

Identifying & Confronting Microaggressions in Our Libraries

Based in part on a workshop (*Confronting Microaggressions in the Classroom: What Are They and What Can I Do About Them*) by Tasha Souza, Associate Director of the Center for Teaching & Learning, Professor of Communication, Boise State University. Shared with permission.

Workshop goal: to feel more empowered to respond when confronted with a microaggression.

Learning outcomes: By the end of the session, you should be able to:

- Identify examples of microaggressions
- Weigh key considerations when faced with a microaggression
- Engage positively when faced with a microaggression

Definition of microaggression: subtle verbal or nonverbal communication, intentional or not, resulting in harmful consequences to members of marginalized groups (Solorzano, Ceja & Yosso, 2000)

1. What is an example of a microaggression?
2. Why do microaggressions matter?
3. What can we do in response to a microaggression?
4. What are some things to consider when faced with a microaggression?

A communication strategy:

1. Note the observed behavior.
 2. Perhaps ask a follow up question: “why did you say that?” “what do you mean?”
 3. Explain how the slight may be interpreted by others.
 4. Explain how the slight makes you feel.
 5. Request appropriate action.
5. Practice with this scenario: You hear someone you supervise at the reference desk jokingly say to a tall African American man, “You must play basketball.”

Consider: How can we reduce the possibility of committing a microaggression ourselves?

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