



A Lesson in Allyship: A Family or Workplace Activity

INTRODUCTION:

Being an ally is an opportunity to open yourself up to support others and learn about causes that matter to them. Sometimes that takes a bit of work to figure out what allyship can look like in different circumstances.

To help you start thinking about how you can be an ally, we would like to tell you a story and give you an opportunity to reflect on how you might react in this situation.

ACTIVITY:

Jesse is a fourth-year medical school student. He started school a little later in life, so he is older than many of his peers. He is married but never talks about it. Some students assume Jesse may have a spouse, although they have never seen him with anyone. He does, however, regularly post photos of his little boy online and flash the pictures proudly to everyone he talks to. You are also a fourth-year medical student. There is a “bring your family day” event coming up in a few weeks. You have advance notice of the menu and know there are plenty of things on the menu that contain nuts and fish. You once overheard Jesse talking about his son’s nut and fish allergies, but he never told you directly about them. You want to be a friend to Jesse while respecting his privacy; however, you also want to let him know about the planned menu. What can you do? Should you say something and, if so, to whom?

Here are some thoughts as you reflect:

1. What is the cost of telling Jesse you were eavesdropping?
2. What is the real responsibility of being an ally?
3. What is the cost of not telling Jesse anything?
4. What is the cost of standing up for Jesse’s family even though you don’t really know much about his story other than he started school late and has a child?

Use this exercise with your family, friends, or colleagues. Decide what you think is the best way to handle it and discuss why. The goal is to get you thinking about what you can do to help others within your level of comfort and safety. This exercise can be repeated with different groups.

Here are some links to resources to help you along the way in your journey to allyship:

1. [Guide to Allyship](#)
2. [Color of Change](#)
3. [8 Ways to Be a Better Ally \(published by Syracuse University\)](#)
4. [Top 5 Ways to Promote Ally Behavior in Students \(published by Human Rights Campaign\)](#)
5. [What it Takes to Be a Successful Ally Video \(published by PBS\)](#)
6. [Allyship in Healthcare \(published by Advantis Medical\)](#)

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