

Address

*What to do when you
encounter microaggression?*

Have *you* experienced a microaggression?

1. YES
2. NO



Did you address the microaggressor?

1. YES
2. NO

Have you witnessed a microaggression towards *someone else*?

1. YES
2. NO



Did you say or do something about it?

1. YES
2. NO

Reasons some may choose not to respond

- Was that really a microaggression?
- Am I being too sensitive? Would I be perceived as “too sensitive?”
- It’s too late, too much time has passed.
- What difference would it make?
- How do I respond?
- Would it offend them if I say something?
- Consequences? Retaliation? Social isolation?



Key Considerations

- Not all have ill-intent
 - But... Impact often means more than the intent
- *Be sure to...*
 - *Criticize the microaggression, NOT the microaggressor*
- Consider the context
 - Group vs. private setting
 - Power differential situation

Why respond?

- For them
- For you
- For the people after you



How to respond?

- The **GRIT** approach

Gather

Restate

Inquire

Talk it out

GRIT

Gather your thoughts

Gather your thoughts, take a breath, recognize context

- Don't react right away
 - Want to act rather than react
- Responding with anger can work against you
- What is the relationship between you and the aggressor?



GRIT

Restate



- **R**estate their comment
- May help the aggressor be aware of what he/she is saying
- Listen actively and openly to their response
- Come from curiosity not judgement
- *“I think I heard you saying... (paraphrase their comments). Is that correct?”*
- *“I want to make sure that I understand what you were saying. Were you saying that...”*

GRIT Inquire



- Inquire about what they meant by their words
- Allow person to think through their words
- Enables the aggressor an opportunity to consider the implications of their words/actions
- *“Help me understand”* questions
 - *“Help me understand what you were you hoping to communicate with that comment?”*
 - *“Will you please help me understand what you meant by that?”*

GRIT

Talk it out

- **T**alk about the potential impact of such a statement or action on others
- **T**alk about your own thoughts and feelings around that statement

GRIT

Talk it out

- *“What do people think when they hear that type of comment?”*
- *“As you know, everything speaks. What message do you think such a comment sends?”*
- *“What impact do you think that comment could have on ...”*
- *“When I hear your comment, I think/feel...”*
- *“In my experience, that comment can perpetuate negative stereotypes and assumptions about... I would like to think that is not your intent.”*



GRIT

Talk it out

- After addressing it (or even if you do not immediately address it), talk out your thoughts with a friend or colleague



Additional considerations

- How you say it is as critical as what you say
- Separate the person from the action
- Humor goes a long way
- Avoid “you” statements

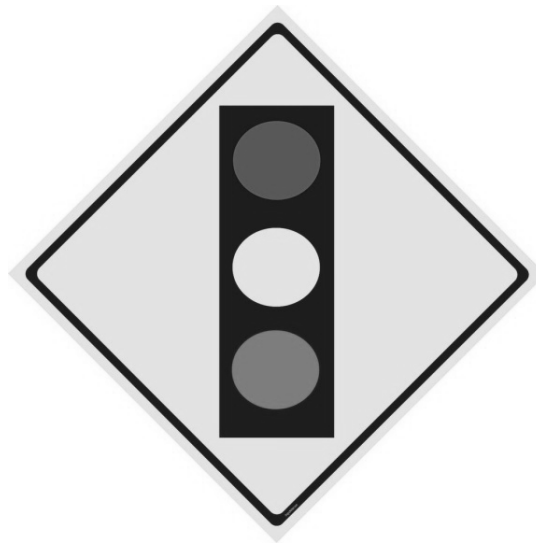
“You are a racist”

VS.

“That remark may be perceived as racially insensitive.”

Distinguish micro from macroaggression

- All of these pearls are for microaggression
- Macroaggression often requires a much more direct approach



The Recipient

- We all need...
 - A group of friends
 - A sounding board
 - A group to share experiences
 - A community within your work environment



The Observer

- How do you react if comment was directed toward someone else?
 - Need to be an ally
 - Do NOT speak for the recipient
 - Instead of “*You hurt his/her feelings*”, consider saying, “*Here’s how I perceived that comment...*”

The Microaggressor

- If you notice something you said affected someone negatively, **OWN UP TO IT.**
- Admit it, learn from it, and apologize.
- If someone confronts you, listen to what they are trying to say. Do not be defensive.

Create a safe place

- Create sessions that are intended for discussing microaggressions
- Have talks on microaggression to increase awareness
- Education is important
- The more people are aware of the term and concept, the less likely they will be defensive about their behaviors
- Lead by example

Scenarios

The **GRIT** approach

Gather

Restate

Inquire

Talk it out