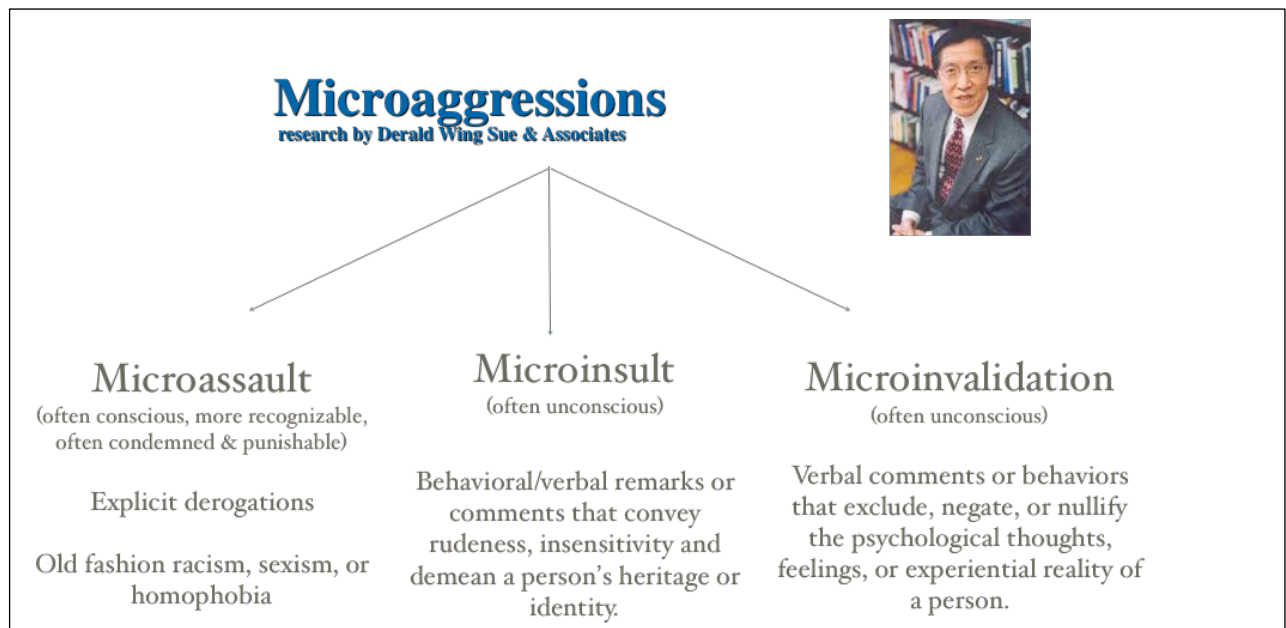


NAIS People of Color Conference - November 28 – December 1
Bouncing Back: Building Resilience
After Experiencing or Causing Racial Microaggressions

Brave Space Guidelines

Adapted from DiAngelo & Sensoy, 2014

- What is said here stays here; what is learned here, leaves here
- Be fully present: Engage in critical dialogue through conscious questioning and active listening.
- Participate at your own comfort level, but push yourself; the most learning happens when we are a little bit uncomfortable.
- Notice your own defensive reactions and attempt to use these reactions as entry points for gaining deeper self-knowledge.
- It's ok for us all to be at different places with the things we discuss today.
- Show respect for one another's beliefs, values, and experiences. Strive for humility.
- Share air time
- Attend to personal anecdotal evidence but also look at broader societal patterns.



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HOW TO BE A RESILIENT & HUMBLE LEARNER

Racism is a behemoth that thrives on complacency, fear, guilt, shame, denial, blame (of self/others), notions of “us and them,” acceptance of the status quo, and silence.

When well-meaning White people make mistakes, we sometimes feel overwhelmed, defensive, self-deprecating, stuck, or hopeless. Yet **when, not if, we mess up**, we can use tangible tools to dismantle the giant that is racism and still have enough reserve to keep our skin in the game:

Gratitude
Inquiry
Acknowledgement
Next steps
Tenderness

Gratitude:

When we are called on our mistakes, we are given gifts. They may not carry the same emotional experience as receiving a birthday present, but they are gifts of learning and growth. We can say things like, “*Thank you for calling me on _____,*” “*Thank you for saying ‘ouch’...*” “*Thank you for being honest about _____,*” and so on.

Inquiry:

Asking questions of self/others and conducting our own research are critical if we are to avoid repeating our mistakes (or at least avoid making them in the same way). White people should be mindful of not expecting People of Color to teach us. When we can accept that we do not – nor will we ever – know everything, we can approach inquiry with genuine curiosity rather than fear.

Acknowledgment:

An acknowledgement can be anything from apologizing to naming what happened or what you heard someone say. In fact, a statement like, “*You just taught me something, but that learning was at your expense. I wish I could take away the pain I just caused you, but I know I can’t,*” can be more impactful than, “*I’m sorry I hurt your feelings.*”

Next steps:

What are you going to do with the gift you have just received? How are you going to share your learning so others, too, can learn from your error? Is there any other corrective action needed to heal pain your mistake caused? What structures need to change now that you have learned something new? What support do you need to seek out from other White people in order to process your mistake and figure out your next steps?

Tenderness:

Be tender with yourself. Show yourself compassion. Forgive yourself. Remember you did not create the system of racism nor did you ask to learn racism. Your mistake may have reminded the person you hurt of all the other previous times they were hurt in the same way. Therefore, their feelings are simultaneously about you and about something much bigger than you.

BECAUSE ADVANCING RACIAL JUSTICE REQUIRES TREMENDOUS COURAGE

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Racial Microaggression Themes

Alien in Own Land

assumptions that Latino/a-Americans and Asian-Americans are foreign born;
“Where are you from?”; “You speak good English”

Color Blindness

statements that indicate that a White person does not want to acknowledge race;
“America is a melting pot”; denying people of color as racial or cultural beings

Denial of Individual Racism

White people denying their racial biases; “I’m not a racist, I have several friends of color.”

Ascription of Intelligence

assigning intelligence to a person of color on the basis of their race;
“You are a credit to your race”; “You are so articulate”

Second Class Citizen

a White person is given preferential treatment as a consumer; assumption that a person of color is going to cause trouble (so won’t pick them up in a cab

Assumption of Criminality

a person of color is considered dangerous, criminal, or deviant;
store owner/worker following a person of color in a store

Myth of Meritocracy

statements which assert that race does not have to do with one’s success in life;
everyone can success in this society if they work hard enough

Pathologizing Cultural Values/Communication Styles

assumption that White values and communication styles are the norm; asking a Latino/a why they speak so loudly or an Asian person why they speak so softly



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