

# Is That a Microaggression?

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# Introductions

*Ana Ochoa: Moderator  
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*Seth Chapman: Presenter  
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# Quotes - Big Picture



**GLENBARD  
PROFILE OF A  
GRADUATE**



Everything you say and do is  
having an impact on others.

Barry Manilow



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# Quotes - Microaggressions



"Microaggressions hold their power because they are **invisible**, and therefore they don't allow us to see that our actions and attitudes may be discriminatory."

-By Tori DeAngelis



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# 4 Community Agreements



## COURAGEOUS CONVERSATION COMPASS



- Stay Engaged
- Speak Your Truth
- Experience Discomfort
- Expect and Accept Non-Closure



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# Agenda:

1. Define Microaggression
2. The Impact of Microaggressions
3. Ice-breaker Activity
4. Forms of Microaggressions
5. Types of Microaggressions
6. Addressing Microaggressions
7. Case Study Scenarios



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# DEFINE MICROAGGRESSION

## What are microaggressions?



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# MICROAGGRESSION

A microaggression is a comment or an action that negatively targets a marginalized group of people.

***A microaggression can be intentional or accidental.***

It is a form of discrimination.

Smith, A. Reviewed by Litner, J. Medical News Today. 11 June 2020. <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/microaggressions>

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# IMPACT OF MICROAGGRESSIONS

- Diminished self confidence
- Diminished psychological well-being
- Poor self image
- Depression
- Anxiety (and related symptoms)
- Absenteeism/Excessive Tardies → Decreased academic performance
- Limited engagement/participation (classroom, clubs, sports, etc.)



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# Ice-breaker

- Walk around the room and read the testimonials
- Think about how they make you feel



# Ice-breaker

- In three words, describe what you thought or felt as you read them?

- Mentimeter



# In three words describe what you thought or felt as you read the testimonials



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**1728 3815**

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# Ice-breaker

- In the last year, how many times have you **experienced or witnessed** a microaggression?
- Provide an example.



# FORMS OF MICROAGGRESSION

**Verbal:** A comment or question that is hurtful or stigmatizing to a certain marginalized group of people.

**“You’re so smart for a woman.”**

**Behavioral:** Occurs when someone behaves in a way that is hurtful or discriminatory to a certain group of people.

**A bartender ignoring a transgender person.**

**Environmental:** When a subtle discrimination occurs within society.

**A college campus that only has buildings named after white people.**



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# Verbal and Behavioral Microaggressions

I'm not racist. I have several black friends.

I don't see color.

You speak great English.

You are so articulate.

A person grabs their purse or wallet as an African American or Latino approaches them.

An individual waits to ride the next elevator when a person of color is on it.

Mistaking a person of color as a service worker.





# WHAT ARE THE UNDERLYING MESSAGES BEHIND VERBAL MICROAGGRESSIONS?

## Verbal:

“I don’t see color.”

“You speak great English.”

“I’m not racist. I have several black friends.”

“You are so articulate.”



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# UNDERLYING MESSAGES BEHIND VERBAL MICROAGGRESSIONS

## Verbal:

- “I don’t see color.”  
(I don’t want to acknowledge race)
- “You speak great English.”  
(Assuming someone is foreign born)
- “I’m not racist. I have several black friends.”  
(Denial: Because I have friends of color, I can’t be racist)
- “You are so articulate.”  
(Believing people of color are less intelligent)



# WHAT ARE THE UNDERLYING MESSAGES BEHIND BEHAVIORAL MICROAGGRESSIONS?

## Behavioral:

- A person grabs their purse or wallet as an African American or Latino approaches them.
- An individual waits to ride the next elevator when a person of color is on it.
- Mistaking a person of color as a service worker.



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# UNDERLYING MESSAGES BEHIND BEHAVIORAL MICROAGGRESSIONS

## Behavioral:

- A person grabs their purse or wallet as an African American or Latino approaches them. (This is an assumption of criminality)
- An individual waits to ride the next elevator when a person of color is on it. (This is also an assumption of criminality)
- Mistaking a person of color as a service worker. (Treating an individual as a second class citizen)



# STOP & THINK

Some feel that since microaggressions can be unintentional, that people should just “let it go” or not dwell on them when they occur.

Do you agree with that?

Why or why not?



# Types of Microaggressions

## Microaggression Examples By Type:

### **Microassault**

“If you come to my country, you should speak English.”

### **Microinsult**

“You’re pretty for a black girl.”

### **Microinvalidations**

“I don’t see color.” [Video](#)



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# REFLECTION

Now that you're conscious of microaggressions, what will you do if you see it occur in your spaces?



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# ADDRESSING MICROAGGRESSIONS

- Identify your own emotions.
- As the bystander, take a pulse of the situation.
- Call the microaggressor ~~out~~ in!
  - Criticize the microaggression, not the microaggressor.
- Don't try to speak on behalf of the target. Think and speak on behalf of how it impacted YOU.





# ADDRESSING MICROAGGRESSIONS

## Recognize & Acknowledge:

- Be the ally! Let the victim know that you will aim to help maintain a safe environment for all.
- Validate the feelings of the victim negatively impacted.
- Remind the microaggressor to be mindful of their language and behavior.
- Be a disruptor by interrupting the reinforcement of existing biases!



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# What if you're the microaggressor?

What should you do if someone points it out to YOU?

- Try not to be defensive
- Self awareness
- Acceptance
- Take Action



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# CASE STUDIES

What would you do?



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# Quotes

“Microaggressions add up. No matter how confident people from marginalized or underrepresented communities feel about their identities, microaggressions create unsafe spaces and make individuals feel like perpetual outsiders.”

— **Mira Yang**, op-ed contributor

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# How serious is this?



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**DON'T BE A MOSQUITO!**



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# Closing Thought

It can be hard enough for adults—particularly adults with privileged identities—to recognize microaggressions. But it's crucial we address them. At their core, these are coded messages of disapproval that are based in identity: comments and actions that echo larger, structural bigotry, telling marginalized people they don't belong, that they are less than.

- By Bret Turner



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# Presenters:

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# Questions and Answers

*We thank you for your time!*



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