

6 Steps to Speak UP against everyday bigotry

1. **Be Ready.** You know another moment like this will happen, so prepare for it. Think of yourself as the one who will speak up. Promise yourself not to remain silent. Summon your courage, whatever it takes to get that courage, wherever that source of courage is for you. To bolster that courage, have something to say in mind before an incident happens. Open-ended questions often are a good response. "Why do you say that?" "How did you develop that belief?"
2. **Identify the Behavior.** Sometimes, pointing out the behavior candidly helps someone hear what they're really saying, for example, "Joe, what I hear you saying is that all women are objects" (or whatever the slur is). Or, "Sally, you seem to be classifying an entire gender in a derogatory way. Is that what I hear you saying?" When identifying behavior, however, avoid labeling, name-calling or using loaded terms (e.g., jerk, sexist pig). Describe the behavior; don't label the person. If our goal is to communicate, loaded terms get us nowhere. If we simply call someone a racist or sexist, for example, walls go up.
3. **Appeal to Principles.** If the speaker is someone you know or have a relationship with, call on their higher principles, for instance, "Sam, I've always thought of you as fair-minded, so I am surprised when you say something that sounds bigoted." Appeal to their better instincts. Remember that people are complex. What they say in one moment is not necessarily an indication of everything they think.
4. **Set Limits.** We cannot control other people, but can say, "Please don't tell sexist jokes in my presence anymore. If you do, I will have to leave." Or, "My workspace is not a place where I tolerate bigoted remarks. What you say outside of this space is your business, but here I ask that you respect my wishes." Then follow through. The point is to draw a line, to say, "I don't want you to use that language when I'm around." Even if attitudes don't change, by shutting off bad behavior, we limit its contagion. Fewer people hear it or experience it.
5. **Find an Ally/Be an Ally.** Seek out like-minded people and ask them to support you in whatever ways they can against everyday bigotry. And remember to return the favor: If you are not the *first* voice to speak up against everyday bigotry, be the *next* voice. Always speak up, and never be silenced out of fear. To be an ally, we must lead by example and inspire others to do the same.
6. **Be Vigilant.** Remember: Change happens slowly. People typically make small steps, not large ones. Stay prepared, keep speaking up. Don't risk silence. There's a sense of personal disappointment in not saying something when we know we should have. If we don't speak up, we surrender part of ourselves. We let bigotry win.

SPEAK UP! Can be used as a verbal training tool...

Tell a story about everyday bigotry — from your own life, the fast facts document, or the scenarios below.

Explain the scope of the problem.

Review the steps and discuss how they could be applied in that situation.

Invite and answer questions.

SPEAK UP! Can be used as a written training tool...

Materials: Index cards (4" x 6")

Pens/pencils

Space for working in small groups and pairs

Ask participants to write down on an index card an everyday experience with bigotry.

Collect the cards to maintain anonymity and shuffle them. (If time is short, facilitators can use their own examples.)

Break into small groups, and give each group an index card.

Ask participants to discuss in small groups:

- How might this incident affect the people involved — the target, perpetrator, and witnesses?
- How might this incident affect the community where it happened (e.g., business, school, family, etc) in terms of emotional, social, physical, and financial consequences?
- How could the Six Steps be applied by any of those involved?

Come back to the larger group, and ask each group to share key points from its discussion.

SPEAK UP! Can be used as an active training tool...

Materials: 10 pieces of paper, numbered 1-10

Tape

Barriers to Interrupting Everyday Bigotry:

Tape numbered pieces of paper taped to the wall.

Explain to participants that:

1 means "extremely uncomfortable responding", and

10 means "extremely comfortable responding."

Read two or three examples from the gathered index cards activity (or the scenarios below).

As you read examples, ask participants to move in front of the number that represents how comfortable they would be responding to each incident.

Invite volunteers to share why they selected their "comfort number," identifying the external and internal factors they considered.

Note that our comfort levels in responding to bias incidents often vary by location and by who else is involved. Practicing with these exercises can help us be more comfortable in more settings.”

SPEAK UP! Example scenarios...

Scenario #1. "A joke like a lead balloon."

A liberal arts college professor is talking with three other professors (2 men, 2 women). A professor from another department tells a joke, asking, "How is a woman like a tea bag?" No one answers. He continues, "You use 'em once and throw 'em away!" Stunned, the three listening professors are silent, neither laughing nor speaking. Everyone walks away. Later, the other male professor who was present talks to the woman professor. They both agree that they were unable to respond in that moment because they felt so shocked by the joke.

Scenario #2. "Victoria's secret isn't much of a secret..."

The WindowsLive website for this project has advertisements. For much of the summer, the ad on the right showed a scantily-clad woman modeling underwear for Victoria's Secret. We found this ironic. The project aims to challenge the implicit societal message that women, in part, are objects to be gazed at. The assumption is that women should first and foremost be *GOOD* objects (i.e., beautiful). Even as we (two women) worked toward this goal, we were continually exposed yet again to female objectification -- an image that conveyed woman-as-sexual-object. Research shows that constant exposure to objectifying images makes women feel worse about themselves, and undermines their competence. How to speak up to a corporation?

Scenario #3. "Business as usual..."

A female manager is referred to as the "office mom" by a man she supervises. No man is ever referred to as the office "dad".

Scenarios #4. "More business as usual..."

A male employee comments on the physical appearance of female colleagues. "She's such a pretty girl," or 'She's a very lovely woman.' A woman coworker finds these comments inappropriate and feels uncomfortable.

Scenarios #5. "Yet more business ..."

A man bakes cookies and brings them to the office. A woman coworker arrives later and asks who brought them. She thanks the man, asking, "Did your wife bake them?"