

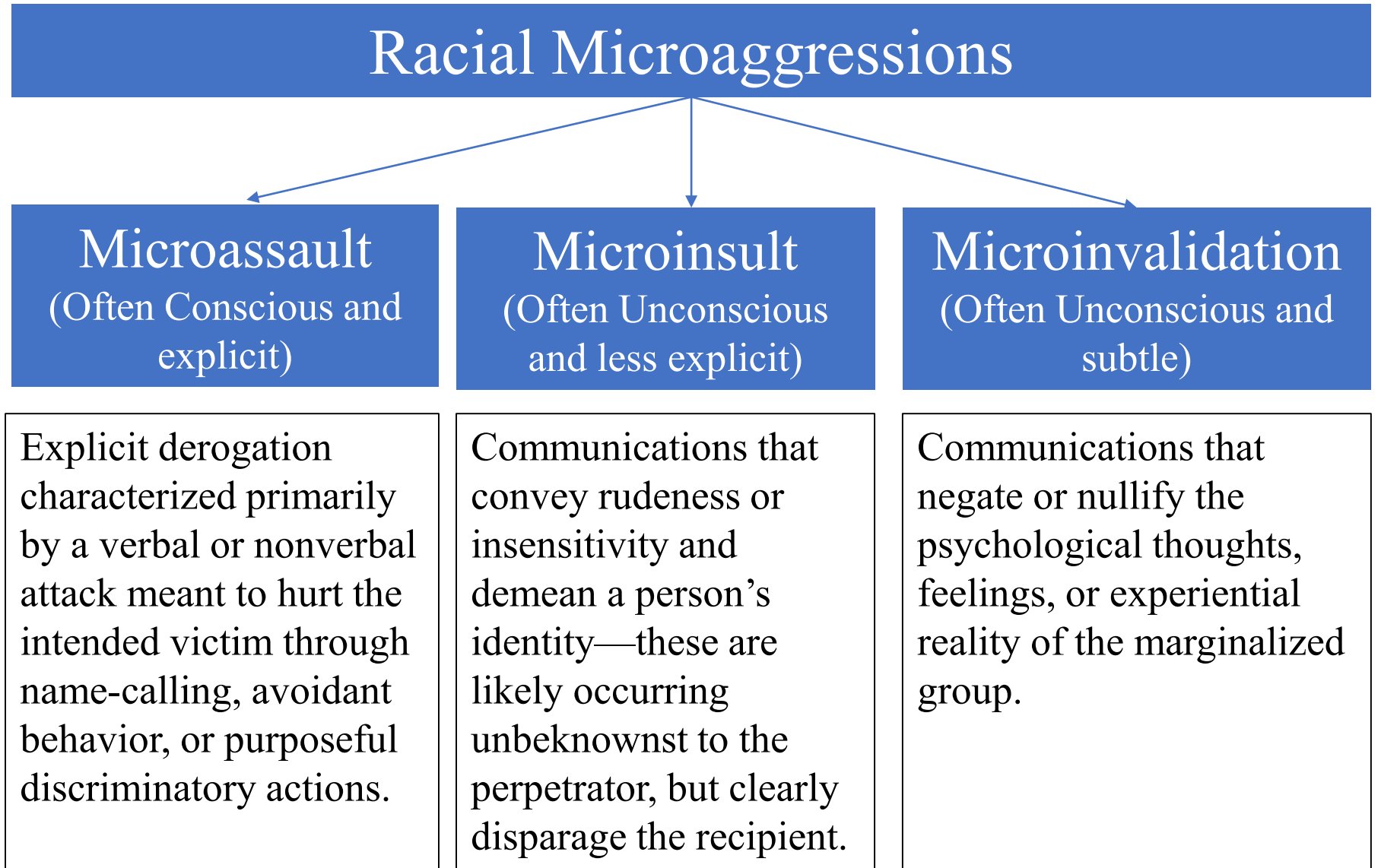
Frameworks for Disrupting Microaggressions



“Guiding organizations and professionals towards equity!”

Microaggressions

“Commonplace verbal or behavioral indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults” (Sue et al. 2007).



(Sue, Capodilupo, Torino, Bucceri, Holder, Nadal & Esquilin, 2007)

Guessing Game Review

Guess the Microaggression?

Microassaults

- Calling the police unnecessarily.
- Name-calling and the use of epithets.
- Crossing the street or clutching a handbag in the presence of certain individuals.
- Offensive signs, posters, or other visual displays.

