

# Learn How to Intercept Bias

When a hiring committee meets to discuss candidates, it’s a prime opportunity to interrupt age bias when it happens. By refocusing the hiring committee on each candidate’s core capabilities, you’ll make the team more likely to hire the best candidate, regardless of their age.

In these scenarios, imagine the hiring panel is reviewing the first round of interviews and you hear someone make a comment that sounds like it may be biased. Use the chart below to identify biased comments and how you could respond to them.

IF YOU HEAR THIS	YOU COULD SAY THIS
<div>✗</div> <div>"He might be overqualified—this role might bore him."</div>	<div>✓</div> <div>"That’s a fair concern, but there are lots of reasons people might apply for a role for which they seem overqualified. We should explore his motivations rather than assuming he’ll be bored."</div>
<div>✗</div> <div>"I can't imagine she's really OK with taking a pay cut from her last job."</div>	<div>✓</div> <div>"If she applied knowing the salary range, I think we should take that as a sign she's comfortable with it—unless she’s said otherwise."</div>
<div>✗</div> <div>"He might not be up to speed with the latest tech."</div>	<div>✓</div> <div>"Do we have a specific concern based on what he said or showed, or is this more of a general impression?"</div>

IF YOU HEAR THIS	YOU COULD SAY THIS
<p>✗ "We want to maintain a youthful, dynamic culture."</p>	<p>✓ "Just as a reminder, using terms like 'youthful culture' in hiring discussions can put us at legal risk for age discrimination. Let's stick to job-related criteria."</p>
<p>✗ "Do you think she'll stay in the role long enough? She might be close to retirement."*</p>	<p>✓ "We can't really predict how long any candidate will stay—people leave roles for lots of reasons. Let's focus on whether she's the best person for the job right now."</p>
<p>✗ "He might have trouble reporting to a younger manager."*</p>	<p>✓ "Cross-generational teams are the norm in most workplaces now. What matters is whether he respects leadership and works collaboratively—age doesn't determine that."</p>
<p>✗ "She has a lot of experience, but we're looking for someone with more energy—someone who can keep up."*</p>	<p>✓ "What makes you think she won't be able to keep up? Did she say something in the interview, or are we assuming based on her age?"</p>
<p>✗ "He used to work with a friend of mine, who joked that he still complains about virtual meetings."</p>	<p>✓ "That sounds more like second-hand commentary than something relevant to his qualifications. Did anything in his interview suggest he struggles with virtual collaboration?"</p>
<p>✗ "I know I shouldn't say this, but the last time we hired an older candidate she was really resistant to change."</p>	<p>✓ "I'd be careful drawing conclusions about this candidate based on a different hire. Let's evaluate each person on their own strengths and what they bring to the team."</p>

Continued on next page

IF YOU HEAR THIS	YOU COULD SAY THIS
<p>✗ “She’s only been out of school for a couple of years—does she have enough gravitas?”</p>	<p>✓ "She seems very coachable. If we have concerns, we can work with her to evolve her presentation style."</p>
<p>✗ “He seems a bit young for the role—can he handle client relationships with our longstanding clients?”</p>	<p>✓ "It takes time to learn the norms of any workplace. Did anyone hear anything that would lead us to believe that he can't accept feedback?"</p>
<p>✗ “They're probably going to leave in a year or two for a better job.”</p>	<p>✓ "Even if they want to grow beyond this role in the next couple of years, they may want to do so within our own organization, which would still be a great outcome."</p>
<p>✗ "She seems like she'll want a promotion really quickly."</p>	<p>✓ "What did you hear in your interviews that made that impression? Let's look to see if she has a history of job-hopping."</p>