

## Spirituality, Wellness, and Solidarity Workshop: Student Handout

### Learn – Listen – Act: How to Be an Ally

- **Learn:** actively seek information about other faiths and spiritual traditions
  - Follow someone of another faith on social media
  - Read a book, watch a movie, listen to a podcast, or watch a show made by someone of another faith – check out MORSL’s podcast recommendations!
  - Attend some of the many interfaith events (many are now online)
  - Check out MORSL’s religious literacy programming
  - Take a Religious Studies course: more of an academic approach to faith
  - Ask respectful questions to a trusted friend who is religious
  - Remember that religions are dynamic and internally diverse
    - Learn about the different beliefs and opinions within a religion
- **Listen:** recognize that no one is perfect, and accept people calling you out on your biases
  - Be open to constructive criticism
    - You may not always be able to see your own biases
    - Confront your own assumptions
    - Defensiveness is often unproductive
  - Listen actively and empathetically
    - Don’t minimize someone else’s lived experiences of discrimination
    - Don’t rush to judgment
  - Listen critically to public discourse
    - Consider whether a source is reliable or biased
- **Act:** go beyond theory and be an ally in everyday life!
  - Know your own blind spots/positionality: this relates to Learning and Listening
  - Be a source of information: e.g. regarding religious accommodations, complaint procedures, MORSL as a resource
  - Be welcoming and offer solidarity
    - Make people feel welcome and included
    - Give people the space to talk about what they’re experiencing
    - Engage in activism against religious discrimination
  - Offer non-directional support:
    - Provide options to those seeking help (e.g. MORSL, spiritual community, faith-based pastoral care, secular counselling, activist groups/events)
    - Respect their ultimate decision
    - You may not always be the ideal supporter, and this is ok! They may want support from someone with similar lived experiences/ who is part of their own faith community
  - Be an active bystander:
    - Respectfully call out prejudice when you see it: try to be non-confrontational and non-judgmental; extend grace to those who display ignorance and help them learn; don’t let harmful stereotypes, comments, or actions go unnoticed
    - But, remember that the well-being of any victims is the priority: e.g. a victim may not want you to call out the xenophobic person in the same metro car
  - Keep religious students’ needs in mind
    - E.g. avoid scheduling big events on a major holy day
    - E.g. recognize that you may need to send someone a message before their holy day/Shabbat in order to make sure they see it in time
    - Offer Kosher and Halal snacks at events; offer non-alcoholic beverages