

Recognizing Microaggressions and the Messages They Send



Alien in One's Own Land

When Asian Americans, Latino Americans and others who look different or are named differently from the dominant culture are assumed to be foreign-born

What's Said

“What are you? You're so interesting looking!”

What's Implied

You are a perpetual foreigner in your own country.



Ascription of Intelligence

Assigning intelligence to a person of color or a woman based on their race/gender

What's Said

To a woman of color: “I would have never guessed that you were a scientist.”

What's Implied

People of color are generally not as intelligent as Whites.



Color Blindness

Statements that indicate that a White person does not want to or need to acknowledge race.

What's Said

“There is only one race, the human race.”

What's Implied

Assimilate to the dominant culture.



Criminality/Assumption of Criminal Status

A person of color is presumed to be dangerous, criminal, or deviant based on their race.

What's Done

Someone crosses to the other side of the street to avoid a person of color.

What's Implied

You are dangerous.



Denial of Individual Racism/Sexism/Heterosexism

A statement made when bias is denied.

What's Said

“I'm not racist. I have several Black friends.”

What's Implied

I could never be racist because I have friends of color.



Myth of Meritocracy

Statements which assert that race or gender does not play a role in life successes.

What's Said

I believe the most qualified person should get the job."

What's Implied

People of color are given extra unfair benefits because of their race.



Pathologizing Cultural Values/Communication Styles

The notion that the values and communication styles of the dominant/White culture are ideal/"normal".

What's Said

"Why are you always angry?" anytime race is brought up in the classroom discussion.

What's Implied

Leave your cultural baggage outside.



Second-Class Citizen

Occurs when a target group member receives differential treatment from the power group.

What's Done

Being ignored at a store counter as attention is given to the White customer.

What's Implied

Whites are more valued customers than people of color.



Sexist/Heterosexist/Cissexist Language

Terms that exclude or degrade women and LGBTQ+ people.

What's Done

Being forced to choose Male or Female when completing basic forms.

What's Implied

Nonbinary identities are not recognized.



Traditional Gender Role Prejudicing and Stereotyping

Occurs when expectations of traditional roles or stereotypes are conveyed.

What's Done

Labeling an assertive female committee chair/dean as a "b___," while describing a male counterpart as a "forceful leader."

What's Implied

Women are out of line when they are aggressive.