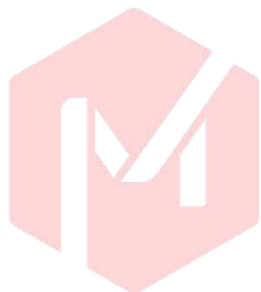


# **"HOW was your DAY?"**

**Getting Real About Bias,  
Diversity and Inclusion,  
Harassment, and Bullying**

**Practical Answers to Tough Questions**



media partners

**FOR PREVIEW ONLY**

**IMPORTANT**—Even though this guide has been edited by a lot of very wise people, it's still just a booklet of helpful suggestions. It's not the law; nor is it a substitute for legal counsel or personal advice from a licensed professional.

## Have you ever . . .

*been at a loss for the **right words** to say in an uncomfortable situation?*

*witnessed a co-worker's **ideas being dismissed**?*

*had someone **treat you differently** because of your sexual orientation, the color of your skin, or your age?*

*felt that your **voice or your perspective was not being heard**?*

*said or done something that **offended a co-worker**, without meaning to?*

*been **intimidated** by a co-worker's comments?*

***been the target** of ugly rumors or gossip?*

This guide won't solve every problem for you, but it might help you **find the right words to say**, help you **avoid some common pitfalls**, or give you the **courage** to build a **kinder and more respectful workplace**.

# Contents

<b>Notes.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Bias .....</b>	<b>7</b>
My co-worker told me I am biased against black people. I don't think I am. What now?.....	7
How do I uncover my unconscious biases if they are unconscious?.....	7
I am gay and I work alongside many other talented professionals. Why can't they see me as an equal?.....	8
There is a woman on my team who works hard and when she offers an opinion, it's often dismissed out-of-hand. I don't want to be the one who tears her head side by side by calling them on it. What can I do?.....	8
During a weekly meeting, I noticed that my manager engages most often with the males on the team while frequently including females. He even interrupts them when they are talking. Does he have a bias against women?.....	8
<b>Diversity and Inclusion.....</b>	<b>9</b>
My homosexual co-worker has a framed picture of her partner on her desk. I don't want to offend her but I don't know how to refer to them. Partners? Gay? What does LGBTQ mean, anyway?.....	9
What if a co-worker asks me if I'm gay?.....	9
What if I can't understand my co-worker's English?.....	9
What if someone is always trying to get me into a political or religious discussion?.....	9
What if someone makes fun of my personal style?.....	10
I've heard the terms "diversity," "inclusion," and D&I, but now there's DEI and DEIB. What does it all mean?.....	10
<b>Hostile Work Environment Harassment .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b><i>Offending Others.....</i></b>	<b>11</b>
I don't mean to offend anyone, so what's the big deal?.....	11
What if a co-worker tells me I've offended him or her?.....	11
How can I have any fun at work if I have to be politically correct all the time?.....	11
<b><i>Derogatory Comments, Gossip, and Rumors.....</i></b>	<b>12</b>
How do I stop someone from mocking my religious beliefs?.....	12
What if someone makes fun of my English or my accent?.....	12
What if a co-worker makes fun of my culture and history?.....	12
How do I stop someone from making derogatory comments about a co-worker?.....	12
What if someone is making derogatory comments about me?.....	13
What if my boss is making the derogatory comments?.....	13
What if a co-worker is making insensitive comments about my appearance to me? Yesterday it was a comment about my natural hair style. "I'm surprised they let you wear your hair that way . . . I mean, I like it, but it's pretty wild, don't you think?" Today she made a derogatory remark regarding my "ethnic scarf." I don't think she means anything by these comments, but they still sting. And, it's tiring. ....	13

**Offensive Language, Jokes, and Slurs .....14**

- What if the racial or religious slurs and jokes of a co-worker offend me? ..... 14
- What if the racial or religious slurs and jokes are directed toward me? ..... 14
- What if my boss is making the slurs, comments and jokes? ..... 14
- What if the sexual comments and jokes of a co-worker offend me? ..... 14
- What if my boss is making the comments or jokes? ..... 15
- Why do I feel like I'm making jokes if everyone laughs? ..... 15
- What if my boss is making jokes about me? ..... 15

**Offensive Posters, Posters, Calendars, and Emails .....16**

- What if a co-worker takes down one of my favorite posters because it's offensive? ..... 16
- What if my boss gives me a suggestive calendar that makes me uncomfortable? ..... 16
- What if someone sends me an offensive or suggestive email? ..... 17
- What if the pictures or emails don't bother me? ..... 17

**Dating, Sexual Advances and Innuendo .....18**

- What if I want to ask a co-worker out? ..... 18
- What if a co-worker asks me out? ..... 18
- What if I want to ask out my boss? ..... 18
- How do I stop a co-worker I am no longer dating from sharing intimate details of our relationship? ..... 19
- What if a co-worker tells me to stop asking her out? ..... 19
- What if a co-worker keeps asking me out even though I've said no? ..... 19
- What if a co-worker uses sexual innuendo as a joke? ..... 19
- What if a co-worker always stands too close or touches me? ..... 20
- What if a co-worker is always looking at my body? ..... 20
- What if my boss is always looking at my body? ..... 20
- What if a customer flirts with me? ..... 21
- What if a vendor flirts with me? ..... 21

