Module 2: Allyship in Aotearoa Schools

Gender diversity: Professional workshops

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Grow
Waitaha

Introduction to the workshops

Acknowledgements

Kia ora, and thank you for participating in this workshop which is part of our **Equity and Inclusion** pou.

Our dedicated rōpū has been collaborating since 2021 to discuss inclusivity for gender-diverse ākonga, and creating resources for schools which largely target governance.

We acknowledge the contributions of **Jordan** (he/him), **Grae** (she/her), and **Gabrielle** (she/her) for writing and filming these workshops. We also acknowledge the efforts of **Ari** (they/them), **Rose** (she/they), **Janelle** (she/her), and **Chris** (he/him) for their support, wisdom, and leadership in creating these workshops.

How to use these modules

These short modules are intended to be used for short professional learning sessions.

These can be self-directed and taken at your own pace or led by a member of staff. Each module should take about **30-45 minutes**.

Module 2: Allyship in Aotearoa Schools is the second of three modules.

It discusses the experience of gender diverse ākonga in Aotearoa, the importance of active allyship, and provides practical tips for educators to create inclusive environments.

Te Rātaka

This session will cover:

Gender diversity:
A quick recap

Gender diversity
in Aotearoa

Allyship for the
trans community

Allyship in action

Learning outcomes

By the end of this session, you should be able to:

Understand some of the experiences of trans people in Aotearoa

Understand allyship and what it means for trans people

Contextualise the experience of trans people in the education sector

Engage in several different activities that show authentic allyship

"

Kotahi te kākano, he nui ngā hua o te rākau

A tree comes from one seed but
bears many fruits

"

Before you begin, ensure that you are in a safe space to share ideas, ask questions, and speak openly.
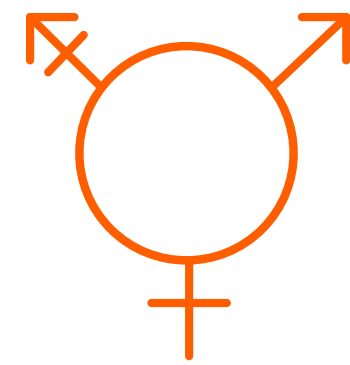
Gender diversity:
A quick recap

Gender diversity and trans identities
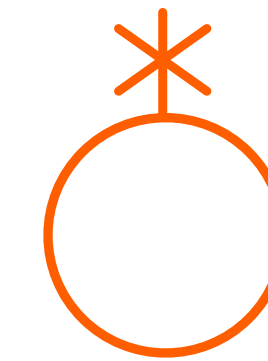
Gender Diversity

Gender diversity describes identities that demonstrate diversity beyond the binary framework (male and female).

People identify in many ways beyond what they were assigned at birth based on basic biology.

Transgender

Transgender (trans) is an umbrella term that describes those whose gender identity differs from what is associated with sex assigned at birth.

Non-binary

Those who are non-binary do not identify with either male or female identities.

Gender diversity and trans identities

+ **Gender** is not the same as sex assigned at birth.

+ People are multi-faceted and it can be difficult to capture the complexity of gender identity.

+ Sex (biological factors) is distinct from **gender identity, gender expression**, and **sexual** and **romantic attraction**.

+ Even our long-held beliefs about gender identity and expression are rooted in our cultural and social upbringing. Our views of what makes a man or woman are contextual. It depends on where we come from, the period we grew up in, and how we were brought up.

Gender diversity in Aotearoa

The experiences of gender diverse people in Aotearoa

The **Counting Ourselves** survey was the first NZ study specific to trans people.

+ Initially conducted in 2018 and again in 2022.

+ The Counting Ourselves 2022 survey results were released in 2025.

