

# MOSAIC

## Pathway on When Humour Hurts

### Thank you for being here!

Welcome to a community of people who are motivated to create cohesion through courageous conversations. We hope that these MOSAIC Pathways will support you to have healthy conversations about complex topics, so that we can collectively move closer to a more peaceful and inclusive society.

We know how busy life can get and that it can be difficult to find the time to be fully prepared for these conversations. Our team has designed this pathway as one possible way to structure a conversation around this topic. We welcome your feedback and suggested changes for this pathway, and any ideas you have for other pathway topics.

### Introduction

In this pathway, we aim to explore what young people think about the idea of humour being hurtful.

By creating a comfortable and safe space, we encourage participants to share their own unique experiences, and engage in honest self-reflection related to the topic.

The purpose of this pathway is to help young people understand how things that might seem funny for them or their friends can, at the same time, be hurtful for others. By encouraging participants to reflect on these experiences and times when they have accidentally hurt others, we hope to encourage empathy and increase awareness of the consequences of sharing hurtful memes and jokes.

We hope that participants leave the session with a heightened awareness of the subjectivity of humour and the hurt it can unknowingly cause.

# Setting up the Conversation

Before getting stuck into the conversation, think how you might create a space that encourages open dialogue, vulnerability with purpose, and constructive engagement, where everyone involved feels empowered to share their experience without fear of judgment.

We encourage appropriate ice breaker and safety check out activities. We believe alongside those activities that this pathway can range in time from 1.5 hours to 3 hours.

Please consider further exploration through the Cyberbullying and Allyship pathways.

## CREATING A SAFE AND ACCOUNTABLE SPACE:

1. **Acknowledge Diverse Experiences:** Begin by acknowledging the diverse experiences present in the room. Everyone brings unique perspectives shaped by their backgrounds, identities, and lived experiences. This recognition lays the foundation for understanding and empathy.
2. **Variation in Knowledge Levels:** Recognise the varying levels of knowledge about the topic. Some participants may be well-informed, while others may be exploring these concepts for the first time. Encourage an open mind and an attitude of curiosity for learning from one another.
3. **Sharing Personal Stories:** Emphasise the importance of sharing personal stories, which can humanise the discussion and deepen understanding. Participants should feel empowered to share their experiences, knowing that doing so enriches the conversation.
4. **Ground Rules for Support:** Establish ground rules for supporting each other throughout the conversation. Encourage active listening, empathy, and validation. Create a space where participants can express their thoughts and feelings without fear of judgement.
5. **Checking Comfort Levels:** Set guidelines for checking in on comfort levels. Acknowledge that discussions around these topics can evoke strong emotions. Encourage participants to communicate when they need a pause or additional support.
  - a. **Check-in with Young Indigenous & People of Colour:** Recognise that these topics/conversations may be more personal for young people of colour. Consider checking in with them individually before the session to gauge their comfort levels and address any concerns. During the conversation, be attentive to their reactions and provide opportunities for them to share or opt-out as needed.
  - b. **Addressing Power Dynamics:** Be mindful of power dynamics within the group. Ensure that everyone has an opportunity to speak, and actively intervene if dominant voices overpower marginalised perspectives. Facilitate with an understanding of the intersectionality of identities and how they contribute to varied experiences of discrimination.
6. **Respecting Dissenting Views:** Acknowledge the potential for differing opinions and viewpoints. Create an environment where dissenting views are acknowledged and discussed constructively through respectful dialogue.

However, dissenting views do not mean participants are entitled to express views that are violent, discriminatory, or question the existence of other people. Respect for differing views does not include tolerating hateful and harmful speech. Ensure that conversations remain within the bounds of respectful communication, within an atmosphere where participants feel safe and valued. Encourage discussions that promote understanding rather than perpetuating harm and address any language or behaviour that may be harmful or disrespectful to others.

## SUPPORT AND CARE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE:

1. **Recognise Vulnerability:** Understand that young people, especially those from marginalised communities, may feel vulnerable discussing these topics. Create an atmosphere that respects and values their emotions and perspectives.
2. **Provide Resources for Support:** Offer resources and information for additional support. Encourage participants to seek help if needed, offer a post workshop support sheet.
3. **Empower Through Education:** Empower young people through education. Provide resources that help build resilience and self-esteem. Highlight positive stories and examples of resilience within their communities.

