

Recognizing and Addressing Microaggressions: Takeaways

Microaggressions Defined

- Microaggressions: Commonplace verbal, behavioral or environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages based on one's membership in a marginalized groups.—Derald Wing Sue, PhD

Types of Microaggressions

- *Microinsult* - behaviors, actions, or verbal remarks that convey rudeness, insensitivity, to demean a person's group, social identity or heritage
 - snubs, avoid eye contact, turning away
 - given poor service
- *Microinvalidation* -actions that exclude or negate the psychological feelings or experiential reality of people
 - "I don't see race, we are all equal"
 - "Don't be so sensitive!"
- *Microassault* - explicit derogation characterized by a verbal or nonverbal attack meant to hurt someone
 - name calling, avoidant behavior
 - purposeful discrimination

Common Themes of Microaggressions

- Treating like a second class citizen
 - Person of color mistaken for a service worker
- Assuming inferiority or pathology of marginalized identity
 - Raising your voice to speak to a blind person
- Assuming normality of dominant culture/identity (Alien in own land)
 - You don't look _____.
 - Where are you from? Your English is great!
- Denying personal bias
 - Obviously, I'm not homophobic, my brother is gay
- Ascription of Intelligence
 - You are so articulate
 - You're good at math, right?
- Culture blindness
 - We are all part of one race, the Human Race
- Assuming criminality
 - I don't want trans* people using MY restroom
 - Being followed in a store

General Tips

- Listen when someone raises a concern
- Become aware of your own unconscious bias - WE ALL HAVE THEM, *BUT WE SHOULD ALSO INTENTIONALLY WORK TO ADDRESS THEM AS WELL!*
- Learn about other social/cultural groups norms
- Be observant - notice reactions
- Interrupt microaggressions when witnessing them
- Educate others about your experience & understanding

Resources

Berk, R.A.(2017) [Microaggressions in the academic workplace](#). *Journal of Faculty Development*, 31(2), 69-83.

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Sue, D. (2010). [Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation](#). Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley

Vo, L.T. (2012). Navigating the academic terrain. In Harris, A.P. & Gutierrez y Muhs, G. (2012) *Presumed Incompetent: The Intersections of Race and Class for Women in Academia*. University Press of Colorado (pp. 93-109)