**Key Concepts**

**Adapted from materials developed by Elsie Y. Cross Associates**

**A. Recognize Intent AND Impact**

When a member of a privileged group says/does something hurtful or inappropriate, their tendency is to want to EXPLAIN their INTENT (I didn’t mean it! It was just a joke! I didn’t do it on purpose...). However, the pain and hurt, the IMPACT, is still very real to the marginalized group members.

An effective ally first acknowledges their impact, apologizes, and asks to hear more about how they have negatively impacted the marginalized group member(s), if others are willing to share. And then states their intention to make amends, change their behavior, keep learning and developing greater capacity, and avoid similar transgressions in the future, etc.

**B. Be Aware of Cumulative Impact**

This concept occurs when a marginalized group member experiences repeated negative oppressive incidents, either in a short period of time or over a long period. Their feelings of anger, fear, distrust, frustration, etc., may build up and then POP for a number of reasons, including:

* It is not safe for them to challenge the people who treated them negatively
* They are tired of intervening and trying to educate others

An ally understands that many marginalized group members may be carrying the cumulative impact of a long series of negative treatment. If they seem irritated or unusually upset, the ally tries to not take it personally, but instead, tries to offer support to the marginalized group member by:

* Acknowledging the degree of feelings that the marginalized group member is experiencing
* Offering to listen to stories of how the person has been negatively treated (without interrupting, arguing, justifying, or trying to “give advice” and “fix it”)
* Asking if there is anything that they can do to be supportive

**C. Recognize Varying Levels of Differential Risk and Credibility**

It is important that all people, marginalized and privileged group members, work to intervene and stop oppression wherever they see it. AND privileged group members are generally given more credibility, listened to more seriously, and have fewer risks when they intervene, as compared to members of marginalized groups. An effective ally consistently recognizes opportunities to speak up and intervene, knowing that it is their responsibility to take action, regardless of the risks involved.

**D. Recognize and Use your Discretionary Power**

All people have some personal power, and possibly positional power from which to speak up and intervene. They have the discretion/the choice of when or how or if to intervene. Privileged group members tend to have MORE discretionary power given how often they are in positions of authority and because of the greater credibility and status they have in society.

**E. Distinguishing Behavior**

Most privileged group members will be perceived as “just another man...white…heterosexual…cisgender…administrator” UNTIL they show THROUGH THEIR ACTIONS that they are actively working as an ally against oppression. When privileged group members speak up and intervene, they DISTINGUISH themselves from the overall privileged group who generally both consciously and unconsciously perpetuate interpersonal and structural inequity.