



# Allyship Guide\*: Focus on Black lives

\*For White People

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Carrie Feit (she/her)  
Co- President, Women's March Florida  
Founder, Women's March Miami  
phone - 305.761.7772

The Law Office of Carrie J. Feit, P.A.  
3211 Ponce de Leon Blvd., Suite 200  
Coral Gables, FL 33134  
phone - 305.443.3060, ext. 217  
facsimile - 305.443.2238  
[www.fl Disabilityattorney.com](http://www.fl Disabilityattorney.com)

## GROUNDWORK: RECOGNIZE YOUR BIAS AND PRIVILEGE

We need to recognize that antiBlack bias *has been* (despite some of us having the privilege to not have had awareness about it) *and is* everywhere and lives inside each one of us. It's in the air we breathe, the water we drink and we usually tap into it unconsciously or implicitly. We hold antiBlackness from an extremely young age from the messages we take in all around us.

Our white privilege - societal benefits, institutional and systemic advantage and intergenerational resources that we were born into - create a debt owed - an obligation to use our privilege, i.e. our resources or our skills/expertise to support someone who may not have access to the same.

We need to recognize that being "colorblind" is harmful. Not seeing the color of someone's skin not only erases their culture, but it erases their struggles or lack of privileges or ignores the fact that they may have had to work harder, smarter or with more obstacles than white people to get to the same exact place. So being colorblind is sort of the opposite of recognizing systemic racism. We want to see color because we want equity (versus equality).

## OUR LIBERATION IS TIED TO ONE ANOTHER

Assumption is folks are newer to the practice of allyship so this guide is a jumping off point. I'm new at this too - not a life-long antiracist by any means. Just a few years ago, my awareness was widened and sharpened and I developed a commitment to collective liberation, which is the idea that our liberation is tied to one another. "None of us are free until all of us are free."

## "WE" INSTEAD OF "YOU"

I start with this idea because it's going to help the practice of being an ally come more naturally when we think in terms of "we" instead of "you" or "I". Allyship will be most meaningful when recognizing that you are not part of the marginalized group, but that group's oppression impacts your liberation. That you're not free if your sisters or brothers are not free. Standing *with or along-side* a group of folks also ties into being empathetic instead of sympathetic, and it also ties into why in movement spaces the word "accomplice" is favored or even replacing the word "ally".

## ALLY IS A VERB

It's important to understand that the concept of being an "ally" as we use it with regard to non-marginalized person's work with and along-side marginalized communities is a VERB. Meaning that someone cannot self-identify as an ally, but can have a practice of allyship or practice being an ally. It's a continuous practice in which there is always room to do better.

## ALLYSHIP IS A MINDSET

Allyship is a mindset, it's a commitment. It's something that needs to have great importance to you and in which you are invested so that it becomes sustainable. Build relationships instead of having transactional connections. Root your allyship in education.

## EDUCATION

Read, with a preference for Black-authored material whenever possible. You can only practice allyship meaningfully if you understand the systems that cause that oppression and how systemic racism works. The most impactful learning you can probably do is listen to Black people and accept their experiences and feelings as valid and true, which may sound obvious, but think about how white people are always given the benefit of the doubt while Black people oftentimes have to prove themselves. That's our bias.

## DEBIAS/THE INNER WORK/CALLING OUT RACISM

Debiasing is also an ongoing practice. I catch myself daily in my bias and it's a great learning/growth moment of self correction. Call out bias in others around you which can be done in a non-adversarial manner. A good practice is to ask the person who made the racist or biased comment a question. What do you mean by that? Why would you say that/why would you think that? Have them take you through the thought process that connected to the negative assumption to help them see their bias. You don't want to lose the person entirely without having a chance to impact them. Whether you should call out the bias/racism more aggressively amounts to whether they are causing harm to someone in the space. In that situation, your focus should switch from helping the person who made the statement see their bias to supporting the person who is potentially being harmed. You do need to check in with the person potentially impacted by the statement in each situation to see if they want to speak for themselves or rather have you speak up for them. They may choose not to take on the emotional labor of explaining to the person who caused the "ouch" (or more blatant racist comment) why the statement was problematic. As an ally in that space, you have an obligation to keep Black people safe while being mindful not to speak over them or for them.

