



The Meaning of Being a Disability Ally



Source: Respectability.org

A person with a disability defined an ally as ‘someone who supports the cause of a marginalized group — women, people of color, people with disabilities, people in the LGBTQ community, people with low income, etc. — and uses their privilege to learn from that group and amplify their cause (Vora, 2021).

How can local health departments foster disability allyship?

- **Educate staff about disability, ableism, cultural competence, and humility, microaggressions and implicit biases-**Be educated about the basics of disability, including types of disabilities and the laws and policies regarding disability.
- **Learn Disability Etiquette-** Parallel to educational efforts, using appropriate language with and about people with disabilities is an important trait for an ally. Language around disability is constantly evolving, so health department staff should keep themselves updated on language use.
- **Invite people with disabilities to the discussion table-**Engaging in both formal and informal conversations with people with various types of disabilities is key to understanding lived experiences of people with disabilities.
- **Sustain Relations with community members with disabilities-** Once public health departments initiate a dialogue with people with disabilities and organizations that support them, there also needs to be sustained efforts to strengthen these partnerships. This can happen by hosting joint events, having representatives from the community lead periodic trainings for public health professionals, and actively participating in initiatives led by community-based organizations.
- **Disseminate knowledge and experiences to the community-** Public health departments can catalyze active allyship in their jurisdiction by sharing their knowledge and experiences with members of their community.

Source: <https://www.naccho.org/>

Learn more at <https://dawncil.org/>