

Microaggressions in Healthcare: How to Respond

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Continuing the Discussion...

- Previous presentations have covered what microaggressions are, their impact, and the multitude of directions that they can occur in the healthcare setting
- Microaggressions Commonplace behavioral indignities whether intentional or unintentional communicating hostile, derogatory or negative attitudes toward marginalized groups.
- Review of intention vs impact
- Multifaceted approach to addressing microaggressions individual, institutional, and societal



Responding to Microaggressions

Sue, Derald Wing; Alsaidi, Sarah; Awad, Michael N; Glaeser, Elizabeth; Calle, Cassandra Z; Mendez, Narolyn Disarming Racial Microaggression: Microintervention Strategies for Targets, White Allies and Bystanders. American Psychological Association 2019. Vol. 74 (1) 128-142

http://psychiatry.emory.edu/documents/microaggressions.pdf

Microintervention strategies **Directed Toward Perpetrator Directed Toward Institutional Directed Toward Societal** Microaggressions Macroaggressions Macroaggressions Make the "Invisible" Visible Undermine the meta- Keep a log of inequitable practices as Create partnerships with academic communication you see them institutions to analyze data related Make the meta-communication • Run your observations by allies who to disparities in education, health

Disarm the Microaggression/Macroaggression

Express disagreement

· Ask for clarification

State values and set limits

Challenge the stereotype

· Broaden the ascribed trait to a

universal human behavior

- Describe what is happening
- · Use an exclamation
- Use non-verbal communication

explicit

Interrupt and redirect

Boycott, strike, or protest the institution

· Solicit feedback from fellow

Monitor trends around recruiting,

hiring, retention, promotion

can corroborate

coworkers/students

- Request meetings with intermediary or senior leadership to share perspectives
- Exercise right to serve on boards to voice your concerns
- Delineate financial repercussions of continued macroaggressions
- Notify press or other media outlets
- Protest political leaders who reinforce inequity and division/ support those who do not

· Disseminate research on disparity

Organize peaceful demonstrations

trends to general public and media

care, employment

- Revise and veto unjust community policies, practices, and laws
- Lobby to your congressmen or senators
- Attend televised town hall meetings to voice your concerns

Educate the Offender

- Point out the commonality
- Appeal to the offenders values and principles
- Differentiate between intent and impact
- Promote empath
- Point to how they benefit
- Describe the benefits of workforce diversity
- Institute long-term mandated training on cultural sensitivity for all levels
- Infuse multicultural principles into organizational mission and values
- Raise children to understand concepts like prejudice, discrimination, and racism.
- Challenge silence/lack of response to macroaggression
- Identify shared mutual goals among people
- Increase community's exposure to positive examples of diverse cultures to offset negative stereotypes and biases

Seek External Intervention

- · Alert Authorities
- · Report the act
- · Seek therapy/counseling
- Seek support through spirituality/religion/community
- · Set up a buddy system
- · Attend support groups

- Report inequitable practices to your union
- Create networking/mentoring opportunities for underrepresented employees/students
- Maintain an open, supportive, and responsive environment
- responsive environment
 Call on consultants to conduct external assessments/cultural audits
- Foster cooperation over competition
- Foster a sense of community belonging
- Create caucuses for allies and targets
- Participate in healing circles, vigils, memorials that remind us of the consequences of hate



Responding to Microaggressions

- First step to addressing microaggressions is to recognize them when they occur.
- In general, if you see something, say something
 - Context, environment, and timing matter.
 - Inform patient or staff person of follow up options if this is something they are interested in pursuing.
 - Many people have tendency to freeze and not say anything.
 Advise to prepare for these moments ahead of time and have responses available.



Determining Whether to Respond

Assess the situation

- If I respond, how will this affect my relationship with this person?
- If you are a part of the majority group: Am I in a better position to respond to this compared to a marginalized group? Will there be fewer consequences to me?
- If I don't respond, will I regret not saying something? Does that convey that I accept the behavior or statement?
- Identify what you are trying to accomplish
 - Am I trying to model for others that these comments/behaviors are inappropriate?
 - Am I interested in educating the person about microaggressions?
 - Am I trying to confront the person because they were making an intentional slight?
- Consider where and when you could address the microaggression
 - If I address the comment/behavior in public, will this lead to defensiveness or backlash?
 - Would it be better to address the comment/behavior now, as a model for others, or to raise the issue later when the person may be more receptive?



Potentially Helpful Topics

- Ask for clarification
 - "Could you say more about what you mean by that?"
 - "How have you come to think that?"
- Focus on impact rather than intent
 - "You may not realize this, but when you _____ (comment/behavior), it was hurtful/offensive because ____."
- Share your own process
 - "I noticed that you_____ (comment/behavior). I used to do/say that too, but then I learned____."
- Focus on the comment/behavior, rather than the person
 - "Your ____(comment/behavior) was hurtful...", rather than, "You are being racist..."



