



6 Ways to Address Degrading Language

1

Encourage the individual to “say what they mean, and mean what they say.” If someone is using a slur to mean an alternate word, encourage them to use the correct word for what they are trying to describe. For example: “I think what you meant to say, is that you don’t like theater.”

2

Ask the person politely to stop using such language. You could just simply say, “hey, please don’t use that word.”

3

Inform him/her that the language they are using is offensive. “I know that you don’t mean anything by that word, but it is really offensive.” If you know the history or origin of the word, you may chose to share this information.

4

Talk about the impact of such language. “You know Sue, that language really hurts; it is demeaning and objectifies people.” Perhaps share a story that exemplifies the impact of such language.

5

Do not laugh at offensive jokes. Don’t laugh, shake your head, or just say “I don’t get it, how is that funny?” You could also interject with a silly joke that has no point.

6

Ask why they feel that way? Often individuals do not know why they hold biases or why they use such language. It is very helpful to both you and the person you are challenging to discuss the root of the bias.