

# RESPONDING TO MICROAGGRESSIONS AND BIAS

*(Can be used alone or in combination)*

- **SAY STOP.**
  - “Just stop. It’s not funny.”
  - “Come on. Cut it Out.”
  
- **RESTATE OR PARAPHRASE.**
  - “I think I heard you saying \_\_\_\_\_ (paraphrase their comments). Is that correct?”
  
- **ASK FOR CLARIFICATION OR MORE INFORMATION.**
  - “Could you say more about what you mean by that?”
  - “I’m wondering how you have you come to think that?”
  
- **SEPARATE INTENT FROM IMPACT.**
  - “You probably didn’t realize this, but when you (comment/behavior), it was hurtful/offensive because \_\_\_\_\_. Instead you could \_\_\_\_\_ (different language or behavior.)”
  
- **SHARE YOUR OWN PROCESS.**
  - “I noticed that you \_\_\_\_\_ (comment/behavior). I used to do/say that too, but then I learned...”
  
- **EXPRESS YOUR FEELINGS.**
  - “When you \_\_\_\_\_ (comment/behavior), I felt \_\_\_\_\_ (feeling) and I would like you to \_\_\_\_\_.”
  
- **CHALLENGE THE STEREOTYPE.**

Give information, share your own experience and/or offer alternative perspectives.

  - “In my experience \_\_\_\_\_.”
  - “I think that’s a stereotype. I’ve learned that \_\_\_\_\_.”
  - “Another way to look at it \_\_\_\_\_.”
  
- **PROMOTE EMPATHY.**

Ask how they would feel if someone said something like that about their group, or their friend/partner/child.

  - “I know you don’t like the stereotypes about \_\_\_\_\_ (their group), how do you think he feels when he hears those things about his group?”
  - “How would you feel if someone said that about/did that to your sister or girlfriend?”

- **TELL THEM THEY'RE TOO SMART OR TOO GOOD TO SAY THINGS LIKE THAT.**
  - "Come on. You're too smart to say something so ignorant/offensive."
- **MIRROR.**

Repeat what they just said or did.

  - "Where are YOU really from?"
  - "Can I touch YOUR hair?"
- **PRETEND YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND.**

As people try to explain their comments, they often realize how silly they sound.

  - "I don't get it....."
  - "Why is that funny?"
- **USE HUMOR.**

Exaggerate comment, use gentle sarcasm.

  - "She plays like a girl?" You mean she plays like Serena Williams?" Or Mia Hamm?
- **POINT OUT WHAT THEY HAVE IN COMMON WITH THE OTHER PERSON.**
  - "I'm tired of hearing your Muslim jokes. Do you know he's also studying \_\_\_\_\_ and likes to \_\_\_\_\_? You may want to talk with him about that. You actually have a lot in common."
- **APPEAL TO VALUES AND PRINCIPLES.**
  - "I know you really care about \_\_\_\_\_. Acting in this way really undermines those intentions."
- **W.I.I.F.T. (What's in it for them?)**

Explain why diversity or that individual/group are helpful/valuable.

  - "I know you're not comfortable with \_\_\_\_\_ but they can help us reach out to/better serve other groups on campus/in the community."
  - "In the real world, we are going to have to work with all sorts of people, so might as well learn how to do it here."
- **REMIND THEM OF THE RULES OR POLICIES.**
  - "That behavior is against our code of conduct and could really get you in trouble."

Adapted from: Goodman, D. (2011). *Promoting Diversity and Social Justice: Educating People from Privileged Groups* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: Routledge.  
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