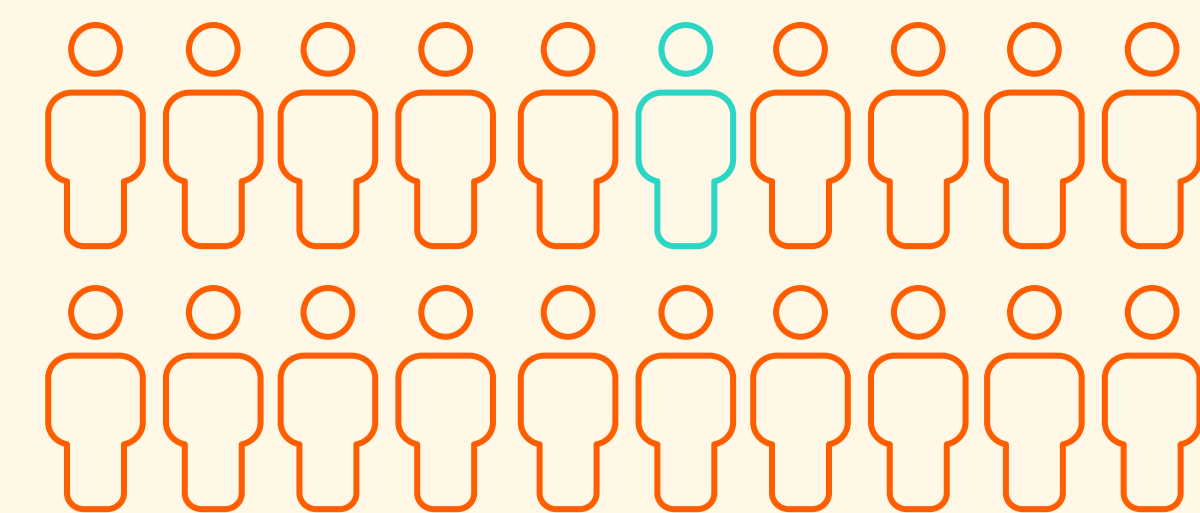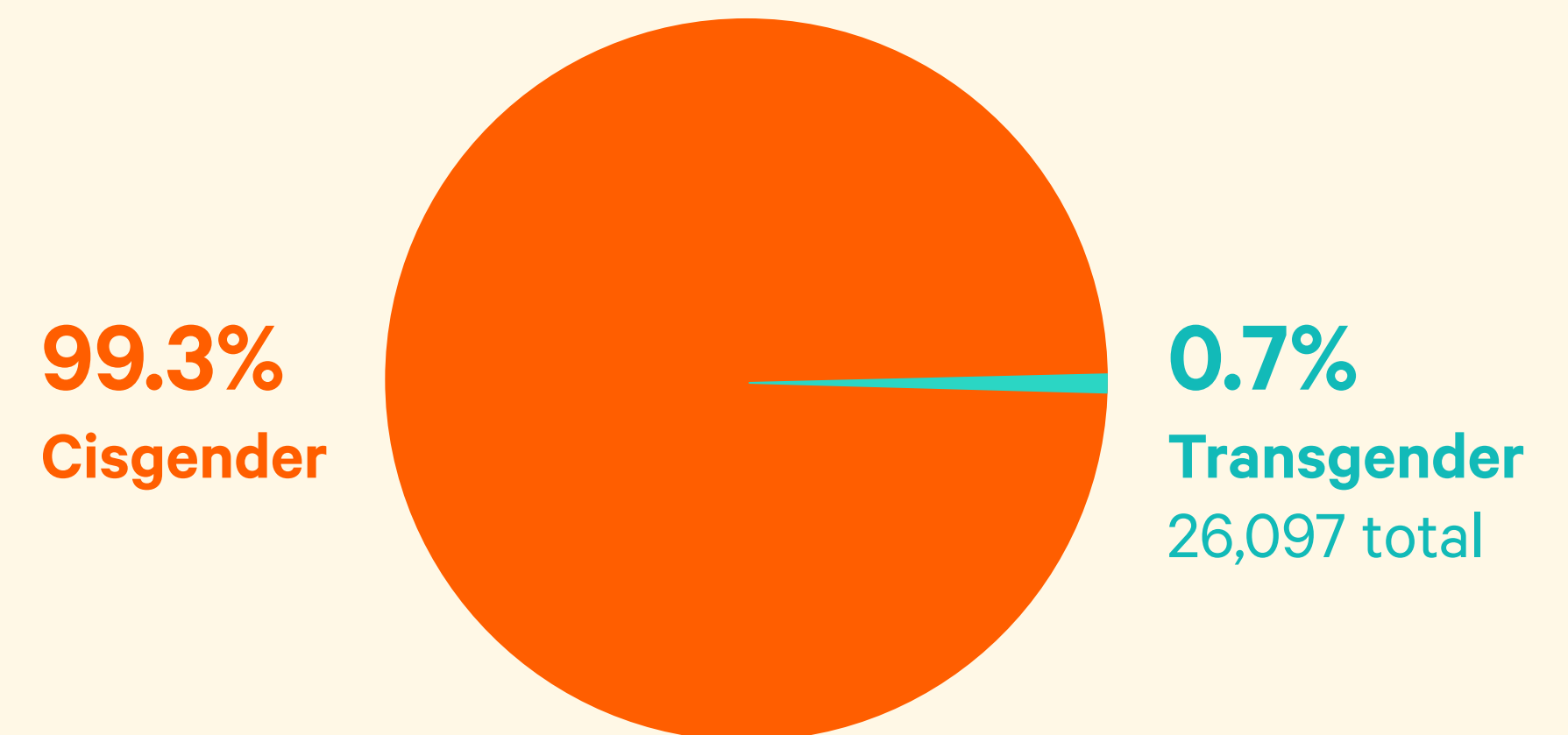+ The 2023 New Zealand census was the first to ask about gender diverse identities.

