

# Guidelines for being a good neighbour and ally

## **Listen to and follow the community.**

Find out who the traditional occupants and Elders are of the land you are on. When doing long-term work on Indigenous rights, build strong relationships within the community and make sure everything is Indigenous-led.

## **Learn. Read about the history and culture of the Indigenous peoples you live and work with.**

Knowing the history and being culturally competent is vital. The issues the community faces come from hundreds of years of ongoing trauma and discrimination. It is not the responsibility of the community to educate you.

## **Show respect. Consult. Ask before acting.**

Consent is a continuous process, not a one-time request. Ask if help is needed and in what form. If you are sharing messages or calls to action in your networks, use the words of the community, without alteration.

## **Don't go where you're not invited, but always go when you are invited.**

Seek permission before taking part in community events, particularly around cultural and spiritual events. They'll usually be labeled something like "all community and allies welcome."

## **Know when to step back.**

Always remember that you are there as a guest in a supportive role. There will be times when the community needs to act alone; respect their boundaries.

## **Speak up but not over.**

A big part of your involvement is to amplify the voices of Indigenous communities. Don't make it about yourself or our union.

## **Apologize when you make mistakes. Do no harm.**

The community should be better off or the same because of your presence, not worse. Follow all of these suggestions and keep reflecting on your behaviour and you're on your way to doing your part in bringing down an unjust system.

(From USW's course: Unionism on Turtle Island. Adapted from "10 Ways to be a Genuine Ally with Indigenous Communities", Amnesty International Australia, <https://www.amnesty.org.au/10-ways-to-be-an-ally-to-indigenous-communities> and from Chescaleigh's 5 Tips for Being an Ally.)