

How Do You Respond in a Cross-Ethnic Relationship?

WAYS TO AVOID LEARNING

DENIAL: I did not say or do anything that was oppressive or offensive

DISMISSAL: You are overreacting, being too sensitive, blowing this out of proportion

ATTACK: I say something back to you intended to hurt you or make you angry

CLAIM IT WAS A JOKE: I insist I was only kidding and the problem is that you have no sense of humor or are taking things too seriously

EXPLANATION: I try to convince you that you are misinterpreting my actions by explaining and rationalizing how my actions are were not really evidence of prejudice on my part

GUILT: I am so ashamed that I offended you that all I can focus on is my own distress that you think I am prejudiced. I feel terrible and apologize even if I do not really understand what the problem is. Sometimes -I get angry if you don't immediately forgive me and help me to feel better

SHOCK: I am so surprised by being confronted that I am immobilized. I cannot hear what you have to say and I cannot think about what I want to do

TRIVIALIZATION: I seek support from other more "friendly" target group members to reassure myself that you are being unreasonable and unfair

GANG UP: I seek support from other agent group members to reassure myself that you are being unreasonable and unfair

WAYS TO LEARN

LET GO OF UNPRODUCTIVE EMOTIONAL REACTIONS: I notice and let go of feelings of defensiveness, embarrassment, anger, fear, guilt, or shame that interfere with my ability to listen to what you are saying

LISTEN: I focus on understanding what you are telling me even though I am probably having many feelings about what you are saying that could interfere with my ability to listen

SEEK MORE INFORMATION: I ask questions to make sure I understand your reaction. I read. I attend workshops. I talk with other agent group members.

RECEIVE YOUR FEEDBACK AS A GIFT: I understand that when someone offers information so that I can become more conscious of my role in maintaining social injustice it is a gift not to be taken lightly. I welcome the information and believe it to my benefit to receive it

TAKE A NEW PERSPECTIVE: I try to look at the situation from your perspective. I try to understand your perspective by thinking about one of my own target group memberships

PROBLEM SOLVE: I take responsibility for identifying ways that I might change my actions. I do not assume that you should or will help me

INTEGRATE NEW BEHAVIOR: I choose different behaviors in the future because I believe it is important for me to do so, not just because I am afraid of being confronted again