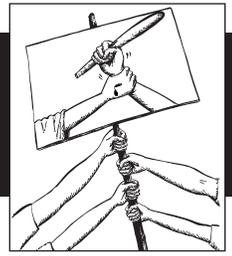


MY BROTHER'S KEEPER: People of Faith Confront Hate Crimes



Ten ways to counteract hate speech

First and foremost, take responsibility for your own speech. If you do stumble, don't let someone else's graciousness take you off the hook. Make amends as quickly and sincerely as possible: "What an insensitive thing for me to say. I'm sorry." Gauge your own comfort level in public situations, and always consider personal safety when choosing to speak up.

- 1. Ask a question.** If someone says something offensive, you can ask him or her why they feel that way. This gives a person a moment to think about what they just said and creates the opportunity for a conversation about how we form our bias and stereotypes.
- 2. Ask people to "say what you mean and mean what you say."** If someone uses a slur to describe something they dislike or find stupid, use this helpful phrase: "I think what you meant to say is that you don't like....."
- 3. Create a culture of respect around you.** Addressing degrading language doesn't have to be complicated. You can simply say to friends, "please don't use that word around me." This will help others think about the impact of their words and they will likely be more careful with others as well.
- 4. Explain why the language they are using is offensive.** Some people use language without understanding its meaning. Instead of immediately criticizing someone, try saying "I'm not sure that you meant anything by that word, but here is what I understand it to mean and why I avoid using it..."
- 5. Talk about the impact of language.** Some people respond better to stories or examples of how words impact others. For example, "I know you don't mean to be offensive to women, but I know lots of young girls who hear that word everyday and it affects their self esteem."
- 6. Do not laugh at offensive jokes.** The easiest way to send a message that a joke is not funny is not to laugh. Even better is to politely interrupt the joke before the offensive punch line.
- 7. Say nothing.** A questioning glance may be an effective and non-confrontational response in a situation in which you feel unsafe speaking directly. Keep moving.
- 8. Say something.** If you choose to raise the issue; state your beliefs clearly. "I find that language very bigoted. It offends me." Or, "I think it's wrong to stereotype people."
- 9. Share a positive message.** Inserting a positive message can help redirect a negative perspective about a particular group. For example, you could say, "I'm sorry that you've had those experiences; my friend represents the group you are describing and she has always been warm and kind."
- 10. Leave the situation.** If these suggestions don't work, you can always remove yourself from the situation. Tell the person, "I'm sorry you still feel this way. I would love to continue this conversation, but only if the language is respectful. Otherwise, I am going to head home."

Adapted from www.preventinghate.org