

# THE TACKLE BOX



Bright watercolor painting of a tightly grown bamboo thicket. The image was chosen to honor the 2025 theme of [AANHPI](#).

## Awareness Month & Days

### When Doing the Right Thing Takes Guts

Maxwell Jasper Oubre - North Central Division

Let's talk about those moments when something feels off—someone getting harassed, excluded, or mistreated in public. You notice. It's uncomfortable. Your heart races a little. Maybe you feel frozen, unsure of what to do. But here's the truth: you have a choice.

And that's the key—you *have a choice*. The person being targeted doesn't. They're in it, whether they want to be or not.

In that moment, you can walk away, pretend you didn't see it, or convince yourself it's not your business. That's the easy route, and honestly, it's the one most people take. But there's another option. You can choose to act—not recklessly, not in a way that puts yourself in danger, but with intention and *courage*.

Because if you're not the one in harm's way, you're operating from a place of freedom. With that freedom comes a responsibility to those who don't have the same privilege of choice. You don't have to be a hero. You don't have to say the perfect thing. You might stumble over your words or feel awkward, and *that's okay*.

What matters is that you're present. That you're willing to act. That you care enough to try. Because in a world where too many people look away, even a small act of courage can mean everything.

- [ALS Awareness Month](#)
- [Mental Health Awareness Month](#)
  - [Coloring is good for mental health](#) - See Page 6
- [Asian American and Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander \(AANHPI\) Heritage Month](#)
- [Jewish American Heritage Month](#)
- May 11 - Mother's Day
  - [How to make Mother's Day more inclusive](#)
  - [Mother's Day Perspectives from a Working Mom](#)
- May 17 - [International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia](#)
- May 19 - [Malcolm X's Birthday](#)
- May 21 - [World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development](#)
  - [Why invest in culture and creativity](#)
- May 25 - [Michigan Arbor Day Events](#)

# When Doing the Right Thing Takes Guts

The **Allyship A-B-C-D<sup>5</sup>** model is all about empowering you to empower others. It's not about playing the hero or making a scene. It's about showing up when it counts, with care and intention. These are practical tools—things anyone can do—that help shift the moment from harm to support.

And these moments matter. More than we often realize. Because when someone is being harassed or targeted, even small acts of solidarity can remind them that they are not invisible, not alone, and not without support.

*Here's the quick version:*

**First**, assess the situation. Is it safe to step in? If not, don't go it alone. Call for backup, alert someone nearby, or report it to someone in authority. Your safety matters, too. If it is safe, a simple check-in can go a long way. A quick "Are you okay?" or even a presence beside them can shift the dynamic and signal that they are not alone.

**Second**, if you missed your chance to act in the moment, don't worry—it's not too late.

- **Check in** afterward. Find a quiet moment and offer a kind word, an open ear, or practical help. They may not want to rehash what happened—and that's okay. The point is to show that someone noticed and cared. Discretion is fine, but silence helps no one.
- **Speak up** later. Could something be done to make sure this doesn't happen again? Can a policy be improved, or a team be trained? And does the person impacted have access to resources—emotional, legal, or otherwise—that could help them recover or respond?
- **Distract** when appropriate. A light but intentional interruption—spilling a drink, asking for directions, starting an unrelated conversation—can redirect the moment and defuse the situation. Just be careful not to put someone else in harm's way, even unintentionally. Holding someone accountable doesn't require humiliation.
- **Delegate** if you can't intervene yourself. That might mean calling over a security guard, manager, teacher, or friend. And if no one's available in the moment, follow up later. Who needs to know? What would support real change?
- **Document** safely. If you're in a position to record the interaction and it's legal to do so, great. But even if you can't, writing down what happened—who was there, what was said, when and where it occurred—can make a big difference when it's time to report or reflect.

This isn't about politics or perfection. It's about living your values with action. Courage!

doesn't always look dramatic—it's often quiet, thoughtful, and grounded in the simple belief that we all deserve dignity.

So next time you see something that makes your stomach turn or your heart race, pause and ask yourself:

***Can I be as brave as the person who didn't get to choose to be in this moment?***

If the answer is yes—even a little—lean into it. That's not just allyship. That's character. That's how we build trust. That's how we take care of one another.

