



Dealing with Racial Microaggressions On-Campus

MULTICULTURAL OUTREACH TEAM
STUDENT COUNSELING SERVICES



Adapted from the University of Arizona and the National Collegiate Athletic Association's Step Up! Be a Leader, Make a Difference Program



**STUDENT COUNSELING
SERVICES**
Illinois State University





Bystanders Stepping Up to Microaggressions

Before we begin, please read the following:

1. This presentation is meant to generate thought and promote discussion. We recognize and appreciate that these topics may contain sensitive material.
2. Many of you in the room may have had personal experiences with microaggressions. Through the course of this discussion, dialogue may occur that causes an emotional reaction from you. Therefore, feel free to leave the room. If you need assistance please speak to a facilitator.
3. We ask that everyone be respectful of others and be conscious and respectful of the diversity of reactions to the topic.



Bystanders

by·stand·er

'bī,standər/

noun

1. A person present but not involved; chance spectator; onlooker.



Racial Microaggressions

“Brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color.”

(Sue et al., 2007)



Why are we discussing bystanders and racial microaggressions?

- **Bystanders can make a difference.**

“A bystander, for example, may be able to “*pivot*” a situation—from one where there is awkward silence, exclusion, or hurt—to one where there is support, both for individuals, and for an organization’s espoused values of inclusivity.”



If Microaggressions Happened to White People- Video





Video Reactions

- What reactions do we have to the video?



Forms of Racial Microaggressions

- *Microassault*
- *Microinsult**
- *Microinvalidation**

**Since we are focusing on the unintentional and unconscious manifestations of microaggressions, this presentation will mostly discuss microinsults and microinvalidations*



Microassault

“An explicit racial derogation characterized primarily by a verbal or nonverbal attack **meant to hurt** the intended victim through name-calling, avoidant behavior, or purposeful discriminatory actions” (Sue et al., 2007).

- Most likely to be conscious and deliberate in private situations where perpetrator can have some degree of anonymity
- Examples
 - *Referring to someone as “colored” or “Oriental”*
 - *Deliberately serving a White patron before someone of color*
 - *Displaying a swastika*



Microinsult

“Communications that convey rudeness and insensitivity and demean a person’s racial heritage or identity” (Sue et al., 2007).

- Subtle snubs that are frequently unknown to perpetrator, but clearly convey a hidden insulting message to the recipient of color
- Examples
 - *White employer tells prospective candidate of color “I believe the most qualified person should get the job, regardless of race” (verbal)*
 - *Employee of color is asked “How did you get your job?” (verbal)*
 - *White teacher fails to acknowledge students of color in classroom (nonverbal)*
 - *White supervisor seems distracted during a conversation with a Black employee by avoiding eye contact or turning away (nonverbal)*



Microinvalidation

“Communications that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of a person of color” (Sue et al., 2007).

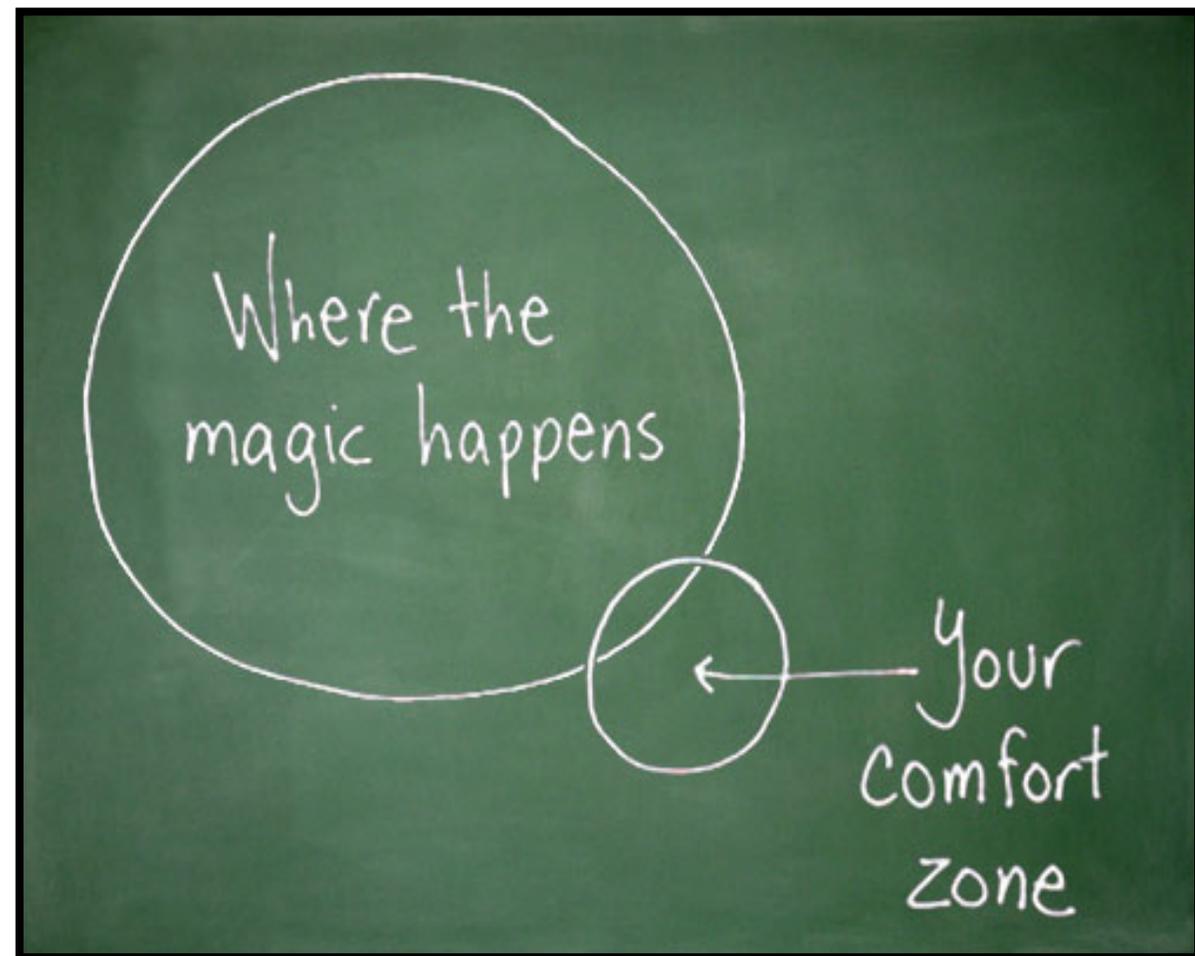
- Vary in degree of conscious awareness
- Examples
 - *Asian Americans complimented for speaking good English or repeatedly asked where they were born*
 - *Blacks are told “I don’t see color” or “We are all human beings”*
 - *“All Lives Matter”*
 - *Latino couple shares with their White friends that they were given poor service at a restaurant; told “Don’t be so oversensitive” or “Don’t be so petty”*



