Responding to and Interrupting Bias

Ask questions:
Statements generate resistance, whereas questions generate answers... Questions offer no target to strike at, no position to attack
- “Why do you say that?”
- “Do you feel that way about every person in the group?”

Appeal to speaker’s egalitarian self-image:
Arouse cognitive dissonance in the prejudiced speaker by priming the speaker’s egalitarian self-image.
- “I’m surprised to hear you say that, because I’ve always thought of you as someone who is very open-minded.”

Tell the other person how you feel rather than how to behave
The latter can be disputed, but the former can’t be disputed
- “It makes me uncomfortable to hear that” vs. “You shouldn’t say that”

Approach with respect rather than self-righteous indignation

Other Suggestions

- Seek clarity: “Tell me more about ________.”
- Offer an alternative perspective: “Have you ever considered ________.”
- Speak your truth: “I don’t see it the way you do. I see it as ________.”
- Find common ground: “We don’t agree on ________ but we can agree on ________.”
- Give yourself the time and space you need: “Could we revisit the conversation about ________ tomorrow.”
- Set boundaries. “Please do not say ________ again to me or around me.

References