

**The Anatomy of an Occupational Therapy Ally**  
**2021 TNOTA Conference**  
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Learning Objectives:

1. Define *allyship* in terms of what this looks like within the field of occupational therapy.
2. Discuss elements of allyship relevant to the work of occupational therapy practitioners.
3. Identify practical action-oriented strategies to improve one's own awareness and promote allyship within the OT profession.

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Summary of demographics: There is relatively little diversity from all perspectives within the OT profession, and that has not changed much over the years and does not differ much between practitioners and students.

*To consider:*

- Why is this important to address?
- How does this relate to improving one's ability to serve as an ally for OT practitioners?

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Ally - a person that actively promotes and aspires to advance the culture of inclusion through intentional, positive and conscious efforts that benefit people as a whole

*"Anyone has the potential to be an ally. Allies recognize that, though they're not a member of the underinvested and oppressed communities they support, they need to make a concerted effort to better understand the struggle, every single day. Because an ally might have more privilege and recognizes their privilege and the power that comes with it, they are powerful voices alongside oppressed ones."*

**The Anatomy of an Occupational Therapy Ally**

Ears	To listen to the experiences of people of color and from other under-represented groups
Eyes	To identify privilege
Nose	To sniff out implicit bias
Mouth	To speak out against injustice
Hands	To take action and make change
Heart	To cultivate empathy for the oppressed

**ONE BODY ... committed to creating change**

*What are some examples of things an actionable ally does to create change?*

- Learns about and addresses their own implicit biases (we ALL have them!)
- Recognizes systematic inequalities and realizes the impact of microaggressions
- Listens to and believes the experiences and perspectives of people from underrepresented groups
- Researches to learn more about the history of the struggle in which they are participating
- Uses their privilege to amplify (digitally and in-person) historically suppressed voices
- Calls out inappropriate behavior (*plan in advance how to do this!*)
- Facilitates colleagues involvement in diversity and inclusion efforts
- Is intentional with using inclusive language
- Engages in (or leads) recruitment efforts (student recruitment, hiring, etc.)
- Recognizes privilege and amplifies underrepresented voices
- Learns how to *listen* and accept criticism with grace, even if it's uncomfortable!
- Does the work every single day to learn how to be a better ally - or (better yet!) an accomplice!