

I HAVE A QUESTION TO ASK, BUT I DON'T WANT TO CAUSE OFFENCE...



We've all been there - someone comes into the room and there's something 'different' about them, something that you've possibly not experienced before. You are curious and really want to ask them some personal questions to understand this difference better.

Maybe they have a really obvious mark on their face... Maybe they have a certain disability or condition... Maybe they look like they practice a religion that you don't know about... Maybe they speak a different language or appear to have come from another country... Maybe you are unclear of their gender... There are lots of differences between people, it's part of what makes our diversity so rich.



It's a natural response to be interested in people who are different to you, but it's really important to be aware of some things before you bring it up with them.

TRY TO...



- Think - are you asking them because you care about them as a person and want to get to know them better, or just to satisfy your own curiosity?
- Be respectful and remember to think about the feelings of the person you are speaking to
- Start with "is it ok to ask you a personal question about your ... race / religion / sexuality etc..."
- Remember they might get asked about this a lot and it might be a very sensitive issue for them.
- Be prepared for them to say 'No' and be ready to apologise if they get upset or angry about your question.
- If they are happy to talk to you, be clear what you are asking about, don't make them have to guess what you want to ask.
- Listen to what they want to say to you. Don't ask them a question and then not listen to their answers.



- If they move on, you move on as well - don't make a big deal about something if they aren't.
- Be ready to do research independently if you really want to find out about this topic, and why it might cause offence to ask people about it.



TRY TO AVOID:

- Dismissing any hurt that you might accidentally have caused by saying things like "you're overreacting / I never meant to cause offence / it's a normal question". Instead, listen if they want to tell you what they're feeling.
- Seeking forgiveness - they might not be ready to give it, and they don't have to. You can apologise but leave it there. They might not want to respond to you at all.
- Pushing the point - if they don't want to talk about it, then don't push it.



REMEMBER, TRY NOT TO ARGUE, SHAME PEOPLE OR MAKE THEM FEEL DEFENSIVE.

THE TACTICS ABOVE AIM TO HELP PEOPLE TALK ABOUT THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN US IN A SENSITIVE WAY. THE TACTICS ABOVE HAVE BEEN SUGGESTED BY NOTTINGHAM PEOPLE THROUGH OVER 1000 HOURS OF CONSULTATION WITH OVER 650 PEOPLE TO UNDERSTAND THEIR LIVED EXPERIENCES OF RESPONDING TO PREJUDICE.



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