

Show Stoppers/Hot Buttons/Triggers

Objective

- Participants will gain an understanding of what areas of discussion could be a 'show stopper' for them; Participants will be better able to address issues if they are aware of their 'show stopper'

Process

When talking to others about race, religion, gender issues, etc., do you find yourself reacting with anger when you hear certain comments? Do you feel embarrassed when you hear an individual of your race make a comment about other races? Most of us have certain words that trigger strong emotion in us and cause an almost involuntary reaction. We also generally have certain topics that we find difficult to discuss/debate without trying to "convert" the other party to our way of thinking. It is important to identify these 'show stopper' so that they don't trip us up in a conversation. This exercise will help you identify your 'hot-buttons.' Do any of these comments bother you?

1. "Why are black people always complaining about inequality? Slavery was in the past. They need to get over it, they have an equal chance now."
2. Affirmative action ignores all the hard work I have done as a white person to get into this school.
3. "I wonder if the Holocaust really ever happened? Yeah, Hitler imprisoned some Jews, but he didn't kill thousands."
4. "I get sick of all this African-American, Asian-American, Latino-American stuff. We are all Americans."
5. "Those Mexicans are here illegally taking jobs from hard working Americans and committing crimes in our city."
6. "The rich kids in my school are all such snobs. They think they own the school."
7. "If we pass these special rights laws for gays and lesbians it will ruin the American family!"
8. "I am not prejudiced. One of my best friends is black".
9. "Girls who dress sexy are asking for it, they want it."
10. "His accent sounds like he is a redneck, I'm sure he doesn't care about justice issues."
11. When referring to something that is thought of as "dumb" as "that's gay."
12. "I know a retarded kid at school that is really nice."
13. "What is going to happen to this country when we start using Spanish in our schools? This is America and we speak English here."

What are some of your "hot button" comments? Others not listed here?

I found I had the strongest reaction to... Why...

I found I had very little reaction to... Why...