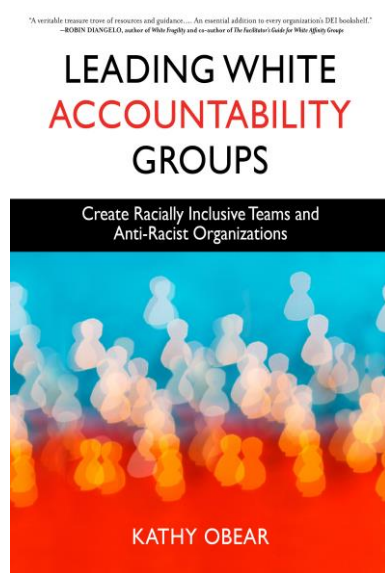
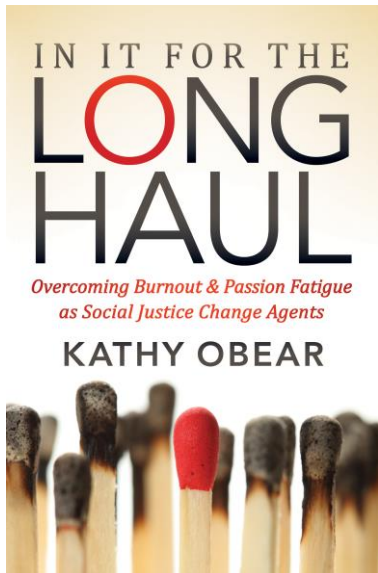


