



# CCSI

Coordinated Care Services, Inc.

Innovative Solutions in Human Service Delivery



# **OUCH that HURTS!** **Microaggressions** **& Oppression**


# TODAY'S TAKE-AWAYS




**Microaggressions  
DEFINITION**



**Microaggressions  
EXAMPLES**



**Microaggressions  
IMPACT**



**Microaggressions  
RESPONSES  
& TOOLS**



## HAVE YOU EVER...

...felt like you had to defend your entire race/ethnicity?

...had to prove that your sexual orientation doesn't define everything about who you are?

...had to defend your expertise because you are a woman?

Then you have probably experienced  
**MICROAGGRESSION.**



# MICROAGGRESSION: What is your experience?



# WHAT ARE MICROAGGRESSIONS?



**MICROAGGRESSIONS ARE SUBTLE ACTS OF BIAS...**  
that reflect as a structural form of oppression towards a specific group of individuals who are usually underserved and underrepresented and considered “minority.”

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point of view.  
**Definition** [defr  
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## MICROAGGRESSIONS ARE INSULTS...

These insults are predominantly unintentional, that is, they are not usually the product of conscious actions



# WHAT ARE MICROAGGRESSIONS?

Jean Harvey (1999, 1-18) defines  
Microaggression as “CIVILIZED OPPRESSION”

- Oppression is “civilized” when its violence is not overt, nor clear to victims, perpetrators, or bystanders and thus is particularly harmful because the actual impact of harm is obscure
- Because of its subtlety, microaggressions are often ignored or dismissed



# TYPES OF MICROAGGRESSIONS

Psychologist Derald Wing Sue and colleagues defined three types of microaggression:

**Microassaults...** is when a person intentionally behaves in a discriminatory way while not intending to be offensive. An example of a microassault is a person telling a racist joke then saying, “I was just joking.”

**Microinsults...** is a comment or action that is unintentionally discriminatory. For example, this could be a person saying to an Indian doctor, “Your people must be so proud.”

**Microinvalidations...** is when a person’s comment invalidates or undermines the experiences of a certain group of people. An example of a microinvalidation would be a white person telling a black person that “racism does not exist in today’s society.”





# MICROAGGRESSIONS (SOME EXAMPLES)

## THEME: ALIEN IN OWN LAND

“Where are you from?”

“Where were you born?”

“You speak really good English.”

When a person asks someone to teach them words in their “native” language.

**\*MESSAGE RECEIVED - ???**



# MICROAGGRESSIONS (SOME EXAMPLES)

## THEME: ASCRIPTION OF INTELLIGENCE

Assigning intelligence to a person of color (POC) based on their race.

“You are so articulate.”

“You are a credit to your race.”

“You speak such good English.”

**MESSAGE RECEIVED**

???



# MICROAGGRESSIONS (SOME EXAMPLES)

## THEME: COLOR BLINDNESS

Statements that indicate that a white person does not want to acknowledge race.

“When I look at you, I don’t see color.”

“America is a melting pot.”

“There is only one race, the human race.”

**MESSAGE RECEIVED**

???



# MICROAGGRESSIONS (SOME EXAMPLES)



## THEME: CRIMINALITY – ASSUMPTION OF CRIMINAL STATUS

A POC is presumed to be dangerous, criminal, or deviant based on their race.

A white man or woman clutching their purse or checking their wallet as a POC approaches or passes.

A store owner following a customer of color around the store.

A White person waits to ride the next elevator when a person of color is on it.

**\*MESSAGE RECEIVED - ???**



# MICROAGGRESSIONS (SOME EXAMPLES)

## THEME: DENIAL OF INDIVIDUAL RACISM & OPPRESSIVE ACTS

A statement made when Whites deny their racial biases

“I’m not a racist. I have several Black friends.”

“As a woman, I know what you go through as a racial minority.”

“I am gay, I also experience oppression, we are the same.”

“I am not privileged; I received no handouts to achieve what I have.”

