

# Microaggressions

# Who are you? (self reflection)

What do you think makes you ... you?

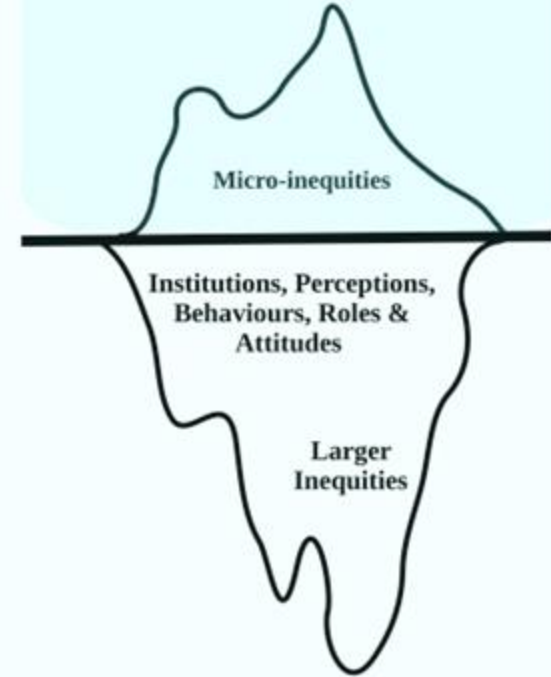
We all have multiple characteristics that makes us the individual that we are and that we present each other. However, sometimes people around us choose one to define us.

Often people from underrepresented and marginalized communities experience labeling and stereotyping, where people choose one characteristic to define them , this characteristic tends to be related to the marginalized or underrepresented group they belong to.

But remember, we are more than just our race, our gender, our abilities, our religion, our careers and /or our socio economic status.

# Micro-inequity:

- A micro-inequity is a behavior, not a thought or belief. It can be a comment, a gesture, a use of specific words, even a tone of voice.
- Micro-inequities fall between the cracks of what is considered traditional discrimination because they don't fit neatly into a legal framework.
- They are subtle forms of discrimination-where a person is singled out, overlooked, ignored, or discounted due to their membership in a particular group. - Rowe, 1973 & <https://rb.gy/ft3g0d>



**Conceptual Iceberg Model of Micro-inequities**



**Microaggressions:** everyday, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership. - Psychologist Dr. Derald Wing Sue

**Microassault:** They are most likely to be conscious and deliberate, although they are generally expressed in limited “private” situations (micro) that allow the perpetrator some degree of anonymity. - D. W. Sue, C.M.

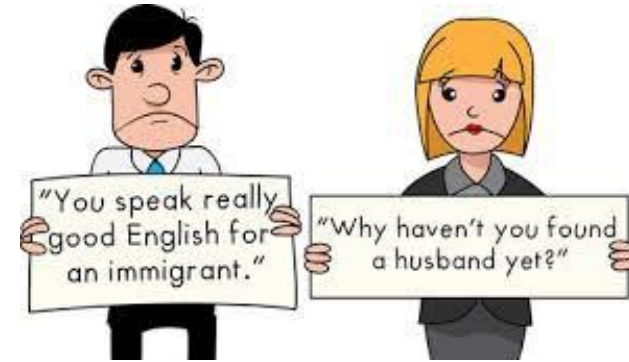
Capodilupo, G.C. Torino, J.M. Bucceri

**Microinsults:** A microinsult is a comment or action that is unintentionally discriminatory. D. W. Sue, C.M. Capodilupo,

G.C. Torino, J.M. Bucceri

**Microinvalidations:** A microinvalidation is when a person’s comment invalidates or undermines the experiences of a certain group of people. D. W. Sue, C.M.

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# Other types of microaggressions

Theme	Microaggression	Message
Alien in own land	"You speak good English."	You aren't American.
Ascription of intelligence	"You are so articulate."	It's unusual for someone of your race to be intelligent.
Color blindness	"When I look at you, I don't see color."	Denies a person of color's racial/ethnic experiences.
Assumption of criminal status	A store owner follows a customer of color around the store.	You are going to steal.
Denial of individual racism	"My best friend is Black."	I'm immune because I have friends of color.
	"As a woman, I know what you go through."	Your racial oppression is not different than my gender oppression.

Sue et al., 2007

(Banks. 2015)  
<https://rb.gy/p3vsd2>

Theme	Microaggression	Message
Myth of meritocracy	"Everyone can succeed in America if they work hard enough."	People of color are lazy and/or incompetent and need to work harder.
Pathologizing cultural values	Dismissing an individual who brings up race/culture at work/school.	Leave your cultural baggage outside.
Second-class citizen	A taxi cab passes a person of color to pick up a White passenger.  "You people."	You're likely to cause trouble and travel to a dangerous neighborhood.  You don't belong and are a lesser being.
Environmental	Television shows/movies without representation of people of color.	You are an outsider. You don't exist.

Sue et al., 2007

Type	Microaggression	Message
Gender	"Smile! You're too pretty for people to not see your smile."	Your appearance defines what people think of you.
	A female doctoral student continues to receive emails from potential participants addressed "sir."	It is unlikely for someone of your gender to pursue an advanced degree.
Sexual Orientation	"I like you, but why do others have to shove it in our faces?"	The LGBTQ experience is offensive and abnormal.
	"So who's the man in the relationship?"	Implies that a "normal" relationship must involve a man and a woman.
Disability	Without being asked, a man helps a disabled person board the train.	You can't function independently.