COUNTING OURSELVES

Findings from the 2022
**Aotearoa New Zealand
Trans & Non-binary Health Survey**
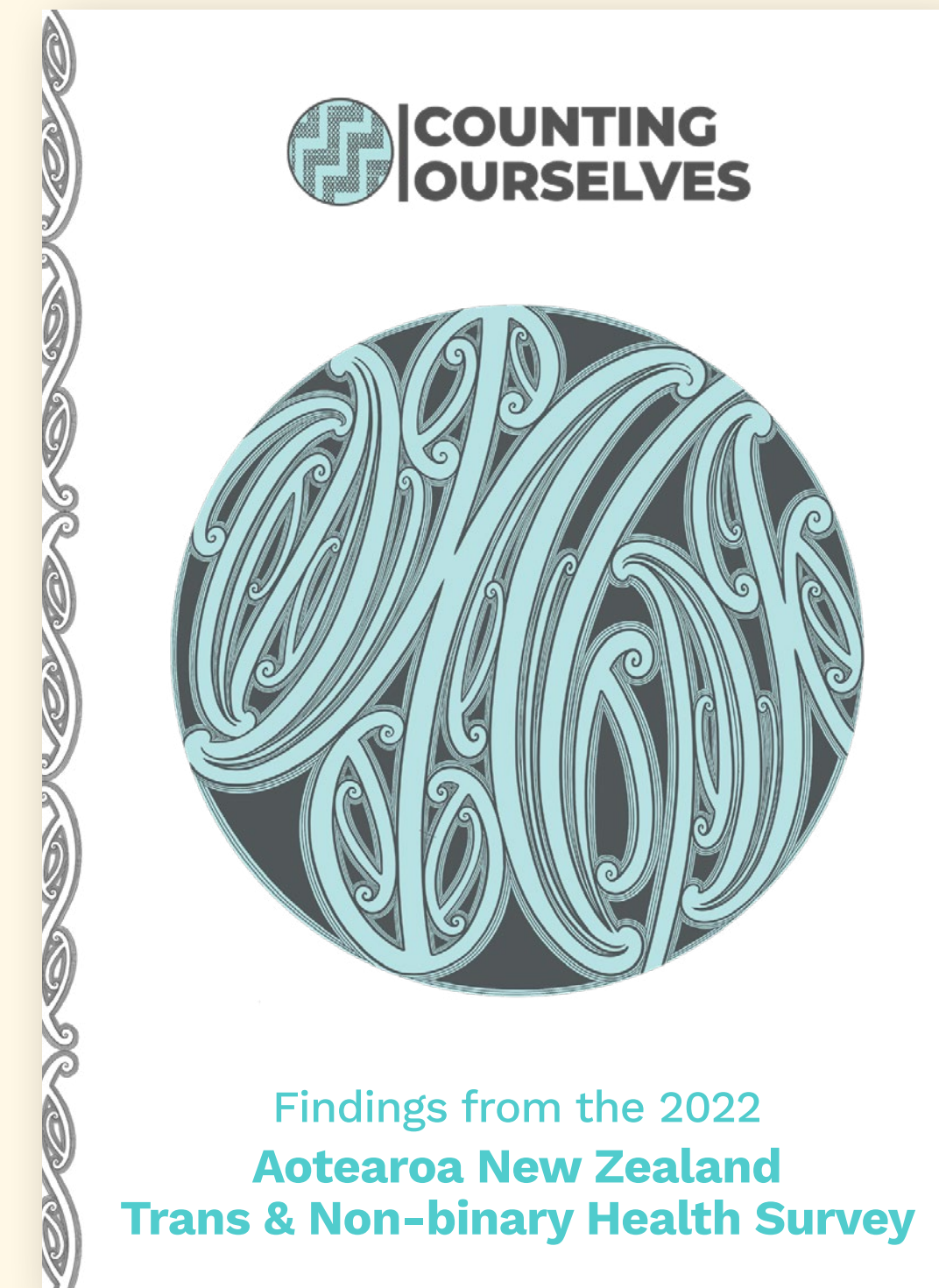
DOWNLOAD REPORT →