## ***More Tools to Interrupt and Shift Microaggressive Situations***

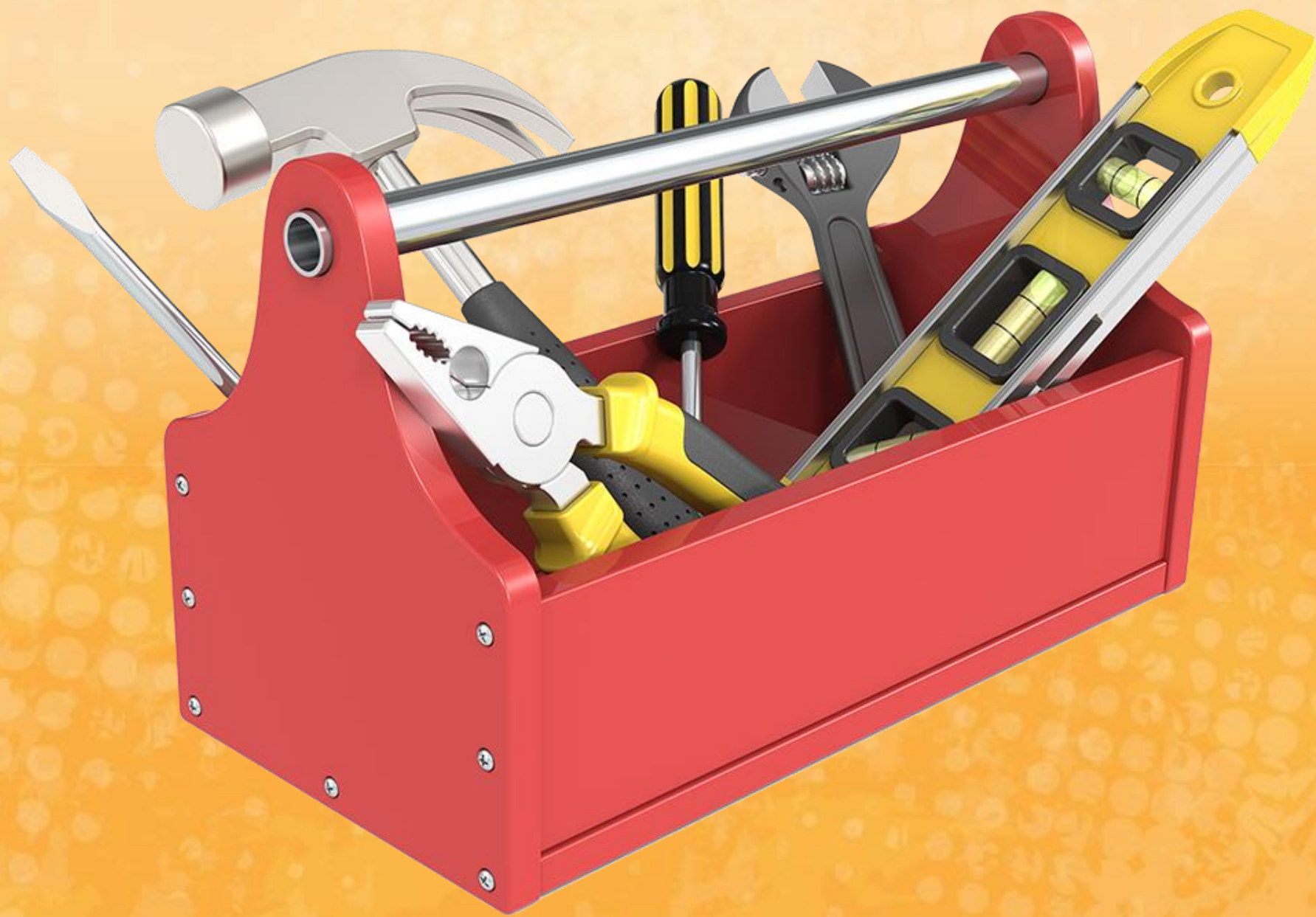


**Kathy Obear, Ed.D.**  
**[www.drkathyobear.com](http://www.drkathyobear.com)**

**REFLECT ~ 0-10, not at all – every time**

**I consistently and effectively respond  
during microaggressive situations.**





## **Respond in ways that:**

- 1. Interrupt microaggressions,**
- 2. Engage others to reflect on the impact and intentions of their microaggressive actions,**
- 3. Raise awareness as to why the comment, behavior or policy has a negative impact, and**
- 4. Build connections and relationships for further dialogue, learning, and organizational change**

# **Start the conversation with a “face-saving” on-ramp:**

- 1. You may not have realized...**
- 2. I trust you didn't intend to, but your comment didn't land well on me...**
- 3. My guess is you didn't notice the impact of what you just said...**
- 4. I could be wrong, but I think your comment had an impact you didn't intend...**
- 5. I know it wasn't intentional, but when you\_\_\_\_, you had a negative impact.**



# Use PAIRS: Tools of Engagement

**PAN** (share what you observed, noticed)

**ASK** a question

**INTERRUPT** the dynamic

**RELATE** in ~ to the person, situation

**SHARE** a reaction, story, example, feeling...

# PAIRS

## Pan, share observations

- **I'm noticing...**
- **I don't think they were finished with their comments...**
- **I notice people got quiet, are looking down...**
- **I think your comment may have had an unintended impact...**
- **I'm feeling...**

## Ask questions for clarity

- **Are you saying that...**
- **Can you say more?**
- **Help me understand what you mean?**
- **Can you give an example? A story? Some background?**
- **What is underneath your comment/question?**

# PAIRS

## Ask more questions

- **What could be the impact of what you said/did?**
- **Help me understand how you came to that conclusion?**
- **What were you hoping to communicate with that comment?**
- **What was your intent in sharing?**
- **Can you help me understand why you feel so strongly?**

## Interrupt

- **I need us to slow down and talk about what just happened...**
- **Let's take a breath...**
- **Let's take an equity pause...**
- **We are not engaging according to our group norms and values.**
- **Could repeat that, I want to make sure I understood.**
- **That has no place here.**



# PAIRS

## Relate to others, situation

- **I relate to what you're feeling; you experienced**
- **I remember a time when I thought that/did that...**
- **I relate to thinking and saying something like that, and then someone helped me understand the negative impact of my comments**

## Share feelings, stories

- **When I hear you say that I think/feel...**
- **Just last week I... Growing up, I...**
- **I'm beginning to feel ...**
- **I feel uncomfortable with that phrase, "joke"...**
- **That landed on me differently than you intended, I think...**

