IDENTIFYING AND CONFRONTING BIAS & PREJUDICE

SPEAK UP!
**Spotting Bias & Prejudice**

**Insensitive remarks**
*Examples:*
“Can I touch your hair?”
“That’s so ghetto.”
“Your English is so good!”
“But you don’t look Native American.”

**Belittling jokes**
Jokes that poke fun at an individual or group’s race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, nationality, age, socioeconomic class, political affiliation, or physical appearance.

**Non-inclusive language**
Language that ignores the presence of groups of people.
*Example:*
Using “policeman” instead of “police officer.”

**Stereotyping**
An over-generalization about a group.
*Examples:*
“Mexicans are lazy.”
“Muslims are terrorists.”
“Women are weak.”

**Social avoidance**
Avoiding a person or group based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, nationality, age, socioeconomic class, political affiliation, or physical appearance.

**Ridiculing**
Making fun of or mocking someone based on the way they look or talk.

**Bullying**
Constantly criticizing, ridiculing, dismissing, or ignoring/ostracizing

**Slurs & Name-calling**
Derogatory terms used to insult individuals or groups based on their race or ethnicity.

**De-humanization**
Talking about (or treating) someone as if they were not a human being.
*Example:*
“She’s a dog.”

**Vandalism & Desecration**
*Examples:*
Writing belittling remarks on or defacing someone else’s fliers or posters.
Destroying property motivated by hate for another individual or group.

**Threats, Rape & Assault**
Some of the most severe forms of bias and prejudice. Violence, verbal or physical, is a criminal offense. ’Nuf said.
Why are we afraid to speak up?

If I call her out, it will damage our friendship.

Maybe it was just a joke and they didn’t mean anything by it?

Did I just hear what I think I heard?

Maybe I’m overreacting?

Concern for relationships

Uncertainty about intention

Uncertainty about one’s own perception

Why do we need to speak up?

Intentional or not, words hurt.

Not speaking up just sends the message that this behavior is ‘normal’ and okay.
How should we speak up?

**GET READY!**

**Now or Later?**
Should I speak up right when it happens or wait until the situation is less emotionally charged?

**One-on-One or with Others?**
Does it make sense to confront the person in a group so that I have others to back me up?

Or is it better to talk about it one-on-one over coffee or lunch?

**A NOTE ABOUT THREATS, VANDALISM, RAPE, ASSAULT**
If you have experienced threats or have been the victim of vandalism, rape, or assault and need medical or other emergency assistance, call 911 or the MU Police at 573-874-7652. You can also submit an anonymous bias incident report by going to biasreport.missouri.edu. If this does not apply to your situation, continue to Step 1.

**GET SET!**

**Be Respectful**
Address the behavior. Don’t attack the person.

**Calling Someone “Racist” or “Ignorant” Generally Isn’t a Good Way to Get Them to Listen to You.**

**Listen First**
Listen for the feelings behind the statement. People often make biased comments when they are feeling frustrated, angry or threatened. Listen first to understand where they’re coming from.

**GO!**

Respond in a way that’s comfortable for you, respectful of the other person, and situationally appropriate. Not all of the following strategies work in every situation, but “I” messages can be helpful in any situation.

“When I heard you say ____, I felt ____ (hurt, uncomfortable, angry) because ____ (it’s important to me that... I think we should ... my beliefs are...).”

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More Ways to Speak Up

Adapted from Promoting Diversity and Social Justice (2nd edition) by Diane J. Goodman. © 2011.

**STRATEGY #1: “THE ECHO”**

Paraphrase or repeat back what they said

By restating what the other person said, you make sure you understand what they said and it gives the other person the opportunity to reflect on what they said. Tone of voice is important. You’re not trying to ridicule, just trying to understand and clarify.

![So, you’re saying that all people on welfare are just lazy and looking for a free ride?](image)

**STRATEGY #2: “THE QUESTIONATOR”**

Ask for more information

This strategy is a great way to help you understand why they said what they said. And again, it gives the person another chance to reflect on what they said. After saying it again, they might realize their statement doesn’t make sense or is unfounded. Being genuine is important. Shaming or using sarcasm can backfire.

![I’m wondering what led you to believe this about _____.](image)
STRATEGY #3: “THE HUH?”

Play dumb

Another way to get them to reflect on what they said—especially good for responding to jokes. You can ask them why race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, nationality, disability, etc. is relevant to the story, or ask them to explain the meaning of a specific slur or derogatory term.

STRATEGY #4: “THE DEBUNKER”

Challenge the stereotype

Offer another side of the story by challenging the assumption or stereotype. Use your personal experiences and knowledge to show how the stereotype presented isn’t valid.

THAT’S INTERESTING. IN HIGH SCHOOL I KNEW SEVERAL AFRICAN-AMERICANS WHO WEREN’T REALLY INTO SPORTS AT ALL. WE GEEKED OUT IN SCIENCE CLUB ON OUR ODYSSEY OF THE MIND PROJECT.
When I heard you say “That’s so gay,” I was angry because it’s insulting and hurtful to Gay People. I know you didn’t mean it that way. Using “ridiculous,” “irrational,” “asinine,” “absurd,” etc. might be a better way to make your point.

Yes, Jameel is a Muslim, but did you know he’s also a huge gamer? You like to play Xbox games, too, right?

Strategy #5: “The Connector”
Highlight commonalities

Comments based on bias and prejudice create an “us vs. them” situation. Highlighting the ways in which the person making the comment is the same as the subject of the comments can help dial down the “otherness.”

Strategy #6: “The Emoter”
Express your feelings

Tell the person how you feel and why and then offer a more appropriate alternative.

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More Ways to Speak Up

Strategic #7: “The ‘I’ve Been There’”

Share your own process

Without sounding self-righteous, talk about how you used to think the same but you’ve changed. Explain what made you change your views.

I used to use the term “jewed” but then I found out more about what it really means and how hurtful it can be to people who are Jewish. I say “bargained” now instead.

Strategic #8: “The One-Worder”

Say Ouch

Sometimes when the comment is directed at you personally you want to respond immediately but can’t think of a good response. Saying “ouch!” can stop the person making the comment and lets them know that what they said was hurtful. It’s a safe, simple strategy that can work well in casual, peer-to-peer situations.
Oops!

What if I realize I’ve said something wrong or hurtful?

Everyone has, at one time or another, made a comment rooted in bias or prejudice. Here are a few things you can do if you have said something hurtful or wrong.

Apologize to those you may have hurt with your comment.

Use it as an opportunity to learn why others found your comment hurtful or wrong.