

Responding to Jokes and Slurs

1. Do not respond by making an equally offensive remark and do not publicly embarrass the person who made the remark or told the joke.
2. Talk with the person privately. By speaking to the offender one on one, you remove his or her necessity to “save face” or defend his or her actions.
3. Start the conversation by “vesting your relationship.” People listen better when they know they matter to the person who is speaking. Start the conversation by saying something such as “I wanted to talk with you, Mary, because your friendship is very important to me.”
4. Use “I” statements, not “you” statements. The point of this conversation is to let the “offender” know how you felt about what was said. It is not intended to be a conversation about what someone else did wrong. Choosing words accordingly will help eliminate the “offender’s” need to defend his or her actions.
5. Remember your “rights.” You do not have the right to dictate someone else’s sense of humor. You do, however, have the right to ask that this type of humor not be used in your presence.

REMEMBER

SILENCE IS USUALLY INTERPRETED AS APPROVAL OR SUPPORT.

LEAVE PEOPLE’S SELF-ESTEEM INTACT.

INACTION IS AN ACTION.