

WHAT IS TONE POLICING?

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source: dictionary.com

TONE POLICING

[definition]

a conversational tactic that dismisses the ideas being communicated when they are perceived to be delivered in an angry, frustrated, sad, fearful, or otherwise emotionally charged manner

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source: feminimsmindia.com

WHY IS IT WRONG?

Tone policing calls out the tone of the message, especially if it conveys strong emotions, rather than the logic of the actual argument. Tone policing is a classic logical fallacy that uses an ad hominem (which is an attack on the person making the argument, rather than the argument itself).

Additionally, this diversionary tactic is yet another tool of gaslighting used to protect privilege instead of understanding the structures of oppression that exist in our society. By using this argument to avoid conversations that may make those with privilege feel uncomfortable or ashamed, those who tone police can choose to remain oblivious and refuse accountability.

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source: the equality institute

EXAMPLES

This is what tone policing sounds like:



Calm down so we can discuss this like adults.

You'd have a lot more people on your side if you weren't so rude.

It's comments like yours that block communication.

It's hard to take you feminists seriously when you're angry and bitter all the time.

Do you really have to be so angry at me? I'm trying to learn here and asking a genuine question.

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REASONS TO STOP TONE POLICING

it genders emotions and reinforces the stereotypes that women are too emotional and that men shouldn't show emotions

it silences marginalized voices by making them feel like their concerns about injustice and oppression are invalid

it prevents people from acknowledging their mistakes and taking accountability for their actions

it preserves societal privilege by giving those in power the ability to refuse conversations they don't want to have

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