**About Harassment .....22**

- What are the basics of harassment? ..... 22
- What is quid pro quo sexual harassment? ..... 23
- What is hostile work environment harassment? ..... 23
- What is third-party hostile work environment sexual harassment? ..... 23

**Bullying .....24**

- What if someone is telling rumors about me and making me look bad in front of my boss? ..... 24
- My friend said HR won't do anything because bullying isn't against the law. So, now what? ..... 24

What if someone is always mean to me?.....	24
What if I see someone being bullied? Won't I become the target if I speak up? .....	24
<b>Harassment and Bullying Complaints and Reporting .....</b>	<b>25</b>
Am I responsible if I just witness harassment, but I'm not part of it? .....	25
What should I do if I feel I've been harassed? .....	25
What if I'm told a harassment complaint has been filed against me?.....	25
What should I do if I'm offended by something at work or I witness something inappropriate toward a co-worker? .....	26
What should I do if I'm threatened about "speaking up?" .....	26
Can I remain anonymous if I file a complaint or help with a harassment investigation? .....	26
What are my responsibilities on harassment and bullying? .....	27
What is my company's policy on sexual harassment? .....	27
<b>About this Guide.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>About the Publisher .....</b>	<b>28</b>

**FOR PREVIEW ONLY**

## Bias

---

### My co-worker told me I am biased against black people. I don't think I am. What now?

It took a lot of courage to give you that feedback. Say, “thank you for telling me. I’m not sure I am, and I don’t want to be, so I will give it some thought.”

Yes, it’s hard. And humbling. But, it is important to consider. Are you biased against people of color, specifically, black people? Most likely, the answer is no. That’s for you to discern. Here’s the thing: no one wants to be biased, but we all are. Uncovering our unconscious bias takes time, humility, and patience. If someone cares enough to point out your bias—as painful as it might be for us to hear—it’s a gift. When you uncover a bias, you’ve given yourself the opportunity to overcome it.

If you are called out for bias, or harbor any other bias, frame the bias. Look at it and own it. Then, challenge it. As we learned in a TED Talk about bias, we should go after them. (See TED talk entitled “How to overcome bias: walk boldly toward them.”)

[https://www.ted.com/talks/governa\\_myers\\_how\\_to\\_overcome\\_our\\_biases\\_walk\\_boldly\\_toward\\_them](https://www.ted.com/talks/governa_myers_how_to_overcome_our_biases_walk_boldly_toward_them).) It’s only after we challenge our biases that we can set them aside. But, we first must be aware they exist.

Now, here’s the tricky part. What if your co-worker called you out, but unfairly? Our current culture makes it difficult to discern what’s real and what’s not. And while we’re talking about bias, it’s important to note that every bias will be challenged. The important thing to remember is that we need to all work on ourselves and our biases. Thank you to your co-worker, you have an opportunity to become a better person. If in doubt, thank you.

### How do I uncover my unconscious biases if they are unconscious?

The first step is awareness. Be mindful of your thoughts, perceptions, and attitudes about people, especially new people or those you don’t know.

When you see someone new, what are your perceptions? What are your stereotypes? What generalizations do you make about people? When you see someone you don’t know, are your immediate thoughts negative, neutral, or positive? When you think of a specific role, are your thoughts wired to imagine a certain type of person?

When you hear a stereotype, or you find yourself making an assumption or judgment about someone:

- **Stop** for a moment.
- **Think.** Who are my assumptions directed toward? What is my assumption or stereotype?
- **Explore** it further. Identify the basis for the stereotype. Ask yourself questions. Where did it come from?
- And **Prepare** yourself for the next time. When I face this bias again, what can I do to set it aside? Where can I find information to counter the stereotype or assumption?

## Diversity and Inclusion

---

### My homosexual co-worker has a framed picture of her partner on her desk. I don't want to offend her but I don't know how to refer to them. Partners? Gay? What does LGBTQ mean, anyway?

LGBTQ is an acronym which stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer; sometimes it has a plus (LGBTQ+) which means it always non-heterosexuals self-identify sexual orientation and gender identity, including cross-dresser, transsexual, and asexual.

While it is important to understand that people may self-identify or self-express in different ways, there are privacy issues to consider. Some people who identify as LGBTQ+ will welcome the questions of how they self-identify; others will not. A good rule of thumb is to let your co-worker guide the conversation. If she prefers different pronouns than she uses to refer to her partner in a specific way, she'll let you know.

The bottom line? Most things are always best — regardless of someone's sexual identity or orientation.

