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Understanding and Addressing Microaggressions in the Workforce PART I

Today's Agenda

- Group Norms
- Definitions of terms
- What are microaggressions?
- How often do microaggressions happen?
- What are the impacts of microaggressions on various marginalized groups?
- How do we address microaggressions as the receiver or as the bystander?

Group Norms

- 1. Be Smarter than Your Phone**
- 2. Confidentiality**
- 3. Use “I” Statements**
- 4. Co-construct Knowledge**
- 5. Share the Airtime**
- 6. Reserve the Right to Change Your Mind/Okay to feel uncomfortable**
- 7. Suspend Judgement**
- 8. Any additional Group Norms?**

Definitions

- **Implicit Bias**
- **Microaggressions**
 - **Microassaults**
 - **Microinsults**
 - **Microinvalidation**

Implicit Bias

- Im-plic-it bi-as /im plisit bi s/: The attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner.
- Activated involuntarily, without awareness or intentional control. Can be either positive or negative. Everyone is susceptible. Having biases doesn't make you a bad person – it only makes you human
~ Kirwan Institute

**What are microaggressions?
And
How often do microaggressions
happen?**

Microaggressions

- Microaggressions are brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, **whether intentional or unintentional**, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative slights and insults toward marginalized groups.

~ Derald Wing Sue, 2007

Micro**assault** (Often Conscious)

- A micro**assault** is an explicit racial derogation characterized primarily by a verbal or nonverbal attack meant to hurt the intended victim through name-calling.

~ Derald Wing Sue, 2017

Microinsult (Often Unconscious)

- A micro**insult** is characterized by communications that convey rudeness and insensitivity and demean a person's racial heritage or identity.
- Microinsults represent subtle snubs, frequently unknown to the perpetrator, but clearly convey a hidden insulting message to the recipient from a marginalized group.

~ Derald Wing Sue, 2017

Microinvalidation (Often Unconscious)

- Micro**invalidations** are characterized by communications that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of a person from a marginalized group.

~ Derald Wing Sue, 2017

What are the impacts of microaggressions on various marginalized groups?

9 Categories of Microaggressions

Theme	Assumption	Microaggression	Message
Alien in own land	When Asian Americans and Latino Americans are assumed to be foreign-born	"Where are you from?"; "Where were you born?"; "You speak good English."; A person asking an Asian American to teach them words in their native language.	You are not American, You are a foreigner
Ascription of intelligence	Assigning intelligence to a person of color on the basis of their race	"You are a credit to your race."; "You are so articulate."; Asking an Asian person to help with a math or science problem.	People of color are generally not as intelligent as Whites.; It is unusual for someone of your race to be intelligent.; All Asians are intelligent and good in math/sciences.
Color Blindness	Statements that indicate that a White person does not want to acknowledge race.	"When I look at you, I don't see color."; "America is a melting pot."; "There is only one race, the human race."	Denying a person of color's racial/ethnic experiences.; Assimilate, acculturate to the dominant culture.' Denying the individual as a racial/cultural being.

9 Categories of Microaggressions

Theme	Assumption	Microaggression	Message
Criminality/assumption of criminal status	A person of color is presumed to be dangerous, criminal, or deviant on the basis of their race	A White man or woman clutching their purse or checking for their wallet as a Black or Latino approaches or passes; A store owner following a customer of color around the store; A White person waits to ride the next elevator when a person of color is on it.	You are a criminal.; You are going to steal/You are poor/You do not belong. You are dangerous.
Denial of individual racism	A statement made when Whites deny their racial biases	"I'm not racist. I have several Black friends"; "As a woman, I know what you go through as a racial minority."	I am immune to racism because I have friends of color.; Your racial oppression is no difference than my gender oppression, I can't be a racist. I'm like you.
Myth of meritocracy	Statements which assert that race does not play a role in life successes	I believe the most qualified person should get the job."; "Everyone can succeed in this society, if they work hard enough."	People of color are given extra unfair benefits because of their race.; People of color are lazy and/or incompetent and need to work harder.

9 Categories of Microaggressions

Theme	Assumption	Microaggression	Message
Pathologizing cultural values/communication styles	The notion that the values and communication styles of the dominant White culture are ideal.	Asking a Black person: "Why do you have to be so loud/animated? Just calm down."; To an Asian or Latino person: "Why are you so quiet? We want to know what you think. Be more verbal."; "Speak up more." Dismissing an individual who brings up race/culture in work/school setting.	Assimilate to dominant culture.; Leave your cultural baggage outside.
Second-class citizen	Occurs when a White person is given preferential treatment as a consumer over a person of color.	Person of color mistaken for a service worker; Having a taxi cab pass a person of color and pick up a White passenger. Being ignored at a store counter as attention is given to the White customer behind you.; "You people..."	People of color are servants to Whites. They couldn't possibly occupy high-status positions.; You are likely to cause trouble and/or travel to a dangerous neighborhood.; Whites are more valued customers than people of color.; You don't belong. You are a lesser being.
Environmental microaggressions	Macro-level microaggressions, which are more apparent on systemic and environmental levels	A college or university with buildings that are all named after White heterosexual upper class males; Television shows and movies that feature predominantly White people, without representation of people of color; Overcrowding of public schools in communities of color; Overabundance of liquor stores in communities of color.	You don't belong/You won't succeed here. There is only so far you can go.; You are an outsider/You don't exit.; People of color don't/shouldn't value education.; People of color are deviant.

