

## Tools: Recognizing Microaggressions and the Messages They Send

THEMES	MICROAGGRESSION EXAMPLES	MESSAGE
<p><b>Foreigner in One's Own Land</b> When people of color who look different or are named differently from the dominant culture are assumed to be foreign-born.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>"Where are you from or where were you born?"</i></li> <li>• <i>"You speak English very well."</i></li> <li>• <i>"What are you? You're so interesting looking!"</i></li> <li>• <i>"Teach me words of your native language."</i></li> <li>• Continuing to mispronounce the names of students after students have corrected the person time and time again.</li> </ul>	<p>You are not a true American.</p> <p>You are a perpetual foreigner in your own country.</p> <p>Your ethnic/racial identity makes you exotic.</p>
<p><b>Ascription of Intelligence</b> Assigning intelligence based on a person's race/gender.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>"You are a credit to your race."</i></li> <li>• To an Asian person, <i>"You must be good in math, can you help me with this problem?"</i></li> <li>• To a woman: <i>"I would have never guessed that you were a scientist."</i></li> <li>• Setting low expectations for students from particular groups, neighborhoods, geographical areas.</li> </ul>	<p>People of color are generally not as intelligent as Whites.</p> <p>All Asians are intelligent and good in math/science.</p> <p>It is unusual for a woman to have strong mathematical skills.</p> <p>If you are from "somewhere else" you cannot be as intelligent as someone from here.</p>
<p><b>Color Blindness</b> Statements that indicate that a White person does not want to or need to acknowledge race.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>"When I look at you, I don't see color."</i></li> <li>• <i>"There is only one race, the human race."</i></li> <li>• <i>"America is a melting pot."</i></li> <li>• <i>"I don't believe in race."</i></li> <li>• Denying the experiences of students by questioning the credibility/validity of their stories.</li> </ul>	<p>Assimilate to the dominant culture.</p> <p>Denying the significance of a person of color's racial/ethnic experience and history.</p> <p>Denying the individual as a racial/cultural being.</p>
<p><b>Criminality/Assumption of Criminal Status</b> A person of color is presumed to be dangerous, criminal, or deviant based on his/her race and/or nationality.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A White person clutches their purse/wallet as a Black or Latino man approaches.</li> <li>• Someone crosses to the other side of the street to avoid a person of color.</li> <li>• While walking through the halls of the Chemistry building, a professor approaches a post-doctoral student of color to ask if she/he is lost, making the assumption that the person is trying to break into one of the labs.</li> </ul>	<p>You are a criminal.</p> <p>You are dangerous.</p> <p>You can't be trusted.</p>
<p><b>Denial of Individual Racism/Sexism/Heterosexism</b> A statement made when bias is denied.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>"I'm not homophobic. I have several gay friends."</i></li> <li>• <i>"As a woman, I know what you go through as a person of color."</i></li> <li>• To an international student, <i>"Your customs are backward."</i></li> <li>• To a person of color: <i>"Are you sure you were being followed in the store? I can't believe it."</i></li> <li>• To a female, <i>"It's all in your head."</i></li> </ul>	<p>I could never be "____" because I have friends of color or other identities.</p> <p>Your racial oppression is no different than my gender oppression. I can't be a racist. I'm like you.</p> <p>Denying the personal experience of individuals who experience bias.</p>
<p><b>Myth of Meritocracy</b> Statements which assert that race or gender does not play a role in life successes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>"I believe the most qualified person should get the job."</i></li> <li>• <i>"Of course he'll get tenure, even though he hasn't published much—he's Black!"</i></li> <li>• <i>"Men and women have equal opportunities for achievement."</i></li> <li>• <i>"Gender plays no part in who we hire."</i></li> <li>• <i>"Everyone can succeed in this society, if they work hard enough."</i></li> <li>• <i>"Affirmative action is racist."</i></li> </ul>	<p>People of color are given extra unfair benefits because of their race.</p> <p>The playing field is even so if women cannot make it, the problem is with them.</p> <p>People of color are lazy and/or incompetent and need to work harder.</p>
<p><b>Pathologizing Cultural Values/Communication Styles</b> The notion that the values and communication styles of the dominant/White culture are ideal/normal.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To an Asian, Latino or Native American: <i>"Why are you so quiet? We want to know what you think. Be more verbal."</i> <i>"Speak up more."</i></li> <li>• Asking a Black person: <i>"Why do you have to be so loud/animated? Just calm down."</i></li> <li>• <i>"Why are you always angry?"</i> anytime race is brought up in the classroom discussion.</li> <li>• Dismissing an individual who brings up race/culture in work/educational setting.</li> </ul>	<p>Assimilate to dominant culture.</p> <p>Leave your cultural baggage outside.</p> <p>There is no room for difference.</p>

