

How to Push Back Without Making Things Worse

"I think we are all guilty of it from time to time."

When you want to push back against hate online, you should assume that the person didn't mean to be hurtful. Criticizing or blaming them might make them get defensive, which can get in the way of changing how they act.

My Notes



Poll

Have any of these things ever kept you from pushing back against prejudice online?

What did other people say?

I'm not sure it was really prejudice.

47%

I'm not sure the person really meant it.

46%

I'm afraid it will make things worse.

52%

I often see people I know laugh at it or join in.

47%

I don't know what to say or do to make a difference.

51%

I don't think people will listen to me.

47%

Source: MediaSmarts, *Young Canadians Pushing Back Against Hate Online*

Even if you think that they are trying to be hurtful, it doesn't help to get angry at them. Instead, show that you don't think they're the kind of person who would express hateful thoughts.

Talk about the message instead:

why it's not accurate, why it's hurtful, and why you don't agree with it.

Try saying:

*"I know a lot of people think that, but it isn't true."
"It's not fair to talk about a whole group of people like that."*

"I don't want to put you on the spot, but words like that can really hurt people's feelings."

"I don't think you'd say that if someone in that group was here."

Sometimes one of the best ways to respond is to ask a question.

That way, if the person didn't mean to say something prejudiced, they can clear it up -- and if they did, they'll have to either back down or stand behind what they said.

Try saying:

"I don't understand. What do you mean?"

"What 'people' are you talking about?"

"What point are you trying to make?"

"Can you give me an example?"

My Notes



"I think that sometimes they aren't trying to be prejudiced, they just think it's funny."

Nobody wants to be the one who takes a joke too seriously.

Instead, you can answer humour with humour.

For example, you can use a GIF or a meme that makes it clear you don't agree with what was said or posted.

Or you can acknowledge that it was a joke,

but tell them that not everyone would think it was funny. They may know that they're making a joke about racism, instead of a racist joke, but other people might not realize it.

Try saying:

"I don't understand. What do you mean?"

You can also pretend

that you think they were joking.



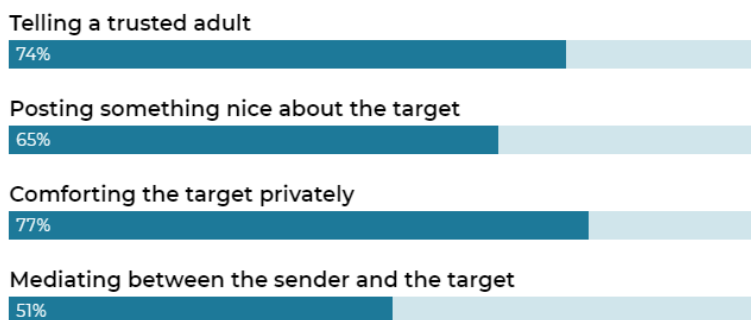
My Notes



Poll

Which of these do you think would work best to stop online bullying without making things worse?

What did other people say?



Source: MediaSmarts, *Young Canadians' Experiences with Electronic Bullying*

Whether you're speaking out against hate, reporting it, or just showing you don't agree, we all have the power to take a stand against hate online.