The New York Times

A Black Yale Student Was Napping, and a White Student Called the Police



The Yale campus. A graduate student in the university's African studies program said she was harassed for taking a nap in a common area. Dave Sanders for The New York Times

Guess the Microaggression?



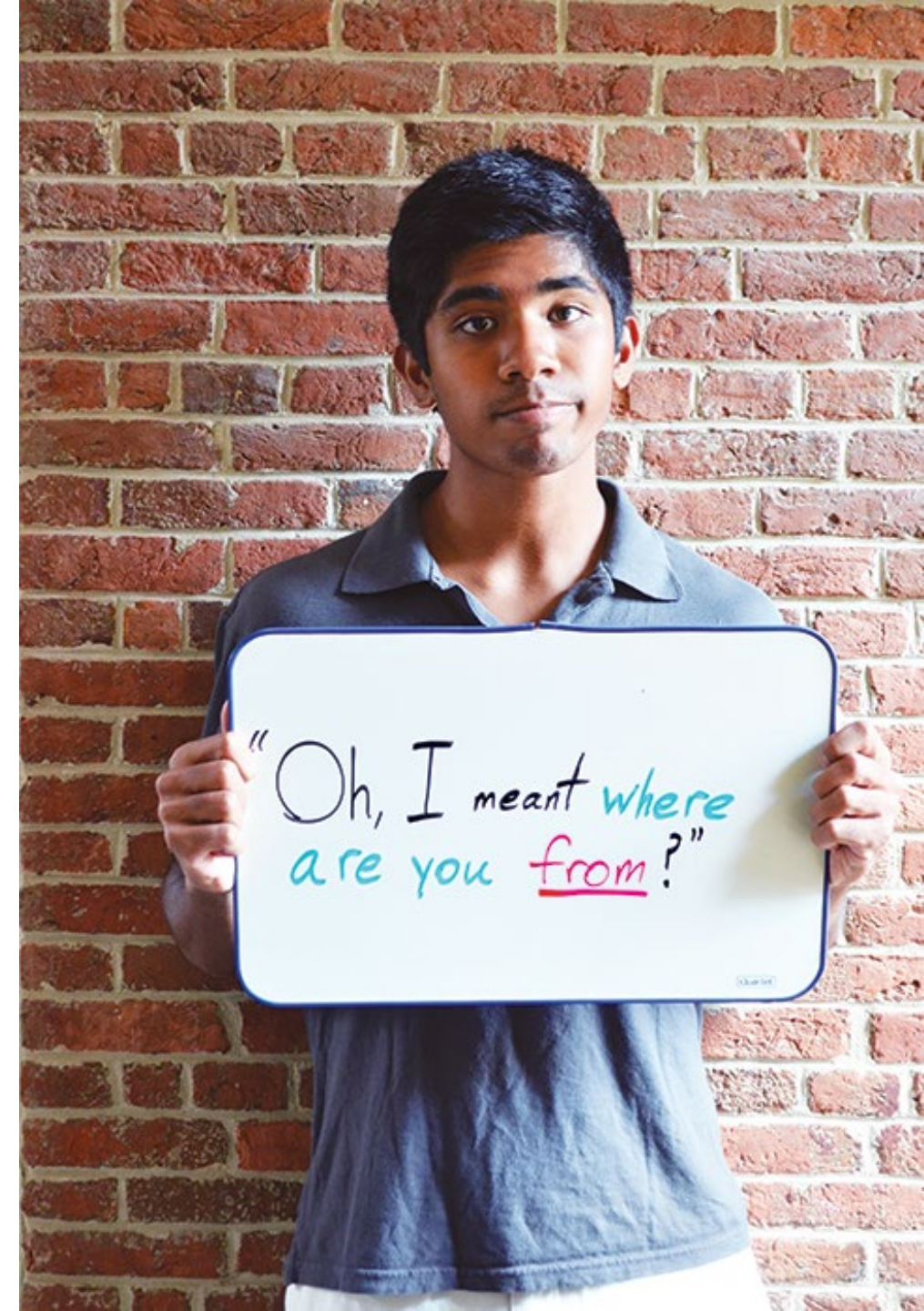
Microinsults

- Ascription of intelligence.
- Second class citizen
- Pathologizing cultural values.
- Assumption of criminal status.
- Interrupted differentially

Guess the Microaggression?