“Reverse Racism”

**\*MESSAGE RECEIVED - ???**



# MICROAGGRESSIONS (SOME EXAMPLES)



## THEME: MYTH OF MERITOCRACY

Statements which assert that race does not play a role in life successes.

“I believe the most qualified person should get the job.”

“Everyone can succeed in this society, if they work hard enough.”

“Pull yourself up by your bootstraps.”

“I am not privileged; I received no handouts to achieve what I have.”

**\*MESSAGE RECEIVED - ???**



# MICROAGGRESSIONS (SOME EXAMPLES)

## THEME: PATHOLOGIZING CULTURAL VALUES & COMMUNICATION STYLES

The notion that the values and communication styles of the dominant/White culture are ideal.

Asking a Black person:

*“Why do you have to be so loud/animated? Just calm down.”*

To a non-native English-speaking person:

*“You have a very heavy accent, speak slowly.”*

To an Asian person:

*“Why are you so quiet? We want to know what you think. Be more verbal. Speak up more.”*

*Dismissing an individual who brings up race/culture in work setting*

To a Latino person:

*“Why are you so emotional, relax, it will be ok.”*

**\*MESSAGE**

**RECEIVED - ???**



# MICROAGGRESSIONS (SOME EXAMPLES)

## THEME: SECOND-CLASS CITIZEN

Occurs when a White person is given preferential treatment as a client over a POC.

“You people...”

Referring to POC as “undesirables”.

POC mistaken for a service worker.

Having a taxicab pass a POC and pick up a White passenger.

Television shows and movies that feature predominantly White people, without representation of people of color.

POC’s voice being diminished in work conversations. When a white person repeats the same comment said by the POC, they are acknowledged and respected for their contribution.

**\*MESSAGE RECEIVED - ????**





# MICROAGGRESSIONS (SOME EXAMPLES)

## THEME: ENVIRONMENTAL MICROAGGRESSIONS

Macro-level microaggressions, which are more apparent on systemic & environmental levels

*A college or university with buildings that are all names after White heterosexual upper-class males.*

*Television shows and movies that feature predominantly White people, without representation of people of color.*

*Overcrowding of public schools in communities of color.*

*Metal detectors in public schools in communities of color.*

*Overabundance of liquor stores in communities of color.*

*Food deserts in communities of color.*

**\*MESSAGE RECEIVED - ???**



# How Unintentional But Insidious Bias Can Be Most Harmful



# IMPACT OF MICROAGGRESSIONS

Reinforces and perpetuates oppression,  
including marginalization

## Three-part Decision-Making Model (Nadal 2010)

- Did this microaggression really occur?
- Should I respond to this microaggression?
- How should I respond to this microaggression?



# IMPACT OF MICROAGGRESSIONS



Choose NOT to Confront...feel regret, remorse, isolation, guilt, and/or shame

Choose to confront, may feel fear:

- of appearing like a negative representation of their social group (i.e., race)
- of retaliation from the person(s) confronted (i.e., student may fear professor retaliation)
- that they chose an ineffective method of communication



# IMPACT OF MICROAGGRESSIONS



Hurts and re-traumatizes people who already experience oppression in the larger world. This can significantly affect one's ability to be present as they are consumed by their need to take care of their emotions.

Feelings of pain can accumulate and affect one's overall health and well-being.

Erodes any trust & credibility established with the supervisor/colleague/group/team leader and seen as someone who “doesn't care about people like me.”

By not “leaning into” and examining the situation, we miss learning opportunities for everyone involved.



# RESPONDING TO MICROAGGRESSIONS

As colleagues/team leaders/supervisors/user of services,  
WHAT CAN WE DO...to *FACILITATE THE PROCESS, NOT THE CONTENT.*

Do not allow a charged statement to be brewed over in silence:  
MODEL THE BEHAVIOR

**Example:** With a clearly annoyed tone, a white student says to professor: “This is UNIV 104, not a course on diversity!” **Model what you want the person to do by acknowledging the statement:**

Professor/Student Leader: “It sounds like you’re making a distinction between diversity and UNIV 104, that talking about diversity, equity, and belonging are not valid topics for this course. Is that what you are saying?”