Gender in the 2023 Census

The 2023 census differentiated between sex assigned at birth and gender identification.

+ It showed 99.3% of people were cisgender (identify with their sex assigned at birth) and 0.7% were transgender – **26,097 trans people in total***.

+ 0.4% indicated they were born with a variation of sex characteristics (intersex). This number could be higher for those not aware of variations.

+ 2023 Census shows **1 in 20 adults** belong to Aotearoa New Zealand's LGBTIQ+ population (corrected)

Stats NZ
Tatauranga Aotearoa

*0.7 percent of the census usually resident population aged 15 years and over who provided the information to derive cisgender and transgender status.

99.3%
Cisgender

0.7%
Transgender
26,097 total

1 in 20 adults belong to Aotearoa New Zealand's LGBTIQ+ population

"

Understanding the experiences of people begins with empathy – realising their journey is shaped by unique challenges and resilience.

When we seek to understand, we open the door to meaningful allyship.

"

2023 Census data for trans communities

+ In general, trans people have lower overall life expectancy, lower sense of control, fewer instances of feeling happy, higher instances of feeling anxious, and lower job satisfaction compared to cisgender people.

+ Trans people rated themselves as having poor physical health much more than cisgender people. Nearly half (42.5%) of trans people believed their physical health was fair or poor. 63.6% stated they had poor overall mental wellbeing, compared to 26.1% of cisgender people.

www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/wellbeing-statistics-2023/

42.5%

Trans people believed their physical health was fair or poor

Rated as having poor overall mental wellbeing

63.6%	26.1%
Trans	**Cisgender**

2023 Census data for trans communities

Due to sample size, there is potentially a lot of variation in trans statistics.

Regardless, these stats show a worrying trend of trans people experiencing **poorer health and wellbeing outcomes** compared to cisgender populations.

www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/wellbeing-statistics-2023/

The Counting Ourselves Survey (2022)

COUNTING OURSELVES

2,631 trans and non-binary people aged 14 and above participated in the survey.

