

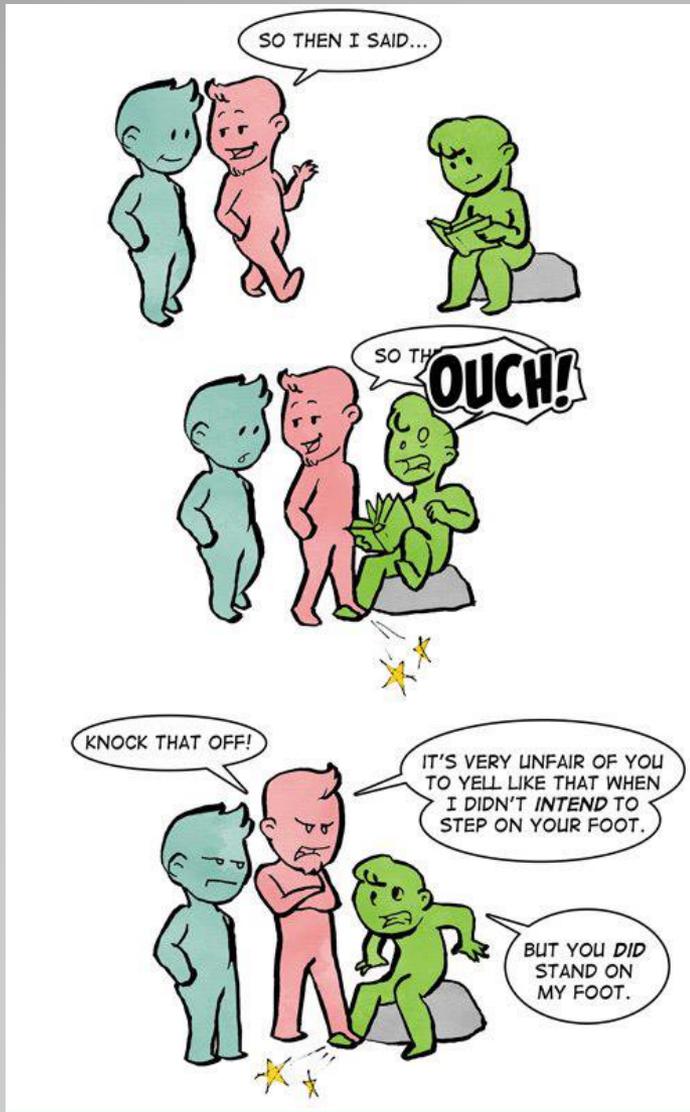
Microaggressions:

Understanding the Effects of Daily Interactions

- What are microaggressions? What types of microaggressions are there? Who commits microaggressions? Who experiences microaggressions?
- What are the effects that microaggressions have on people who deal with them on a daily basis?
- How do people typically respond to microaggressions?
- What can people do to confront and challenge microaggressions?

What are microaggressions?

Microaggressions are everyday interactions that convey negative, offensive, and possibly threatening messages to people based wholly on their group membership. They can be verbal, non-verbal (behavioral), or environmental. They can be intentional or unintentional, and are typically small or brief, or *micro*.



Impact > Intent

What types of microaggressions are there?

- Microaggressions can be committed based on:
 - Race
 - Gender
 - Sexuality
 - Ability
 - Age
 - Religion
 - National Origin/Citizenship Status
 - Class

There are three forms of microaggressions:

- Microassault
- Microinsult
- Microinvalidation

Microassault

- Conscious and direct biases that aggressors communicate to marginalized groups through speech, behavior, or environmental cues
- “The intent of these messages is to threaten, intimidate, and make the individuals or groups feel unwanted and unsafe because they are inferior, subhuman, and lesser beings that do not belong on the same level as others in society” (Sue, 2010).

Microinsult

- Interpersonal or environmental interactions that demean a person's identity through stereotyping, rudeness, or insensitivity
- "Microinsults represent subtle snubs, frequently outside the conscious awareness of the perpetrator, but they convey an oftentimes hidden insulting message to the recipient" (Sue, 2010).

Microinvalidation

- Excluding, negating, or nullifying the feelings, psychological reactions, and/or experiences of marginalized groups in speech, behavior, or environmental cues
- “In many ways, microinvalidations may potentially represent the most damaging form of the three microaggressions because they directly and insidiously deny the racial, gender, or sexual orientation reality of these groups” (Sue, 2010).

