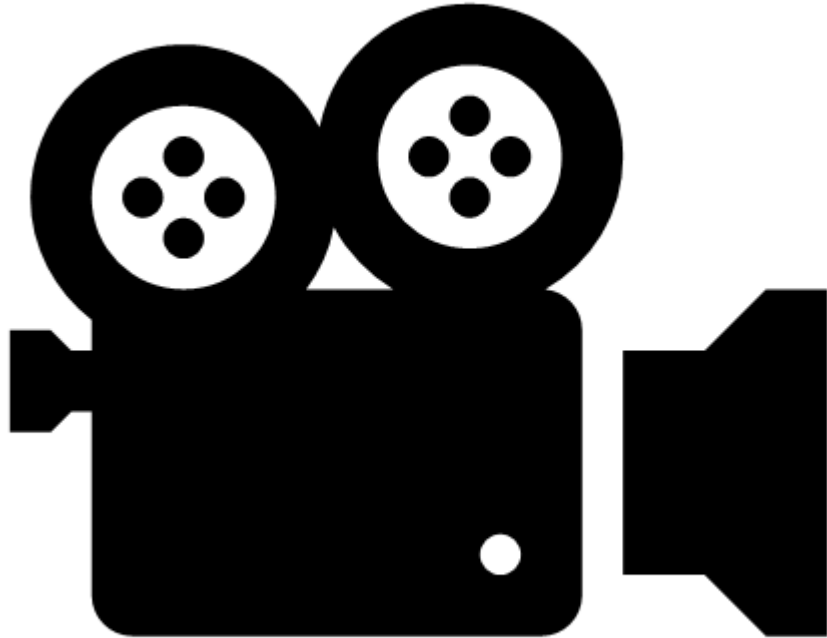


This event will be recorded.



Welcome &  
thanks for  
joining us today!

# The Davidson Microaggressions Project

FIRST Workshop - Nov. 24, 2020

Facilitated by DMP collaborators:  
Dr. Amanda R. Martinez, Jaelyn Taylor,  
& Ricky Pinnock



Using narratives from the Davidson Microaggressions Project & the 2020 2nd edition of this book, → this session explores ways to develop more inclusive learning experiences by strategizing responses to microaggressions in the classroom at Davidson College.

Follow us for additional resources:

- Website: [www.davidsonmicroaggressionsproject.org](http://www.davidsonmicroaggressionsproject.org)
- Twitter: [@DMP\\_Davidson](https://twitter.com/DMP_Davidson)
- Instagram: [@dcmicroaggressions](https://www.instagram.com/dcmicroaggressions)
- Facebook: [Davidson Microaggressions Project](https://www.facebook.com/DavidsonMicroaggressionsProject)
- Podcast: <http://davidsonmicroaggressionsproject.org/dmp-podcast/>



# Davidson Microaggressions Project Mission

## Why DMP started:

- Heavy load of backstage emotional labor among poc for collectivist identity connection & processing.
- Culture shock & disorientation.
- Backstaging protects perpetrators.
- Whose fragility, defensiveness, & comfort are we invested in protecting and why?
  - Climate of some not belonging goes against the DEI goals we promote in this community.
  - Microaggressive climates erode the targets' physical, cognitive, emotional, & behavioral well-being; retention issue.
- We can learn & do better.
  - We believe people are capable of change when presented with new information and with self education and self-reflexivity.

## Why DMP now & indefinitely:

- The college's student body & demos of the South are becoming more diverse with each incoming class.
- Students keep the institution accountable to stated goals beyond passive intentions.
- Students experience microaggressions in various contexts on campus and, due to power dynamics, benefit from our "lurk to learn" presence via DMP.
  - Ex: Students of color may lean on fellow students of color or faculty of color for backstage processing but this stops short of bringing perpetrators to accountability.
  - "Lurking to learn" saves face.

