ENTER

Discussion Guide

Microaggressions

facilitation note

Use the provided information, resources, questions, and prompts to engage in discussions with your group in order to develop shared understanding about and increase knowledge, awareness, and skills related to the topics covered. Material is arranged for organizational clarity and is not necessarily sequenced for facilitation (e.g., at times, it may make sense to start with an awareness-raising discussion before exploring content to increase knowledge). Discussions do not need to cover all material in a single session.

These discussions are intended to be one part of larger, ongoing individual and group commitments to learning and advancing justice. These conversations should not be singular occurrences; rather, community members should integrate these concepts into policies, procedures, and practices. If addressing these topics ever seems out of place, it is a signal that they are not yet fully integrated. Additional resources are available at socialjustice.emory.edu.

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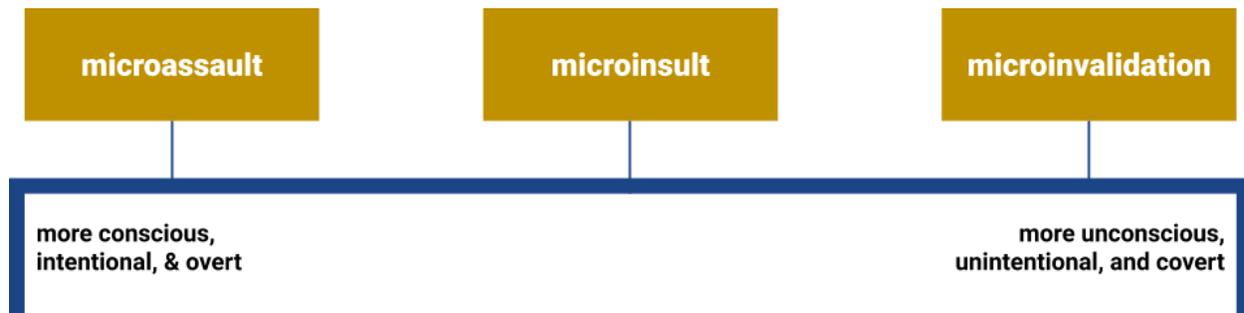
Knowledge

definition (Interactive Glossary
)

> **"...brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative...slights or insults..."**
>
> (Sue et al., 2007)

- What stands out to you about this definition?
- Why is it important to know that microaggressions can be intentional or unintentional?
- Why is it important to know that microaggressions can be verbal, behavioral, and/or environmental?

Microaggressions are along a continuum from being very deliberate & conscious to being outside one's conscious behavior.

types of microaggressions

microassault	microinsult	microinvalidation

more conscious, intentional, & overt   **more unconscious, unintentional, and covert**

microassault	°°	"Your kind doesn't understand English."
microinsult	°°	Being seated in a less desirable location in a restaurant.
microinvalidation	°°	"There is only one race - the human race."

"Oftentimes, microaggressions appear to be a compliment but contain a metacommunication or hidden insult to the target groups in which it was delivered. People who engage in microaggressions are ordinary folks who experience themselves as good, moral, decent, individuals. Microaggressions occur because they are outside the level of conscious awareness of the perpetrator (Sue in Wiley, 2014)."

- How, if at all, does learning about these three types of microaggressions shift or expand how you think about microaggressions?
- What are some of the challenges to identifying microaggressions in one-on-one situations? In groups?
- While it may be impossible to always know when we commit a microaggression, what are some strategies to be more aware of when one occurs?
- What are some reasons that someone may share with you that you committed a microaggression? How do you react when someone tells you this?

Awareness

activity | video processing

description
- ➔ topics: examples of microaggressions
- ➔ time: varies
- ➔ materials: a way for all to view video

preparation
- ➔ Select which video(s) the group will watch. While the videos featured are all less than 4minutes and 30seconds, longer videos are available (e.g., TED(x) Talks). You should review the video in advance to ensure applicability to your group.
- ➔ Ready accommodations as needed by participants (e.g., verbal descriptions, use of captions).

implementation

➔ (re)View the video(s) as a group.

Please note that Social Justice Education is not responsible for the content of these videos.

