

DMP & AAI

— From Vision to Action

# Microaggressions

defined:

Microaggressions are the brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial, gender, sexual-orientation, and religious slights and insults to the target person or group (Sue, Capodilupo, et. al., 2007).

Perpetrators are usually unaware that they have engaged in an exchange that demeans the recipient of the communication.

Sue, D. (2010). *Microaggressions in everyday life race, gender, and sexual orientation*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

# 3 Types of Microaggressions

**Microassaults:** “... are consciously biased beliefs or attitudes that are held by individuals and intentionally expressed or acted out overtly or covertly toward a marginalized person or socially devalued group.” -p. 24

**Microinsults:** “... are subtle snubs often unconsciously disguised as a compliment or positive statement directed towards the target person or group.” -p. 25

~ Derald Wing Sue, 2018, *Microaggressions, Marginality, and Oppression*.



But I don't  
*see* color!  
We're all  
just  
humans.



Sugar-coat  
ed insults!

**Microinvalidations:** “... are similar to microinsults in that they generally occur outside the level of conscious awareness of perpetrators. However, this form of microaggression is perhaps the most insidious, damaging, and harmful form, because microinvalidations directly attack or deny the experiential realities of socially devalued groups. They accomplish this goal through interpersonal and environmental cues that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and experiences of the target group.”

# Large Group Debrief Discussion Questions:

- 1) When people discuss microaggressions, a common response is that they are “innocent acts” and that the person who experiences them should “let go of the incident” and “not make a big deal out of it.” Do you agree or disagree with this point of view? Explain.
- 2) If a person from a marginalized group pointed out to you that one of your comments was a microaggression, how would you respond at the time? Would it change the likelihood of your making a similar comment in the future? Why or why not?

From Vision to Action:  
Making the Invisible Visible

<http://davidsonmicroaggressionsproject.org/>

Davidson College

Examples



# “Icebreakers”

On my first ever day of classes at Davidson, my class went around and give icebreakers. Having experience with people assuming I'm born or raised in East Asia, I specifically mentioned being born and raised in [the United States] without mentioning anywhere else. After class, the professor came up to me and asked in [an Asian language] if I was from Beijing. He received tenure a year later.

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# “Chinese Class”

My first year at Davidson another first-year male student said I looked familiar and said he probably knew me from his Chinese class.





# “Awkward, Exoticized, and Embarrassed”

(I am a female-identifying, Asian-American student at Davidson.) I visited a Walmart around campus my first year here and was approached by a white man at the register who asked me if I was Korean. After affirming, he continued to talk to me across the register, asking me if I ate kimchi, if I spoke Korean, and other questions about my heritage. He proceeded to tell me about his Korean wife and even showed me a picture of her. He couldn't hide his pride at having successfully guessed my ethnicity. I felt incredibly awkward, exoticized, and embarrassed to be having the conversation at such a volume/distance that others could overhear.

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\*Q&A\*

*Thank you for attending  
our session!*

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