# Expectations & Framing for this Workshop Space:

- ❑ Microaggressions are real & projects like DMP exist at many colleges.
  - ❑ Microaggressions are not limited to college campuses.
- ❑ The last 12 years have resulted in 20,000 publications (scholarly and popular) of interdisciplinary work documenting the importance and cumulative effects of microaggressions. We all have the personal, moral, & ethical responsibility to do the self-reflection and self-education on this topic.
  - ❑ *Traditional training programs aimed at cultural competence have shown evidence of affecting only explicit bias, while implicit bias remains relatively unchanged. Microaggressions research shows effectiveness hinges on change directed at cognitive, emotional, and behavioral development.*

# Expectations & Framing continued...

- ❑ **Macrostructures are real. We are interpersonally socialized into and navigate spaces historically structured by foundations of racism, sexism, classism, ableism, homophobia, xenophobia, etc.**
- ❑ It's important to name the microaggressions to arrest their impact. Naming gives voice and articulation to experiences, which legitimizes the problems. Awareness alone is insufficient; effective, responsible actions must follow to curtail and prevent the perpetual manifestation of microaggressions.
- ❑ We must prioritize impact over intentions because prioritizing intentions prioritizes the microaggressor, regardless of how well-intentioned. Dominant group members typically hold power and, therefore, potential to continue harm if implicit biases are left unexamined.

# Expectations & Framing continued...

- ❑ **Making microaggressions visible problematizes politeness and prompts defensiveness, discomfort, & vulnerability.** Davidson can be a hostile environment. To improve DEI and retention, we must recognize the necessity of outing to **learn from these stories** as part of our **collective growing pains**.
- ❑ Privileging the majority's comfort by only focusing on positive exemplars accomplishes the following: a) tokenizes the marginalized, b) perpetuates an American Dream myth that negates foundational structures of inequality, c) fuels an expectation for the minoritized to constantly do the labor of telling their stories for the majority to learn from, d) erases the ways our community is exclusionary and hostile, e) which then downplays the work we have to do to improve the quality of experience for all here.
- ❑ **Your openness and vulnerability will enhance the ideas exchanged in this workshop.** If you're unwilling to **self-reflect & confront your own attitudes**, you'll be ineffective when encountering microaggressions in the classroom.

# Microaggressions defined:

**“Microaggressions are verbal and nonverbal interpersonal exchanges in which a perpetrator causes harm to a target, whether intended or unintended. These brief and commonplace indignities communicate hostile, derogatory, and/or negative slights to the target. (Sue et al., 2007). Importantly, microaggressions theory values the target’s perception in identifying harm, as perpetrators often are unaware that they have engaged in an exchange that demeans the target” (Wing Sue & Spanierman, 2020, p. 8).**

**“Micro”** does not refer to small or innocuous but rather underscores the interpersonal, microlevel context of the act.

**“Aggressions”** take shape as insults, invalidations, or assaults.



# 3 Types of Microaggressions

## Microassaults      Microinvalidations

Conscious, deliberate, and either subtle or explicit racial, gender, or sexual-orientation biased attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors that are communicated to marginalized groups through environmental cues, verbalizations, or behaviors.

Non/verbal interpersonal exchanges that convey stereotypes, rudeness, and insensitivity and that demean a person's racial, gender, sexual orientation, heritage, or identity.

Non/verbal communication that excludes, negates, or nullifies the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of certain groups, such as people of color, women, and LGBTQ individuals.

## Microinsults

# Microacts & Macrostructures

In contrast to microaggressions, macroaggressions reside in institutional or societal policies and practices, often packaged in symbols, “diversity cues,” exclusion of decorations, literature, and ethnic aesthetic-cultural forms like music, art, language, and food can assail the racial, gender, or sexual identity of various groups.

Environmental macroaggressions refer to the numerous demeaning and threatening social, educational, political, or economic cues that are communicated individually, institutionally, or societally to marginalized groups. (Wing Sue & Spanierman, 2020).

“Educators must increase their ability to identify microaggressions, understand the detrimental impact of microaggressions on people from marginalized groups, and accept responsibility to take corrective actions” (Sue et al., 2007).

As long as microaggressions remain hidden, invisible, unspoken, and excused as innocent slights with minimal harm, we will continue to insult, demean, alienate, and oppress members of marginalized groups.

Making the “invisible” visible is the first step toward combating unconscious and unintentional forms of bias and bigotry.