Some key findings:

+ 77% of participants aged 14+ reported high or very high psychological distress.

+ 50% had deliberately injured themselves in the last 12 months. 53% had contemplated suicide and 10% had made an attempt.

+ 16% of 14-18 year olds had been bullied at least once per week over the last year (compared to 5% of cisgender students) and 53% of these instances were because of their gender identity/ expression.

+ 22% of students aged 14-18 reported teachers harassing/attacking them over the last year.

countingourselves.nz/2018-survey-report/

Reflective questions

Why does knowing physical and mental health statistics matter?

+ Were you aware of poorer wellbeing outcomes?

+ Does it change how you view/approach these communities?

What role can we play in improving wellbeing statistics?

+ What change(s) would you want to see?

+ Where do schools fit into improving wellbeing?

+ What power does an active ally have?

Allyship for the trans community

What is allyship?

Allyship is the active and consistent effort to use your privilege and power to support and advocate for people with less privilege.

We need to understand inequities and make concrete efforts to minimise them.

Turning a blind eye can signal that:

a. we don't understand the differences or injustices around us

b. we think they're okay

c. we don't care.

Allyship for trans communities

It is about consistent effort – taking continuous steps to address inequities and make an impact.

+ Considering the statistics we looked at earlier, educators are uniquely placed to be an ongoing positive influence in the lives of young gender-diverse people.

+ This is through taking an active role in **affirming** and **validating identities**, advocating for **rights** and **wellbeing**, **listening** and **supporting, educating others**, and addressing the unique challenges of trans people.

"

It is essential that schools realise they likely already have gender-diverse ākonga, or that they will inevitably have gender-diverse ākonga.
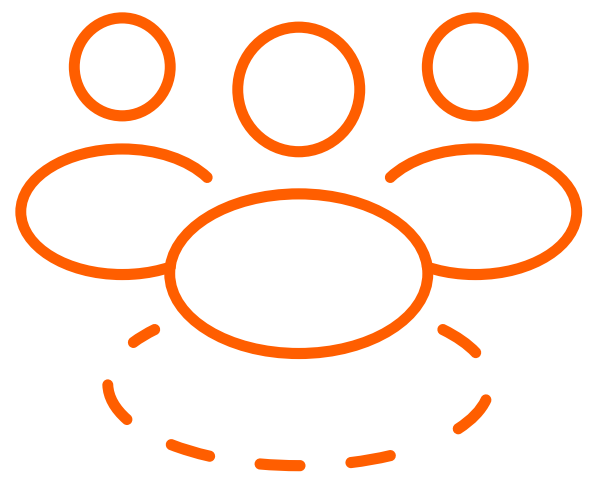
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Allyship in action

Practical ways to be an ally

Affirm identities

Respect names and pronouns – learn people's preferred names and pronouns and use them consistently. If you make an error, correct it without drawing lots of attention to the error.

Recognise the diversity of trans experiences – understand that 'trans' is an umbrella term that includes a range of identities, including those who are non-binary.

Avoid deadnaming – if someone has changed their preferred name, avoid using their deadname. Be mindful in records, class lists, and informal interactions.

Practical ways to be an ally

Creating safe and inclusive spaces

MŌRENA TĀTOU, GOOD MORNING EVERYONE

✓ **Use inclusive language** – for example, 'students' or 'everyone' instead of 'boys and girls'.

✓ **Representation** – Incorporate gender diversity in classroom materials, discussions, and media. Show positive examples of trans people in various fields.

✓ **Advocate for gender-neutral spaces** such as bathrooms and changing rooms where this is possible.

Practical ways to be an ally

Listening and supporting

Engage with rainbow students and staff – check ways to help them feel supported.

Validate the feelings and experiences of rainbow people. Respond empathetically.

Be a trusted person – there can often be a lack of supportive people (perceived or otherwise). Show that you are someone they are safe around by being approachable and consistent.

