

Just one person speaking up can inspire others to do the same.

OUCH! That Stereotype Hurts



Communicating Respectfully in a Diverse World

Participant Handout

Based on the book by Leslie C. Aguilar

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Your voice will make a difference.

OUCH! That Stereotype Hurts

Goal

Explore communication skills for promoting inclusion and respect in the workplace.

Objectives

Participants will have the opportunity to...

- Understand the impact of stereotypes and biased statements, even when casually said.
- Identify the most common reasons people sit silent in the face of bias and stereotypes.
- Enhance skills for speaking up against stereotypes without blame or guilt.

Definitions

Stereotypes

- An oversimplified image or statement applied to a whole group of people, without regard for the individual.

Bias

- A predisposition to see events, people or items in a positive or negative way. Bias is an attitude or belief.

Silent Collusion

- To go along with through silence.

Ally

- Someone who speaks up on behalf of someone else.

OUCH! Discussion

Consider the following questions. Out of respect for others, please avoid identifying specific individuals in your discussions.

1. Do you ever hear similar stereotypes or biased comments in this community? In this organization?

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2. Why do individuals sometimes remain silent in the face of stereotypes or other demeaning comments? Share experiences and examples.

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3. How does this video relate to you? Do you see yourself reflected in any way?

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Speaking Up Activity

Directions: You will see ten quick vignettes. Decide which technique or techniques each vignette demonstrates. Circle the technique(s) used.

1



"Look, I know you meant that to be funny, but it hurts."

Assume Good Intent and Explain Impact

Ask a Question

Interrupt and Redirect

Broaden to Universal Human Behavior

Make It Individual

Say Ouch!

2



"I'm not so sure that's a guy thing. I think that applies to both men and women."

Assume Good Intent and Explain Impact

Ask a Question

Interrupt and Redirect

Broaden to Universal Human Behavior

Make It Individual

Say Ouch!

3



"I'm not sure I caught that. What were you saying?"

Assume Good Intent and Explain Impact

"Do you mean that?"

Ask a Question

"Uh, what are you saying, man?"

Interrupt and Redirect

Broaden to Universal Human Behavior

Make It Individual

Say Ouch!

4



"So, did you hear the one about the three bald men?"

Assume Good Intent and Explain Impact

"Careful there, ladies, I resemble that remark."

Ask a Question

Interrupt and Redirect

Broaden to Universal Human Behavior

Make It Individual

Say Ouch!

5



"Those people don't even try to speak English."

Assume Good Intent and Explain Impact

"You sound frustrated. What happened? Was there someone you couldn't understand?"

Ask a Question

Interrupt and Redirect

Broaden to Universal Human Behavior

Make It Individual

Say Ouch!

6



"I think she's great. I just don't want to put her in a situation where she can fail."

"I know you mean well, but now you're not giving her a chance at all."

Assume Good Intent and Explain Impact

Ask a Question

Interrupt and Redirect

Broaden to Universal Human Behavior

Make It Individual

Say Ouch!

7



"The baby boomers won't have the level of tech savvy we need. We need to recruit young kids right out of school."

"Well, let's not assume that all the young people will have the skills we need and others won't. Let's test everyone's skill and then make a decision based on the results."

Assume Good Intent and Explain Impact

Ask a Question

Interrupt and Redirect

Broaden to Universal Human Behavior

Make It Individual

Say Ouch!

8



"I think these kids just can't be trusted."

"I don't think that's an age thing. Do you know any people our age who aren't trustworthy?"

Assume Good Intent and Explain Impact

Ask a Question

Interrupt and Redirect

Broaden to Universal Human Behavior

Make It Individual

Say Ouch!

9



"So, about the holiday schedule."

"Let Jenny work the holiday shift. She's single; she doesn't have family."

"Ouch!"

"What do you mean?"

"I know that you're trying to help out the other employees, but is that fair to Jenny?"

Assume Good Intent and Explain Impact

Ask a Question

Interrupt and Redirect

Broaden to Universal Human Behavior

Make It Individual

Say Ouch!

10



"OK, that went really well. That wraps things up, is that right?"

"We really need someone who is young and energetic for this job."