# ACTION Model, Kenney's (2014) 6 steps, & Microinterventions (see separate document)

- 1) **A**sk clarifying questions & paraphrase comments to gain a better understanding of intentions.
  - 2) **C**ome from curiosity, not judgment.
  - 3) **T**ell what you observed as problematic in a factual way.
  - 4) **I**mpact exploration: discuss the potential impact of the initial statement on others present.
  - 5) **O**wn your thoughts and feelings around the impact. Self disclose, use “I” statements, etc.
  - 6) **N**ext steps: request appropriate action. Further education on the issue and its harm, ask the class to refrain from such comments or language usage, etc.
- 1) **Inquire** - ask students to elaborate to acquire more information.
  - 2) **Reflect** - paraphrase, or mirror, what students are saying.
  - 3) **Reframe** - create a different way for students to view the situation.
  - 4) **Redirect** - shift the focus. Open up the conversation to others.
  - 5) **Revisit** - if there was a missed opportunity, revisit the microaggression and address it at a later time.
  - 6) **Check in** - connect with targets and perpetrators privately outside of class.

# Microintervention Strategies:

## Make the “invisible” visible

- Undermine the communication.
- Name & make metacommunication explicit
- Challenge the stereotype
- Broaden the ascribed trait
- Ask for clarification

## Disarm the microaggression

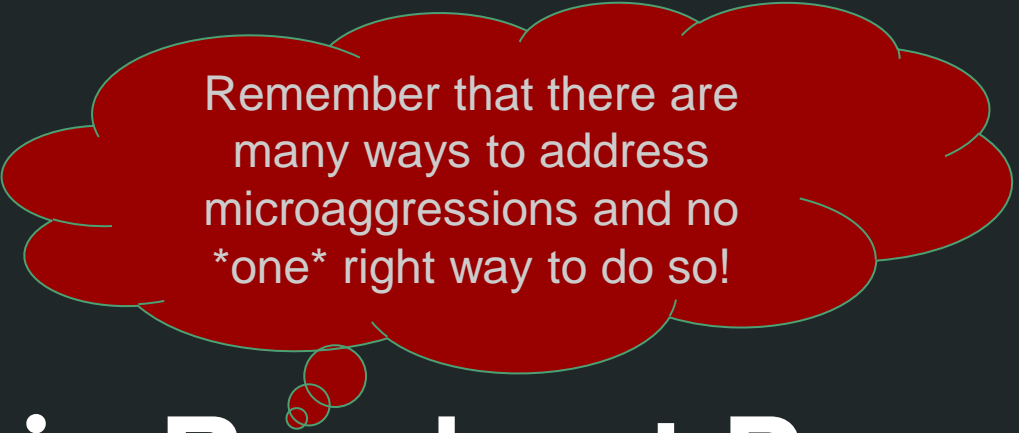
- Express disagreement
- States values & set limits

## Educate the offender

- Differentiate between intent & impact
- Values & principles appeals
- Center commonality & empathy
- Point out how they benefit

## Other ideas we’ve learned from our podcast interviewees:

- Own up to the microaggression. Acknowledge the impact and apologize.
  - ◆ Stop there. Do not then over-explain your good intentions! This centers you as the perpetrator and shifts focus away from the target. You then inadvertently make them do the emotional labor of soothing your reaction about the microaggression.
- Point out what’s problematic & steps you can take to improve.
  - ◆ You have power in the classroom & with students. There are always many remedies you can enact.
- Due to power dynamics, and especially if you’re the dominant group member, educate yourself! Resources abound.
  - ◆ Do not ask the target to explain their experiences to you. You do not need to know their traumas to learn, know, & do better. Asking people to relive their microaggressions for your benefit is inappropriate.
- Check your fragility & defensiveness. Self-reflect to unveil hidden, implicit biases. Learn about them. Being self-aware & open to educating yourself as an ongoing process goes a long way.



Remember that there are many ways to address microaggressions and no *\*one\** right way to do so!

# Discussion in Breakout Rooms

1) Unpack each microaggression and 2) discuss the impact -- intentionally ***focus on the impact over the intentions.***

Then, discuss ideas about how to address each situation using inspiration from the ACTION model, Kenney's (2014) 6 steps, & the microintervention strategies.

