

DISABILITY & PREJUDICE – 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 a website called www.NottinghamTogether.com 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

! 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>People with mental health issues shouldn't go to university.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do you think that? Have you had problems with people with mental health issues at university? Have you or anyone you know suffered with mental health issues? • There is a huge difference in people's capacity - not everyone with mental health difficulties is unable to study. • Many more people than you realise experience mental health difficulties through their lives - 1 in 4 people experience mental health issues each year. That could mean Universities losing a quarter of their applications and funds. • Is it fair to hold back their prospects? Would it cause their mental health issues to become worse through lack of prospects? What would be the impact of this on them and society?
<p>People with disabilities shouldn't have children.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A child of a disabled person would have as much love and support as any other child should have. • Lots of disabled people have healthy non-Disabled children. • Some people are born non-disabled and then become disabled. Should a soldier who has lost their legs in a battle be told they are not allowed to have children?
<p>Why are you making such a fuss about making events accessible? Disabled people never come to these things anyway.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They might want to come but are unable to because they are inaccessible. • Perhaps that means we need to do some more focused advertising if they don't know about it - maybe there are other barriers like that they are worried that they won't feel welcome? • How do you know that they don't?
<p>You're so ... - autistic. - spastic. - special needs. (or uses other derogatory disabled terms)</p> <p>Everyone says Spaz. I don't mean anything by it.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you know the real meaning of that term? • Do you realise how upsetting it could be to someone with ... to hear their condition used as an insult? • Do you mean that as an insult? I know many people with ... who are fantastic people and make amazing contributions to society and people around them. It's a compliment if you think I'm like them. • That word hurts my feelings and I find it offensive. Please don't use it, particularly in front of me. Did you know you could be reported for a hate crime by using that term?

Prejudiced comment	Potential responses
<p>People with mental ill-health or disabilities...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - should be locked away. - should be in hospital. - shouldn't be in the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you know anyone who suffers from mental health issues? • If you look back through history women who had children outside of wedlock were deemed mentally ill, LGBT people were deemed mentally ill and nowadays we know these aren't mental illnesses. Just because someone is classed as having a mental illness doesn't mean they can't function in the community.
<p>People with depression / anxiety are weak and can't deal with the real world.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They need support. Something or someone has caused this problem. • 1 in 4 people in the UK are thought to suffer from depression or anxiety at some point in their life. • It could be argued that suffering from depression and anxiety is a natural response to a lifestyle in Western culture that isn't healthy. For example high career expectations, fast-paced living without rest, social media not being a substitute for healthy supportive relationships, lack of community and disconnection from nature. • Anxiety and depression can look very different in different people - for some people it might be a short phase of life following an incident like losing someone, and for others it could be a chemical imbalance in their brains that means they are chronically depressed.
<p>If you can't access a space, just don't go there.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I Agree. If it's not accessible and not welcoming then I can take my business elsewhere, but what about essential places and services where there is no alternative? • Do you think that's always true? Should no effort be made to make spaces accessible? Why? • Who do you think should be accommodated and who shouldn't be? What should those who aren't able to access a space do instead, if they want to?
<p>People who are obese should just stop eating as much.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People may have an eating disorder and often need psychological intervention. • Do you know anyone with an eating disorder? • Do you always eat healthily? Have you ever eaten too much when you were feeling sad? • Do you think it is always as simple as that?
<p>People with disabilities are a waste of taxpayer's money.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being disabled doesn't necessarily mean you can't work. There are plenty of jobs suited for people with certain disabilities. A lot of disabled people also support the system as volunteers. • Many people with disabilities are working and contributing to society and the economy, and feed into the system by paying taxes. It's only a small fraction who are unable to work • What would you suggest that people do if they are unable to work? • How can we support people who want to contribute to the economy but aren't as able as other people? Also people who are on benefits also contribute to the economy as they pay tax on benefits and spend their benefits in the UK so it feeds back into the same system so to speak.
<p>People with disabilities should have been aborted.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The parents are able to decide if they will be able to support and love the child. The majority of disabled people become so later in life. Anyone can become disabled at any point in time, not everyone is born into it • My friend/relative had a disability and was very much valued, loved and appreciated by anyone who met them. They had a way of making people laugh and supporting the strongest of people at their most vulnerable moments. 