"It sounds like you're saying an older person couldn't do this job. Is that what you mean?"

"Well, not necessarily, but they really have to have a lot of energy, deal with the public, lift heavy things."

"So what I'm hearing you say is we need someone who can lift heavy things, and who has a lot of energy to deal with the public."

"Exactly."

"OK, we'll look for those qualifications regardless of the person's age."

"Well, okay, yeah."

Assume Good Intent and Explain Impact

Ask a Question

Interrupt and Redirect

Broaden to Universal Human Behavior

Make It Individual

Say Ouch!

Speaking Up Discussion

Consider the following questions. Out of respect for others, please avoid identifying specific individuals in your discussions.

Assume Good Intent and Explain Impact | Ask a Question | Interrupt and Redirect
Broaden to Universal Human Behavior | Make It Individual | Say Ouch!

1. When you experience demeaning or stereotypical comments, which technique(s) for Speaking Up do you personally prefer? In what types of situations would you use these techniques? Share experiences and examples.

2. Discuss times or situations in which you hesitate to speak up against biased or stereotypical comments.
 - What type of situation is most difficult for you?
 - How do you respond in these situations?
 - If you remain silent, what is the impact?

3. How can you increase your comfort, confidence and skill in speaking up in these situations?

Personal Application: How will you apply the Speaking Up Techniques in your professional or personal life? *(You may discuss this in the group or write your own private response below.)*

Skills Practice

1. In this scenario, what is the impact of this statement if left unaddressed?

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2. Will you speak up...

...now or later?

...in public or in private?

...on your own or with the help of an ally?

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3. Which technique(s) can you use to speak up without blaming or shaming the other person?
Practice / role play speaking up now.

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Key Learning Points

Stereotypes exist and are prevalent in our society. Stereotypes are oversimplified images and statements applied to a whole group of people, without regard for the individual.

Bias is a predisposition to see certain things, events or people in a positive or negative way.

No one person or group owns bias or stereotyping. The same person can be both recipient and sender of biased statements.

Stereotypes touch every person – we may send stereotypes, be the recipient or target of stereotypical statements, or we may be a bystander witnessing stereotypes. We either speak up or stay silent in the face of stereotypes and other biased statements.

There are many **reasons people remain silent** in the face of stereotypes or other biased statements, even if they'd like to speak up – embarrassment and discomfort, fear of social isolation or negative implications, or they don't know what to say.

When we remain silent in the face of stereotypes and other disrespectful comments, others interpret this as agreement or support. This is called **silent collusion** – to go along with through silence.

There ARE ways to speak up without blaming or shaming the other person. The key is to **assume the other person is a decent human being** and did not intend harm.

Anyone can speak up in the face of demeaning or stereotypical comments. You don't have to be the boss. A simple phrase or question on your part can turn a conversation from destructive to productive.

An **ally** is someone who speaks up on behalf of someone else. Sometimes as a bystander, you have more power to influence change than does the targeted person, who may not be present, may feel powerless to speak up, or may be stunned into silence.

One voice – **your voice** – **can make a difference.** So, go ahead, **speak up on behalf of respect:**

Assume Good Intent and Explain Impact

Ask a Question

Interrupt and Redirect

Broaden to Universal Human Behavior

Make It Individual

Say Ouch!

Notes

A series of horizontal dotted lines for taking notes.

Quotes

“The simple act of naming a bias as such or objecting to it on the spot establishes a social atmosphere that discourages it: saying nothing serves to condone it.”

– Daniel Goleman, Emotional Intelligence

“Communication provides the legs for bias, carrying it from person to person, from generation to generation. Eventually, however, communication will be the way to end discrimination.”

– John N. Bailey, ABC, Exec. Dir, International Association of Business Communicators
Without Bias: A Guidebook for Nondiscriminatory Communication (preface)

“We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of the bad people but for the appalling silence of the good people.”

– Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
Why We Can't Wait (Letter from Birmingham Jail)

“We must be the change we want to see in the world.”

– Mahatma Gandhi

*“I am only one; but I am still one.
I cannot do everything, but still I can do something.
I will not refuse to do the something I can do.”*

– Helen Keller