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### How to be an Ally

Allyship has been a large part of my life and even more so over the last few years as the Black Lives Matter organization has grown and made an immense impact on society and my community. I grew up in a diverse community, which I am grateful for every day, and I have heard and seen acts of racism in multiple forms throughout my life. This podcast helped me realize more about allyship and ways to improve my understanding of personal biases and fundamental biases ingrained in individuals due to my upbringing. Dr. Jennifer Hutton discussed the different stages of being an ally, including self-interrogation. Unknowingly, I have been practicing self-interrogation since the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor initiated a national uproar and protests nationwide. When the protests began, my hometown hosted a peaceful protest for anyone to attend. As the peaceful protest was moving away from our downtown area, many decided to take advantage of the lack of police presence to destroy and loot small businesses. Videos emerged on social media of bricks being thrown at police officers, a squad car set ablaze triggering an explosion that set nearby businesses alight, and looters running away with arm full of jewelry and clothing. The city that our community members have spent the last two decades trying to refurbish, destroyed in a matter of hours. Although my heart was heavy and filled with agony and anger, my mother and I grabbed what we could and went to help clean up the aftermath the following morning. As we reached downtown, the

tears came rolling down my face at the pure shock from the damage done, but the tears shifted as we saw hundreds of our fellow community members were there to help clean up the mess and help shop owners board up their stores. The entire town was cleaned up in a few hours as the artistic community chose to decorate the boarded-up stores with positive affirmations in graphic writing. That was the point when I began to enter the self-interrogation stage of being an ally that Dr. Hutton had explained in the podcast. Looking back at my self-interrogation phase, I remember thinking about when I first heard about the Black Lives Matter movement and not understanding why it wasn't all lives matter. I believed that all lives matter was a better title for years, and my upbringing in a diverse community did not change that belief. I decided to discuss my perspective change on my social media platforms hoping that other individuals in similar situations would stop and think about if their perception has changed and how they can own up to their mistakes and still be an ally for this community. After listening to this podcast and thinking about my own experiences, I want to become more aware of my own self biases and continue to grow as an individual while becoming a better ally my community and my future clients. Dr. Hutton made an incredible remark at the beginning of her discussion when she discussed how changes were found in the DNA of survivors of the Holocaust due to the excessive amount of stress they underwent while in these concentration camps. Stress is an ongoing issue for many minority groups today. The only way we can help change this pattern is by making a difference and by making our voices heard. While doing this, Dr. Hutton made a good point about understanding how to be an ally and supporting these individuals rather than becoming a white savior and approaching this as if you are in a superior role to them. I believe

that diversity education should become a requirement within our school system to help our community become more accepting of individuals from every background.

I wanted to attach an image of some of the art that was displayed after the city clean-up was completed. This day will forever be in my heart and has changed my perspective and understanding for the better and led me to become a better ally.