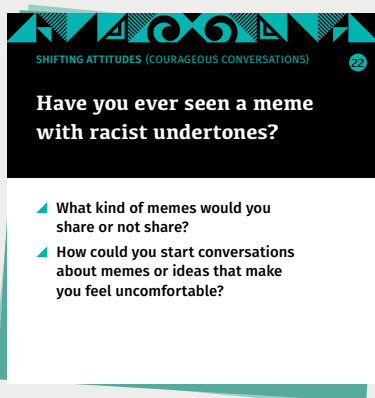
4. **Anti-Racist Practice:** Incorporate anti-racist principles into facilitation by emphasising the importance of dismantling racist structures and promoting inclusivity. Encourage young people to explore how they can actively contribute to anti-racist practices in their lives and build a sense of collective responsibility in creating a more equitable and just society.
5. **Encourage Allyship:** Encourage participants to support one another, learn from shared experiences, and work together towards a more inclusive and equitable future.

# MOSAIC CARDS

These are the recommended MOSAIC cards you can use to explore when humour may be hurtful.

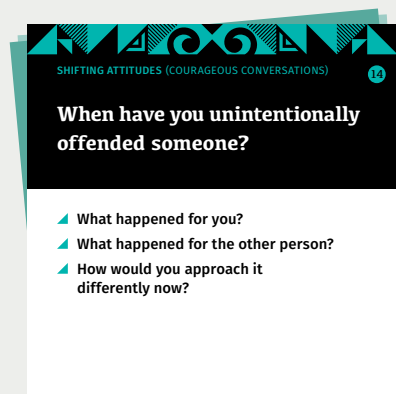
## CARD 22

Have you ever seen a meme with racist undertones?



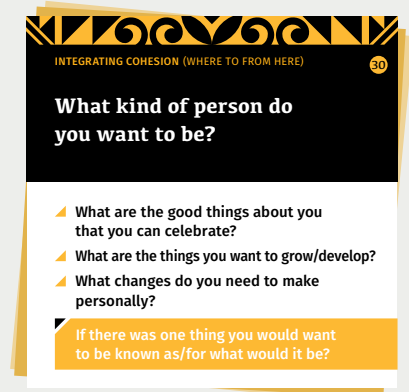
## CARD 14

When have you unintentionally offended someone?



## CARD 30

What kind of person do you want to be?



## CARD 15

What is the line between funny and offensive?



# Supporting Resources

Here is a selection of relevant resources for facilitators and workshop participants to explore the topic of when humour may be hurtful. We recommend that you engage with the resources beforehand; however, they may also be built into the structure of the session where appropriate.



Comedy

## **JAMES ACASTER ON RICKY GERVAIS' TRANS JOKES**

An example humour that targets those in positions of power or privilege (punching up) versus making jokes that target those who are less privileged or vulnerable (punching down).

3 minutes

### **Where to find it**

YouTube

<https://youtu.be/adhOKGmgmQw?si=IP-FueECyDgxaFey&t=147>

### **Level of understanding:**

Basic



Article

## **POLITICAL CORRECTNESS ISN'T KILLING COMEDY. SCARED OLD STAGNANT COMEDIANS ARE - REBECCA SHAW**

The old guard is being left behind in a world that no longer finds bigotry funny. It's about time.

7 minutes reading time

### **Where to find it**

Guardian

<https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2018/may/28/political-correctness-isnt-killing-comedy-scared-old-stagnant-comedians-are>

### **Level of understanding:**

Basic



Online resource

## **BANTER: WHERE DO WE DRAW THE LINE BETWEEN ACCEPTABLE LANGUAGE AND UNACCEPTABLE LANGUAGE?**

Educational resource with videos for raise awareness of when banter turns into bullying.

4 minutes reading time  
and 7 minutes viewing

### **Where to find it**

Anti Bullying Alliance

<https://anti-bullyivngalliance.org.uk/tools-information/what-bullying/banter>

### **Level of understanding:**

Basic

# The Conversation

## A. Getting started

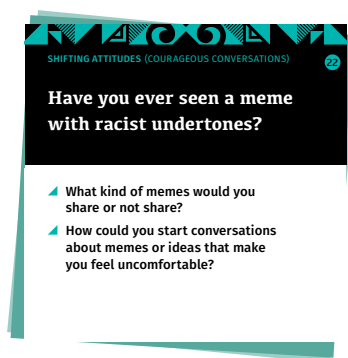
### WHO HAS SEEN A MEME AND THOUGHT IT CROSSED THE LINE?

