

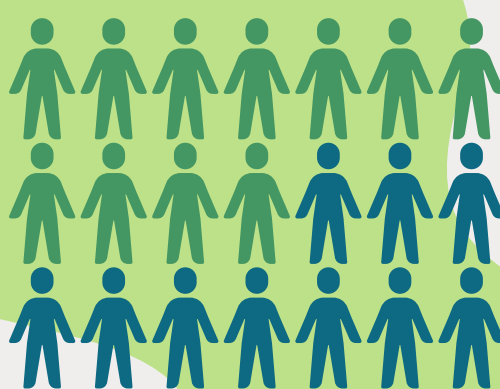
White Men's Allyship Starting Points

By Jeff Halvorsen, Lemlem Haile, Fanny Oliphant, and Liza Lorenzetti

White men participants identified four early experiences that made them open to learning more about joining social justice groups as allies: 1) childhood experiences of victimization; 2) church and community involvement; 3) learning about white masculinity; and 4) identity preferences.

Childhood Vicimization

Participants discussed early childhood experiences of oppression, such as poverty, and victimization that included the death of a father, childhood maltreatment, and bullying.



"I wanted to make sure no one ever felt that kind of pain"

Growing up valuing "helping people"

Church and Community

All the participants developed commitments to helping people from church and community involvement. For one white man, providing mutual community support was part of being a white man.

White Masculinity

Often, the men felt they "didn't fit" with the expectations and "stereotypes of masculinity." The mismatch sent some white men in search of a new way to express how they saw themselves.



Identity Markers

The men described themselves using terms like shy, curious, sensitive, and introverted. Many of these preferences were helpful for the white men as they learned to engage as allies. It helped some listen with empathy, do background work, and question what they had been taught growing up.

Visit our website AlbertaMen.com for a research brief on the *Starting Points of White Men's Allyship* and the rest of the **White Men's Allyship Learning Series**. The series is based on focus groups and interviews with seven social justice community leaders, including Black, Indigenous and racialized people, who nominated six white men aspiring to allyship.

Also acknowledge the community leaders (Pamela Beebe, Lemlem Haile, Omer Jamal, Abbas Mancey, Fanny Oliphant, Kamal Sehgal, and Adrian Wolfleg) and white men aspiring to allyship (Ryan, Will Tabak, Doug Murhpy, Phil, Jerry, and Perry Stein) who contributed to this work.

BECOMING A WHITE MALE ALLY

By Jeff Halvorsen, Lemlem Haile, Fanny Oliphant, and Liza Lorenzetti

A STEP-BY-STEP LOOK AT HOW SOME WHITE MEN CAME TO JOIN SOCIAL JUSTICE GROUPS

PIVOTAL MOMENT

The men felt there were pivotal moments in their lives that turned their life trajectory toward joining social justice groups. An example is the decision to take social science or social work classes in university. This happened multiple times as they did the ongoing work of challenging oppressive views.

"who can attend university, who has access?"

LEARNING EXPERIENCES DIFFERENT FROM THEIR OWN - SEEING PRIVILEGE

Participants heard stories of people who experienced oppression and began to reflect on what it meant to their own lives that they did not have to face these same experiences of violence, exclusion, and oppression. One white man said he didn't really get how much race mattered until he spent time listening to the way racism impacted every aspect of life for his friends who immigrated to Canada from the Carribean.

The learning process often creates burdens on already taxed Indigenous, Black, and Racialized community groups and leaders.

REINTERPRETING THE WORLD - SHIFTING VALUES

After learning about and beginning to perceive their own privilege, the white men then turned to reinterpreting the world around them and their identities. The white men began to see previously 'funny' jokes as racist and sexist. The white men stated they began to re-evaluate the racist, sexist, and oppressive values they were taught. "I saw it and once that light bulb turned on, I couldn't shut it off anymore."

"Don't centre yourself - amplify the voices"

MAKING CHANGES

Once the men began to see the world differently and their values shifted, they made changes in their lives. Some left jobs or friend groups that did not fit their values and built new relationships. "My entire life has kind of taken a 180. All my beliefs, my thoughts, how I hold myself. It's all different."

An advisory member said "they become a part of the transformation of society, an agent of change, and how they act in society" and "it's an ongoing process"

White men made many mistakes in their relationships with the groups they allied to. They lost and had to repair trust. Learning and change occurred again and again.

MENTORS

The degree to which men had to transform themselves and their worldview was different depending on how progressive their upbringing was and some changed more than others. Men with progressive mentorship had fewer struggles with their identity and valued the support as they developed their skills as allies.

- Visit our website AlbertaMen.com for a research brief on the *Becoming a White Male Ally* and the rest of the *White Men's Allyship Learning Series*. The series is based on focus groups and interviews with seven social justice community leaders, including Black, Indigenous and racialized people, who nominated six white men aspiring to allyship.

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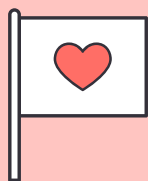
6 RELATIONSHIPS OF WHITE MEN ASPIRING ALLIES

By Jeff Halvorsen & Liza Lorenzetti



To the Group Allied With

When joining as an ally you have to consider, (a) how to join the group; (b) your role in the group; (c) how to be accountable and respond to being corrected and 'called in'; (d) Be aware and deal with your emotions (pride, shame, guilt, etc.) and keep moving forward; (e) you have to keep learning and growing, countering unconscious bias; (f) know when and how to respectfully move between groups - not forgetting its all connected



To Other White Men Aspiring Allies

Relationships between white men can be territorial; resist instinct to be competitive and self important; mentor other white male allies as a co-learner; build relationships



To Organizations With Power

Working within the system is a recognized way of making change, white male privilege allows access. Use your access to CREATE SPACE and opportunity for the social justice group, act as a facilitator, and advocate.



To White Men and Women Not Aligned to Social Justice

Do they just need more information or fundamentally disagree? Do you have a relationship with the person or are they a stranger? Keep calm, create space over time for change, be supportive and provide information. Call them in when they are disrespectful.



To Whiteness and Masculinity

Have to create new ways of being white men. Don't take leadership - unless asked, take the notes, do the background organizing. Resist "traditional [white] masculinity". And make space and be present.



To Oneself

Allyship requires white men to be reflective, change, grow, and heal. Transform from being a 'white saviour' - feeling responsible for saving or assisting 'other' people - to healing yourself and being a support; learn what to do; know who you are and be genuine. Mentor with humility, kindness, and respect; aspire to oppose all forms of injustice and inequality; and work to undermine the systems that create white male privilege

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