

Responding to Racism Effectively: Scenarios Worksheet (Facilitator Version)

1. You are having lunch with a co-worker and he begins to tell a joke: “Hey have you heard the one about the (race/ethnicity)____?” [or other racial/ethnic joke]

Notice/Identify What is the problem?	Intervention What would you say/do?
<p>Jokes perpetuate stereotypes Often contain hurtful words/names/language</p> <p>“Just a joke” mentality - intention vs. impact - your intention may not be to cause harm, but...</p> <p><u>Consider the Context:</u> Co-worker, casual but public environment</p>	<p>“I don’t like racial/ethnic jokes” “I don’t find that funny” [simple interruptions]</p> <p>“Jokes can perpetuate hurtful stereotypes even if you didn’t mean to cause any harm”</p>

2. You are watching the Packers game and they are playing the Washington Redskins. One of your friend’s says “I don’t get why the mascot issue is such a big deal. It’s not offensive. People are proud to be Redskins fans. It’s kind of an honor.”

Notice/Identify What is the problem?	Intervention What would you say/do?
<p>Hurtful words - have historical meaning and power</p> <p>“Just a word” - minimizes the impact on Native Americans who take offense</p> <p>Doesn’t really matter if you don’t find it offensive, if at least some Native Americans do then you should respect the fact that it is hurtful/offensive</p> <p><u>Consider the Context:</u> friends, social gathering</p>	<p>“Have you considered why a Native American might find it offensive?”</p> <p>“Have you ever asked a Native American how they feel about it?”</p> <p>“You may not think it is offensive, but others (specifically Native Americans) have expressed the harmful impact on them.”</p> <p>“How might you feel if someone referred to you by using a derogatory racial/ethnic term?”</p>

3. You are driving through town with your aunt in the passenger seat. As you are stopped at a red light, you notice there is an African American man walking down the street on the same side as your car. Your aunt asks you to lock the doors.

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<p>Automatic Responses: based on fear response, which is culturally conditioned by family, community, media influence that perpetuates stereotype of “dangerous” or “criminal”</p> <p>Where does the “gut” reaction come from?</p> <p><u>Consider the Context:</u> family, private one-on-one</p>	<p>Lock the door? (may help decrease fear response, and allow room for discussion)</p> <p>“I’m curious, why did you ask me to lock the door?”</p> <p>“What made you feel that you needed to lock the door?”</p> <p>Maybe don’t push the issue. At least you made her think about it.</p>

4. You are walking around on campus with a friend and you notice flyers for an up-coming Native American Powwow nearby. Your friend says “I wish I was Native American. They are so spiritual and connected to the earth.”

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<p>“Positive” Stereotypes are also problematic. They imply that negative stereotypes must be true as well.</p> <p>Stereotypes (positive or negative) invalidate the individual by assigning group characteristics.</p> <p><u>Consider the Context:</u> friend</p>	<p>“Do you think that all Native Americans are ‘spiritual and connected to the earth?’”</p> <p>“I realize you don’t mean any harm, but I think using stereotypes - even if they are highlighting positive qualities - can be harmful”</p> <p>“If all Native Americans are spiritual and connected to the earth, does that mean that they all have drinking problems too?”</p>

5. You are having coffee with two friends who are meeting each other for the first time. One friend is white and one friend is of Middle Eastern descent. Your white friend says “I can’t believe you are Middle Eastern. It’s good to know there are good Middle Eastern people out there.”

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<p>Inherent assumption that Middle Eastern people are not “good”</p> <p>Fear-based response - stereotype of the dangerous/violent/anti-American</p> <p>Product of media/politics, especially post-9/11</p> <p><u>Consider the context:</u> friends, public place, third-party</p>	<p>“I think you meant well, but that may have been hurtful”</p> <p>“I think this has become a common problem, especially since 9/11. There has been a lot of portrayal in the media of Middle Eastern people as violent, dangerous people who should not be trusted. It’s unfortunate that a small sub-group can taint the image of the rest of the group.”</p> <p>“Would you consider what it would feel like if everyone around you automatically assumed you weren’t a ‘good’ person just because of your racial/ethnic appearance?”</p> <p>To the Middle Eastern friend: “I wanted to check in with you about that comment, and acknowledge that that was probably very hurtful”</p>

6. You are shopping at a local electronics store that allows you to test out their equipment. A young African American man is trying out some of the devices. The store clerk approaches the young man and asks him if he needs any help. The young man responds that he's just looking around. You periodically look up to notice that the store clerk is following the young man around the store.

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<p>Is this part of the store's policy? Is it a personal habit of the clerk?</p> <p>Stereotype of African Americans as criminal</p> <p>Product of mass arrest and incarceration of African American men, media coverage of African American men involved in the criminal justice system</p> <p><u>Consider the Context:</u> Strangers, public place</p>	<p>"I noticed that after this young man told you he was just looking you continued to follow him around the store while he shopped. I also noticed that your white customers are not being followed. Is it your store's policy to oversee your African-American customers more than your white customers? If so, I would like to speak with the manager."</p>

7. You walk into the break room at work, and overhear several co-workers talking about Affirmative Action. One co-worker says “I’m so sick of this. Slavery happened so long ago, can we just move on and not dwell on it? Affirmative Action does nothing except perpetuate the problem. It’s reverse racism!”

