

The EIC Herald

EQUITY INCLUSION DIVERSITY



ETHICS IN ACTION

This newsletter is dedicated to Microaggressions. You might wonder how microaggressions and ethics are related. At first glance - they aren't. As folks who work in a clinical setting, we have an ethical obligation to 'do no harm' (non-maleficence) and in supporting health and wellbeing we are 'doing good works' (beneficence).

Microaggressions are in direct contrast with these 2 ethical principles. Microaggressions create barriers to successful healing, cause relationship ruptures and can cause pain, self esteem deterioration and damage self perception and feelings of acceptance and belonging.

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CURIOSITY CORNER

ASK THE EIC?

Have a question? We may be able to answer it!

Email us or drop your question in any EIC box (coming soon)! We'll do our best to respond to all queries while honoring your privacy!

The term Microaggression was coined by Chester M. Pierce in the 1970's - to describe daily subtle insults experienced by black and African Americans.



WHAT ARE MICROAGGRESSIONS

Death by a thousand pinpricks.

A microaggression is a prejudice statement or action that targets or singles out marginalized people and groups. (cont on page 3)

TAKING ACTION

INTENT VS IMPACT (&RECOVERY)

Imagine you said something nice to someone. When you gave the complement, you were coming from a good place and meant well. Your intentions were entirely innocent and meant to be encouraging. You definitely didn't mean to offend someone... But the comment had alternative meaning from the other person's perspective. After you spoke, they felt uncomfortable and slightly insulted. Even if you meant well, you don't get to decide if what you said was offensive or not. To reiterate:

“You don't get to decide if what you said was offensive or not.”

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For additional information, you are invited to click any or all the links attached to articles and photos!

SERVICE IN ACTION:

DEVELOPING AWARENESS AROUND IMPLICIT BIAS

TAKE A QUIZ [HERE](#).

WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

WHY MIGHT IT BE HELPFUL TO UNDERSTAND OUR UNACKNOWLEDGED ASSUMPTIONS & PREJUDICES?

“I TOOK THE DARK SKIN/LIGHT SKIN PREFERENCE AND THE TEST INDICATED I HAVE A STRONG AUTOMATIC PREFERENCE FOR DARK-SKINNED PEOPLE OVER LIGHT-SKINNED PEOPLE. I WAS SURPRISED BY THE RESULTS; I WAS HOPING TO BE MORE TOWARDS THE MIDDLE, BUT I GOT ONE END OF THE EXTREME. THE TEST WAS CONDUCTED IN A WAY THAT MADE SENSE AND I FOUND THE PLATFORM VERY EASY TO USE.”



CONT FROM PG 1

TAKING ACTION IMPACT VS INTENT (&RECOVERY) CONT FROM P 2

Microaggressions are *subtle and often unintentional*. It takes stepping outside your own viewpoint and personal experience to understand what you said was offensive. If someone has the courage to speak up and tell you how the comment actually made them feel, it's not your place to tell them they are wrong. Even with the best intentions, a complement that is perceived as insulting is still an insult.

We're all human and make mistakes. When we meant to say something nice, being told it was actually offensive can be jarring. ("Was my complement so off-base that it was rude? No, the other person must be confused."). By rejecting their response, you are dismissing and invalidating their alternative perspective. If they are willing to share their version of what they heard, it's best to respond with compassion and humility. Tiffany Jana, co-author of [Overcoming Bias: Building Authentic Relationships Across Differences](#) offers a few tips on how to navigate recovering from an accidental microaggression. The first thing is to ensure the other person feels heard. This requires listening with an open heart and open mind. Then they deserve an apology; a good apology that addresses what you did, rather than "I'm sorry you were offended". Instead, try something along the lines of "Thank you for sharing this with me and I'm sorry what I said was offensive." Because microaggressions are often accidental, this is something we have to keep working on. We can all strive to be better versions of ourselves, and this requires grace, humility, and ongoing commitment.

Ethics In Action: What are Microaggressions? Cont. from pg 2

A microaggression is a discriminatory or biased statement or action that targets or singles out marginalized people and groups.

Microaggressions can be verbal statements or observations: "You're pretty smart for a girl." They can be behavioral, like being interrupted or dismissed at a staff meeting, because you are a person of color or female. Microaggressions can also be environmental. An environmental microaggression according to [Medical News Today](#) is when all the buildings of a college campus are named after white historical figures.

Microaggressions are small and rarely overt demonstrations of bias, discrimination and prejudice. And, similar to [privilege](#), can go unnoticed or acknowledged by the person using them.

Microaggressions cause harm. People who experience frequent microaggressions report diminished self esteem, depression and trauma related.

As folks working in a clinician setting, it's trauma informed to be aware of this type of experience, and how it influences the over all health and well being of the folks we serve. It's also helpful to understand the prevalence and impact of microaggressions in our agency – with peers and colleagues.

We do better, when we know better. Please utilize the links, videos and research in this newsletter to support continued growth and understanding of microaggressions and the impact they have on clients and coworkers!

TAKING ACTION

CONTINUED

Definitions:

-Microassaults: A microassault is when a person intentionally behaves in a discriminatory way while not intending to be offensive. An example of a microassault is a person telling a racist joke then saying, “I was just joking.”

-Microinsults: A microinsult is a comment or action that is unintentionally discriminatory. For example, this could be a person saying to an Indian doctor, “Your people must be so proud.”

-Microinvalidations: A microinvalidation is when a person’s comment invalidates or undermines the experiences of a certain group of people. An example of a microinvalidation would be a white person telling a black person that “racism does not exist in today’s society.”

Implicit Bias Tests:

[Harvard Implicit Bias Test](#)

Additional Articles:

[Reflections on cultural humility \(apa.org\)](#)

Examples of Microaggressions: <https://sph.umn.edu/site/docs/hewg/microaggressions.pdf>

Tiffany Jana, co-author of [Overcoming Bias: Building Authentic Relationships Across Differences](#).

Rebecca Knight, Harvard Business Review. <https://hbr.org/2020/07/youve-been-called-out-for-a-microaggression-what-do-you-do>

[We all have implicit biases. So what can we do about it? | Dushaw Hockett | TEDxMidAtlanticSalon - YouTube](#)

Additional Information and Resources:

[Research Outcomes on Microaggressions and Mental Health](#)

Simply click through the link and use the search function to find microaggression classes and workshops that are often free!

[CE’s For Less](#)

[Clearly Clinical Podcast](#)

[Eventbrite](#)