

HOW TO MEET PEOPLE WHERE THEY ARE

Meeting someone *where they are*, means bridging the gap between your expectations and where the other person is coming from.

Not everyone in life will share the same view as you! In advocacy work, there needs to be an element of respecting others' decisions, beliefs, and worldviews – and allowing them to come to draw their conclusions. Learning how to meet people where they are is a great social skill and can enhance advocacy work. Below are some tips on how to 'meet people where they are' –

Tip 1! Make an assessment on someone's viewpoint, not a judgement.

Be curious. Learn to understand other's point of view, rather than absorb or judge it. Can you think of a time you may have judged someone for having a different point of view than you?

Tip 2! Listen, learn and respect other's worldview

Having conversations with people will reveal their worldviews. A *worldview* is the way you look at the world. It's the lens through which you understand all your experience and make decisions. Our worldview is unique and is informed by our lived experiences. It's important to consider others' worldviews when *meeting them where they are*. Our worldview is not fixed and can change. Advocacy work can help with altering worldviews. Can you think of someone who has a contrasting worldview to you? In what ways are their views different?

Tip 3! Try to avoid judgmental words in conversation and written form (i.e. on socials).

Sometimes, using judgemental language can have the opposite outcome we're trying to achieve. When communicating what you feel is socially just, use positive language to get your message across. Even the best of us judges others from time to time. Developing an awareness of what judgment looks and sounds like (and even feels like) can help prevent us from being judgmental in the first place.

Can you think of an example where you've seen judgmental language used in advocacy work (i.e in the media, on socials, or in conversation)? What message do you think it sent?

Tip 4! Ask open-ended questions and repeat what you hear back to the person.

Asking open-ended questions can let others know you're not judging them. Rather, it shows you're curious about their worldview. This creates human connection. If someone isn't in agreement with your point of view, at least you've made a connection where they may be open to learning something new from your perspective.

Describe a recent conversation you had where you learnt about someone else's perspective.

Tip 5! Acceptance!

This is a big one. If another person's worldview contrasts with our own – it's not our role to convince them otherwise. Rather, we're here to advocate for what we believe is right.

Sometimes our energy is best spent advocating and reaching those who'd be open to the same dialogue as us, rather than spending time disagreeing with people who are firm in their ways. Acceptance is the will to tolerate a difficult situation or different viewpoint, and take action in the direction you think it'll be of the most benefit.

Is there something you could accept, even though you disagree with it?



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