Student: “No, that’s not what I’m saying!”

Professor/Student Leader: “Okay, please clarify what you are trying to say?”



# RESPONDING TO MICROAGGRESSIONS

## WHAT CAN WE DO: LEAN INTO THE TENSION

Acknowledge necessity of having conversations. Prepare the person/group for transitions: entering, moving through, continuing/concluding/exiting the conversation.

Example: “We may be entering crucial and important terrain here. As a group, how can we make sure that each person is heard?” Revisit grounding assumptions and needs during the discussions – allow this to evolve per discussion.

Keep an open mind by asking questions that help you better understand what the person is trying to communicate.

Avoid being defensive by making grand statements about ourselves or others.



# RESPONDING TO MICROAGGRESSIONS

## WHAT CAN WE DO: EXPRESS APPRECIATION

It's important to recognize, validate, and express appreciation to individuals for their bravery, openness, and willingness to participating in deliberate dialogue.

Acknowledge the Experience - "As a team/group, we have just experienced crucial conversation."

EXAMPLE

I appreciate your courage and commitment to your work by being willing to engage in these kinds of important and critical conversations. It is common to walk away from these conversations feeling unsettled and as we are willing to practice this, we will get better at it. I hope you all will feel free to bring these kinds of topics up again when situations arise."





# RESPONDING TO MICROAGGRESSIONS

## MICRORESISTANCE

Reframing defense to microaggression into proactive focus on the structural nature of the problem; incremental daily efforts to challenge privilege.

## OPEN THE FRONT DOOR

- Observe (I noticed...based on concrete factual info)
- Think (I think...focus on issue not person)
- Feel (I feel...feelings as a result of observation/issue)
- Desire (I would like to see...statement of desired outcome)

## SELF-CARE

Increase personal and psychological resources and strength through self-care

## INCREASING SOCIAL RESOURCES

Show up to equity/diversity events

# RESPONDING TO MICROAGGRESSIONS

## CONFRONT MICROAGGRESSIONS...

when you witness them, including when you are the perpetrator

## TEACH OTHERS...

about microaggression and microresistance

## ALLY; ACCOMPLICE

## CHALLENGE THE SYSTEM...

when you are in positions to do so

## MICROAFFIRMATIONS...

Acts kindness of that occur wherever people wish to help others succeed

## INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGY

# RESPONDING TO MICROAGGRESSIONS

## APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

Active listening

## CREATING INVITATION FOR EVERYONE...

to participate, amplifying voices, inclusive pedagogy

## HELP PROCESS EXPERIENCES

“Great to see you, you’ve been in my thoughts. Let’s find some time to connect and chat.”

## BELIEVE ME...

When I tell you that I feel I have been targeted because of my identity,

## AFFIRMING FEELINGS

Identify resources and options available; highlight opportunities for growth, healing, empowerment

## REINFORCING & REWARDING POSITIVE BEHAVIORS

Recognize and celebrate use of campus resources; “I’m glad you’re here.”