Activity: Unproductive Meeting Behaviors

Unproductive Meeting Behaviors

- In the 1st column, check-off any unproductive behaviors which you have observed in meetings.
- Then in the 3rd column, check-off any of these behaviors that you have ever done.
- Look back over this list, and imagine what needs the person/you were attempting to fulfill with each of these behaviors. Write these unmet needs in the 4th column. Examples of needs: recognition, inclusion, understanding, clarity, safety, connection, mutuality, collaboration, acknowledgement, efficiency, honesty, respect, competence, trust, fun, make a difference, etc.

Others do this	Unproductive meeting behaviors, when someone:	I've done this	Unmet needs
	1. Makes inappropriate comments or "jokes"		
	2. Belittles the input or comments of others		
	3. Minimizes or rationalizes away the frustrations and comments of group members		
	4. Interrupts or talks over others		
	5. Engages in side conversations		
	6. Dominates the conversation		
	7. Makes snide or sarcastic comments		
	8. Only interacts and makes eye contact with people like them; people they like		
	9. Gives unsolicited "advice;" tell someone how they should have felt or responded differently		
	10. Dismisses or ignores the input of others		
	11. Disregards feedback from group members		
	12. Laughs at or makes fun of other group members		
	13. Treats peers with disrespect		
	14. Gives someone the "silent treatment" or "cold shoulder"		
	15. Uses a negative, judgmental tone		
	16. Uses an overly aggressive or forceful style		
	17. Refuses to participate in the discussion or the activity		
	18. Is silent, shut down or withdrawn		
	19. Challenges the validity of the information being presented to serve a personal agenda		
	20. Questions the usefulness of an activity or a discussion to serve a personal agenda		
	21. Gives excuses or PLEs (Perfectly Logical Explanations) for disrespectful comments and behaviors		
	22. Raises their voice to try to silence others		

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Directions:

- In the 1st column, check-off any unproductive behaviors which you have observed in meetings.
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- Please plan to share with the larger group.

**How do we address microaggressions
as the receiver or as the bystander?**

Type of Change Agents

- **Actor**
 - The actions of an Actor do not disrupt the status quo, much the same as a spectator at a game. Both have only a nominal effect in shifting an overall outcome.
 - The actions of an Actor do not explicitly name or challenge institutionalized systems of oppression which is necessary for meaningful progress towards social justice.

Type of Change Agents

- **Ally**
 - Ally is typically considered a verb – one needs to act as an ally, and can not bestow this title to themselves.
 - The actions of an Ally have greater likelihood to challenge institutionalized systems of oppression. An Ally is like a disrupter and educator in spaces dominated by privilege group membership.

~ <https://www.whiteaccomplices.org/>

Type of Change Agents

- **Accomplice**

- The actions of an Accomplice are meant to directly challenge institutionalized systems of oppression, colonization, and White supremacy by blocking or impeding racist people, social injustices, policies and structures.
- Realizing that our freedoms and liberations are bound together, retreat or withdrawal in the face of oppressive structures is not an option.

~ <https://www.whiteaccomplices.org/>

Activity – Checklist for Allies and Accomplices

Checklist for Allies and Accomplices: Tools and Strategies to Increase Your Capacity and Effectiveness as Change Agents (A Place to Start)

Directions: Read each of the following and rate how often you **effectively demonstrate** these skills:

1 = Never 2 = Rarely 3 = Occasionally 4 = Often 5 = Always

- 1. Consistently track interactions and group dynamics; work to create balance of engagement among all members; and speak up when you notice exclusionary comments and behaviors.
- 2. Cultivate relationships with other members of privileged groups who actively work to dismantle oppression and create inclusive organizations. Talk honestly about where you get stuck and ask for feedback and coaching.
- 3. Continue to deepen your awareness about privilege and dominant culture, and how these operate in you, others, and organizations/systems.
- 4. Recognize and change in the moment when you are operating out of stereotypes, privilege, and/or dominant cultural beliefs.
- 5. Track patterns of negative differential treatment on members of marginalized groups and intervene to stop inappropriate actions and educate others.
- 6. Support others when they question or challenge **uninclusive** or disrespectful behaviors or policies so they are not alone. Recognize that marginalized group members have a far greater risk if they challenge and speak up.
- 7. Recognize and intervene when unconscious bias and prejudice are impacting opinions and decisions.
- 8. Continually learn more about the experiences of members of marginalized groups and oppression.
- 9. Recognize when members of marginalized groups might be reacting out of cumulative impact, and offer space to talk about issues and their experiences.
- 10. Analyze policies, programs, services, and practices to assess any differential negative impact on members of marginalized groups and shift practices to create change.
- 11. Track current utilization of services and assess the degree of satisfaction and usage by members of marginalized groups.
- 12. Regularly assess the climate and culture of organizations and analyze the data for any differential experiences from members of marginalized groups.

