

## 7 WAYS TO RESPOND TO

# DEMEANING COMMENTS

**1** **Assume good intentions.**  
*"I'm sure you meant that as a compliment, but not everyone will understand it that way."*

**2** **Ask sincere, open-ended questions.**  
*"What do you mean?"*



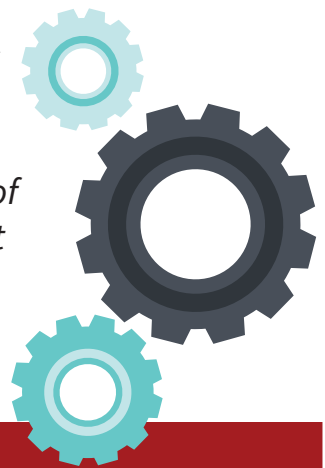
**3** **Individualize.** *"Are you thinking of someone in particular?"*



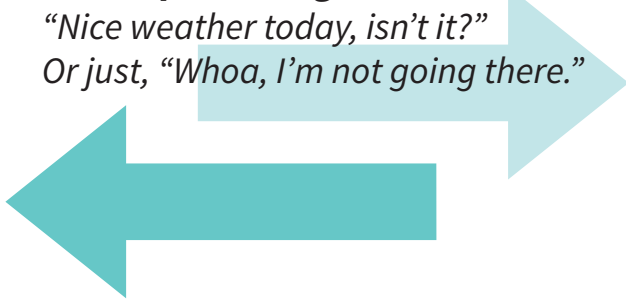
**4** **Explain the impact.** *"Saying things like that implies that people in that group are usually a problem. I don't think that is what you mean."*



**5** **Broaden the description.** *Show how the trait applies to many groups. "Yes, a lot of people behave that way when they feel threatened."*



**6** **Interrupt & change directions.**  
*"Nice weather today, isn't it?"*  
*Or just, "Whoa, I'm not going there."*



**7** **Just say**  
**"Ouch!"**



Adapted from *Ouch! That Stereotype Hurts: Communicating Respectfully in a Diverse World* by Leslie C. Aguilar.