It takes bravery to be accountable, to cross cultures, and to speak the unspoken.

As such, we relate to each other with respect.

With respect for each other's bravery, we do not shame by calling-out our areas of growth. In our Brave Space, we call-in to learn together.





Why We Might Not Intervene

1. Thought I was the only one who felt that way
2. Didn't want to go against the group
3. Didn't know what to do
4. Didn't think it was my responsibility
5. I was too shocked and angry
6. At the time I didn't think it was a problem
7. Other



Guidelines on Approaching Microaggressions Effectively

1. Critically **self-examine** racial biases and their impact on one's life and the lives of others
2. Be **respectful** of individuals and their viewpoints
3. **Listen** to what individuals' lives are like and the experience they've had in the world
4. **Don't rush the process** of trying to **understand** a person's experiences or identity
5. **Accept that you are responsible** for your negative comments or reactions



Action Steps

1. Identify the microaggression
2. Form a goal based on the source of the microaggression
 - Change negative **beliefs**
 - Change negative **attitudes**
 - Change discriminatory **behavior**
3. Determine the most effective way to address the microaggression.
4. Decide which strategy to use.



Different Strategies / Approaches

- *Individuation Approach*
- *Recategorization or Common Identity Approach*
- *Confrontation Approach*



Individuation Approach

Individuation Approach

Try to get the person to see others as individuals instead of members of a disliked group.

Highlight things about a targeted group member that are different from perceptions.

Tell them something about the targeted member so that the person could get to know and appreciate them as individuals.

Encouraging curiosity about the targeted member.



Individuation Approach

Scenario

You witness an interaction between a nurse from the campus health department and an African American student (Darren), just prior to a medical appointment. Darren shares with the nurse that he has been the target of racism on campus and that the offenders have been fellow students and campus police. The nurse responds by saying, “You know, you African Americans are always crying racism”. How might you intervene?

Example of Bystander Response:

I’m troubled to hear you stereotyping/categorizing an entire group of people in this way. Have you had a chance to get to know Darren? Perhaps, by getting to know Darren, you would have a greater appreciation for his story and better understanding of how he has been impacted by the experiences mentioned. (This response attempts to utilize all three strategies under the individuation approach)



Recategorization or Common Identity Approach

Recategorization or Common Identity Approach

Get others to see that the targeted group is similar to others and shares similar goals.

Highlight things the person and targeted group share in common.

Discuss issues that affect both the person and the targeted group

Think of other ways to get the person to see things from a different perspective.



Recategorization or Common Identity Approach

Scenario

A history class on campus contains mostly White students. There is one Asian and two Black students in the class. During a class discussion, the Asian and Black students are addressed by the class, requesting to hear the minority perspective. What do you do?

Example of Bystander Response

Is there a White perspective?

Point out that diversity (including diversity of experience and perspective) exists within all communities. Therefore, it can be unhelpful and potentially dangerous to expect for an individual to serve as the spokesperson for a group with an apparent shared identity (in this case racial identity) (This response attempts to utilize the first and third strategies under the recategorization/common identity approach)



Confrontation Approach

Confrontation Approach

Point out the inconsistency in the person's actions and stated beliefs.

Point out a statement as a potential bias

Ask the person if they think all people should be treated equally and then point out how their views contradict that.

Ask the individual if they value diversity then remind them of how they might unfairly stereotype others.



Confrontation Approach

Scenario

You're sitting in the library and overhear a group of white students discussing how "stupid Mexicans can only get into this school because of Affirmative Action" followed by laughter. What do you do?

Bystander Approach

How would you use the confrontation approach to respond to the scenario?



Case Study

Incident:

You are the advisor to Ekwueme Gbadamosi, a Business major seeking an off campus internship. At a meeting, you witness a potential site supervisor requesting that he go by Gabe so that it would be easier for everyone at the site to pronounce. Although feeling embarrassed and offended, Ekwueme agrees.

1. Identify the microaggression
2. Discuss the potential impact on the target
3. Talk about what bystander approach would help in responding to this incident



Final Thoughts?

Thank You for Attending this Presentation!

ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT:

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