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<p>What are the underlying values of the speaker? They seem to be concerned about fairness.</p> <p>Ignorance and/or Denial of historical events that created/perpetuated racial inequity and oppression.</p> <p>Common deflection: “reverse racism” - ignores the root origins of the problem and diverts blame back onto people of color.</p> <p><u>Consider the Context:</u> Co-workers, at work What if it was your supervisor?</p>	<p>“It seems as though fairness is important to you.” Start a discussion about the hundreds of years of discrimination and marginalization of African Americans. “Can you put yourself in that position?”</p> <p>“We are not just talking about slavery. There have been many policies that exclude African Americans and other people of color from access to opportunities and resources.” (Redlining, Fair Housing Act, GI Bill, etc)</p> <p>“Can I suggest you read this article? Watch this video?”</p> <p>Educate self - may need to leave the situation and learn more</p> <p>Have a discussion about the importance of diversity and multiculturalism. Different perspectives help us learn/grow and lead to better outcomes.</p>

8. In response to an invitation to participate in the SPD's racial justice initiative (this program) one of your co-workers rolls their eyes and says "Seriously? I already did this last year. Why are they making us do this again? I think we get the point. It's such a waste of time."

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<p>This is not something we learn about once and then we are done. It takes an ongoing discussion. It requires us to keep listening to others' experiences, and to challenge what we think we know.</p> <p>"waste of time" mentality is hurtful and invalidates those affected most (people of color)</p> <p>"Preaching to the Choir" - well, the choir needs to practice. We all regress and we all have blind-spots when it comes to privilege and oppression.</p> <p>Obviously race is still a big issue within the WI criminal justice system (recent reports).</p> <p>Racism is not over. We need to continue talking about it, and take action when we can.</p> <p><u>Consider the Context:</u> Co-worker, at work What if it was a supervisor?</p>	<p>"Has the problem of racism or racial disparity gone away or improved tremendously since our last program? Tell me about that."</p> <p>"I think it's important to keep talking about these issues and to hear other people talk about they are affected by racism."</p> <p>"What's the harm it checking it out? Maybe we will learn something"</p> <p>"As long as people are still being hurt/ affected/ oppressed, we need to take action/keep talking/keep learning"</p> <p>"We all have blind-spots when it comes to recognizing racism. By having an ongoing discussion, we can bring some of those blind-spots to light so that we are less likely to act in an oppressive way"</p>

9. You are riding in the car with your parents. Suddenly, the car next to you starts to pull into your lane as though they don't notice your vehicle. Your dad honks the horn and avoids a collision. He looks at the other driver and then says "No wonder. He's Asian."

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<p>Stereotypes</p> <p><u>Contextual considerations:</u> Family</p>	<p>"Dad, c'mon" "Really?" [simple interruptions]</p> <p>"Do you really think that being of Asian descent has anything to do with someone's ability to drive?"</p>

10. You are talking to some friends about where to have dinner and someone says "There's a really great place on the west side but the neighborhood is pretty 'ghetto'"

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<p>Hurtful words/names/language</p> <p>"That's not what I meant" Subtle innuendos/euphemisms - ghetto....poor?.....minority?</p> <p><u>Consider the Context:</u> friends</p>	<p>"What do you mean by ghetto?"</p> <p>"That word has negative racial connotations..."</p> <p>"Do you know the origin of the word 'ghetto'?"</p>

11. A woman comes in to your office and starts speaking Spanish, and it is apparent that she does not speak English. A co-worker says “That is so frustrating. The least she could do is learn the language if she is going to live here. She’s probably not even legal.”

<p style="text-align: center;">Notice/Identify What is the problem?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Intervention What would you say/do?</p>
<p>“White is right” mentality and North American/European American ethnocentrism</p> <p>To be “in” or “one of us” you must speak our language, wear our clothes, behave accordingly (everyone should assimilate to “our” culture)</p> <p>Hurtful language - “not legal” or “illegal” or “alien”</p> <p><u>Consider the Context:</u> co-worker, at work What if it was your supervisor?</p>	<p>“May I ask you why it bothers you that she doesn’t speak English?”</p> <p>“I think it would be hard to move to a new country and not speak the language”</p> <p>“Why would you automatically assume that she doesn’t have citizenship?”</p> <p>“What would it be like to be called an ‘alien’? or illegal? It seems very dehumanizing.”</p>

12. You are at a family gathering, sitting around talking with your grandmother. Also present are some of your younger cousins, as well as your niece and nephew. Your grandmother makes a comment about how many “colored people” now live in the neighborhood.

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<p>Hurtful words/names/language - historical weight/power</p> <p>Perhaps not intentional - old “accepted” language</p> <p>What was she implying about the increase in diversity in the neighborhood? Positive/Negative?</p> <p><u>Consider the Context:</u> family, inter-generational</p>	<p>“Actually, Grandma, that word isn’t appropriate anymore. You could say “people of color” instead.”</p> <p>“I think it’s nice that our neighborhood is becoming more diverse”</p>