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<p><b>Second-Class Citizen</b> Occurs when a target group member receives differential treatment from the power group.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculty of color mistaken for a service worker.</li> <li>• Not wanting to sit by someone because of his/her color/nationality.</li> <li>• Saying “<i>You people...</i>”</li> <li>• An advisor assigns a Black post-doctoral student to escort a visiting scientist of the same race even though there are other non-Black scientists in this person’s specific area of research.</li> <li>• An advisor sends an email to another work colleague describing another individual as a “good Black/female scientist.”</li> <li>• Raising your voice or speaking slowly when addressing a blind student.</li> <li>• In class, an instructor tends to call on male students more frequently than female ones.</li> </ul>	<p>People of color are servants to Whites. They couldn’t possibly occupy high status positions. You don’t belong. You are a lesser being.</p> <p>People of the same race are all the same. Only people of the same race get along with each other. You’re not good enough.</p> <p>A person with a disability is defined as lesser in all aspects of physical and mental functioning.</p> <p>The contributions of female students are less worthy than the contributions of male students.</p>
<p><b>Sexist/Heterosexist Language</b> Terms that exclude or degrade women and LGBTQ persons.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of the pronoun “he” to refer to all people.</li> <li>• Being constantly reminded by a coworker that “<i>we are only women.</i>”</li> <li>• Assuming the gender of any student. Moreover, continuing to misuse pronouns even after a student, transgender or not, indicates their preferred pronoun to you.</li> <li>• Overattribute: tendency to attribute almost everything a person says, does, believes to being LGBT/Q.</li> </ul>	<p>Male experience is universal.</p> <p>Female experience is invisible.</p> <p>Acknowledgment does not have to be given to how people self-identify.</p> <p>Perpetuates stereotypes.</p>
<p><b>Traditional Gender Role Prejudicing and Stereotyping</b> Occurs when expectations of traditional roles or stereotypes are conveyed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When a female student asks a male professor for extra help on an engineering assignment, he asks “<i>What do you need to work on this for anyway?</i>”</li> <li>• An advisor asks a female student if she is planning on having children while in postdoctoral training.</li> <li>• Shows surprise when a feminine woman turns out to be a lesbian.</li> <li>• Labeling an assertive female committee chair/dean as a “b_____,” while describing a male counterpart as a “forceful leader.”</li> </ul>	<p>Women are less capable in math and science.</p> <p>Women should be married during child-bearing ages because that is their primary purpose.</p> <p>It is not o.k. to identify outside of the gender binary of male/female.</p> <p>Women are out of line when they are aggressive.</p>
<p><b>Making Assumptions/Ignoring Differences</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “<i>For this class, you are required to visit four art galleries located in the downtown area. The entrance fees vary but I am sure you can afford it.</i>”</li> <li>• “<i>You’re Latino and you don’t speak Spanish? You should be ashamed of yourself!</i>”</li> <li>• “<i>You’re an international student so you must have lots of money.</i>”</li> <li>• “<i>You’re from X country?! Is there running water there?</i>”</li> <li>• Ignoring student-to-student microaggressions, even when the interaction is not course-related.</li> <li>• The professor only calls on men in the class.</li> </ul>	<p>Everyone has ample financial resources</p> <p>If you have a particular identity, you have to fulfill all aspects of that identity to be “legit.”</p> <p>International students all come from wealthy families/backgrounds and have no financial struggles.</p> <p>It is not my problem how you all treat each other.</p> <p>Only certain people really matter.</p>
<p><b>Singling out “the other”</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Singling students out in class because of their background.</li> <li>• Expecting students of any particular group to ‘represent’ the perspectives of others of their race, gender, culture, etc. in class discussions or debates.</li> <li>• Asking people with hidden disabilities to identify themselves in class.</li> <li>• Forcing students with non-obvious disabilities to “out” themselves or discuss them publically.</li> </ul>	<p>There are no individual differences in a group; lumping everyone together is fine.</p> <p>We don’t care about your privacy.</p>