

Guiding Principles for the U.S. Alliance of Women, Non-binary Persons and Other Gender Minorities with Disabilities

This document describes the shared values and rules that all members of the U.S. Alliance of Women, Non-binary Persons and Other Gender Minorities with Disabilities (the Alliance), agree to follow and support through their words and actions.

Guiding principle 1: the Alliance is an intersectional feminist space

The Alliance defines intersectional feminist space as a space where all participants welcome one another in *all* our diversity and recognize that different types of discrimination and inequality often overlap with and increase gender-based discrimination. Intersectional feminism centers the voices of those experiencing overlapping, coexisting forms of oppression in order to understand inequalities and the relationships among them. [\(see Crenshaw, 2020\)](#). The Alliance is a space that can handle the weight of everyone's experiences and woes in healthy ways. Additionally, it is a space to access resources and share them freely, which collectively aids us all.

The Alliance is a gender inclusive space. The Alliance honors, supports, and includes individuals of marginalized genders or “MaGes”. MaGes include but are not limited to cis women, trans women, trans men, non-binary people, and people who may be questioning their gender. (See [What Are We Tal’m’bout? Glossary, 2019](#)).

Members understand that sisterhood is so much more than “cis”terhood. (Cis or cis gender refers to people whose identity and sense of gender is the same as their birth sex).

Guiding Principle 2: the Alliance is an anti-racist space

An anti-racist space is a space for *all* races. The Alliance is not a place that asks members to check your culture at the door or that requires code-switching (e.g., changing actions and/or language to fit into the dominant culture). Members are respectful and culturally sensitive to each other’s culture. We are open to learning new things and can admit when we are wrong.

The Alliance welcomes and supports the voices of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). The Alliance is proactive in its anti-racist work and takes steps to avoid issues before they arise. We are committed to making published material/statements available in multiple languages and to elevating the voices of the most marginalized amongst us on any given issue.

The Alliance is a space to have open and honest conversations without white guilt playing a role. White members of the Alliance are committed to ending white supremacy in both their speech and their actions and to undoing white fragility, the discomfort White people feel when engaging in and or witnessing conversations about racial injustice and inequality ([OBASI, 2020](#)).

Guiding Principle 3: the Alliance is an anti-ableist space

An anti-ableist space is a cross disability space that uplifts people with disabilities. There is no disability hierarchy within the Alliance, all people are treated fairly.

The Alliance is a space where disabled people's voices and needs are centered. We work to actively recruit people often ignored in disability spaces, such as people with intellectual disabilities, neurodivergent people, people with psychiatric disabilities and people with chronic illness.

The Alliance is a space that is accessible and flexible and actively pursues cross-disability inclusion. Members are committed to creating a space where accessibility is integral and does not have to be added on.

We are committed to addressing ableism as well as its many intersections Such as racism, sexism, and classism

etc. (See [a working definition of ableism by Talila "TL" Lewis*](#); updated January 2021 *developed in community with Disabled Black and other negatively racialized people, especially Dustin Gibson).

Guiding principle 4: the Alliance is a safe space

The Alliance defines safe space as a space that has the following characteristics:

1. A space where women, non-binary persons, and other gender minorities with disabilities can voice/reply with opinions and suggestions without judgment.
2. A space where members can relate to each other through shared experience as disabled people.
3. A simplified space.
4. A space with people who are friendly, pleasant, personable, positive, supportive, respectful and caters to the needs of those involved in healthy ways.
5. A space that has room for people to make mistakes and be forgiven.
6. A space that hears and respects *all* voices.
7. A space where members are free to be their true authentic selves.
8. A space that is judgment free.
9. A space where we can empower each other to reach our goals.

10. A space where we can engage in productive dialogue
11. A space where we take accountability for our words and actions

To ensure that the elements of a safe space are upheld during Alliance meetings, ground rules will be established and disseminated before each meeting.

Guiding principle 5: the Alliance strives for authentic and equitable leadership

The Alliance is a community where everyone's voice matters equally and is respected by every member. The Alliance acknowledges a multitude of experiences and types of knowledge and expertise. members are committed to identifying their own personal biases. This allows us the opportunity to combat our biases firsthand to enable us to grow individually and collectively. Alliance members with leadership roles commit to empowering and building the leadership skills of fellow members.

Guiding Principle 6: Alliance advocacy work

The purpose of the Alliance is to collectively engage in a variety of advocacy activities. Our work will focus on issues which are most important to alliance members.

Based on Survey data from advocates, the top four issues of importance for 2022 include:

1. Home and community-based services, accessible affordable housing, and de-institutionalization of women, nonbinary persons, and other gender minorities with disabilities
2. Employment rights and justice for women, nonbinary persons, and other gender minorities with disabilities
3. Educating about disability, including the social and cultural aspects of disability, and its multiple intersections (e.g., educating and working with related human and civil rights organizations)
4. Sexual and reproductive health rights and justice/ parental rights and justice for women, nonbinary persons, and other gender minorities with disabilities.

The work of the Alliance will prioritize the above issues but remain open to addressing other issues as they arise.

The Alliance will engage in both programmatic advocacy (e.g., creating training, tool kits, etc.), and policy advocacy (e.g., communicating and collaborating with government officials about laws and policies). Taking part in advocacy within the United Nations is also another mechanism available to the Alliance. The advocacy strategy used will depend on the issue being addressed, as well as member preferences.