SNIPPET: Microaggressions in the Classroom
Focused.Arts.Media.Education
2017 [2:39]

Examples of Workplace Microaggressions
Emtrain
2019 [1:53]

#HatchKids Discuss Microaggressions
SheKnows
2015 [1:49]

What Kind of Asian are You?
Helpmefindparents
2013 [2:19]

If Latinos Said the Stuff White People Say
As/Is
2014 [2:14]

What are Micro-Aggressions?
Catharsis Productions
2017 [1:33]

What is the Definition of a Microaggression
Quartz
2016 [4:29]

How Microaggressions are Like Mosquito Bites
Fusion Comedy
2016 [1:57]

Racial Microaggressions: Comments That Sting
The New York Times
2014 [3:14]

processing

- What stood out to you in the video and why?
- What were the main points of the video? Why are these points important? What additional points could be helpful and why?
- What aspects of the video were effective in communicating its message? What aspects were not as effective?
- What strategies could increase the efficacy of your attempts to engage in future conversations about microaggressions?

Microaggressions are cumulative.

- Microaggressions are cumulative - this is often one of the most overlooked and difficult to understand aspects of microaggressions. Why is it important to know that an isolated response to a microaggression of an individual may be about more than the isolated microaggression?
- How can microaggressions impact students' academic experiences?
- How can microaggressions impact the experience of employees?
- What factors could lessen or increase the impact of microaggressions on an individual?
- As microaggressions are identified through experiential and subjective experiences, what are some of the challenges in addressing microaggression? What are strategies to meet these challenges?

activity | Johari Window

The Johari Window was created by psychologists Joseph Luft and Harrington Ingham.
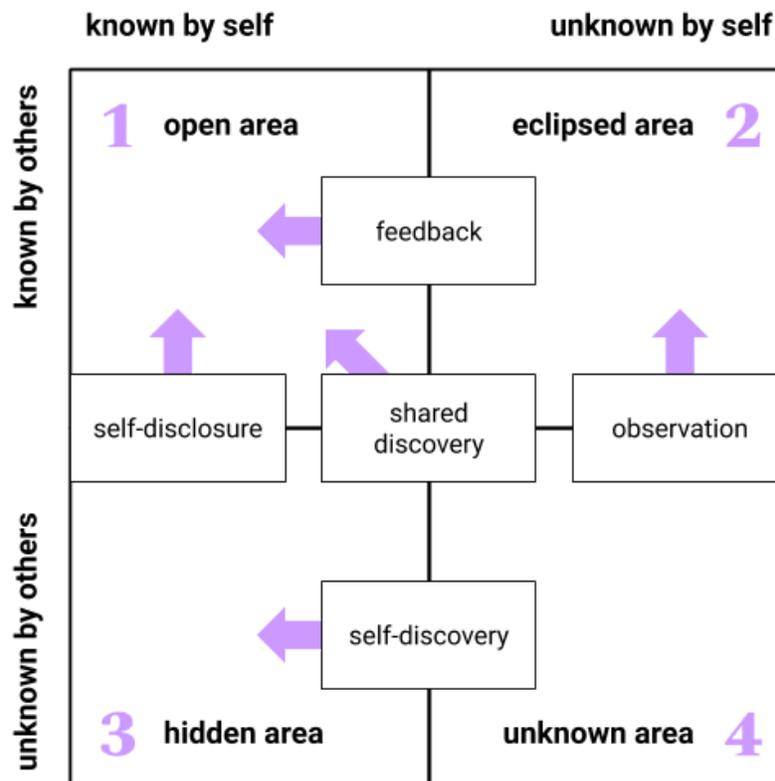
description
- ➔ topics: what we and others know about ourselves and how this knowledge can shift
- ➔ time: 10-15 minutes
- ➔ materials: depends on implementation

preparation
- ➔ Decide if you will complete the activity completely verbally or include writing/typing.

