



Dealing with resistance

Resistance is “any form of response that denies, challenges or undermines efforts” to prevent social change. Whilst it is inevitable, it can be helpful to be prepared and plan how to respond to resistance.

1. Expect resistance. Talking about the safety of animals and their rights to live free from violence can challenge people’s beliefs and power, which can lead them to resist.
2. Prepare and practice. Have relevant statistics, information, and examples ready. Think about your audience and practice responding to their concerns or questions.
3. Your safety comes first. Please do not continue a conversation if you believe your emotional, mental or physical safety is at risk, as that is the absolute priority.
4. Listen and acknowledge. If safe to do so, listen to the person’s perspective and ensure people feel heard and respected, and that their concerns are acknowledged.
5. Clarify their concern. Seek to understand the person’s perspective and concerns, as well as their underlying assumptions or beliefs, so that you can respond appropriately.
6. Decide whether to respond. Responding can help build a shared understanding, however you do not need to respond if the person is disrespectful or antagonistic.
7. Build common ground. Identify your common ground and connect with the person who has raised concerns by showing that you care about something in common.
8. Communicate your message. State your key message and supporting facts. If necessary, address any misinformation the person may have stated, but do not reinforce it.
9. Reflect on the conversation. Feel free to note how the conversation went in a project report or discuss as part of a community of practice.
10. Seek support if you need it. Addressing resistance can be traumatising. If you need to, you can call 1800RESPECT for support as a worker, or speak to your clinical supervisor.

Reference

Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria’s Partners in Prevention’s online resource on *Responding to resistance*: <<https://www.partnersinprevention.org.au/resources/responding-to-resistance/>>