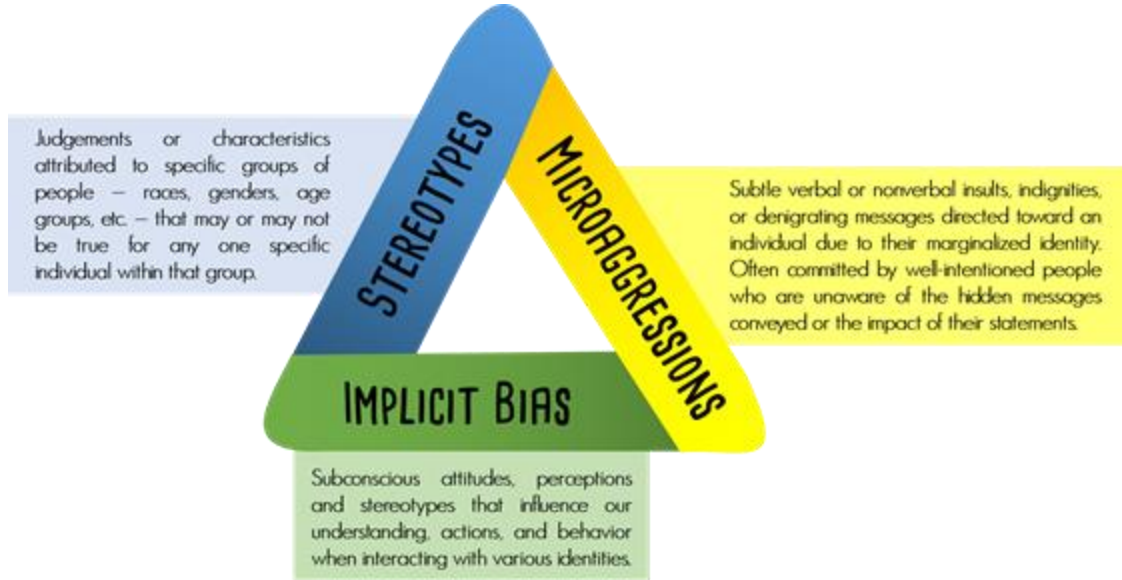


Type	Microaggression	Message
Religion	<p>"You don't look Jewish!"</p> <p>Although not explicitly celebrated, a public school displays Christmas decorations in December.</p>	<p>All Jewish people look the same.</p> <p>In America, Christianity is the most important religion. Those who practice others are outsiders.</p>
Class	"That's ghetto."	Being poor is associated with negative/undesirable characteristics.

# How does microaggressions impact people?

Microaggressions can be subtle but they amplify inequality, perpetuate stereotypes and implicit bias.

Microaggressions accumulate over time and can create a lot of damage to someone's mental and physical health (they are like [mosquito bites - video](#))



# How can we address microaggressions?

**Microresistances:** Small-scale individual and/or collaborative efforts that empower targeted people and allies to cope with, respond to, and/or challenge microaggressions with a goal of ultimately dismantling systems of oppression. - Irey, 2013; Souza, Ganote, and Cheung, 2017

**Microaffirmations:** Microaffirmations are tiny acts of inclusion and caring, and graceful acts of listening. - Irey, 2013; Souza, Ganote, and Cheung, 2017



# Scenario 1

You are organizing a conference that has attracted 250 attendees. You have asked one of your professors if they can moderate a discussion with some panelists. One of your invited panelists, Robbie is a non-binary person who uses “they/them” pronouns. Despite being aware of Robbie’s pronouns the moderator misgenders them a couple of times during the session. After the conference, Robbie emails to let you know that they were extremely disappointed by the moderator misgendering them. You bring up the issue with the moderator and the moderator responds “is not that big of a deal, people can use any pronouns on me and I do not get offended” What would be your response? What do you think you can do as an organizer of the conference? What would be some ways to avoid repeating this scenario?

# How to change our vocabulary?

Start using Micro affirmations in your daily actions and conversations:

- When students or colleagues tell you they feel they have been targeted because of their identity, you believe them and do not question their reasoning.
- Acknowledging that a microaggression may have occurred.
- Visibly confronting inequitable, hostile, or biased behavior if you are in a position of privilege to do so.

# How to change our vocabulary?

- Use inclusive vocabulary like for example gender neutral words; do not assume anything about people.
- Sometimes is better not to say anything and focus on actually getting to know someone.
- Challenge your own self-protective responses. Be proactive not reactive
- Personally stand against bias and discrimination, especially in times when you are not the target of it.
- Educate yourself, use resources online or books or classes. -Micro-aggressions and Micro-affirmations, Emelyn A. dela Peña, Ed.D.

# Resources

<https://ready.web.unc.edu/section-1-foundations/module-4-implicit-bias-microaggressions/>

<http://rjcenterberkeley.org/microaggression-workshops/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z7l194OXxYo&t=537s>

[https://cehs.unl.edu/images/EdPsych/nicpp/NICPP\\_microaggression\\_presentation\\_2015-06-02.pdf](https://cehs.unl.edu/images/EdPsych/nicpp/NICPP_microaggression_presentation_2015-06-02.pdf)

<https://www.microaggressions.com>