Person to Person Activism: Disarming Microaggressions and Leveraging Personal Narratives

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MINDFUL MOMENT
to foster belonging, safety, and self-awareness
Agenda

- Introductions
- What are Microaggressions?
- Who Intervenes and How?
- Practice Scenarios
- Art Activity
- Wrap-up
Hello!

I am Lexie Barber
Hello!

I am Stephanie Campbell
Hello!
I am Melina Knabe
Hello

- Who are you?
- Where are you coming from?
- Why are you here?
- What are you hoping to gain?
- What do you already know about microaggressions?
What ARE Microaggressions??

First, let’s hear from some experts
Racial microaggressions are brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults towards people of color. -Sue et al., 2007
Let’s reflect on the video...

How have microaggressions impacted your life?

Quick-Write!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Microassault</th>
<th>Microinvalidation</th>
<th>Microinsult</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>➢ Displaying a swastika</td>
<td>➢ “I don’t SEE race”</td>
<td>➢ “How did YOU get into this school?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Using racial slurs</td>
<td>➢ “Where are you REALLY from?”</td>
<td>➢ “You’re so articulate”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Deliberately serving white customers before POC customers</td>
<td>➢ “It was just a joke, he didn’t mean it to be racist. Calm down.”</td>
<td>➢ Implying that the reason a POC got a job was because of affirmative action</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Consequences of Microaggressions

- Cognitive abilities
- Self-esteem
- Academic success
- Affect, depressive symptoms, distress
How do these slights and prejudices impact your peers or loved ones?
### Table Chat!

Where do you think microaggressions come from? What are they triggered by?

What feelings come up for you when you encounter microaggressions

Do unhelpful thoughts ever come up for you in those situations that limit your willingness to respond? If so, what are those thoughts?
WHO should intervene?

HOW to intervene?
Four Ways to Intervene

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interrupt</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Educate</th>
<th>Echo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-Speak up every time it happens</td>
<td>-Ask simple, exploratory questions to understand intent</td>
<td>-Explain why the term/phrase is offensive</td>
<td>-If someone else responded, thank them and reiterate anti-bias message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Inconsistent responding sends the message that some bias is okay</td>
<td>-”Tell me more”</td>
<td>-Give speakers benefit of doubt</td>
<td></td>
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Helpful Tips

Model Behavior:
- Avoid a sarcastic, mocking, snide, or arrogant tone
- Use yourself as a model

Focus on the Event, not the Person
- Direct conversation to the behavior or event to reduce defensiveness

Starting Out:
- “If it’s okay with you, can I ask you more about ___?”
The Language Used Matters

See “Responding to Microaggressions and Bias” sheet

**Restate or Paraphrase**

- “I think I heard you saying ***. Is that correct?”

**Separate Intent from Impact**

- “I know you didn’t realize this, but when you ***”
**Share Your Process:**
- “I noticed that you ___. I used to do/say that too, but ___”

**Point Out Commonalities**
- “Do you know they are also studying ___ and like to _____.”

**Challenge the Stereotype**
- “Actually, in my experience _____.”

**Express Your Feelings**
- “When you ____, I felt _____ and I would like you to ____”

**Appeal to Values**
- “I know you really care about ____. Acting this way undermines that.”
Important considerations:

**Privilege**
- Will further conversation be beneficial and productive?

**Power**
- What is my current level of stress?
- Am I safe?

**Safety**
- What is my desired outcome?
Scenarios

Let’s put this into practice!
“Where are you from? Your English is so good!”
“I don’t see color. There is only one race - the human race”
“Men and women have equal opportunities for achievement. I think the most qualified person should get the job!”
Environmental Microaggressions

- University buildings named after White heterosexual upper-class males
- Prominent figures in TV/movies are not representative
- Sports team mascots
How might microinterventions play out in your work/school/common spaces?
How might dynamics of privilege and power impact the microintervention?
Table Chat!

What aspect of this was most challenging? Easiest?

What questions or concerns do you have about carrying out those next steps?

Does anyone have anything empowering or inspirational to share with the group?


