



Growing and nurturing relationships for life



SOCIAL POWER: THE BYSTANDER

Almost 40% of all racist incidents occur in public spaces, including on public transport. This video aims to teach bystanders what they can do when they witness racism in a public space.

See

- **What is happening?**
An Islamic woman is singled out and belittled because of her attire.
- **Who are the people involved?**
Everyone, and in this instance, an Islamic woman, those taunting/belittling her, and others who speak up in defence of this person.
- **Who gains from this situation? Who loses?**
Everyone, intolerance ultimately makes us all worse off. The Islamic woman, and those who speak up in defence of this person, do gain in exercising courage and solidarity. Those taunting/belittling her reflect narrowmindedness, disrespect, religious/racist intolerance.
- **What is the situation doing to people?**
Initially making them uncomfortable-the woman and those who speak up in her defence. Creating and/or supporting an environment that endorses racial and/or religious intolerance, unless it is called out and challenged.
- **Why is it happening? Why does it continue?**
Poorly formed impressions about others who are different; notions of cultural superiority; suspicion of others that may be informed by a variety of things, including global socio-political and/or religious events and experiences and experience.

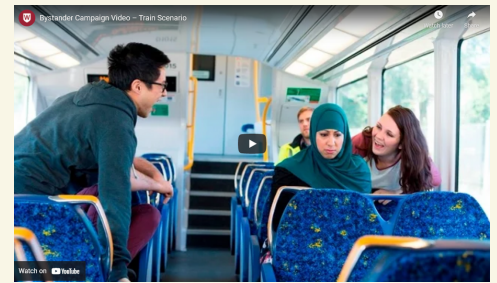
Judge

- **How do you feel about this situation?**
As a parent/adult, I can be both understanding from experience, and concerned when others are vilified and targeted because of their beliefs and attire which reflect this.
- **Have you ever behaved or acted like anyone in the situation? If so, what happened? Why? How did you and/or those involved feel?**
As an adult, I can identify with the behaviour and experience. I have experienced acceptance and rejection from others, and know how speak up in defence of others, to diffuse and respectfully call out inappropriate behaviour.
- **What do you think should be happening?**
Freedom to dress and express belief without judgement, condemnation, antagonism.
- **What does our faith say about it?**
'Our rich religious traditions seek to offer meaning and direction. ... At the heart of their spiritual mission is the proclamation of the truth and dignity of the human person and human rights. ... In a world where various forms of modern tyranny seek to suppress religious freedom, or try to reduce it to a subculture without right to a voice in the public square, or to use religion as a pretext for hatred and brutality, it is imperative that the followers of the various religions join their voices in calling for peace, tolerance and respect for the dignity and rights of others.' Pope Francis, 2015

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Act

- **What can we do to bridge the gap between what is happening (the reality) and what should be happening (the ideal/what our faith says)?**

'Religious freedom is violated in almost one third of the world's countries (31.6 percent), where two thirds of the world's population lives. 62 countries out of a total of 196 face very severe violations of religious freedom. The number of people living in these countries is close to 5.2 billion, as the worst offenders include some of the most populous nations in the world (China, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nigeria)' (Aid to the Church in Need, Religious Freedom in the World Report, 2021)

Assist my teenager to reflect upon the narrowminded, suspicious, judgemental attitudes that some people have and hold. Likewise, to reflect upon the feelings of vilification or rejection that comes with being targetted. Discuss the importance of integrity and courage to speak up in support and defence of others. Listen to them and offer them strategies akin to those who speak up in defence of the woman.

- **What action are we going to take?**

Explore whether there are options to become more aware, better informed about other religious beliefs, and understanding that people of faith share far more in common than what divides them/us. Bring facts and empathy, not judgement.

- **Who can we involve in our action?**

People of other faith(s) in the local neighbourhood, fellow students or members of groups/sporting clubs/workplaces my teenager belongs to-getting to know them, being curious and respectfully finding out about what they believe, and why. In being connected with them, knowing who they are.... together we can form the 'village', and more tolerant and accepting community required to raise/form a child, a teenager, an adult....