Practical ways to be an ally

Advocating for trans people
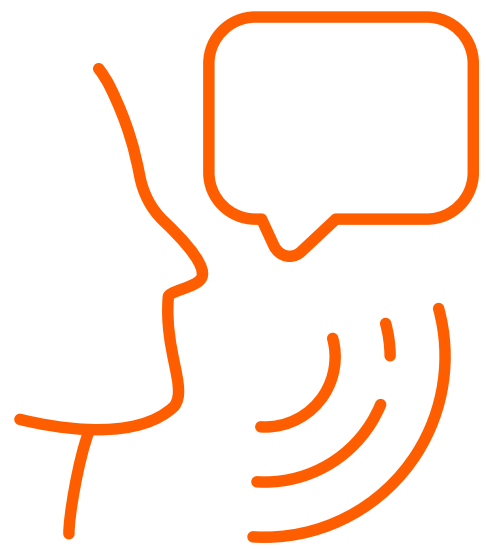
✓ **Challenge discrimination from others.** This includes shutting down bullying.

Discrimination may not only come from students/peers, but also colleagues and people from the community.

✓ **Promote inclusive policies** – Including in the classroom regarding class rules etc. Ensure that gender-diverse people are able to participate in the school fully.

# Practical ways to be an ally

Educate yourself and others

InsideOUT

Continue your journey of learning about gender diversity! Familiarise yourself with gender-diverse identities, statistics, news, stories etc.

Seek knowledge from others, including rainbow organisations such as InsideOUT – there are plenty of free resources available.

Share knowledge – Help educate others in an empathetic, understanding way. Encourage inclusive practice among colleagues.

Practical ways to be an ally

Address unique challenges
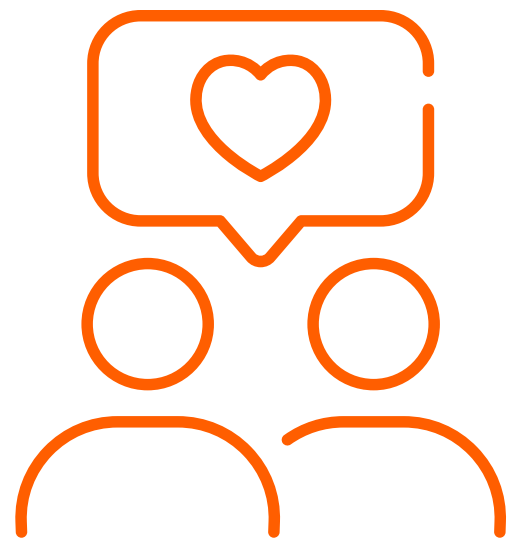
Trans people are often intersectional and may have additional identities. This includes those that are Māori, Pacific Island, Disabled, neurodiverse etc.

✓ **Mindfully navigate privacy and disclosure.** Be careful with sensitive information about gender identity. Always prioritise safety and comfort when discussing someone's gender identity.

✓ **Normalise gender diversity** – treat them as part of the school community rather than an exception.
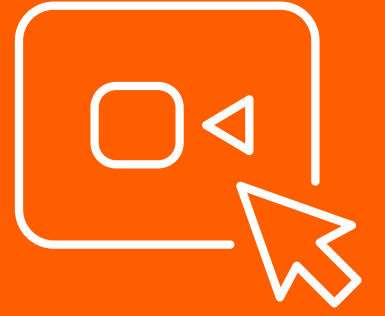
Reflective questions

In what new ways can you be an ally to gender-diverse people?

+ What activities were you engaged in before?

+ What new activities could you now incorporate?

What is allyship *not*?

+ What behaviours/actions suggest someone is not being an ally?

+ How can we ensure people are doing things for the right reasons, and not just for performance?

Short video

1. In what small ways do you act as an ally in everyday life?

2. What small actions do you notice in others that make a big difference?

https://youtu.be/rP8UEJCuXn4

VIEW →

Tēnā koutou
Thank you
Fa'afetai lava

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