RESPONDING TO MICROAGGRESSIONS AND BIAS

(Can be used alone or in combination)

▶	RESTATE OR PARAPHRASE.
	"I think I heard you saying (paraphrase their comments). Is that correct?"
>	ASK FOR CLARIFICATION OR MORE INFORMATION.
	"Could you say more about what you mean by that?"
	"How have you come to think that?"
•	ACKNOWLEDGE THE FEELINGS BEHIND THE STATEMENT. Express empathy and compassion.
	"It sounds like you're really frustrated/nervous/angry"
	"I can understand that you're upset when you feel disrespected."
>	SEPARATE INTENT FROM IMPACT.
	"I know you didn't realize this, but when you (comment/behavior), it was
	hurtful/offensive because Instead you could (different language or
	behavior.)"
•	SHARE YOUR OWN PROCESS.
	"I noticed that you (comment/behavior). I used to do/say that too, but then I
	learned"
•	EXPRESS YOUR FEELINGS.
	"When you (comment/behavior), I felt (feeling) and I would like you
	to"
•	CHALLENGE THE STEREOTYPE. Give information, share your own experience and/or offer
	alternative perspectives.
	"Actually, in my experience"
	"I think that's a stereotype. I've learned that"
	"Another way to look at it is"
•	APPEAL TO VALUES AND PRINCIPLES.
	"I know you really care about Acting in this way really undermines those intentions."

	OMOTE EMPATHY. Ask how they would feel if someone said something like that about their pup, or their friend/partner/child.
	"I know you don't like the stereotypes about (their group), how do you think he feels whe he hears those things about his group?" "How would you feel if someone said that about/did that to your sister or girlfriend?"
TE	LL THEM THEY'RE TOO SMART OR TOO GOOD TO SAY THINGS LIKE THAT.
	"Come on. You're too smart to say something so ignorant/offensive."
	ETEND YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND. As people try to explain their comments, they often realize w silly they sound. "I don't get it"
	"Why is that funny?
US	E HUMOR. Exaggerate comment, use gentle sarcasm. "She plays like a girl?" You mean she plays like Serena Williams?" Or Mia Hamm?
PO	INT OUT WHAT THEY HAVE IN COMMON WITH THE OTHER PERSON.
	"I'm tired of hearing your Muslim jokes. Do you know he's also studying and likes to? You may want to talk with him about that. You actually have a lot in common."
W.I	I.I.F.T. (What's in it for them). Explain why diversity or that individual/group can be
hel	pful/valuable.
	"I know you're not comfortable with but they can help us reach out to/better serve other groups on campus/in the community."

"In the real world, we are going to have to work with all sorts of people, so might as well learn how to do it here."

► REMIND THEM OF THE RULES OR POLICIES.

"That behavior is against our code of conduct and could really get you in trouble."

Adapted from: Goodman, D. (2011). Promoting Diversity and Social Justice: Educating People from Privileged Groups. New York: Routledge. Excerpt available at www.dianegoodman.com

Diane J. Goodman, Ed.D. www.dianegoodman.com



When you receive feedback that you performed a microaggression...

- Check in with yourself notice feelings of defensiveness, acknowledge emotions
- 2. Listen try to understand impact had on person vs intention behind comment/behavior
- Acknowledge the microaggression validate person's feelings and acknowledge negative impact of comment/behavior
- 4. Apologize goal to acknowledge mistake, not receive forgiveness
- 5. Practice Self-Compassion if you were able to listen, acknowledge, and apologize for your comment/behavior, you handled this the best way you could



Additional Resources

This presentation combined and utilized information from many of the resources below. For more information on what microaggressions are, how they are harmful, and ways to address them, please refer to the following resources.

- How to Respond to Microaggressions
 https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/03/smarter-living/how-to-respond-to-microaggressions.html
- A Guide to Responding to Microaggressions https://advancingjustice-la.org/sites/default/files/ELAMICRO%20A_Guide_to_Responding_to_Microaggressions.pdf
- Dear Anti-Racist Allies: Here's How to Respond to Microaggressions
 https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/05/health/racial-microaggressions-examples-responses-wellness/index.html
- This Is the Right Way to Respond to Microaggressions at Work
 https://www.themuse.com/advice/how-to-respond-microaggressions-at-work
- Allies and Microaggressions https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2016/04/13/how-be-ally-someone-experiencing-microaggressions-essay
- Everything You Need to Know About Microaggressions https://www.oprahmag.com/life/relationships-love/a26294696/what-is-microaggression/
- Microaggressions Are A Big Deal: How To Talk Them Out & When To Walk Away https://www.npr.org/2020/06/08/872371063/microaggressions-are-a-big-deal-how-to-talk-them-out-and-when-to-walk-away
- Microresistance and Ally Development: Powerful Antidotes to Microaggressions https://www.unomaha.edu/faculty-support/teaching-excellence/microaggressions-handout.pdf



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