Responding when your Behavior is Perceived as Offensive

DO . . .
- Listen as non-defensively as you can.
- Assuming it’s true, assure the person that you did not intend for them to feel harassed, uncomfortable, or offended.
- Tell the person you are sorry they feels the way they do as a result of your behavior.
- Assure the person that you want them to feel comfortable in your presence and ask what you could do differently in the future so they would not feel that way.
- Assuming the person’s request would not prevent you from doing your job, agree to do what they asks to avoid the problem in the future.
- Acknowledge that it may have been difficult for the person to approach you, given how they felt, and thank them for telling you directly about their concerns.
- Ask them to please let you know in the future if they ever feels uncomfortable again.

DON'T . . .
- Say they are being too sensitive,
- Say they have no sense of humor,
- Say “don’t flatter yourself” (if they believes you made unwelcome advances toward her/him),
- Say they are wrong or lying,
- Say they have mental/emotional problems,
- Threaten them,
- Retaliate or get back at them for complaining, or
- Engage any further in the specific behaviors about which they complained about