### What if a co-worker asks me if I'm gay?

Questions about your personal life, religion, politics, or private life are not your work. That said, it's a good idea to spend a lot of time at work, and many of our co-workers become friends. It's really up to you to set your boundaries. If you are uncomfortable with the question, the best way to respond is to calmly say something like, "I prefer not to discuss my personal life. Please don't ask me about it again." If the person continues the conversation, walk away. If the person, or other co-workers, won't let it go, talk to your manager.

### What if I can't understand a co-worker's English?

If you have a hard time understanding one of your co-workers, don't just walk away because you felt too awkward to ask them to repeat themselves. The person wants to be understood and you want to understand, so smile and politely ask, "I'm sorry, I didn't understand. Could you please repeat that more slowly?" And one more hint: Just because you have trouble understanding someone doesn't mean that they have trouble understanding you. So, unless someone asks you to, don't assume that you should speak slower and certainly not louder.

### What if someone is always trying to get me into a political or religious discussion?

Some people sincerely believe that they have discovered truths that will make your life or the world better. Other people just love a good debate and the sound of their own voice. They'll bait you with questions and comments until they can get you into a discussion. While a diverse workforce brings strength, some of the diverse values and beliefs do not need to be discussed at work, especially if the purpose is to influence your personal beliefs.

It's best just to say something like, "You're obviously very sincere in your beliefs, but I'm not interested in hearing them right now. If that changes, I'll come and talk to you. Okay?"

## Hostile Work Environment Harassment

---

### Offending Others

#### I don't mean to offend anyone, so what's the big deal?

It's not the intention that matters; it's the impact on the other person.

If you're thinking it's difficult to know how to behave at work, you're right—sort of. It's easy to blow this out of proportion and say that you're not allowed to be yourself or that the world has gone too PC. But political correctness is not just a matter of respecting the people around you.

The way you act and what you say when you are out with a group of friends on a Saturday night may be different from how you act and what you say while you're at work. You can be yourself in both environments, just a different part of yourself.

At work, cluelessness is not an excuse. If you find yourself offending people without meaning to, get a clue. Think about what you say and do before you say or do it.

**FOR PREVIEW ONLY**

#### What if a co-worker tells me I've offended him or her?

If it was not your intention to offend your co-worker, get in touch as quickly as you can with the person in the past. Yes, it may be a little embarrassing for you, but consider the courage it took your co-worker to tell you.

Now, if you *did* intend to offend, an "I'm sorry" is a good place to start. But, most importantly, consider yourself warned and don't do it again. Negative or offensive comments among co-workers only make it more difficult to work, which is why you're together in the first place. And, keep in mind that a pattern could lead to serious consequences, including loss of employment and even legal action.

#### How can I have any fun at work if I have to be politically correct all the time?

Actually, you can—and should—have fun while you work. We all spend too much time at work not to enjoy it. However, that fun shouldn't be at the expense of someone else.

If you're getting caught up with what's PC and what isn't, you're missing the point. Consider the feelings of your co-workers because it's the right thing to do. Making fun of people or sexually charging the workplace with your comments, suggestions, and behaviors is inappropriate. Try having fun by enjoying your job and the people with whom you work.



## Bullying

---

### What if someone is telling rumors about me and making me look bad in front of my boss?

The most important thing to remember is that it's not you. Bullies thrive on power and control. They try to overcome their own insecurities by latching on to a target who they can bully so they feel more powerful. What can you do? If you're comfortable doing so, speak up. Keep it calm, keep it clear, and ask them to stop. If that doesn't work, document everything and then talk to HR.

### My friend said HR won't do anything because bullying isn't against the law. So, now what?

More and more states are passing legislation against workplace bullying. And, even if bullying is not against the law in your state, it may be against company policy. Here's the thing: you can't control the outcome, but you can do your part to affect change.

Accept that you did nothing to bring on the bullying. Call it what it is: bullying. And, go to your manager and HR and share a plan that takes bullying into account. Take courage, it's regardless of the outcome you can and I know you did everything you could to stop bullying.

### What if someone is always mean to me?

If someone is always mean to you and you have absolutely no idea why, they may just be a mean person. It's a sad fact of life, but no matter where you go, you're going to find people who are mean, rude, selfish, or all of the above. Some are bullies. Some are just disgruntled, unhappy people. So, how you deal with the person depends on how closely you work together and whether the person is just plain mean to everyone, or someone who has targeted you to bully.

It may be easier to ignore someone who is mean to everyone. But, if someone is bullying you, that's a different story. The power and control tactics the bully uses will escalate over time and things will get worse for you. So, speak up. Keep it calm. Keep it clear. And, document everything so you're prepared to go to your manager and HR.

### What if I see someone being bullied? Won't I become the target if I speak up?

Remember, there is strength in numbers. If you speak up, then you shine a spotlight on what is happening and bring it out of the shadows. It takes courage to be an upstander instead of a bystander, but when good people do and say nothing, the bad behavior continues unchecked.