


# GENERAL COMMENTS - HOW CAN I RESPOND?


People often tell us they want to respond to prejudice when they see it - but they don't feel quite confident enough or 'know what to say'. So we've created these resources to help offer some ideas and guidance. We've worked with people with lived experience of responding to prejudice. Together we have identified the comments they hear most often, and the potential responses they would suggest using to reply. Experience tells us that arguing doesn't work, but by talking and listening, we can help to change perspectives and attitudes.




Remember, you don't have to engage in conversation if you don't feel physically and emotionally safe to do so, and all hate crime should be reported to Nottinghamshire Police by calling 101 (999 in an emergency) or online through True Vision at [www.report-it.org.uk](http://www.report-it.org.uk)


**! Warning: Please be aware the content of these comments and responses may be offensive or distressing and is intended for educational purposes !**



Prejudiced comment	Potential responses
<p>What about my freedom of speech?</p> <p>This is just my opinion and I have a right to an opinion.</p> <p>You can't say anything without offending someone.</p> <p>This is political correctness gone mad.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are already limits to freedom of speech. You can be sued for libel for spreading lies about someone, for example.</li> <li>• Oppressed groups are having their freedom of speech restricted by receiving hate and abuse for being who they are - we need to consider how exercising our own freedoms might impact on the freedoms of others.</li> <li>• We can express our opinions, but freedoms, like power, come with responsibility. You don't have the right to use it to incite hate, riots, or to purposefully target people.</li> <li>• Isn't there anything that you think takes freedom of speech too far? For example are there certain things you think shouldn't be discussed with children, or things that would seriously offend you?</li> <li>• Say what you want, but I also have the right to ask you why you said it and challenge you.</li> </ul>
<p>You're being ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- too sensitive.</li> <li>- a snowflake.</li> <li>- a libtard.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maybe you think that, but I am concerned by what was said because I'm considering the possible impact it could have.</li> <li>• It's easy to just not care, but if someone cares about someone saying something harmful or offensive, it's because they're considering the wider impacts that it could have.</li> </ul>
<p>I saw a post/report that said this was happening.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We all need to fact check our news. Not everything shared in the news or online is correct or shows the whole picture so it's important to find out more before making opinions.</li> <li>• A lot of the things we see or read are designed to trigger our emotions and make us take sides. We have to take a step back and look at the bigger picture to see if something is as it appears or if we're being manipulated.</li> </ul>
<p>These responses are just creating divisions - we need to stop making a mountain out of a molehill when there isn't even an issue.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If someone gets upset by what someone is saying or the way that they're behaving, then maybe it's a much bigger issue than you realise for that person.</li> <li>• Maybe the divisions were already there and we need to talk about it to get past that. We all have different experiences and triggers so we can't know how someone else is feeling or responding to something.</li> <li>• If someone's upset, even if you don't agree with the reason why, telling them to get over it won't work and it just doesn't help. The best way to move on is to listen and understand why it upset them - even if that takes a little bit of work, it'll be less work in the long run.</li> </ul>

Prejudiced comment	Potential responses
<p>People get ahead just because they tick a box. It's unfair.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are you feeling unheard or overlooked? Do you feel you need more support or recognition?</li> <li>• The playing field is already uneven because of injustices in the world that have favoured some people over others. The 'tick boxes' are a way of rebalancing this and making things fair for everyone.</li> <li>• Many people have to work a lot harder to get to the same place as others who have certain characteristics. This goes both ways in different situations, but most commonly there are some groups that struggle more. When there's positive action in place (which is rare, actually - and positive discrimination is also illegal), it's only to balance this situation.</li> </ul>

<p>These aren't issues anymore...  - Women already have equality.  - Racism is fixed.  - etc.  What more do you want?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We still have a long way to go.</li> <li>• We may have equality in the law for these issues, but many still face the consequences of years of inequality.</li> <li>• There is still a lot of discrimination around. We need structural reforms to institutions that haven't kept up with changes over the years, and we need to do more to address unconscious discrimination.</li> </ul>
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<p>I don't have privilege, I worked and earned everything I have.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having privilege doesn't mean you don't have to work hard to get somewhere, it just means that you're less likely to face as many hurdles as other do to get there, or might progress further than someone without privilege who has put in just as much or even more work.</li> <li>• Privilege and hard work are easily confused but are not the same. To be privileged means that rules, institutions and conscious or unconscious bias might favour people in your category over others.</li> <li>• Historical privilege means that there are many people today who are disadvantaged and suffering the consequences of past discrimination, because they have to work harder to overcome these circumstances and achieve the same outcomes as others.</li> </ul>
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<p>I have a problem with this group of people - but I don't mean you!</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I have friends and family who are part of this group as well - do you have a problem with them?</li> <li>• Maybe if you knew them just like you know me, then you wouldn't have an issue with them - perhaps you've been taught or convinced you have an issue with them when really you don't.</li> <li>• You might not mean to hurt me by saying that, but have you thought how it might make me feel to say that you have an issue with people like me - but I'm the exception?</li> <li>• Why do you think you have a problem with them? Do you think they have a problem with you?</li> </ul>
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<p>I don't have a problem with it but other people might.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It's ok for them to have an opinion but why should my rights be infringed because other people might have a problem with me?</li> <li>• Why do you feel it's necessary for you to defend the views that other people might have, which you don't even agree with, over me in that case?</li> <li>• In society we all need to compromise to live together peacefully. If other people have a problem with it then that's fine and their opinion should be taken on board, but if it doesn't even affect them then is it right to give those opinions equal or greater weight?</li> </ul> 
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