



Meeting Microaggressions with Microresistance: Creating More Inclusive Campus Environments

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Microresistance work is done
entirely in collaboration with

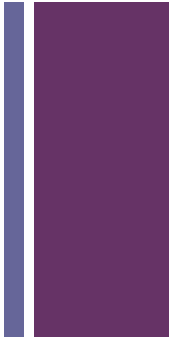
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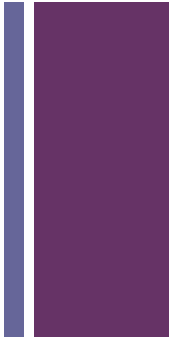
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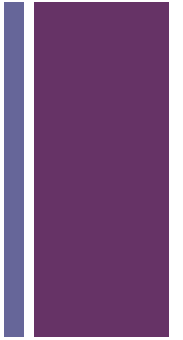
+ Rationale for Workshop

Nadal, Wing, Griffin, Davidoff, and Sriken (2014) found that “while all microaggressions are harmful, microaggressions that occur in educational settings (i.e., by professors or other students) or work settings (i.e., by employers or coworkers) may particularly hurt individuals’ self-worth” (p. 468).

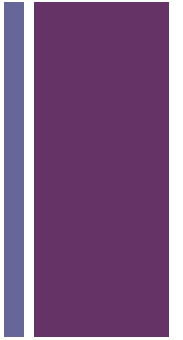


+ Rationale for Workshop

In addition, Sue (2010) found that microaggressions negatively impact students' academic achievement and feelings of inclusion.



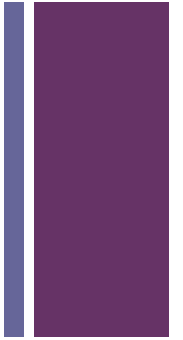
+ Rationale for Workshop



Microaggressions, then, must be addressed head-on if we want to create vibrant and equitable educational and work environments.

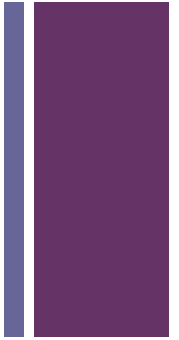
+ Workshop Goal

- For participants to feel more empowered to respond with microresistance when a microaggression occurs.





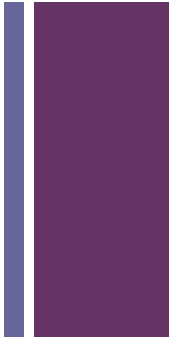
Situating Microaggressions within Systems of Oppression: A Sociological Framework



- We live in a society in which systemic racism and white supremacy are pervasive. In addition, they intersect with other systems of oppression (e.g. patriarchy, classism, heterosexism, ableism, and American imperialism).
- And sadly, higher education is not immune.

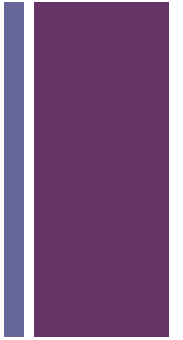
+ A Distinction:

- Microaggressions, though they usually unfold in small interactions, are firmly situated in broader, interlocking systems of oppression; they are micro-level manifestations of these systems (Ganote, Souza, Cheung, 2019).



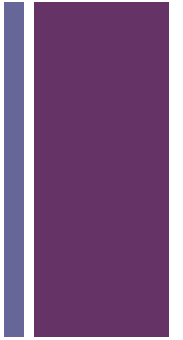
+ Microaggressions are

- “brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative . . . slights and insults” (Sue, 2007, p. 271)



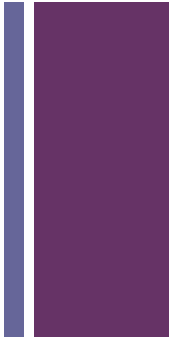
+ Another Distinction:

- Micro: in terms of perception by the person giving the microaggression, NOT in the hurtful impact they may have.



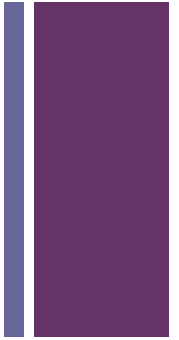


Think & Ink: Write down for yourself an example of a microaggression you have experienced or witnessed.





