

Interrupting Microaggressions

APPROACH	MICROAGGRESSION	INTERVENTION
<p>INQUIRE Ask the speaker to elaborate. This will give you more information about where they are coming from, and may also help the speaker to become aware of what they are saying.</p> <p>KEY PHRASES: "Say more about that." "Can you elaborate your point?"</p>	<p>A white student to a black student: "Well, you're lucky you're here at Holy Cross."</p> <p>Theme: Myth of meritocracy</p>	<p>Professor: "What do you mean by that?" White student: "Well, you know, affirmative action."</p> <p>Then you have the opportunity to address the misconceptions and stereotypes about affirmative action (ie, that white women are the primary beneficiaries of affirmative action).</p>
<p>REFLECT Mirror what the speaker is saying. This can help make the invisible (ie, unconscious bias) visible for the speaker.</p> <p>KEY PHRASES: "So it sounds like you think..." "So, what I heard you say..."</p>	<p>"As a woman, I know what you go through as a racial minority."</p> <p>Theme: denial of individual racism.</p>	<p>"So it sounds like you're equating gender and racial oppression. What are people's thoughts on that?"</p>
<p>REFRAME Create a different way for students to look at a situation.</p> <p>KEY PHRASES: "Have you ever thought about it like this..."</p>	<p>"If people of color just worked harder, they wouldn't have to go on Welfare or collect unemployment."</p> <p>Theme: Myth of meritocracy</p>	<p>"Let's try re-framing that for a moment. What are people's thoughts about systemic barriers that disproportionately affect people of color?"</p>
<p>RE-DIRECT Shift the focus to a different person or topic. *Particularly helpful when someone is asked to speak for their entire race, cultural group, etc.</p> <p>KEY PHRASES: "Let's shift the conversation..."</p>	<p>Heterosexual student to LGBTQ identified student: "What do gay people think of the state of marriage equality?"</p> <p>Theme: Token asked to speak for or represent a group.</p>	<p>Professor: "Let's open the conversation up to everyone. What do you all think of the state of marriage equality?"</p>

Adapted from Northnode Domestic Violence Curriculum, 2008

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<p>REVISIT Even if the moment, or micro-aggression has passed, go back and address it. *This is important, as research indicates that unaddressed microaggression can leave just as much of a negative impact as the microaggression itself. KEY PHRASES: "I want to go back to something that was brought up in class last week." "Let's rewind five minutes..."</p>	<p>"Yeah, but HC Puerto Ricans aren't normal Puerto Ricans."</p>	<p>Professor: "Last week in class when we were talking about diversity at HC, someone remarked that the Puerto Rican students on campus don't act like "normal" Puerto Ricans. Let's revisit that. What do we mean by "normal"?"</p>
<p>CHECK IN After class, during office hours, over email, etc check in with students -- both those who verbalized microaggressions and those who may have been affected or offended by the microaggression. *This is important, as research indicates that unaddressed microaggressions can leave just as much of a negative impact as the microaggression itself.</p>	<p>Heterosexual student in class (with an LGBTQ identified student who has come out to you): "I just don't understand why gay people don't try conversion therapy. It's much easier to be straight."</p>	<p>Professor: "I just wanted to check in about class today when we were talking about sexual orientation and the conversation turned to conversion therapy. How are you doing?"</p>
<p>KEY PHRASES: I'm going to interject here... What do you mean by that.... Let me pause you there... Say more about that... So, it sound like you're saying... Let's try reframing this...</p>		
<p>Avoid starting questions with "Why" -- it leaves people feeling defensive. Instead try "Tell me more about that."</p>		
<p>When addressing a microaggression in class, try to avoid using the pronoun "you" -- it leaves people feeling defensive, and it keeps the conversation narrow (between the professor and the one student). Instead, try using the pronouns "we" or "us" -- it opens the conversation up to the entire class.</p>		
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