Topic: How to recognize and respond to microaggressions

By Jiayi Hu

Prototype Start

Learn to recognize and respond to microaggressions.

Start Learning

What are microaggressions?

Press anywhere to continue

What are microaggressions?

They are indirect, subtle or unintentional comments or actions that **discriminate** against members of a marginalized group.
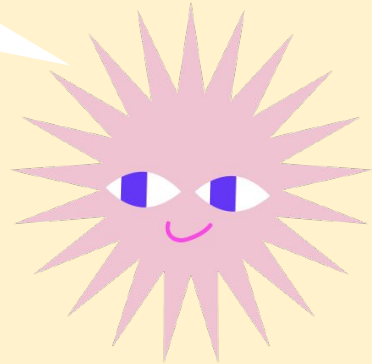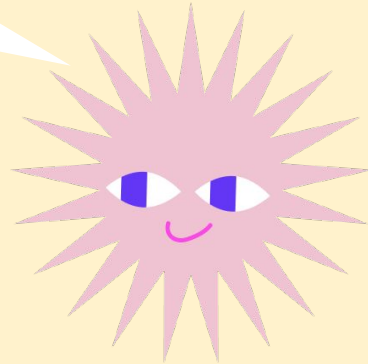
Press anywhere to continue

What are microaggressions?

They are indirect, subtle or unintentional comments or actions that **discriminate** against members of a marginalized group.

They could be hard to recognise in day-to-day interactions. Let's learn!

Press anywhere to continue

Choose a chapter to get started!

Chapter I: Microassaults

Chapter II: Microinsults

Chapter III: Microinvalidations

Chapter II: Microinsults

Dining hall near closing time, you walk in to use a meal swipe for a to-go option. You usually eat on time so this is your first time doing it in a while.

Back

Next

You

Okay, I think I can just grab a paper bag and take stuff from the shelf… right? First time doing this in forever.

Back

Chapter II

Next

Ms.Carter

Here. *hands you a paper bag*

Back

Chapter II

Next

You

Thanks! *turns around to look at what's available to grab & go*

Ms.Carter

suddenly No, give me that back. I wasn't supposed to give you a paper bag.

Back

Chapter II

Next

You

Oh—sorry. *hands back the bag*

Back

Chapter II

Next

You

That was weird… I'm just following what she gave me?

You look at the shelf and hesitate
"How many items am I allowed to take with one swipe?"

Ms.Carter

sharply You don't even know how many items you're getting? You just grabbed that bag!

You

It's my first time getting something to-go in a while…

Back

Chapter II

Next

Ms.Carter

briskly Three items. That's it.

>

Back

Chapter II

Next

How do you respond?

A. "I didn't mean to cause trouble—I'm just confused."

B. "There's no need to talk to me like that."

C. Say nothing and just pick three items.

Back

Chapter II

Next

How do you respond?

A. "I didn't mean to cause trouble—I'm just confused."

Ms. Carter shrugs and walks away without responding.

Back

Chapter II

Next

You

[Walking out of Dining Hall]

I know I asked a simple question… but it felt like I was being accused of trying to steal. Like I wasn't being given the benefit of the doubt. Like I was already guilty. Was it the tone? The look? The way she took the bag back so fast?

Back

Chapter II

Next

A. "Maybe I'm overthinking. She's probably like that with everyone."

B. "No… that felt like something deeper. That didn't feel fair."

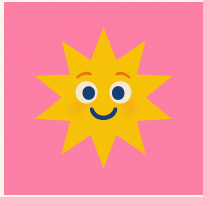C. "Why do I always second-guess myself when I feel disrespected?"

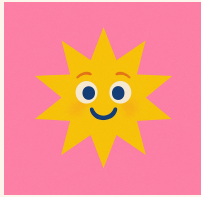A. "Maybe I'm overthinking. She's probably like that with everyone."

Let's unpack it together. How you felt matters.

Chapter II

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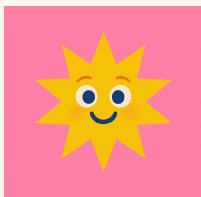A. "Maybe I'm overthinking. She's probably like that with everyone."

The fact that you felt accused of stealing is really important.

Chapter II

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A. "Maybe I'm overthinking. She's probably like that with everyone."