Micro-invalidation

- Alien in own land.
- Color blindness.
- Myth of meritocracy.
- Denial of discrimination.
- Denial of one's experience.



Guessing Game Quiz

Type of Microaggression?



Source:

<https://kera.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/cb19-ss-types.microaggressions/microassult-microinsults-and-microinvalidation/>

Type of Microaggression?

- A - Microassault
- B - Microinsult
- C - Microinvalidation

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Type of Microaggression?

To those who have tried to anglicise my name, I am not “Ollie” or “Oliver”

My name
is
Olumide

Type of Microaggression?

- A - Microassault
- B - Microinsult
- C - Microinvalidation

Type of Microaggression?

- A - Microassault

- B - Microinsult

- C - Microinvalidation

Implications of Microaggressions

Challenging because ...

- Difficult to identify and address because it is subtle and vague.
- Often dismissed or seen as innocent comments - invisible to the dominant, but visible to the minority group.

Research shows that accumulation of microaggressions

- Can lead to health problems.
- Are more psychologically damaging than direct forms of discrimination.
- Have negative impacts on employees' relationships at work and job outcomes.

Table 3 Impact of microaggressions on employees: percentage of participants who agreed with statements

Experiences such as these. . .	Microassaults (in %)	Microinsults (in %)	Microinvalidations (in %)
Are offensive to me	95.3	89.7	92.2
Negatively impact my mood for the rest of the day	87.3	86.0	82.4
Negatively impact my sense of wellbeing	82.5	75.9	76.5
Cause me to question how my colleagues view me	75.4	83.6	84.0
Negatively impact the relationships I have with coworkers	72.4	83.3	79.6
Decrease my overall job satisfaction	80.3	75.4	82.0
Cause me to be less productive at work	59.0	50.9	51.0
Make me think about leaving my current job	59.3	52.8	69.4

Source: Sue et al. 2007)

What to do if you *experience* a microaggression?

Addressing Microaggressions

Be Mindful, and ask yourself:

- *If I respond, could my physical safety be in danger?*
- *If I respond, will the person become defensive and will this lead to an argument?*
- *If I respond, how will this affect my relationship with this person (e.g., co-worker, family member, etc.)*
- *If I don't respond, will I regret not saying something?*
- *If I don't respond, does that convey that I accept the behavior or statement?*

Source: Dr. Nadal developed a tool kit called the [Guide to Responding to Microaggressions](#))

Addressing Microaggressions

M.I.C.R.O. ©

- **Make the “invisible” visible**
 - Challenge the stereotype.
 - Broaden the trait to a universal human behavior.
 - Ask for clarification.
 - Rephrase what they may have meant.
- **Intentionality**
 - Self: Educate or Express?
 - Others: Sincerely seeking vs Apathetic; explicit or implicit bias.
- **Communicate one-on-one**
 - Engage in one-on-one dialogue to indicate how and why what they said was offensive.
 - Interrupt and redirect.
 - Describe what is happening.
 - Express disagreement.
- **Request for assistance and support:**
 - Seek external reinforcement. E.g. seek out help from your supervisor or join a support group.
- **Own your thoughts and feelings around the impact**
 - Express the impact the statement had on you. E.g., “When I hear your comment I think/feel...”

What to do if you are accused of being a Microaggressor?

- Take a breath.
- Overlook the emotion from the accuser.
- Be open to dialogue:
 - ✓ Being called out may mean they trust you.
 - ✓ Actively listen.
- Avoid playing the “definitions” game.
- Avoid over-explaining yourself.
- Just apologize.
- Remember the platinum rule.

“Platinum” Rule
Creating others how
they want to be treated

Can a racial minority also be a micro-aggressor?

All groups can perpetuate and experience microaggressions.

Intragroup microaggressions exist (Kendi, 2020; Miller, 2019).

Intersectionality.

What should leaders do when they
witness a microaggression?

S.T.E.P. - I.N.

Strategies for reducing workplace microaggressions

Serious attention

Train

Engage

Promote valuing differences

Inform

Normalize

S.T.E.P. - I.N.

Strategies for reducing workplace micro-aggressions

Serious attention

- Death by a thousand cuts.
- Do not under-estimate.
- Do not ignore.
- Set the tone
- Ask about the person's well-being

S.T.E.P. - I.N.