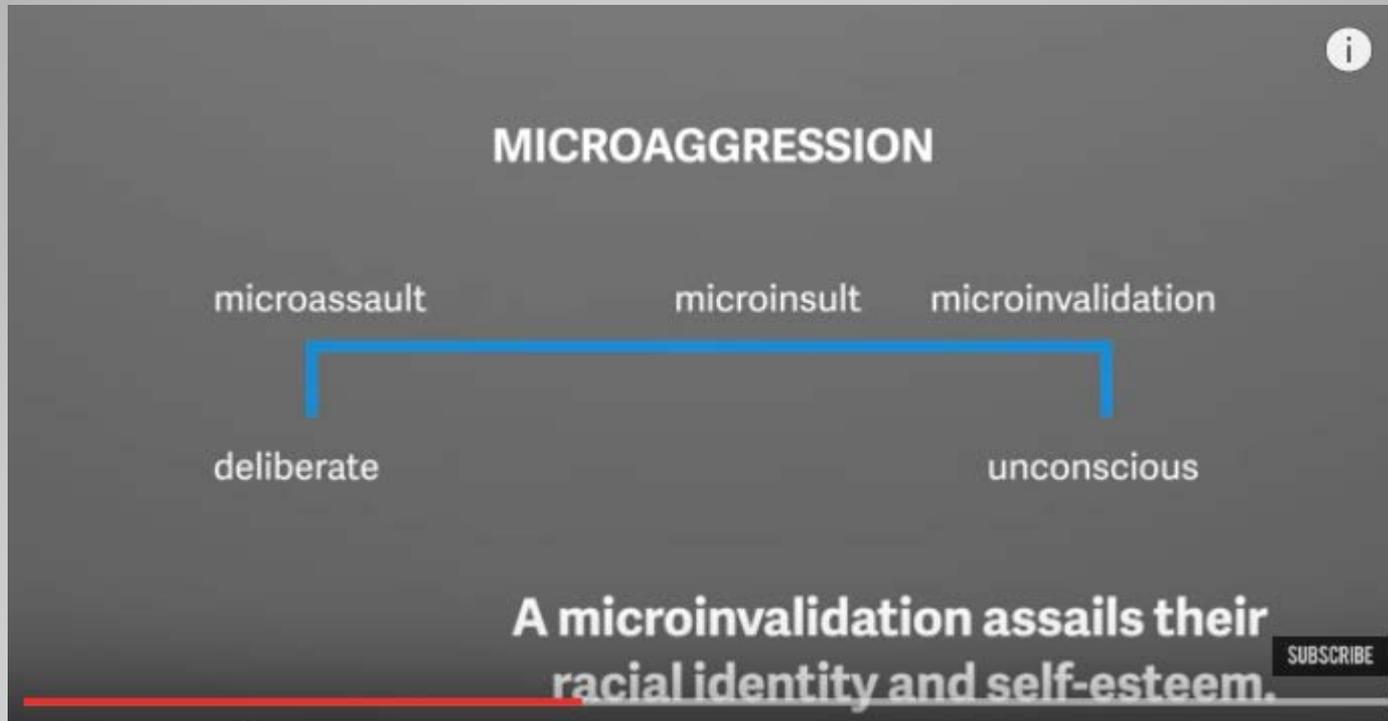
**What are the effects of
Microaggressions?**

Effects of microaggressions:

- Mental exhaustion
- Strained relationships
- Psychological illnesses like depression and anxiety
- Internalized feelings of worthlessness based in a person's difference
- Increased anger
- Heightened feelings of vulnerability

Watch on YouTube

“What is the definition of microaggression?”
By Quartz



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bjzWENcW6NQ>

Whose Reality Counts?

“Whose reality is the *correct* reality?”

1. Attributional ambiguity

- Because people in marginalized groups generally have a heightened vigilance to microaggressive behavior, sometimes they question themselves on whether something was a microaggression or not
- This ambiguity also leads to the dragging out of the impact of the microaggression as the person will usually expend a good deal of energy after the fact trying to determine whether or not an interaction was actually an actualized bias against them

2. Response indecision

- Not knowing the best way or how to respond

3. Time-limited responding

- The incident is over before a response can be made

4. Denying your own experience

- Engaging in self-deception by believing it did not happen

5. Impotency of actions

- “It won’t do any good anyway.”

6. Fearing the consequences

- Interpersonal power differentials determine the degree of threat

7. Catch-22 of responding

- If you don't respond it's as if you're verifying that "it isn't that big of a deal." If you do respond it is seen as overreacting or being too sensitive.

Watch on YouTube

"#HatchKids Discuss Microaggressions" By SheKnows



Content for grown-ups,
made by kids with a mission.

**Hatch Workshop:
Microaggressions**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8RfwnibEd3A>

Steps to take toward combating microaggressions

1. Defining microaggressions

- “Being able to define microaggressions and to know the various forms they take must begin with a cognitive and intellectual understanding of their manifestations and impact” (Sue, 2010).

2. Recognizing microaggressions

- “Recognizing microaggressions when they make an appearance is more than an intellectual exercise in definition” (Sue, 2010).
Microaggressions can only be confronted when they are recognized as such
- Additionally, recognizing when you, yourself, are a perpetrator of microaggressions is an important and necessary step.

3. Deconstructing the underlying meaning of microaggressions

- “Microaggressions are reflections of worldviews that are filled with ethnocentric values, biases, assumptions, and stereotypes that have been strongly culturally inculcated into our beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors” (Sue, 2010).
- Understanding the underlying meaning behind a microaggression not only helps to legitimate the experiences of those who are impacted by microaggressions, but they also connect them to larger systems of systemic and institutional racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, classism, xenophobia, etc.

Examples of underlying meanings:

- “You’re pretty for a black girl.” →
underlying meaning = black girls aren’t pretty.
- “You speak really good English.” →
underlying meaning: You seem foreign and therefore I assume you aren’t very smart. Or, I assumed you didn’t speak English because you clearly aren’t from here.

Resources for further information:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TPCGNDaE7MA>
- <http://www.microaggressions.com/>
- *Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation*
– Derald Wing Sue (2010)