

Here are some points that you need to consider. You should have included all of these in your reflective activity.

- You did the right thing when you told Jim the first time that the joke made you uncomfortable. But Jim has now told another inappropriate joke, which shows more needs to be done. You are now doing the right thing by telling your line manager and asking to discuss it further during supervision.
- Your line manager needs to know what happened so it can be recorded. There might have been other incidents like this. Telling your line manager means action can be taken to address Jim's behaviour and to improve awareness of equality and respect at work.
- You know jokes can cause harm to those who overhear them, even if the person telling the joke claims no offence was meant. Racist and homophobic jokes usually rely on stereotypes. Stereotypes not only cause offence, they lead to people being treated unfairly. It can feel humiliating, intimidating, or hostile when the joke is about your own community or people you care about.
- It can feel uncomfortable to challenge someone directly on a joke they believe is harmless. You successfully challenged Jim earlier so you have shown you have this important skill.
- A climate of respect in a care setting begins with the staff. When members of staff tell racist or homophobic jokes it sends a message to residents this is acceptable and may lead to further inappropriate comments or jokes.
- You need to learn more about the standards expected of social service workers and about the law on equality. The SSSC Code of Practice for Social Service Workers says that social service workers are expected to promote equal opportunities for people using services and carers. You are expected to respect diversity and different cultures. This promotes a safe workplace for residents, carers and visitors.
- The Equality Act (2010) is the law that protects people from unwanted behaviour that is directed at them because of their race, sex, disability, sexual orientation, age and so on. This law covers all workplaces. By challenging and reporting racist and homophobic comments, you are helping to uphold this law.
- You are now doing the right thing but in future you need to take more action sooner. By now reporting the incident you are meeting the standards expected of a social service worker. You need to learn more about how to deal with and challenge discrimination. You need to fully understand the legal and work setting requirements on equality, diversity, discrimination and rights. Your line manager can help you with this.

When you heard Jim telling the racist joke the right thing to do was to find an opportunity to tell him it was inappropriate. You should then have told your line manager what happened.