

INTERRUPTING BIASED AND STEREOTYPIC COMMENTS

Remember: When people feel attacked, they become defensive and don't listen. **Keep your tone non-confrontational and non-judgmental.** Decide whether you want to simply stop the comment or also educate.

SOME POSSIBLE RESPONSES: (They can be used in combination.)

- **PARAPHRASE (REPEAT BACK)** what they said. It clarifies it for you and for them.
- **EXPRESS EMPATHY AND COMPASSION.** Listen for the feelings behind the statement.
- **ASK FOR MORE INFORMATION.** Try to understand why people hold those views.
- **PLAY DUMB-** as people try to explain their comments, they often realize how silly they sound.
- **CHALLENGE THE STEREOTYPE.** Give information, share your own experience and/or offer alternative perspectives.
- **PROMOTE EMPATHY.** How would they feel if someone said something like to about their group, or their friend/partner/child.
- **EXPRESS YOUR FEELINGS** when hearing the comment, and explain why you're offended or uncomfortable.
- **SHARE YOUR OWN PROCESS.** Talk about how you used to say, think or feel similar things but have changed.
- **SEPARATE INTENT FROM IMPACT.** Acknowledge that they may not have meant to be offensive or that they wouldn't intentionally do something hurtful.
- **USE HUMOR.** Exaggerate comment, use gentle sarcasm
- **TELL THEM THEY'RE TOO SMART OR TOO GOOD TO SAY THINGS LIKE THAT.**
- **APEAL TO VALUES AND PRINCIPLES.**
- **POINT OUT WHAT THEY HAVE IN COMMON WITH THE OTHER PERSON--** interests, values, experiences, concerns.
- **W. I. I. F. T. (What's in it for them).** Explain why diversity or that individual/group can be helpful/valuable.
- **POINT OUT POLICY OR LAWS THAT PROHIBIT SUCH CONDUCT.** Remind people of their liability.

Adapted from, Diane J. Goodman, *Promoting Diversity and Social Justice: Educating People from Privileged Group*, 2nd ed., Routledge, 2011 drdianegoodman@gmail.com www.dianegoodman.com