**\*Pause the recording and write out how you could use tools from each of the 5 skill sets in **PAIRS** and some of the “face-saving” on-ramp phrases to begin the conversation.**

### **Scenario:**

**A white team member interrupts the only Person of Color on team for the 2<sup>nd</sup> time in a meeting; they haven't interrupted anyone else during the meeting.**

# Use PAIRS

**PAN** (share what you observed, noticed)

**ASK** a question

**INTERRUPT** the dynamic

**RELATE** in ~ to the person, situation

**SHARE** a reaction, story, example, feeling...



**Practice using each of the 5 skills sets of PAIRS with at least 3 of the following scenarios. (This will be part of the quiz after this recording.)**  
**Identify some possible biases fueling each microaggression.**

**Choose of these examples and write out how you could each of the 5 PAIRS skill sets to start the conversation.**

**a. A more experienced staff member (A) starts debating a suggestion from a newer employee (B); their comments sound dismissive and minimizing. As the newer staff member is explaining more, (A) interrupts them with a louder voice than before.**

**b. A Muslim staff member is talking about some microaggressions they are hearing during Ramadan and wants the team to explore ways to interrupt and prevent these moving forward. Someone says, these sound like isolated incidents. As someone else starts to agree....**

**c. A staff member is complaining about having to make accommodations for someone with some disabilities: "Are these all really necessary? Could be they are trying to work the system."**

# What Could You Do?

- d. A white colleague said: “You don’t look Indigenous.” When you try to talk with them, they get defensive: “I’m not racist, I didn’t mean anything by it; I have friends from the reservation.”**
- e. A Person of Color joins the Zoom 6 minutes after the top of the hour. The leader looks at their watch, frowning says, “Glad you could join us.” You know white colleagues have been late to other staff meetings without comment.**



# What Could You Do?

- f. A cisgender colleague continues to refuse to use the pronouns of a nonbinary or gender queer staff member and misgenders them each time.**
- g. You overhear a male colleague making inappropriate sexist and sexualizing comments.**
- h. You overhear a colleague making anti-Semitic stereotypic comments related to money and banking.**

# What Could You Do?

- i. A colleague is often curt and demanding as they interact with an administrative assistant when they give them work to do.**
- j. Discussing which staff may be ready to apply to be a supervisor, someone says, “She only went to a community college.”**
- k. A colleague of color passionately shares some of their concerns and no one acknowledges their comments.**

# **Have a Follow-Up Conversation:**

## **Summary of Possible Steps**

- 1. Initiate the conversation: Topic, process, hoped for outcomes**
- 2. Clarify what you thought occurred**
- 3. Explore the probable impact of their behavior**
- 4. Explore their intent, hoped for outcomes of their behavior**
- 5. Identify more effective ways to engage**
- 6. Share your expectations for behavior change**
- 7. Check-in about the clarity & impact of this conversation**
- 8. Offer to be of support in the future**



***BREATHE***

# Ways to Confront Repeated Inappropriate Behaviors:

**1st, 2nd, 3rd time**

## 1st time:

- a. Describe the behavior you observed**
- b. State what you want to be different**
  - \* I'd appreciate it if you'd...**

## 2nd time:

- a. Describe the behavior: I believe this is the 2nd time we've talked about this...**
- b. This is the impact when you do that...**
- c. I need you to change your behavior ....Am I clear?**

### **3rd time:**

- a. Give clear consequences if they continue this behavior: This is the 3rd time I've asked you to...**
- b. I am documenting the pattern.**
- c. If this happens/you do this again...**



# **Clearly state your expectations for behavior change**

- 1. In the future I need you to \_\_\_\_.**
- 2. I need you to change your behavior and stop \_\_\_\_.**
- 3. That comment/behavior has no place here.**
- 4. You may not agree, but as an employee you are required to co-create an equitable, inclusive work environment. Can you do this consistently?**

**ACTION**  
*expresses*  
**PRIORITIES.**

**GANDHI**