

# Microaggressions and the Workplace: The Role of Resilience in the Face of Understated Bias



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# Objectives



- ❧ Introduction to the literature on microaggressions
- ❧ Introduction to microaggressions in the workplace
- ❧ Increase awareness of the various forms of microaggressions for professionals

# Definition



❧ Microaggressions- brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory or negative racial slights and insults to the target person or group.

(Sue et al., 2007, p. 273)

# Categories of Relationship

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❧ Microinsult

❧ Microassault

❧ Microinvalidation



# Literature Review



## Types

- ❧ Racial
- ❧ Gender
- ❧ Sexuality
- ❧ Class
- ❧ Disability

## Coping Mechanisms

- ❧ Bonding together
- ❧ Group Spokesperson
- ❧ Confronting perpetrator
- ❧ Silence
- ❧ Protective Factors and Resiliency

# Microaggressions: An Interactive Exchange



Themes\*

Messages

Examples

\*Adapted from Sue, D.W., (2010). *Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Race, Gender & Sexual Orientation*. Wiley & Sons.

# Alien in One's Own Land

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❧ When Asian Americans  
and Latino Americans are  
assumed to be foreign-born

# Ascription of Intelligence

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- ❧ Assigning intelligence to a person of color on the basis of their race



# Color Blindness



☞ Statements that indicate that a person does not want to acknowledge the presence of race

# Denial of Individual Racism/ Sexism/Heterosexism



❧ A statement made when persons deny their racial or gender or heterosexual biases & privilege

# Myth of Meritocracy



❧ Statements which assert that race does not play a role in life successes

# Pathologizing Cultural Values/Communication Styles



❧ The notion that the values and communication styles that are Euro-centric are ideal

# Tools for Inclusive Work Environment



- ❧ Be Self-Awareness
- ❧ Model Appropriate Language and Behavior
- ❧ Use Active Listening and the Non-Expert Stance
- ❧ Balance the Teachable Opportunity:  
Ignorance/Invisibility and Over-Kill are the unproductive ends of the response spectrum
- ❧ Create Safety for the Messiness of the Dialogue
- ❧ Become Knowledgeable about HR policies that Impact your Communication with Colleagues and Consumers/Patients



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# Questions

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# Thank You!



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