

Responding To Discrimination In The Workplace



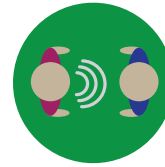
There isn't a right or wrong way to respond to a racist, sexist, or other discriminatory comment. We all learn by speaking out and finding what feels comfortable for us.

Before responding consider...



Goals

Do you just want to stop the behaviour or to educate the person?



Tone

If you want someone to listen, try to use a conversational & non-confrontational tone. Tone is as important as what you say.



Setting

Private conversations provide a better opportunity to educate & start a dialogue. A public response can embarrass the speaker, but publically acknowledges what is wrong with the statement - you may end up educating others too.



Relationship

What you say will be different with a family member vs. a stranger.

While responding...

"I don't like hearing women spoken about that way. I want to discuss the issue with the respect that it deserves."

Express your feelings

"I disagree with what you just said"

Disagree!

If you want you can follow up to explain why you disagree

"What you just said could be considered discrimination. I think you should stop."

Point out policies or standards

"So, are you saying that all indigenous people live on government handouts?"

Paraphrase or repeat back

It can help you clarify what they meant to say or help them hear how biased their comment sounds.

"All Muslim people? Do you really think so?"

Question the validity of the comment

"It sounds like you think no Indigenous people pay taxes. Did you know that Indigenous people actually get very few tax exemptions?"

Challenge the stereotype

Identify the stereotype embedded in the comment, and correct the misinformation

"I'm tired of all these jobs going to people from other countries who aren't even qualified"

"You sound pretty frustrated. Have you been looking for work?"

Express empathy

Sometimes people are speaking from a place of anger, frustration or disappointment. Give them a chance to express their feelings. It may allow for a more productive conversation to addressing what is wrong with what was said.

"How would you feel if someone made a comment like that about your family?"

Help the person self-reflect

This involves encouraging empathy

"For a long time, I didn't realize that..."

Share your own process

If, in the past, you had similar assumptions, what led you to change? It's important not to sound self-righteous or pompous. Make it clear you are speaking from a true desire to share.

To learn more about EQUIP Health Care please visit www.equiphealthcare.ca

References:

1. Anti-Discrimination Response Training developed by Dr. Ishu Ishiyama, Associate Professor, Education and Counselling Psychology, University of British Columbia
2. Goodman, D. (2011) Promoting Diversity and Social Justice: Educating People from Privileged Groups. New York: Routledge

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