

MITIGATING MICROAGGRESSIONS IN THE WORKPLACE

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Categories of microaggressions

- . Pathologizing differences (micro insults)
- . Denigrating and pigeonholing
- . Excluding and rendering invisible
- . Perpetrating colour blind racist attitudes

Common Microaggressions

RACIALIZED PEOPLE

- You're so exotic
- What sport did you play to get into this school?
- You aren't like other (insert race) people
- Is that your real hair, can I touch it?
- Are you a diversity hire?
- Are you the new cleaner?
- Do all your kids have the same father?
- You have really big eyes for an Asian person

WOMEN

- Love, dear, sweetheart
- Do you really need to work?
- Being spoken over
- Having ideas dismissed but then validated when a man gives the same idea
- You should smile more
- Try to be nicer

2SLGBTQIA+

- That's so gay
- Who's the man and who's the woman here?
- Is your wife coming?
- When are you having the surgery?
- What did you look like before you transitioned?
- How can you be sure you're a lesbian if you haven't tried it with a man?

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

- But you look so normal
- I'm really OCD about my files
- I'm so dyslexic today
- The way you've overcome your disability is so inspiring
- Turn a blind eye
- Falling on deaf ears
- Tone deaf



DON'T

I'm never going to remember that.

Do you have something shorter for that?

Can I just call you _____ instead?

DO

Repeat their name after they introduce themselves

I want to make sure I get it right, can you teach me?

Write it down, spell it phonetically



Coping with microaggressions

- Collective coping (microaffirmations)
- Resistance coping (confronting)
- Self-protective coping (self-care)

Allies speak up

- “I’m wondering what led you to believe that?”
- “What do you mean by that? Why does their race matter? Did I miss something?”
- “There’s some history behind that expression you just used that you might not know about. It actually means _____, so replacing it with _____ would be great.”
- “I noticed that you said _____. I used to say that too, but then I learned _____.”
- “You may not realize this”... or “You might be surprised to hear this...”

**WHAT IF I'M THE ONE WHO
SAYS THE WRONG THING?**



An ego-centric response looks like

- **Centering yourself:** “I can’t believe you think I’m a toe-stepper! I’m a good person!”
- **Denial that others’ experiences are different from your own:** “I don’t mind when people step on my toes.”
- **Derailing:** “Some people don’t even have toes, why aren’t we talking about them instead?”
- **Refusal to center the impacted:** “All toes matter!”
- **Tone policing:** “I’d move my foot if you’d ask me more nicely.”
- **Denial that the problem is fixable:** “Toes getting stepped on is a fact of life. You’ll be better off when you accept that.”
- **Victim blaming:** “You shouldn’t have been walking around people with boots!”
- **Withdrawing:** “I thought you wanted my help, but I guess not. I’ll just go home.”

An ally's response looks like

- **Centre the impacted:** “Are you okay?”
- **Listen to their response and learn:** “Thanks for letting me know.”
- **Apologize for the impact, even though you didn't intend it:** “I'm sorry!”
- **Stop the instance:** Move your foot.
- **Stop the pattern:** Be careful where you step in the future.

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