**3 Types of Microaggressions**

**Source**: Derald Wing Sue & Madonna G. Constantine, “Racial Microaggressions as Instigators of Difficult Dialogues on Race: Implications for Student Affairs Educators and Students,” *The College of Student Affairs Journal*, Spring 2007, vol. 26, no. 2

**Microassaults**: “Explicit racial derogations meant to hurt intended victims through name calling, avoidant behavior or purposeful derogatory actions” (pg. 137). “Conscious and deliberate acts” (pg. 138). “Clear and intentional” (pg. 138).

* Calling someone the “N-word” or similar racial bigoted names.
* Stating that white people are superior to People of Color and Indigenous Peoples.
* Stating that People of Color and Indigenous Peoples are inferior to whites.
* Stating that white dominant culture and practices are better, superior to those of People of Color and Indigenous Peoples.
* Refusing to work with, serve or be served by People of Color and/or Indigenous Peoples.
* Making disparaging remarks about People of Color and/or Indigenous Peoples.
* Making negative stereotypic comments about People of Color and/or Indigenous Peoples.
* Belittling People of Color and/or Indigenous Peoples.
* Angrily yelling at someone who is assumed to be a Latino/a, Middle Eastern, or an immigrant of color: “Go back to your country!!! Speak English!!”
* Racist graffiti and vandalism.
* Intentionally teaching racist history or ideologies as truth and accurate.
* Intentionally choosing not to use any readings or resources written by People of Color and/or Indigenous Peoples.
* Intentionally mispronouncing the name of someone who is a Person or Color or Indigenous, or intentionally calling them by a wrong name.
* Touching the hair of a Person or Color or Indigenous person even after they have told you not to.

**Microinsults**: “Words and actions that convey rudeness, insensitivity, or demeaning attitudes….In general, they occur outside the level of awareness…” (of those making the comments or doing the behaviors)… “but they convey a hidden insulting message to the recipients of color” (pg. 138).

* Questioning the competence and capacity of a Person of Color: “You were only hired to fill a quota.” “You only got in because of Affirmative Action.” “You took my sister’s spot. She deserved to be here!” “We have to hire the most qualified person, not just a People of Color.” “Minorities don't succeed in that position.” “We can’t lower our standards!” “She got that promotion because she is Black.”
* Ignoring, not acknowledging, under-addressing, or chastising People of Color in meetings and classrooms as they offer ideas, ask questions, raise concerns, etc.
* Disproportionately disciplining People of Color for behaviors that whites also do, but without being held accountable.
* Not giving the same respect to People of Color: The white presenter is introduced as Dr. \_\_\_, while the co-presenter of color with a doctorate is introduced as Ms. or Mr. \_\_\_\_ or by their first name. Giving credit to white members of the team for work that also was developed by the People of Color.
* Not recognizing the positional authority of People of Color: Whites assuming People of Color are not the manager or leader, but instead a custodial or maintenance worker or an administrative assistant. A few white team members often do not follow the directions or complete the assignments from their supervisor of color. A white customer demanded to talk with a white manager.

**Microinvalidations**: Comments and actions that “exclude, negate or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of people of color….directly attacks the racial reality of persons of color” (pg. 138).

* Comments to question or chastise those raising issues of race and racism: “Why do you always make everything about race?” “There is more to your job that you should be paying attention to besides race.”
* Comments that question the legitimacy of People of Color: “Where are you *really* from!?!?” “How did you get into the US?” “Where did you get your degree?”
* Comments that express surprise at the intelligence or competencies of People of Color and Indigenous Peoples. Saying with a tone of surprise: “You are so articulate!” “You speak really good English!” “You’re so polished!” “That was a really good idea!”
* Comments that try to erase, dismiss or minimize the lived racist experiences of People of Color: “You’re being too sensitive!” “That’s just an isolated incident. Don’t over-react to that.” “It’s not that big a deal. Just let it go.” “That had nothing to with race; that happens to me, too!” “I don’t see color; I treat everyone as a human being.”
* Saying to a mixed-race person, “What are you?”
* White leaders and employees dismissing or contradicting concerns about racist behaviors: “You must have misunderstood them. They are a really good team member.” “They were probably just having a bad day…”
* White staff overlook or ignore the input of colleagues of color until a white person validates it or says it.
* Defensive behaviors when whites are confronted about the racist impact of their comments or behaviors: “I’m not racist. I was just kidding. I didn’t mean it.” “You’re attacking me!” “I’m a good person. My best friend is Black.” “My friends of color think that joke is funny!” “I treat everyone like that.”
* Policing the tone, emotions, dress or appearance of People of Color.
* Not acknowledging or engaging with People of Color: A white leader visiting the project team and greets several white members by name, then just nods at the only Person of Color on the team. Whites say hello to white peers in the office but walk past People of Color on their team without acknowledging them.

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