# TOOL: INTERRUPTING MICROAGGRESSIONS

## Tool: Interrupting Microaggressions

MICROAGGRESSION EXAMPLE AND THEME	THIRD PARTY INTERVENTION EXAMPLE	COMMUNICATION APPROACH
<p><b>Alien in One's Own Land</b> To a Latino American: "Where are you from?"</p> <p><b>Ascription of Intelligence</b> To an Asian person, "You're all good in math, can you help me with this problem?"</p> <p><b>Color Blindness</b> "I don't believe in race."</p>	<p>"I'm just curious. What makes you ask that?"</p> <p>"I heard you say that all Asians are good in math. What makes you believe that?"</p> <p>"So, what do you believe in? Can you elaborate?"</p>	<p><b>INQUIRE</b> Ask the speaker to elaborate. This will give you more information about where s/he is coming from, and may also help the speaker to become aware of what s/he is saying. <b>KEY PHRASES:</b> "Say more about that." "Can you elaborate on your point?" "It sounds like you have a strong opinion about this. Tell me why." "What is it about this that concerns you the most?"</p>
<p><b>Myth of Meritocracy</b> "Everyone can succeed in this society, if they work hard enough."</p> <p><b>Pathologizing Cultural Values/Communication Styles</b> Asking a Black person: "Why do you have to be so loud/animated? Just calm down."</p>	<p>"So you feel that everyone can succeed in this society if they work hard enough. Can you give me some examples?"</p> <p>"It appears you were uncomfortable when ___ said that. I'm thinking that there are many styles to express ourselves. How we can honor all styles of expression—can we talk about that?"</p>	<p><b>PARAPHRASE/REFLECT</b> Reflecting in one's own words the essence of what the speaker has said. Paraphrasing demonstrates understanding and reduces defensiveness of both you and the speaker. Restate briefly in your own words, rather than simply parroting the speaker. Reflect both content and feeling whenever possible. <b>KEY PHRASES:</b> "So, it sounds like you think..." "You're saying... You believe..."</p>
<p><b>Second-Class Citizen</b> You notice that your female colleague is being frequently interrupted during a committee meeting.</p> <p><b>Pathologizing Cultural Values/Communication Styles</b> To a woman of color: "I would have never guessed that you were a scientist."</p>	<p>Responder addressing the group: "___ brings up a good point. I didn't get a chance to hear all of it. Can ___ repeat it?"</p> <p>"I'm wondering what message this is sending her. Do you think you would have said this to a white male?"</p>	<p><b>REFRAME</b> Create a different way to look at a situation. <b>KEY PHRASES:</b> "What would happen if...." "Could there be another way to look at this..." "Let's reframe this..." "How would you feel if this happened to your___..."</p>
<p><b>Second-Class Citizen</b> Saying "You people...."</p> <p><b>Use of Heterosexist Language</b> Saying "That's so gay."</p>	<p>"I was so upset by that remark that I shut down and couldn't hear anything else."</p> <p>"When I hear that remark, I'm offended too, because I feel that it marginalizes an entire group of people that I work with."</p>	<p><b>USE IMPACT AND "I" STATEMENTS</b> A clear, nonthreatening way to directly address these issues is to focus on oneself rather than on the person. It communicates the impact of a situation while avoiding blaming or accusing the other and reduces defensiveness. <b>KEY PHRASES:</b> "I felt ___ (feelings) when you said or did ___ (comment or behavior), and it ___ (describe the impact on you)."</p>
<p><b>Second-Class Citizen</b> A woman who is talked over.</p> <p>Making a racist, sexist or homophobic joke.</p>	<p>She responds: "I would like to participate, but I need you to let me finish my thought."</p> <p>"I didn't think this was funny. I would like you to stop."</p>	<p><b>USE PREFERENCE STATEMENTS</b> Clearly communicating one's preferences rather than stating them as demands or having others guess what is needed. <b>KEY PHRASES:</b> "What I'd like is..." "It would be helpful to me if..."</p>