Directions:

1. Read each of the following and rate how often you **effectively** demonstrate these skills.
2. After you are done, put a check mark next to the ones you would like to work on.
3. Share with a partner one of the selections you are proud of and one that you want to work on.
4. Please plan to share with the larger group.

Activity: What Could You Do?

What Could You Do?

Directions: Choose 1-2 examples of microaggressions and exclusionary situations. Write each one in the left-hand column. Then discuss and note how you could **ADDRESS** the situation in the other column.

Consider as you discuss:

- What is the probable impact if **no one speaks up** in this situation?
- What could be the **positive outcomes if someone does intervene** and speak up?
- What could you do to **ADDRESS*** the situation?
 - **A** = Acknowledge (that something occurred)
 - **D** = Dialogue (with the person in the moment, afterwards)
 - **D** = "Document" (tell someone; use the Bias Reporting System)
 - **R** = Redirect (the conversation)
 - **E** = Educate (the person)
 - **S** = Stop (the exclusionary behavior)
 - **S** = Support (the people impacted)

Microaggression, Exclusionary Situation	WHAT COULD YOU DO?

Developed by Naomi Sigg, Director of Office of Multicultural Affairs, Case Western University, 2015
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2. Write each one in the left-hand column.
3. Then discuss and note how you could address the situation in the other column.
4. Please plan to share with the larger group.

~ Developed by: Naomi Sigg, Director of Office of Multicultural Affairs, Case Western University, 2015

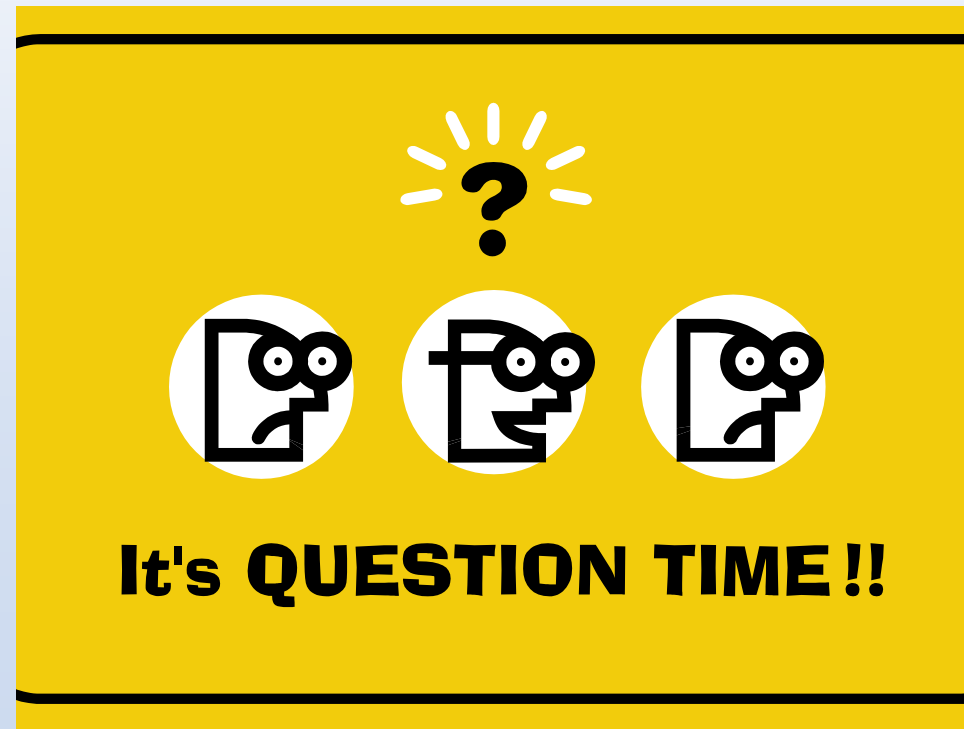
Additional Resources and Tools

1. Traps and Potholes for Allies to Avoid, a Beginning List by Tanya Williams, Ed.D., www.tanyawilliams.org and Kathy Obear, Ed.D., www.drkathyobear.com
2. PAIRS: Effective Dialogue Skills developed by Kathy Obear, Ed.D., www.drkathyobear.com
3. Responding to microaggressions and bias by Diane J. Goodman, Ed.D. www.dianegoodman.com

Microaggressions are like mosquito bites

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hDd3bzA7450>

Questions/Comments



Coming Soon....
Understanding and Addressing
Microaggressions in the Workplace
Part II

How to Navigate Triggering Events?