

ISLAMOPHOBIA & 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>Muslims gangs groom children for sexual exploitation.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sadly, exploitation occurs in all groups of people regardless of their race or religion. Muslims are no more or less likely to engage in this activity than other groups. • Islam teaches against sexual exploitation. Muslims who sexually exploit others do so in spite of their religion, rather than because of it. • We know these people exist but the vast majority of Muslims are sickened by this as well. We shouldn't point out these people's religion because it has nothing to do with it the same way we don't point out Christian grooming gangs.
<p>Muslims are terrorists. All Muslims moving to Europe are radicalised.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of Muslims are peaceful and just want to get on with their lives like everyone else. • It's understandable to be scared of terrorism, but the media has had a big part to play in overstating the extent of the threat of Islamist terrorism compared with other types such as domestic or right-wing terrorism which have partly become much bigger issues because of this. • Most Muslims, as with most religions, are moderate, and most move to Europe escaping conflicts in their home countries - they come because they know it is safe and want to be far from conflict.
<p>Halal food is cruel to animals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All large-scale farming can be cruel to animals. Traditional farming includes many practices that are horrible for animals, including force-feeding animals, rape, allowing them to bleed to death, separating mothers from their babies, and treating them in physical and emotionally harmful ways. Halal practices are no different.
<p>Sharia Law and courts are taking over our legal system.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharia Law is unenforceable in the UK court system because only laws passed by Parliament or international treaties are recognised by the legal system. There are Sharia tribunals or councils where Muslims can voluntarily resolve disputes without going through the court system as a form of 'Alternative Dispute Resolution'.
<p>Muslims are trying to convert everyone.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone is free to discuss their own religion, which can include debate and trying to convince others that their religion and beliefs are correct. No one is obligated to convert to a religion they don't want to follow, and Islam is far from the only religion trying to convert others to it.

Prejudiced comment	Potential responses
<p>Our pubs / churches are being taken over.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think should happen if pubs or churches aren't being used and someone wants to buy them and invest in them for a different purpose? • Businesses and venues close for all sorts of reasons, and the buildings go on to be sold or re-let for other purposes such to open a new business or convert them into residential. If these buildings are being bought or rented for Muslims to use it is likely because there is demand in the community, and if there is not then they may close and be re-sold or let out again for another purpose.
<p>I don't want my kids getting converted.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As their parents you are likely to have the greatest influence in their lives on their opinions and beliefs up until adulthood. Ultimately if they choose to convert there is little you can do to stop them, but as a parent your job should be to make sure they do so out of choice and don't feel pressured into converting. If your child tells you they are thinking of converting, take the time to find out what it is they feel is the reason that they want to convert.
<p>My kids are being forced to eat Halal food.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While Halal food has become common in supermarkets it will always be labelled as such, so you are not forced to buy and feed it to your children. • It's great that so many different dietary requirements are catered to now such as gluten free, halal and others. More of us can now enjoy food available in supermarkets and restaurants!
<p>Muslim women are oppressed - they're forced to wear clothes such as hijabs and niqabs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They have a choice and most prefer to follow this for their own reasons including cultural ones. Even the Queen wears a headscarf as was once the fashion.
<p>I don't trust when you can't see someone's face.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although it may seem intimidating, it is their freedom of choice to wear what they like. • The eyes are the soul of a person - if you can't see their face, talk to the eyes!
<p>Muslims are homophobic / anti-LGBT.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Islam, like many religions, has beliefs on LGBT which might not reflect the beliefs of other people. It's important to remember that there are many LGBT Muslims and many Muslims that have different views on LGBT issues, just as many Christians have views that differ to those preached.
<p>Using derogatory terms such as 'letterbox' for Muslim women.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you considered how that might make them feel by saying that? • It's ok to have your opinions and to debate that, but how does using those terms help get your argument across any better? • You may have your opinions but that doesn't give you the right to be hurtful, try to express your point without turning to insults.