Begin session with participants making a connection between the topic and their own experiences. Support participants to understand where they personally draw the line with humour and memes.

Follow up questions or points could be:

- What / who was the meme making fun of?
- Why did you think it crossed the line?

### CARD 22: HAVE YOU EVER SEEN A MEME WITH RACIST UNDERTONES?



Participants understand how racist memes can perpetuate harmful stereotypes and hurt real people.

Exploration of how humour can be hurtful and problematic regardless of intentions.

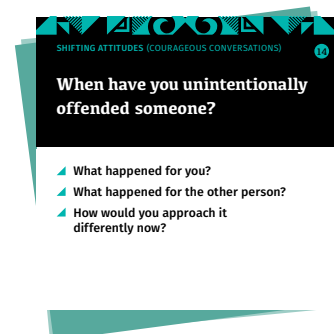
Follow up questions or points could be:

- In what ways could that meme have been hurtful to people of the target group?
- How would you feel if someone you loved was hurt by something that was meant to be funny?



## B. Getting deeper

### CARD 14: WHEN HAVE YOU UNINTENTIONALLY OFFENDED SOMEONE?



Participants develop an understanding of how “crossing the line” can impact situations.

Encouraging them to reflect upon what it feels like to upset or cause harm to someone.

Follow up questions or points could be:

- How do we normally feel when we hurt / upset someone we love?
- What bodily sensations do we feel when we have been upset / hurt by another person?

### CARD 15: WHAT IS THE LINE BETWEEN FUNNY AND OFFENSIVE?



Participants draw a line for themselves between funny and offensive, and recognise that it will be different for others.

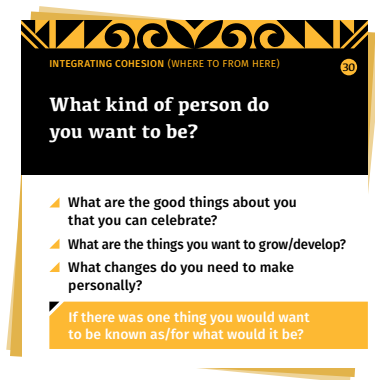
This encourages them to think about where that line is for them, how that might differ to others, and how that relates to harm.

Follow up questions or points could be:

- How does finding things funny relate to social acceptance or social belonging?
- Does it matter if we find something funny if other people are being harmed by it?

## C. Wrapping up

### CARD 30: WHAT KIND OF PERSON DO YOU WANT TO BE?



Participants articulate their aspirations related to who they want to be as people.

Encouraging participants to establish the type of person they would like to be, so that they have a frame of reference when sharing material that might be funny to them but potentially harmful to others.

Follow up questions or points could be:

- How can we make sure that we act in ways that align with who we want to be?
- How do you want to be remembered for making others feel?
- What are some key learnings/takeaways?  
How might these be shared with others and in what settings?
- How has this Pathway impacted your understanding of the topic?
- How might you apply your experience of this Pathway conversation?



# After the Conversation

## More learning

Facilitators and workshop participants may be keen to continue with their learning about humour may be hurtful. Here are some extra resources that you can check out to deepen your understanding of the topic.



Video Essay

### THE SEXUAL ASSAULT OF MEN PLAYED FOR LAUGHS - POP CULTURE DETECTIVE

Many examples of jokes and an explanation of why this humour is generally indefensible and continues to harm men.

*Content Warning: sexual assault,  
29 minutes*

#### Where to find it

YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v>

#### Level of understanding:

Moderate



Video Essay

### WHY BORAT WORKS BETTER IN 2020 - LINDSAY ELLIS

Discussion on how all humour is political, and contextual, how what is considered funny changes over time with the norms of the times.

*31 minutes*

#### Where to find it

YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MlqWBVea5S4>

#### Level of understanding:

Moderate

# Support

We know these conversations can be difficult and bring up a range of experiences and deep emotions, which is totally valid. If you would like some support, here are some contact details for suggested organisations and communities.

## **Sticks n Stones**

Youth led bullying prevention organisation.

<https://www.sticksnstones.co.nz/>

## **ICON**

In Case of Online Negativity: options for young people dealing with online harm.

<https://icon.org.nz/>

