and what are some next steps that you will take?

As we mentioned at the beginning of this series of modules, we all share an existence in Edmonton, but our lives and experiences can be and are very different from one another. Some of us are served well, and others (like Jesse Lipscombe) share that they are "trying to survive a minefield of a life" here. If you are one of the people to take action to combat injustice in our city -- be that through listening, confronting dismissive attitudes in conversations, showing up to amplify voices at a rally, examining barriers that exist in policies and processes that you have influence over, or in whichever ways you choose -- then you are engaging <u>in the allyship that PeerNetBC</u> <u>describes</u> as "a lifelong process of building relationships based on trust, consistency, and accountability with marginalized individuals and/or groups."

Now that you've done to work to be a better ally, how can you translate your learning to ensure your Community League can also be an ally to those experiencing injustice? More on this in Module 3B.