Microaggressions are often about **impact over intent** — it may not have been her goal to make you feel that way, but that doesn't invalidate your reaction.
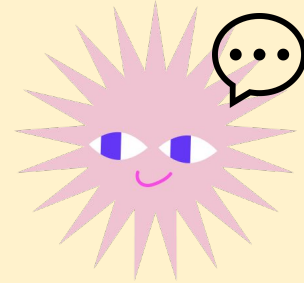
Chapter II

>

Microinsults

Sometimes, microaggression come in the form of casual comments or questions that carry a hidden edge, often referred to as **microinsults**.

Chapter II

Microinsults

They sound innocent—maybe even like advice or guidance—but they're **veiled judgments**.
It's not the question itself, but the implication behind it:

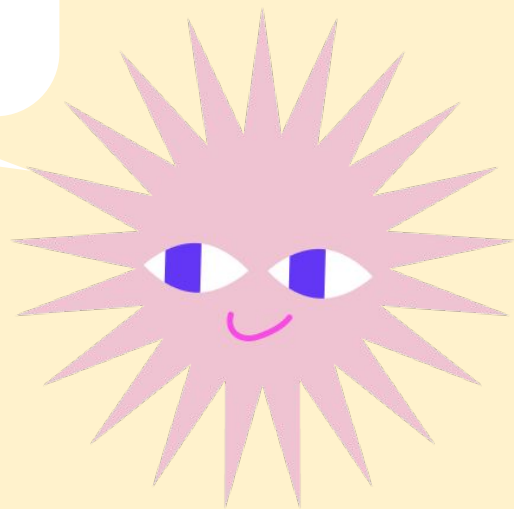*"You're not trusted."*
"You're not capable."
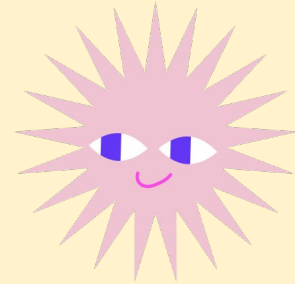*"You don't belong."*

Chapter II

Microinsults

In moments like these, it's important to take a step back and think:
How should you respond when faced with subtle disrespect?

Press anywhere to continue

Here are some options you could consider:

Address it directly: "That felt a little dismissive. Can you clarify what you meant?"
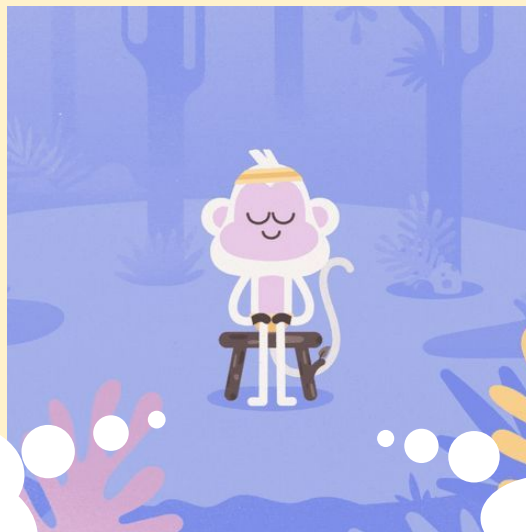
Talk to someone you trust: "I'll bring this up with a friend later. It's hard to process right now."

Reflect before reacting: "Maybe I need to think about how I feel before saying anything."

Let it go for now: "I'll let this slide, but I'm going to pay attention next time."

Chapter II

>

Talk to someone you trust: "I'll bring this up with a friend later. It's hard to process right now."

Remember, there's no "right" or "wrong" answer.

Chapter II

>

Talk to someone you trust: "I'll bring this up with a friend later. It's hard to process right now."
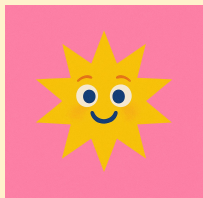
Everyone responds to microinsults differently, and what matters most is your emotional well-being and how comfortable you feel in addressing the situation.

Chapter II

>

Talk to someone you trust: "I'll bring this up with a friend later. It's hard to process right now."

The goal is not to suppress your feelings but to navigate them in a way that serves you.

Okay, got it!

Chapter II

Two more to go!

Chapter I: Microassaults

Chapter II: Microinsults

Chapter III:
Microinvalidations

One more to go!

Chapter I: Microassaults

Chapter II: Microinsults

Chapter III:
Microinvalidations

≡

Congrats! You've finished all three cases. Let's test your understanding of microaggressions with a quiz!

-> Get Started

Which of the following is an example of a microaggression?

