

## What Can an Ally Say?

Here are examples of what you can say when you hear hurtful or offensive comments and jokes. If you are uncomfortable responding directly, you can use the indirect responses identified below.

### General Tips for How to Respond

- Describe the problematic behaviour or language
- Remain calm and assume good intentions
- Avoid labeling or name-calling
- Use a non-judgmental tone and facial expression

### Direct Response

- **Clarify what you heard:** *"I think I hear you saying that all \_\_\_\_\_ are \_\_\_\_\_. Is that what you mean?"; "You seem to be describing an entire group of people in a derogatory way. Is that what you meant to do?" "It sounded to me that you think ..."*
- **Ask for more information:** *"What do you mean?"; "I'm not sure I understand what you are saying. Can you explain?"; "How did you develop that belief?"; "What's so funny?"*
- **Appeal to common values and/or the principles that guide Mount Sinai Hospital:** *"At MSH, we learn to treat others with respect and sensitivity. I think that statement is disrespectful/insensitive."; "At MSH, we don't talk about people that way. Can we discuss something else?"*
- **Refer to your own journey:** *"That was my first reaction too, but then I realized ..."* or *"I used to think the same thing, then I started to question why I thought/felt that way."*
- **State your opinion about the comment:** *"I think it's wrong to stereotype people."; "It is unfair to generalize about a group of people."*
- **Appeal to the speaker's integrity:** *"I've always thought of you as a fair-minded person. It surprises me to hear you say something that sounds biased."*
- **Explain the impact:** *"Your comment is hurtful."*
- **Point to your ALLY button:** *"I am an ally. I have to speak up."*

### Indirect Response

- **Use non-verbal signals:** Give a questioning glance, change the subject, or leave.
- **Repeat the statement without the discriminatory language:** Someone says *"My day has been so crazy."* You respond *"Did you mean to say your day has been hectic?"*

\*\*\*Remember that your goal is to educate and create empathy\*\*\*

Adapted from: *Ouch! That Stereotype Hurts*, International Training and Development, LLC (2007) Aguilar, L. (Author), Lesko, J. (Producer-Distributor), SunShower Learning. For additional information see: [www.OuchThatStereotypeHurts.com](http://www.OuchThatStereotypeHurts.com),

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