MJ Oubre (they/them)

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# ALLYSHIP A-B-C-D<sup>5</sup>

## Assess safety risk

A

If you see someone in trouble, assess if you can help safely. Your safety comes first.

## Be in a group

B

It's safer to intervene in a group; if not, report it to someone who can act.

## Check-in on the affected person(s)

C

Reach out to the person who may need help and ask if they need assistance.

## Direct action

Speak up, ask the person to stop, or check on the individual(s)—preferably as a group.

## Delay

Wait for safety, then check if the person is okay. Report the incident—it's never too late to act.

## Distract

Redirect with a conversation, allowing them to get away or get help—any excuse to help them leave.

## Delegate

If it feels unsafe to speak out, alert someone in authority

## Document

If safe and legal, record the incident and note the date, time, and witnesses.

FIRST

SECOND



FRUITS BY THE FISH

Code of Conduct



Conduct Report Form



\*Adapted from University of Cambridge

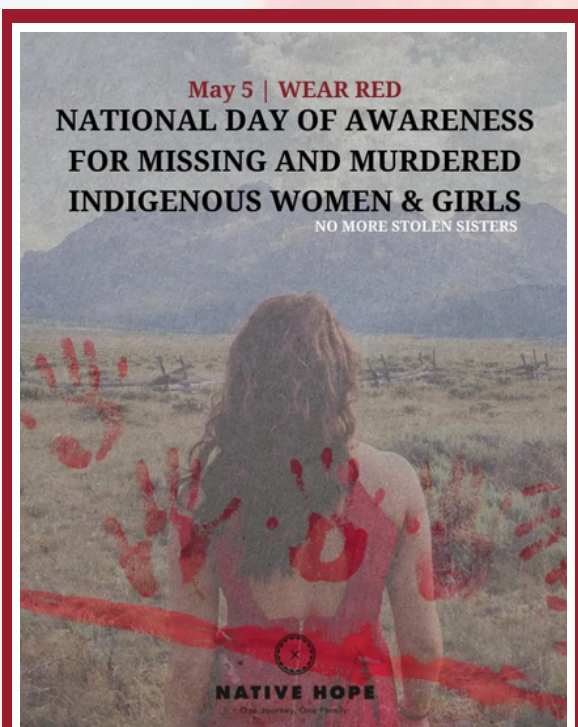
# Promoting Representation: Series on Diverse Children's Literature

Being able to look around you and see portions of your identity shared by others is incredibly important, especially for children. Representation matters as it shapes societal perceptions, combats stereotypes, fosters inclusivity, enhances self-esteem and helps with identity development. So much of the work around DEI is about improving representation so that everyone feels comfortable expressing their true selves and has a welcome place within society. Federal restrictions on DEI, including those imposed on education, have serious and far-reaching ramifications with a scope that is difficult to fully comprehend. One likely outcome is that educators will pull back on programs that incorporate aspects of DEI, meaning school age children will receive less exposure to materials with diverse representation. One way parents can combat this is by exposing their children to books and other materials that focus on representing individuals from varied backgrounds, cultures, abilities, etc. To aid with this we are introducing this limited series that focuses on highlighting children and young adult books that promote representation. This month the books shared focus on disabled representation but other topics will be covered in the future. We hope you enjoy.



Three children read a large open book at a table, as colorful scenes from various cultures—such as a palace, animals, and landscapes—radiate from the pages, filling the room with imagination.

- **Preschool**
  - Deafness: [Butterfly on the Wind](#) by Adam Pottle and Ziyue Chen
  - Wolf-Hirschhorn Syndrome: [Dancing with Daddy](#) by Anitra Rowe Schulte and Ziyue Chen
  - Limb Differences: [Ninja Nate](#) by Markette Sheppard and Robert Paul Jr.
  - Neurodivergent – Autism: [Flap Your Hands: A Celebration of Stimming](#) by Steve Asbell
- **Lower Grades**
  - Wheelchair Use: [A Wheelchair for Francis](#) by Adrienne Mugwanya
  - Limb Differences: [What Happened to You?](#) by James Catchpole
  - Neurodivergent – Dyslexia: [Thank You, Mr. Falker](#) by Patricia Polacco
- **Middle Grades**
  - Physical Disability: [Wonder](#) by R.J. Palacio
  - Cerebral Palsy: [Out of My Mind](#) by Sharon M. Draper
  - Mental Illness: [So B. It](#) by Sarah Weeks
- **Upper Grades**
  - Epilepsy: [Mis\(h\)adra](#) by Iasmin Omar Ata
  - Chronic Illness: [Five Feet Apart](#) by Rachael Lippincott, and Tobias Iaconis Tobias Iaconis
  - Deafness: [The Silence Between Us](#) by Alison Gervais



