

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

- You are now doing the right thing by speaking to your line manager about what has happened. You probably realise you made a mistake when you did not report what happened sooner. While the young person has asked you not to pass on his comments, an important part of upholding someone's rights is knowing when to pass on information. A way to protect him is to report overhearing the joke yourself.
- Your line manager needs to know what happened so that 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.
- In future you need to act sooner and more effectively to deal with situations like this. 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 realise jokes can cause harm to those they are directed at, or 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. Earlier on, you did challenge Jim so you have shown you have this important skill.
- 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.
- 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. Challenging and reporting racist and homophobic comments helps to uphold this law.
- While you are now doing the right thing, you need to do some further learning to make sure you meet the standards expected of a social service worker. You need to learn how to better deal with and challenge discrimination. You need to understand the legal and work setting requirements on equality, diversity, discrimination and rights. Your line manager can help 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.