



A project of the Mental Health Association in New York State, Inc.

Let's Talk Allyship

What we need to do is learn to respect and embrace our differences until our differences don't make a difference in how we are treated.

- Yolanda King

Promoting Culture in the Classroom

To truly engage students and be perceived by them as an ally, educators must reach out in ways that are culturally and linguistically responsive, and examine the assumptions and stereotypes we bring into the classroom that may hinder connectedness. This article titled, [Culture in the Classroom](#), provides resources for educators to self-reflect and identify hidden biases. It also provides insight about how to take a close look at curriculum and incorporate lessons that include diverse reading selections representing authors from various cultural backgrounds.

Educators who approach teaching from a multicultural lens can help children develop social awareness, including empathy, and make them feel included in the school community. For immigrant and refugee students, it can provide the emotional scaffolding necessary to cross the linguistic and cultural divide between country of origin and country of residency. Embracing cultural diversity in the classroom supports the mental health and wellness of students, and fosters a caring school community.

Understanding Microaggressions

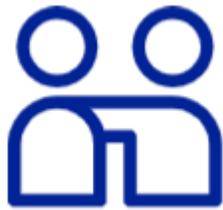
One important aspect of being an ally is to be self aware, and intentional with our language. Microaggressions are comments that are indirect or subtle but reflect our implicit biases or prejudices. Offensive comments can make individuals feel invisible, and dismiss their personal experiences - such as identifying as a member of the LGBTQ+ community or any other historically disadvantaged group. They can leave a long lasting negative impact on a person's self esteem, can harm relationships and may lead to individuals feeling unsafe or targeted within their environment, such as a community or school. PBS Learning Media has created lessons for the classroom.

PBS Learning Media

Forming a Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) Club

Student-run GSA clubs in middle schools and high schools unite LGBTQ+ and allied youth to support issues impacting them in their schools and communities. They raise awareness and promote social change. Even if your school does not have the capacity for a formal club, other clubs, such as Student Council or Key Club, may find the resources at the GSA Network helpful to developing projects that support LGBTQ+ youth such as hosting socials or raising awareness about how to support peers navigate the coming out process. Visit the GSA Network to learn more.

[GSA Network](#)



Special Education Allyship in Action

In this [article from Teach for America](#), Special Education teachers share how they practice allyship in the classroom providing students with the skills to find their voice and self-advocate. They also promote goal setting, and career exploration, to empower students to fulfill their hopes and dreams.

To promote allyship in schools, consider Best Buddies Friendship Programs.

[Best Buddies](#)



Being an Ally to Muslim American Families

EmbraceRace.org created guides that offer practical guidance to families on difficult topics such as racism, inequity and safety.

One particular resource, created by Mommying While Muslim podcast creators, Zaiba Hasan and Uzma Jafri, focuses on practical strategies to address concerns such as school bullying.

[Embrace
Race](#)

Family Acceptance Project

The Family Acceptance Project is the first comprehensive study of LGBTQ youth and their families and the first evidence-informed family support model to help diverse families learn to support their LGBTQ children. The project represents a diverse group of families, and explores the role of family acceptance and rejection, and discusses how the level of connectedness can impact overall mental health and wellness. When youth feel supported on their journey, they harvest more positive views of the future, higher self esteem and sense of inclusion.

[Family Acceptance Project](#)



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