

## CONFRONTING ISSUES OF PREJUDICE

1. Don't ignore it! Don't let an ethnic slur or joke pass without a remark. To do so sends the message that you are in agreement with such behavior or attitudes.
2. Be aware of your own hesitations to intervene in these situations. Confront your own fears about interrupting discrimination, set your priorities, and take action.
3. Be open to the limitations your attitudes, stereotypes, and expectations place on your perspective. None of us remain untouched by the discriminatory images and behaviors we have been socialized to believe.
4. Don't be afraid of possible tension or conflict. In certain situations it may be unavoidable. These are sensitive and deep-seated issues that won't change without some struggle.
5. Project a feeling of understanding when discriminatory events occur.
6. Explain and engage when you confront prejudice. Try not to preach or be self-righteous.
7. Eradicating racism is a long term struggle requiring continuous change and growth. Try not to get too frustrated.
8. Be a role model. Practice the positive values you are trying to teach. Try not to compartmentalize your response to "multi-cultural time."
9. Distinguish between categorical thinking and stereotyping. For example, "redheads " is a category, but "redheads have fiery tempers" is a stereotype.
10. Remember that issues of human dignity, equality, and safety are non-negotiable.

*Adapted from Patti DeRosa, The Multicultural Project, Communication and Education Inc., Cambridge, Mass.*

## STRATEGIES FOR RESPONDING TO SLURS AND ETHNIC JOKES

Prejudiced remarks, offensive ethnic jokes and racial slurs can occur in any setting. Left unchecked such comments can often get out of hand and poison a work, school or social situation. Not responding to these remarks conditions us to accept them, and if we accept them it may be easier to be accepting of bigotry, discrimination, scapegoating and or even violence.

While, there are no cookbook strategies for confronting such remarks, the following are some effective strategies:

### IN A PRIVATE CONVERSATION

\*Don't laugh at the joke or slur.

If you know the person, voice your anger to them calmly but pointedly.

State how you feel rather than making an abstract statement  
Paraphrase the remarks to make sure you perceived the comment as the person meant it.

\*If the speaker dismisses the objection, continue the dialogue, hear the other person's concerns and point out your own.

### IN A GROUP SETTING OR MEETING

\*If the remark or action is particularly outrageous regardless of the speaker or the setting it may be necessary to register your disagreement.

\*Usually in group settings it is preferable not to publicly embarrass the speaker making an offensive comment.

\*At a large meeting or public talk, passing the speaker a note may be an appropriate means of expressing your displeasure with an offensive comment.