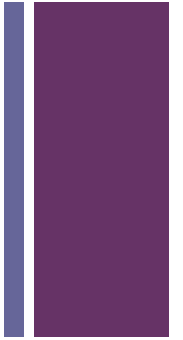
3 Types of Microaggressions:



1. **Microassaults** are “conscious biased beliefs or attitudes that are held by individuals and intentionally expressed or acted out overtly or covertly toward a marginalized person or socially devalued group.” (Sue, 2010, *Microaggressions and Marginality*, p. 8)

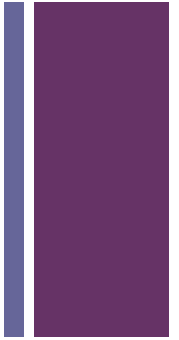
+ 3 Types of Microaggressions

2. **Microinsults** are “interpersonal interactions or environmental cues that communicate rudeness, insensitivity, slights, and insults that demean a person’s racial, gender, sexual orientation, or group identity and heritage. Microinsults are subtle snubs often unconsciously disguised as a compliment or positive statement directed toward the targeted person or group.” (Sue, 2010, *Microaggressions and Marginality*, p. 9)



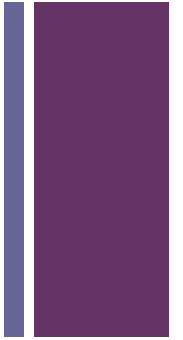


3 Types of Microaggressions



3. **Microinvalidations** “directly attack or deny the experiential realities of socially devalued groups. They accomplish this goal through interpersonal and environmental cues that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and experiences of the targeted group.” (Sue, 2010, *Microaggressions and Marginality*, p. 10)

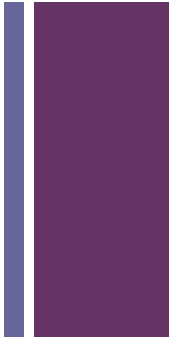
+ Think & Ink:

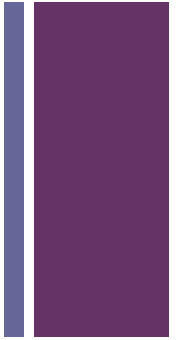


- What might stop you from intervening or responding to a microaggression?

+ Addressing a microaggression

- Do we have to address it?
 - Everything speaks.
 - If we don't, it may breed silence or more incivility.

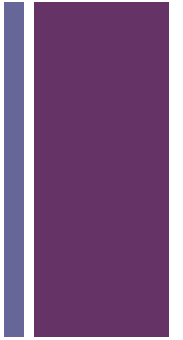




- SO, how can we address a microaggression that occurs in a faculty or staff meeting, a classroom, a studio or lab space, a hallway, or in another space on campus or in the community?

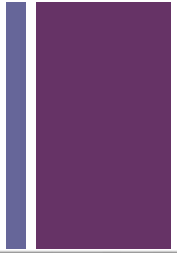
+ Through Microresistance:

- Small-scale individual or collaborative efforts that empower targeted people and allies to cope with, respond to, and/or challenge microaggressions with a goal of disrupting systems of oppression as they unfold in everyday life, and thereby creating more inclusive institutions (Ganote, Souza, Cheung, 2016; Irely, 2013).





Allied resistance on a spectrum



White Savior

"Woke" justification

Performative Ally

Awareness

Allyship

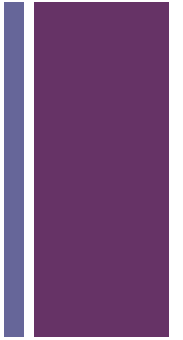
Abolitionist

- Allies commit themselves to ending systemic oppression by following the lead of targets and acting accordingly
- Want to avoid being a white savior or performative ally

Citation: Scale created by C. Demnowicz,
www.racismscale.weebly.com

+ Microresistance can happen

- before a microaggression occurs
- immediately after a microaggression has occurred
- after a microaggression has occurred, and you have had time to contemplate your response



+ Specific Forms of Microresistance:

Microaffirmation

OTFD

XYZ

AI

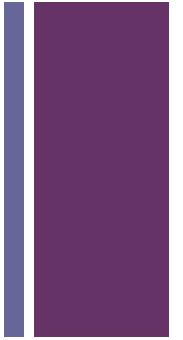
etc.



+ Microaffirmations are

“tiny acts of opening doors to opportunity, gestures of inclusion and caring, and graceful acts of listening.”

(Rowe, 2009)



+ OTFD and other communication frameworks



+ Open the Front Door to Communication

O = OBSERVE

concrete, objective, factual observations

T = THINK

thoughts based on observations

F = FEEL

actual feelings/emotions you have as a result of observation

D = DESIRE

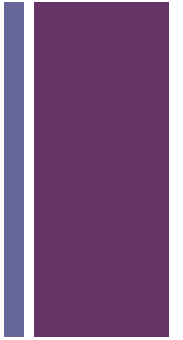
a statement of desired outcome

(Learning Forum, 2016)

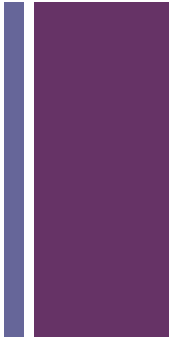


+ Example Indirect OTFD

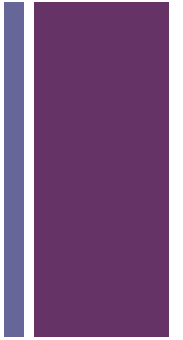
“Let’s pause. I noticed (**Observe**) that there seems to be an expectation that an individual can speak for an entire group. I think (**Think**) we need to resist this temptation because it’s a lot to place on someone to ask them to speak for a whole community. I feel uncomfortable (**Feeling**) with this request and would like us all to simply ask others to speak for themselves (**Desire**).”