## EMOTIONAL LABOR

Black people take on emotional labor every time they teach non-Black folks about their history, their pain, our allyship, our mistakes or how we can do better. Sometimes it's unplanned; sometimes it's planned; hopefully it's paid. Black people, especially Black women should be paid for their emotional labor whenever possible. Non-Black and white people take on emotional labor with other non-Black and white people, and that is our Work to do in service of Black liberation and in turn collective liberation. And it's a form of allyship. **DO NOT EXPECT BLACK PEOPLE TO TAKE ON EMOTIONAL LABOR TO EDUCATE YOU.** When you have to work out your fragility or missteps, and that will come up in this work, talk to other white people. Also **READ, WATCH AND LISTEN.** There are so many resources out there.

## DONATE DONATE DONATE

Use your privilege to practice this form of allyship. Donate to the folks doing the Work for decades for our collective liberation, and also in recognition of the pay gap around the type of work and folks traditionally valued. Donate to individuals and communities being most impacted by systemic oppression. Donation links to local frontline community organizations and efforts most relevant to this moment are listed toward the end of this document.

## SHOW UP AND STAY INVOLVED

Show up to meetings, circles, conversations, rallies and protests when Black folks invite you or when you have the opportunity. Then stay connected to that group and find out next steps or the next opportunity for involvement.

## CENTERING and DISCOMFORT

*In Black spaces:* Be mindful about not taking up too much space as white people tend to do. We tend to feel the need to contribute our thoughts to a conversation instead of simply listening in order to feel productive or to show our worth. But in the practice of allyship, you're in a learning space to develop empathy and understand a struggle. Black folks want you there but we need to realize we are in a space FOR them, which is needed when we live in a white dominant culture. Also we have so much to learn about racism and oppression from Black people no matter your age, no matter how long you've been marching. These spaces can be intense, emotional, and you may experience feelings of shame or fragility. Cry amongst your fellow white folks only.

*In your sphere of influence:* It's not about making yourself feel good or about saying feel-good things that everyone can get behind. And it's definitely not about how injustice affects you. Instead, PUSH YOUR FOLKS TO TASK IN THIS MOMENT. We know that people move into growth when they go beyond their comfort zone, so be thought provoking and unafraid to examine your own biases outwardly. Allyship in your circles should be slightly uncomfortable and you should be taking risks.

Allyship is uncomfortable when saying unpopular things in your sphere of influence, when in Black spaces and worried about centering, when getting checked by people of color on your bias or language. Again, discomfort leads to growth, so lean into it. Be comfortable being uncomfortable. And always be mindful that your discomfort pales in comparison to the discomfort and pain that Black folks regularly experience. Also, white people's comfort is catered to way too much, and is often the reason for discomfort of people of color ("POC").

## MISTAKES

It's really important to know that you will make mistakes. All the time. Everyone does. It's expected. The key is to acknowledge them, learn and move on. Do not be performative in your apology/regret.

## DON'T LOOK FOR PRAISE OR THANKS

Don't expect to be thanked for speaking out against inhumanity which we all should be doing anyway. It's going to take a long time to earn trust and get thanked.

## HOW TO SHOW UP TO PROTESTS/SPACES OF RESISTANCE

When we show up at protests or marches in support of Black Lives, we are their guests. We need to recognize that Black folks have been marching and protesting for generations, and we need to follow their lead. At these events, white people should stay on the edges to put a physical barrier in between Black protesters and the police. We know that neither the police or anti-protestors are as likely to target white people as they are Black people or POC. At any event in a public space in which groups are resisting or speaking out such as a press conference, white people (and *not* non-Black POC) should be prepared to deal with law enforcement or any other entities or individuals that are trying to interfere or shut it down.

