



# Interrupt Bias. Every Time. In The Moment. Without Exception.

Bias is prejudice in favour of or against a thing, person, or group compared with another. Biases can be innate or be learned.

Biased language includes slurs, put-downs, stereotypes, and other negative labels. Most of these remarks are said in ignorance, but some reflect real hostility.

There are times when someone says something biased and you struggle with how you'll respond. These are opportunities that must be acted on the moment they occur.

Modelling the kind of behaviour you want to see in society is one of the best ways to teach it.

Every moment that bias goes unanswered is a moment that allows its roots to grow deeper and stronger. If you don't speak up against bias, your silence says that you condone it. In moving forward, consider the basics:

## BE PREPARED

Prepare by educating yourself on issues relating to equity, inclusion, and anti-racism. Prepare by having handy phrases you are comfortable saying. Promise yourself that you will speak up in these moments, then follow through.

## BE POSITIVE

Do not just be reactive. Take proactive steps to help create the school and social climate you seek.

## BE CONFIDENT

There is no need to apologize for speaking up. Do not let naysayers silence you. You recognize bias and you seek to eradicate it. This is important work and you must dedicate yourself to it.

## BE ENCOURAGING

Help others prepare to speak up. Encourage the good behaviour you see, especially changed behaviour. If someone else has spoken up before you, be the next voice, echoing that anti-bias message—thanking the person who has spoken up and encouraging others to join in.

## Strategies to Interrupt Bias

### Interrupt

You must speak up against every biased remark, every time it happens. Letting one go, then speaking up against the next one, sends an inconsistent message that sometimes bias is acceptable; other times it is not. Interrupt Bias. Every time. In the moment. Without exception.

#### TRY SAYING:

- That is offensive.
- I don't find that funny.
- I don't like words like that.
- That phrase is hurtful.
- I'm surprised to hear you say that.
- Using that word doesn't help others feel safe or accepted here.

### Question

Questions in response to biased remarks can be a powerful tool to make the speaker accountable for their words. Your goal is to understand the roots of the speaker's prejudices, then help add context and information to dispel them.

#### TRY ASKING:

- What do you mean by that?
- Why do you say that?
- What point are you trying to make by saying that?
- Did you mean to say something hurtful when you said that?
- Follow up with: Tell me more.

### Educate

Hate is not behind all hateful speech. Sometimes ignorance is at work, or lack of exposure to diverse experiences and perspectives. Other times, people simply don't know the negative power behind certain words or phrases. Explain why a term or phrase is offensive. Encourage the person to choose a different expression.

#### TRY SAYING:

- Do you know the history of that word?
- Do you know why we do not say that?
- Did you think of the impact of your words on others?

### Echo

If someone else speaks up against hate, thank them and reiterate their anti-bias message. One person's voice is a powerful start. Many voices together create change. As the echoing voice, you can reiterate the anti-bias message, or you can thank the first person for speaking up—or both.

#### TRY SAYING:

- Thanks for speaking up. I agree that word is offensive, and we should not use it.