+ Example Direct OTFD



“Let’s pause. I noticed (**Observe**) that Tracy just asked Maria to speak for an entire group. I think (**Think**) you/we need to resist this temptation because it’s a lot to place on someone to ask them to speak for a whole community. I feel uncomfortable (**Feeling**) with this request and would like us all to simply ask others to speak for themselves (**Desire**).”



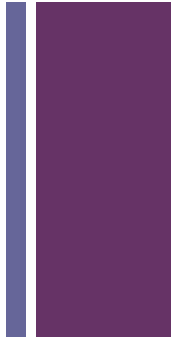
- Your OWN communication style and personality can weave through any microresistance attempt!

Questions?



OTFD Practice

- Scenario 1: You are in your current role. A newer colleague of yours, a woman of color named Tanisha, has an outstanding professional record and reputation. However, you notice that some of your colleagues do not really listen to her ideas when she speaks in meetings or other professional spaces. This has just happened again – you're in a meeting where Tanisha has shared what you know to be a cutting-edge approach, but the chair of the committee (or department) has moved the meeting along without responding to her idea in any way.
- What do you say, and when do you say it?
- Write down a possible O, T, F, and D response, addressing the situation at hand.



+ OTFD Practice

- Scenario 2: You are in your current role. You are serving on a high-profile search committee at your university, which has a new initiative to diversify the faculty and staff. One of your colleagues on the search committee, after hearing about this initiative, immediately says that they refuse to choose someone who "isn't qualified" for the position.
- What do you say, and when do you say it?
- Write down a possible O, T, F, and D response, addressing the situation at hand.

+ How did it go?

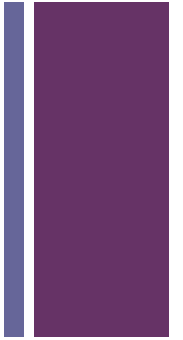
What was easy? Hard?

How did it feel?

What did you learn?

Might you use it in the future?

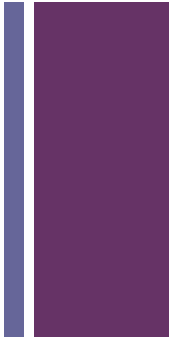
When/where/in what situation(s)?



+ A different strategy to try: XYZ

I feel X
when Y
because Z.

- Apply this framework to your earlier microaggression example.



+ AI Framework

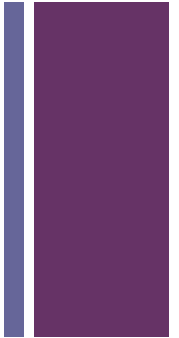
(more interactive)

Ask a clarifying question to help you understand what the person meant by their comment.

Impact exploration:

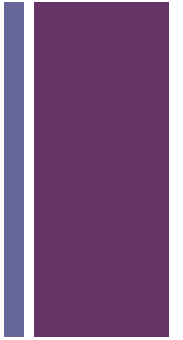
ask for, and/or state, potential impact of such a statement or action on others.

(modified version of a framework developed by Souza, 2018)



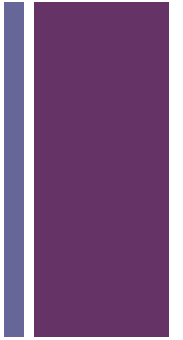
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Questions on OTFD, XYZ, or AI?



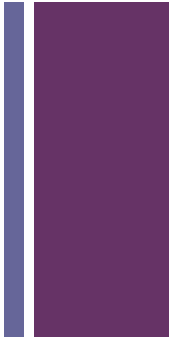
+ Reflection

- Do you think that microresistance (whether it comes in the form of a microaffirmation, OTFD, XYZ, AI, or any other form) might be helpful to you, or not? Why or why not?



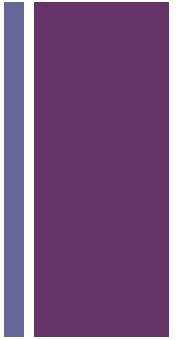


A question, now that you know what microresistance is:



- In your opinion, can microresistance serve as one part of a systemic approach to transforming oppression on our campuses and in our communities?

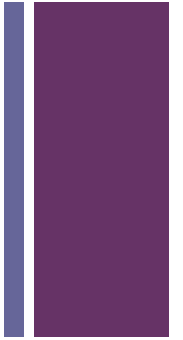
+ “In my life” Think & Ink



Write down 3 concrete ways in which you can use these skills in your work, whether with students or with colleagues.



Collective Reflection



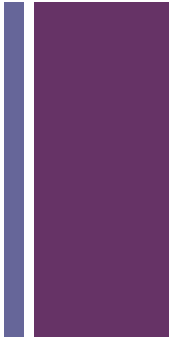
■ One thing I learned today is...

■ I had no idea that...

■ I will try to...



Contact Information



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