## A WORD ABOUT SAVIORISM

White saviorism seems to come up more recently when folks not meaningfully connected to a particular struggle believe they can take actions to significantly help or even solve the problem, without understanding the years of work within the community, or that the community has its own leaders and its own voice. It's important that as allies we take a supporting role versus a center role and support sustainable community led solutions versus attempting to be the solution.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES/READINGS

[Anti-Racism Resource List for White Allies Readings, Podcasts, Films, Youth-led Media, Journalist/Public Academic Sites, Children's Books, Parenting Resources, and Suggestions for Action/Donations Compiled by Dr. Lauren Silver, May-June 2020](#)

[10 Things Allies Can Do, YWCA](#)

[For Our White Friends Desiring To Be Allies By Courtney Ariel](#)

[Anti-racism Resources for White People from Sarah Sophie Flicker & Alyssa Klein](#)

## Books

*When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America*, by Paula Giddings

*Women Race & Class*, by Angela Davis

*How We Get Free: Black Feminism and the Combahee River Collective*, Edited by Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor

*Democracy Abroad, Lynchings at Home, Racial Violence in Florida*, by Tameka Bradley Hobbs

*How to be an AntiRacist*, by Ibram X. Kendi

## DONATION LINKS

### Local (South Florida/Florida) Organizations

[Dream Defenders](#)

[FF4L \(Fedfam4life\)](#)

[South Florida Black Mama's Bailout](#)

Defend Black Women Fridays via South Florida Healing Justice Project: Venmo @BlackMagicPlease

Fempower MIA community (a creative collective effort to create a Black and Brown feminist awakening in Miami) bailout fund: cashapp and Venmo @fempowermia or PayPal.me/FREETHEMALL

[Soul Sisters Leadership Collective](#)

### National Bailout/GoFundMe for Affected Families/MN Organizations

[George Floyd Memorial Fund](#)

[Justice for Amaud Arbery Fund](#)

[National Bail Out Fund- Free Black Mamas](#)

[The Movement for Black Lives and National Bail Out in Response to the Murder of George Floyd](#)

[Reclaim The Block, A Grassroots Organization Based In Minneapolis to Address Community Needs](#)

[Black Visions Collective, Minnesota Organization Focused on Black/Collective Liberation and Transformative Justice](#)

[Freedom Fund](#)

[Bail Funds By City Resource](#)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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*Cortés Marià Lewis, aka Advocate Cortés Marià Lewis, Women's March Miami Advocacy Chair, who is our organization's guide and informs our work and meaningfully connects us to the communities to which we pledge allyship.*

*Jasmen Rogers-Shaw, Lead Organizer, March For Black Women, Former Gender Justice Organizer at Miami Workers Center, Mentor to Women's March Miami on issues around Black Feminism and Intersectionality.*

*Tify Burks, South Florida Healing Justice Project, Liberation Organizer, Black Lives Matter Alliance Boward.*

*Social Justice Doula Lutze Segu, aka The Feminist Griote, currently earning her doctorate in Vancouver but calls Miami home and holds workshops when she is in town on feminism, race, allyship and intersectionality. You can find her at [lutzesegu.com](http://lutzesegu.com), follow her (@thefeministgriote on Instagram), and sign up for her newsletter wherein she suggests readings and podcasts and other resources.*

*South Florida People of Color, aka SoFl PoC, aka Miami Shores PoC. Their events, many of which are led by Dr. Tameka Bradley Hobbs, historian and professor of African American history, are extremely researched, organized and informative.*

*ReEnvision Harmony, Lead Visionaries Alex Louis and Mavi Ramirez, who educate folks through transformative workshops and trainings about empathy, unconscious bias and allyship/accompliceship.*