

What to Say “In the Moment”

Tools to use when it is hard to think of what to say or do to address an uncomfortable situation

The Bystander Effect is when multiple people witness an emergency or wrongful situation but do not act. In many circumstances the more people that witness the inappropriate behavior, the less likely it is that any individual will act to help the victim.

(source: Psychology Today)

These are sentences to use in the moment, if you are being made to feel uncomfortable or are witnessing an individual being made to feel uncomfortable. These tools are not a replacement for reporting harassment and if feeling unsafe, should only be used at the individual's discretion.

When Being Made to Feel Uncomfortable at Work

- “This is making me feel uncomfortable.”
- “I’m done with this conversation.”
- “I have a meeting to get to.”
- “I promised Bob that I’d be stopping by his cube right now.”
- “I have to go to the restroom.”
- “I have to go. I have something on the copier.”

When Witnessing a Person Being Made to Feel Uncomfortable by Colleague or Manager

- Disrupt the situation
 - Ask the colleague/manager for directions to a local place to get lunch.
 - Drop a book or ask for the time.
 - Start a conversation with the individual who is uncomfortable (i.e. ask them for help on an email or other matter).
- Direct
 - “You need to stop.” or “That crossed the line.” or “That’s inappropriate.”
 - “You shouldn’t talk that way at the office, onsite, on the floor etc.”
 - “Why would you say that?”
 - “We are at work. That’s not okay.”
- Delay
 - Check-in with the person later to see how they are feeling.
- Solidarity
 - Stand next to the person to show them that you are with them.
 - Stay with the individual until the situation has ended.
- Seek assistance: Connect with HR or a supervisor or regarding the situation.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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