## Tool: Interrupting Microaggressions

MICROAGGRESSION EXAMPLE AND THEME	THIRD PARTY INTERVENTION EXAMPLE	COMMUNICATION APPROACH
<p><b>Color Blindness</b> "When I look at you, I don't see color."</p> <p><b>Myth of Meritocracy</b> "Of course he'll get tenure, even though he hasn't published much—he's Black!"</p>	<p>"So you don't see color. Tell me more about your perspective. I'd also like to invite others to weigh in."</p> <p>"So you believe that ___ will get tenure just because of his race. Let's open this up to see what others think."</p>	<p><b>RE-DIRECT</b> Shift the focus to a different person or topic. (Particularly helpful when someone is asked to speak for his/her entire race, cultural group, etc.) <b>KEY PHRASES:</b> "Let's shift the conversation..." "Let's open up this question to others...."</p>
<p><b>Myth of Meritocracy</b> In a committee meeting: "Gender plays no part in who we hire."</p> <p>"Of course she'll get tenure, even though she hasn't published much—she's Native American!"</p> <p><b>Second-Class Citizen</b> In class, an instructor tends to call on male students more frequently than female ones.</p>	<p>"How might we examine our implicit bias to ensure that gender plays no part in this and we have a fair process? What do we need to be aware of?"</p> <p>"How does what you just said honor our colleague?"</p> <p>"What impact do you think this has on the class dynamics? What would you need to approach this situation differently next time?"</p>	<p><b>USE STRATEGIC QUESTIONS</b> It is the skill of asking questions that will make a difference. A strategic question creates motion and options, avoids "why" and "yes or no" answers, is empowering to the receiver, and allows for difficult questions to be considered. Because of these qualities, a strategic question can lead to transformation. Useful in problem-solving, difficult situations, and change efforts. <b>KEY PHRASES:</b> "What would allow you..." "What could you do differently..." "What would happen if you considered the impact on..."</p>
<p><b>Traditional Gender Role Prejudicing and Stereotyping</b> In the lab, an adviser asks a female student if she is planning to have children while in postdoctoral training.</p>	<p>To the adviser: "I wanted to go back to a question you asked ___ yesterday about her plans for a family. I'm wondering what made you ask that question and what message it might have sent to her."</p> <p>To the student: "I heard what your advisor said to you yesterday. I thought it was inappropriate and I just wanted to check in with you."</p>	<p><b>REVISIT</b> Even if the moment of a microaggression has passed, go back and address it. Research indicates that an unaddressed microaggression can leave just as much of a negative impact as the microaggression itself. <b>KEY PHRASES:</b> "I want to go back to something that was brought up in our conversation/meeting/class ...." "Let's rewind ___ minutes..."</p>
<p><b>CONSIDERATIONS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The communication approaches are most effective when used in combination with one another, e.g., using impact and preference statements, using inquiry and paraphrasing together, etc.</li> <li>Separate the person from the action or behavior. Instead of saying "you're racist", try saying "that could be perceived as a racist remark." Being called a racist puts someone on the defensive and can be considered "fighting words."</li> <li>Avoid starting questions with "Why"—it puts people on the defensive. Instead try "how" "what made you ...."</li> <li>When addressing a microaggression, try to avoid using the pronoun "you" too often—it can leave people feeling defensive and blamed. Use "I" statements describing the impact on you instead or refer to the action indirectly, e.g., "when ___ was said..." or "when ___ happened..."</li> <li>How you say it is as critical as what you say, e.g., tone of voice, body language, etc. The message has to be conveyed with respect for the other person, even if one is having a strong negative reaction to what's been said. So it is helpful to think about your intention when interrupting a microaggression—e.g., do you want that person to understand the impact of his/her action, or stop his/her behavior, or make the person feel guilty, etc. Your intention and the manner in which you execute your intention make a difference.</li> <li>Sometimes humor can defuse a tense situation.</li> </ul>		

Adapted from Kenney, G. (2014). *Interrupting Microaggressions*. College of the Holy Cross, Diversity Leadership & Education. Accessed on-line, October 2014. Kraybill, R. (2008). "Cooperation Skills," in Armster, M. and Amstutz, L., (Eds.), *Conflict Transformation and Restorative Justice Manual*, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, pp. 116-117. LeBaron, M. (2008). "The Open Question," in Armster, M. and Amstutz, L., (Eds.), *Conflict Transformation and Restorative Justice Manual*, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, pp. 123-124. Peavey, F. (2003). "Strategic Questions as a Tool for Rebellion," in Brady, M., (Ed.), *The Wisdom of Listening*, Boston: Wisdom Publ., pp. 168-189.

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# 13 MICROAGGRESSIONS



# WHO IS COORDINATED CARE SERVICES, INC. (CCSI)?



## Cultural Competence and Health Equity

*Innovative Transformation, Culturally Intelligent Change*

Helping our customers to engage with diverse populations, deliver effective services and achieve intended outcomes.

Our Team aids in organizations to enhance practices and programs.

- Examine current practices
- Strategic planning
- Formal CC organizational integration and implementation
- Specialized education and professional development of your leadership, workforce, customers and stakeholders
- Leadership coaching
- On-going technical assistance and consultation





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*With much gratitude for your time,*



Thank You!