

A TECHNIQUE FOR INTERRUPTING BIAS

Adapted from Michigan State University
Office for Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives

Kaplowitz, D. R., Griffin, S. and Seyka, S. L.(2019).
Race dialogues: A facilitator's guide to tackling the elephant in the classroom.
Teachers College Press.

THE ReA²CT APPROACH

Being called in or called out on your own biased behavior is never easy, especially when your intent wasn't to cause harm. This is a methodology to use when you need to acknowledge the impact of your words or behavior.

REFLECT on what the person is telling you.

Re

Try reflective listening: reflect back on what you think you've heard. Consider silent reflection, listening deeply to what was shared and how the person may be feeling. Give yourself time, even days, to reflect on what was shared and the impact of your actions.

Try to focus on the impact more than your intent.

ACKNOWLEDGE/APOLOGIZE

A²

Acknowledge what you have done wrong.

- "I hear what you are saying."
- "I see that my actions impacted you."
- "I have had some time to reflect and now understand that my actions were wrong."

Apologize and take full responsibility for the impact of your actions. Avoid using:

- "I'm sorry if I hurt your feelings."
- "I'm sorry your feelings got hurt, but..."

Even if it wasn't your intent, take responsibility for the impact. Try:

- "I am sorry that I hurt you."
- "I am sorry that my joke was disrespectful."
- "I am sorry, I should have thought more about how my actions might impact others."

CHANGE

C

Explain what you will do differently in the future; be specific.

Move beyond simply apologizing and begin "walking your talk." Sharing how you will change your behavior shows that you have internalized the message and are going to do things differently moving forward.

THANK THE PERSON for bringing this to your attention.

T

Being called in or called out isn't easy! Usually when we are apologizing, we feel guilty and embarrassed.

Channel any guilt into action.

Let the person know that they have helped you learn how to be your best self!

- "Thank you for bringing this to my attention."
- "Thank you for letting me know that my joke wasn't funny."
- "I know it wasn't easy, but I appreciate you for calling me in."



Division of Institutional Equity

**CENTER FOR
SOCIAL JUSTICE DIALOGUE**

CONNECT WITH US:
CSJDialogue@umbc.edu
my.umbc.edu/groups/CSJD