Strategies for reducing workplace micro-aggressions

Train

- Microaggressions specifically
- Regular intervals
- Role playing activities
- Case method

S.T.E.P. - I.N.

Strategies for reducing workplace micro-aggressions

Engage

- Create space for everyone to feel safe and supported
 - Call people by their names
 - No touching policy
- Micro inclusions or micro affirmations
 - Rephrase the conversation
 - Confirm the target's viewpoints
 - **Address microaggressions directly**

Engage: Addressing Microaggression Directly

- Apologize to the victim on behalf of your organization
- Schedule a conversation with the perpetrator
- Explain its impact (intent does not matter)
 - Be specific about the behavior
 - Victim and the team
 - Values and policies
 - Educate the perpetrator
 - How can they do better?

Engage: Addressing Microaggression Directly

- Examples of common microaggressions
 - Can I touch your hair?
 - I do not see color.
 - You are very articulate.
 - All lives matter.
- The Comeback Strategy
 - Reverse the situation – “Can I touch *YOUR* hair?”
 - Share history or experience regarding loaded statements
 - Metaphors – So does that mean all fishes matter and not just saving the whales?
- Action plan and train the perpetrator
- Follow-up

S.T.E.P. - I.N.

Strategies for reducing workplace micro-aggressions

Promote valuing difference

- Create a culture of inclusion.
- DEI emphasized like other functional areas.
- Acknowledge holidays and heritage months.

S.T.E.P. - I.N.

Strategies for reducing workplace micro-aggressions

Inform

- Available literature and information
- Publicize your DEI activities
- Transparency

S.T.E.P. - I.N.

Strategies for reducing workplace micro-aggressions

Normalize

- Private-sector/ corporate Ombudsperson
- MBWA
- More attentive leadership
- Anonymous 360-degree feedback
- Conversation box

Your Turn: Maya

Maya, a black woman, is an excellent key account manager with a solid background. Recently she noticed that certain colleagues had mistreated her. In particular, two colleagues, Sam and Pat, have been ignoring and undervaluing her contributions. During meetings, they have been cutting her off when she speaks and not allowing her voice to be heard. They have also told some other employees that they believe Maya was hired only because she was black and that she is not equipped for the task, even though she displays the skills to do the job. Although Maya has expressed her concerns with her boss, he did not seem to take her claim seriously. Currently, Maya's results are better than Sam and Pat's, plus she has a good network in the area. She asked for a meeting to get your support. (Source: Adapted from SkillGym.com)

Read the case and answer the following questions:

1. What type of micro-aggression do you think this is?
2. How would you address it?
3. How would you mitigate to ensure it does not happen again?

Your Turn: Debrief

- Type of microaggression: **Microinsult** and **Microinvalidation**

Addressing Microaggressions Directly as Leaders

- Educate the perpetrator about the microaggression.
- Explain its impact (intent does not matter).
- Express importance of apologizing.
- Follow-up with the victim.
- Training, training, training, and more training.

Your Turn: Case Example

Ethan, a gay white man, just got hired as a sales associate at a pharmaceutical company. Recently, employees received an email about the quarterly banquet where high sales performers are recognized. Traditionally, employees bring their significant others to these events. Ethan spoke to his partner and they decided to attend. Ethan sat next to someone he knew from his office, Dan. They would regularly talk at work and it seemed like they were becoming work friends. Ethan and Dan introduced their partners to each other and sat down at the dinner table. Ethan had a great evening getting to know Dan and his wife. The following Monday at work Dan approached Ethan and said, "I am glad you made it to the banquet. You know you had me fooled." Ethan with a confused look on his face replied, "What do you mean?" Dan answered, "I mean... nothing about you looks gay." Ethan, taken by surprise by this microaggression statement, reluctantly laughed it off and then came to you, his boss, to discuss the incident.

Read the case and as a group answer the following questions:

1. What type of micro-aggression do you think this is?
2. How would you address it?
3. How would you mitigate to ensure it does not happen again?

Your Turn: Debrief

- Type of microaggression: **Micro-invalidaion**

Addressing Microaggressions Directly

- Educate the perpetrator about the microaggression
- Explain its impact (intent does not matter)
- Engage- introductions and conversation
- Inform – pamphlets, brochure, website
- Follow-up with the target of the microaggression
 - Build self- esteem
 - Confidence
 - Role-modeling



What was the most surprising thing you learned?



QUESTIONS?



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