A. "You look so normal, I wouldn't have guessed you were gay."

B. "You probably won't understand this, but…"

C. Why don't you try harder to focus?"

D. All of the Above

Next

How should you handle a situation where you're not sure if someone's comment was a microaggression?

A. Confront them immediately and demand an apology.

B. Ignore the comment and move on without further thought.

C. Reflect on your feelings, and if it's still bothering you, decide whether to address it directly or speak with someone you trust.

D. Assume it was not a microaggression and dismiss your feelings.

Next

Empathy and active listening are important when dealing with microaggressions. Which of the following best demonstrates active listening in response to a microaggression?

A. "I don't think you meant it, but that comment made me uncomfortable. Can we talk about it?"

B. "You shouldn't be so sensitive. I was just kidding."

C. "Maybe you didn't mean to offend me, but I'll just forget it."

D. That's ridiculous—let's move on."

Next

Someone says, "I'm surprised you're so good at math, considering you're a woman." What is the potential impact of this microaggression?

A. It reinforces a harmful stereotype about gender and intelligence.

B. It shows a genuine compliment about your abilities.

C. It doesn't matter—it's just a comment.

D. It encourages women to step back from pursuing math.

Next

A friend says, "I didn't realize people with ADHD could be so organized!" This comment is an example of:

A. Microassault

B. Microinvalidation

C. Microinsult

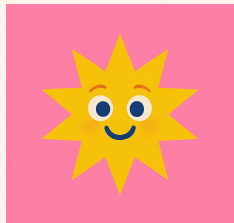D. None of the Above. It's not an micro-aggression.

Next

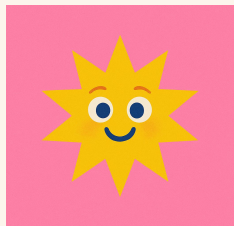# Congrats!

You got 5/5.

Review my results

Quiz Again

Continue to outro
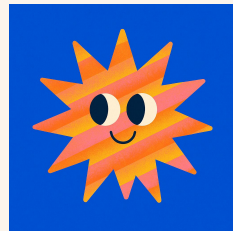
Great job! You've got a strong understanding of microaggressions and their impact.

Press anywhere to continue

Great job! You've got a strong understanding of microaggressions and their impact.

Recognizing these subtle moments is the first step to creating a more inclusive environment. Keep learning and keep speaking up—your awareness can make a difference.

Press anywhere to continue

Lastly…
Remember, it's important to not just recognize microaggressions, but to also **reflect** on how we can respond—both for our own well-being and to help others feel **seen and respected**.

Share my results

Return to home

End of Prototype

User testing #1

Which team member facilitated the prototype?
- Claryssa Tarigan

Which team member took notes?
- Jiayi Hu

What was the name of the user?
- Elizabeth Ting

Was the user able to complete the prototype? If so, what was their score on the quiz?
Yes, the user completed the prototype and scored 4 out of 5 on the quiz.

What's something positive you learned from the prototype? Try to focus on the
new features you iterated on.
- The user enjoyed the progress indicator for scenarios and quiz.
- They loved the graphics talking to each other

What was one critical incident you learned about from the prototype? (a time
the user was wrong, confused, or had to think very hard to figure something out).
- for the quiz, the user suggested that some answers are too obvious - I might make the answers more difficult to choose from.
- They got the last question wrong as they did not sit through all three different scenarios.

User testing #2

Which team member facilitated the prototype?
- Claryssa Tarigan

Which team member took notes?
- Jiayi Hu

What was the name of the user?
- Martin Ma

Was the user able to complete the prototype? If so, what was their score on the quiz?
Yes, the user completed the prototype and scored 4 out of 5 on the quiz.

What's something positive you learned from the prototype? Try to focus on the
new features you iterated on.
- The user liked the visual novel storytelling style of learning and thinks it's very effective in teaching.

What was one critical incident you learned about from the prototype? (a time
the user was wrong, confused, or had to think very hard to figure something out).
- The user was confused as to what the hamburger menu was for
- They also got the last question wrong as they did not sit through all three different scenarios. I will keep developing the other
two scenarios.

Positive & Negative Findings

1. The visual novel is an immersive way to learn about microaggressions through real examples. It simulates a real life situation.
2. There's too many text and too little media.
3. There are too many slides (i.e. user had to click too many times). Maybe consider condensing each convo into 2-3 states.
4. The multiple choices are good as they get the user involved in REALLY thinking about the situation and what they would do.
5. It may be interesting to show a quiz result graphic based on which multi-choice option the player picks?