May 5th is not only a day to honor and remember Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW), but also a time to bring awareness to the international crisis of violence against Indigenous people. It is a call for justice for the Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit people who have been lost or taken from their families and communities. For more information, the websites of the [National Indigenous Women's Resource Center](#) and [Native Hope](#) offer a wealth of excellent resources about the history and significance of MMIW. Below is a list of suggestions for how you can participate in and help raise awareness of MMIW.

- 1) Wear RED on May 5th and post a photo on social media with the hashtag [#NationalDayofAwareness](#) [#MMNWG](#) or [#MMIW](#)
  - 2) Host or participate a community event on May 5<sup>th</sup>, such as that occurring in Grand Rapids this year
  - 3) Host a prayer circle or candlelight vigil on May 5<sup>th</sup>
  - 4) Post a list of names of sisters missing or murdered from your community;
  - 5) Create a living memorial
- View the National Indigenous Women's Resource Center webinars, [recordings](#) and [ally resources](#)

Left: on a rugged high plains backdrop a brunette woman in a red dress stands with her back facing the viewer. Overlaid are red handprints, the symbol that has come to represent MMIW.



An art fully draped kapa cloth decorated with a striking yellow, brown, black and red geometric pattern.



A closeup of the same kapa providing a detailed view of the hand printed pattern and rows of unglazed flat ceramic beads.

# Featured Artist: Lehuauakea

As a Native Hawaiian interdisciplinary artist, Lehuauakea breathes new life into the traditional practices of kapa (barkcloth) and 'ohe kāpala (carved bamboo printing tools). Kapa is a labor-intensive process that transforms tree bark—most commonly from wauke (paper mulberry)—into cloth, historically and presently used for clothing, bedding, ceremonies, and burial wrappings. If you're interested in learning more about the process,



A striking image of seated Lehuauakea dressed in a cream Kapa wrap and black sash holding a 'ohe kāpala with a backdrop of a rugged cliff.



Lehuauakea provides an excellent description [About Kapa](#) on their website. Lehuauakea's work has received national and international recognition, with exhibitions at the Portland Art Museum, National Gallery of Victoria, Queensland Art Gallery of Modern Art, Forge Project, and Museum of International Folk Art, among others.

Lehuauakea strives to again make kapa a part of daily life for Native Hawaiians by preserving and expanding this traditional art form for the next seven generations and beyond. They are committed to revitalizing the patterns and traditions of this Native Hawaiian art while exploring themes of environmental stewardship, Indigenous cultural resilience, and the evolution of contemporary Kanaka Maoli identity. As part of the Native Hawaiian diaspora, they are dedicated to assisting other Hawaiians reconnect with their culture and find empowerment in their heritage.

Remember that you are part of a supportive community, and you are never alone. The DEIJB Committee remains committed to fostering an inclusive environment that ensures the MI AFS has a welcoming space for everyone.

If you'd like to get involved, share resources, or simply connect, we encourage you to reach out! We welcome your voice and participation! You can contact us at [mifishcastafs@gmail.com](mailto:mifishcastafs@gmail.com) or submit items [anonymously](#).

Warm Wishes -

Kyle Brumm (he/him), Dana Castle (she/her), Lydia Doerr (she/her), Tracy Galarowicz (she/her), Kynzie House (she/her), Maggie Haite (they/them), Taylor Skiles (she/her), Kathleen Quebedeaux (she/her)



This Mental Health Awareness Month coloring page is courtesy of the awesome folks at [Mental Health America](https://www.mentalhealthamerica.net). So go ahead, print it out, and relax with your favorite crayons, markers, colored pencils, paints or pastels!