# “You Looked It Up!”

I just committed a microaggression while guest lecturing in a class a week ago. I was covering for another instructor and using their slides, and I didn't know what they meant by a particular term. A student asked and I gave them my interpretation but said I wasn't sure if that was exactly what the professor meant. A female student raised her hand and said something like "it means this" and gave a definition. We were in a computer classroom, so I assumed she had googled the term and I said something like, "great, thanks! You looked it up." Her face flashed a weird look and I realized I had just insinuated that she couldn't have known that without looking it up, and perhaps because she was a woman. This occurred to me after I had moved on to the next topic, and I didn't know how to go back and apologize or correct my potential misperception without being really awkward in class. I don't know the student's name, so now I just have a horrible feeling in the pit of my stomach that I contributed to her feeling unwelcome in science classes at Davidson.

# Science Lab

During a science class, we had a class about BMI and health and part of the lab included weight yourself and measuring the circumference of different parts of our bodies. As a fat woman who has always been stigmatized for her weight, this "didactic" activity was very triggering and brought up a lot of fatphobia i had experienced in the past



# Name Mistaken

In one of my classes, I was mistaken for the only other black woman in my class. This was done by a student when trying to reference a point I had brought up in the previous class discussion two days before. This point he was trying to reference was said in a twenty minute presentation I had given last class. This other black woman and I have two vastly different skin tones and were sporting two very different hairstyles. When I corrected him on who he was trying to quote, he waved it off and perhaps spared me two seconds of eye contact. I was annoyed the entirety of the class period and looking back, I wish I had stood up for myself a bit more. Your dismissal of knowing my name is simultaneously you participating in the erasure of black women in academia.

# Hard of Hearing On Campus

As a Hard of Hearing student I am frequently told things along the lines of, "You do not sound Deaf," "Wow, I wouldn't know you are hard of hearing if you had not told me. You must work so hard," and "That is so inspiring that you have overcome so [much] get to where you are." I am also often asked to "try to read my lips," and "can you take out your hearing aids and then tell me if you can hear me?" While these microaggressions are annoying and invalidating, others have a truly detrimental impact on my ability to learn and participate, such as the refusal of people at events to wait for the microphone to speak because they will "just speak loud enough." One semester I was in 80 person collaborative seminar. After class on the first day I went up to the professors and told them that I could not hear well in the room and it was difficult for me to find sight lines to read lips. I gave an explicit suggestion for a different room. One of the professors told me that the other room would not be better. I was uncomfortable telling him that I knew I would be able to hear better in the other room. Two months later, after several different attempts to make the room we were in work in different ways and getting the accessibility office involved we finally switched to the room I had recommended on day one. At the end of the first class in that room, a student raised their hand and asked if we could always meet in the new room because it was easier to hear. I felt both validated and deflated- If I had been listened to on day one not only would I have had a better learning experience, but so would all of my hearing classmates.

# Return to large group

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Each group shares highlights from their breakout discussion.

# Precious Soundbites from Research on Allyship

## Amelie Lamont's [Guide to Allyship](#)

- “**Do** your research to learn more about the history of the struggle in which you are participating ”
- “Being able to let go of your ego is an incredibly important skill to develop.”
- From the POV of the microaggressor: “this isn’t about changing the other person’s [microaggressed] frame of mind. They’re allowed to be upset about being oppressed.”

## Michelle Kim's [Allyship \(& Accomplice\): The What, Why, and How](#)

- Allyship is not an identity, it is action (Doing the work of an ally, rather than being an ally)
- “No one needs to be saved, we just need to share our access and privileges to level the playing field.”
- “making mistakes is an inevitable part of the allyship journey”

# Last thoughts:

- Allyship. Know the difference between being a passive ally vs. actively anti-racist in your actions.
  - ◆ This includes thinking about education as ongoing and openness and active self-education
  - ◆ Passive allies stop at “believing in equality”
  - ◆ “To recap: Being an ally doesn’t necessarily mean you fully understand what it feels like to be oppressed. It means you’re taking on the struggle as your own.” (Lamont) [Guide to Allyship](#)
- Center impact over intentions. It is a major misstep to ignore harm inflicted, whether you meant it or not.
  - ◆ This is about implicit biases -- and we all have them. **BUT as faculty, you hold power over students.** Therefore, you have an obligation to address microaggressions, especially if you consider yourself an anti-racist ally or an anti-sexist ally or an anti-homophobia ally or an anti-ableism ally etc.



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***Thank you for your time and  
participation!***

**Explore our website and follow us on social media to learn more from  
our resources.**