implementation

➔ Present the diagram. If desired, a slide deck is available at socialjustice.emory.edu.
  ◆ describe the areas (i.e., the four quadrant boxes)
    ■ open area | that which is known by both self and others
    ■ eclipsed area | that which is know by others but not self
    ■ hidden area | that which is known by self but not others
    ■ unknown area | that which is not known by self or others
  ◆ describe how knowledge shifts between areas (the internal boxes and arrows)
    ■ Information shifts from the **eclipsed area** to the **open area** though the solicitation and/or provision of **feedback**.
    ■ Information shifts from the **hidden area** to the **open area** though **self-disclosure**.
    ■ Information shifts from the **unknown area** to the **eclipsed area** through **observation**.
    ■ Information shifts from the **unknown area** to the **hidden area** through **self-discovery**.
    ■ Information shifts from the **unknown area** to the **open area** through **shared discovery**.

processing

● What are your reactions to the quadrants and categorization of information in this way?
● Why might individuals consciously place and keep certain information in certain areas? What about unconsciously?
● What are potential risks of information shifting between particular areas? What are potential benefits?
● While not everything is necessarily intended to exist in the open area, what factors can support the consensual, beneficial process of shifting information from one area to another?

● How does this model relate to the concept of microaggressions?
  ○ as the party committing the microaggression?
  ○ as the party targeted by the microaggression?
● How does recognizing the potential risks and benefits of information shifting between areas impact how we discuss microaggressions?

The study of microaggressions…is a study of powerful emotions, subjective experiences, bias, values, and beliefs, as well as especially the pain and suffering of oppression. It does not lend itself easily to objectivity…

(Sue, 2017)

Skills

interpersonal engagement

Engaging with others about microaggressions may feel intimidating, isolating, or uncomfortable as well as many other emotions. Below are some questions and prompts to consider for various parties involved in these engagements.

With the elimination of microaggressions as a goal, significant parts of this pursuit include reducing their frequency, increasing and spreading awareness, and maintaining individual and collective momentum for advancing justice. It is essential to provide space for people to share their experiences and have them validated as well as allow people to learn and grow while being accountable for their decisions & actions.

one who unconsciously committed a microaggression

reflections

- What am I feeling and thinking at this moment? How may these experiences impede my ability to receive and make space for the messages being provided?
- What needs is this person expressing?
- What information do I need in order to process and learn? How might I obtain this information beyond asking the other person to provide it to me in the moment?
- What factors may cause us to interpret this experience differently? What can I learn from this experience? What additional work do I need to do to avoid impacting others in this way?

potential responses

- "I'm sorry that I had this impact on you. Thank you for letting me know. I am committed to doing better in the future."
- "Thank you for sharing. Are you willing to share more so that I can better understand your experience?"
- "I appreciate you bringing this to my attention. I need to take some time to process what you shared and learn more about the topics you brought to my attention. Would you be open to following up with me at a later time?"

one who was targeted by a microaggression

- What are my needs at this moment?
- What are my goals in sharing this information (e.g., catharsis, education)? Are my decisions aligned with my goals? *(Decisions of if and how to respond should be aligned with the goals.)*
- What additional support do I need and where can I find it?

Microaggressions are not trivial and insignificant but have a continuing and oftentimes macro impact.

(Sue, 2017)

individual & group action

There are numerous resources available in the Emory Community for continued education, skill building, and development related to microaggressions and other issues related to equity, inclusion, and social justice as well as spaces for processing, support, and healing.

for individuals

- If I am unable to identify instances when I have or could commit a microaggression, why? What sources of information could help me broaden my perspective?
- What information do I need to become more aware of my biases & prejudices? How can I obtain this information?
- What resistance (internal or external) may I encounter in my process to learn about these topics? How can I effectively navigate these resistances?

for groups

- How, when, and where do microaggressions occur in our community?
- What policies, procedures, and practices do we have to support our ability to address these microaggressions? What new or changed ones do we need?
- What is our collective commitment to equity, inclusion, and social justice? How does this commitment support our ability to meet and advance our group's mission or purpose?

Microaggressions are about experiential reality and about listening to the voices of those who are oppressed, ignored, & silenced.

(Sue, 2017)

resources

Belonging & Community Justice
 Center for Women
 Office of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Life
 Office for Racial and Cultural Engagement
 Social Justice Education

Office of Spiritual & Religious Life
Office of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion
International Student & Scholar Services

Counseling & Psychological Services
Faculty & Staff Assistance Program

Share compliments, complaints, requests & reflections HERE.