

Discussing Microaggression Types

Microaggression Series Part 2

Presented for TTADA at UND

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UND Land Acknowledgement

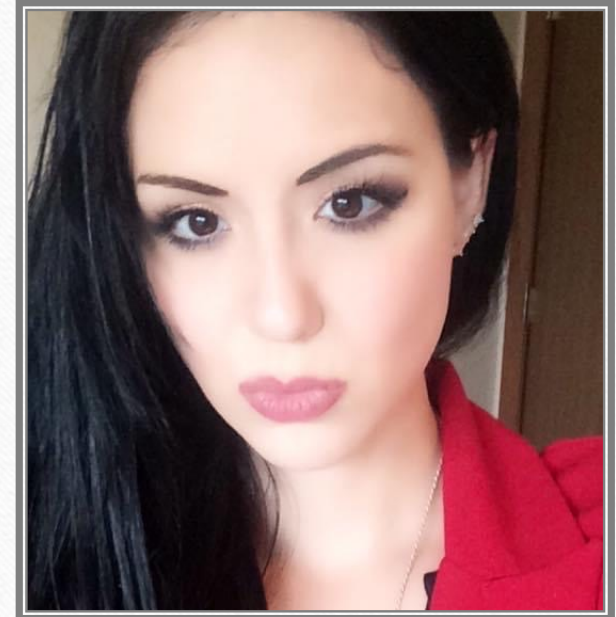
Today, the University of North Dakota rests on the ancestral lands of the Pembina and Red Lake Bands of Ojibwe and the Dakota Oyate - presently existing as composite parts of the Red Lake, Turtle Mountain, White Earth Bands, and the Dakota Tribes of Minnesota and North Dakota. We acknowledge the people who resided here for generations and recognize that the spirit of the Ojibwe and Oyate people permeates this land. As a university community, we will continue to build upon our relations with the First Nations of the State of North Dakota - the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation, Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate Nation, Spirit Lake Nation, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, and Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians.

Committed Action: Indigenous Resources

- <https://www.racialequitytools.org/resources/fundamentals/core-concepts/decolonization-theory-and-practice>
- <https://decolonizethisplace.org/resources>
- <https://therednation.org/>
- <https://nativegov.org/resources/>

Introductions

- Dr. Cerynn Desjarlais (Ph.D. Counseling Psychology)
- UND Alumni (Graduate School)
- Director of Online Counseling Programs at UND
- Clinical Assistant Professor – Department of Education and Behavioral Health Studies
- Doctoral Dissertation on Indigenous Spiritual Microaggressions
- Metis Cree from Alberta, Canada
- Pronouns: she, her, hers



Five Part Series on Microaggressions

- Part 1: Understanding why microaggressions exist
- Part 2: Discussing the types of microaggressions
- Part 3: Explaining how individuals are impacted by microaggressions
- Part 4: Microinterventions: how to intervene when they occur
- Part 5: How microaggressions are integrated into textbooks, curriculum, assignments, grading, classroom policies, etc.

Disclaimer

- Conversations about microaggressions may cause intense emotions:
 - Anger, sadness, frustration, shock, surprise, shame, guilt, embarrassment, denial, or disbelief
- Some people may be more impacted than others
 - Life experiences, identity statuses, socialization
- Emotions are information; facilitate self-awareness & emotional intelligence
 - This information is a tool to provide information about yourself interpersonal situations and contexts

Disclaimer

- If you are feeling triggered:
 - Please seek mental health attention from a licensed mental health provider
 - UND University Counseling Center: <https://und.edu/student-life/counseling-center/>

Show of Virtual Hands

- Who here knows that the term “microaggressions” is actually a broad term used describe a various types of microaggressions?
- Who here has heard of a microinsult?
- Who here has heard of a microassaults?
- Who here has heard of a microinvalidation?

Today's Agenda

- We will discuss...
 - Common groups targeted by microaggressions
 - Common microaggression themes documented in literature
 - Various types of microaggressions and how to identify them

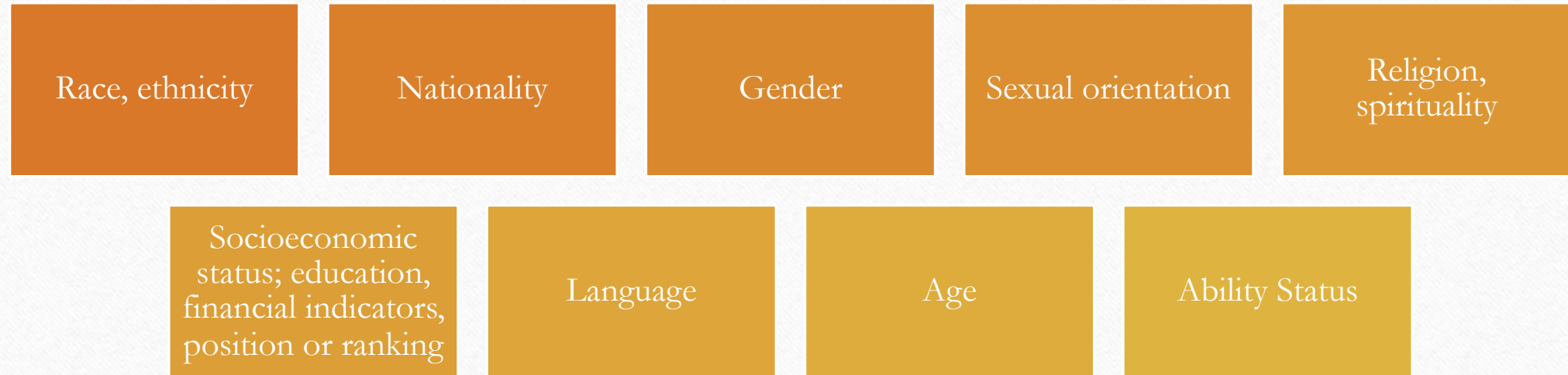
Quick Review: Microaggressions

- Microaggressions are intentional or unintentional snubs, slights, and convey hostile, or derogatory assumptions, and perpetuate stereotypes
- There are a few main types of microaggressions: microassaults, microinsults, microinvalidations
- Lateral microaggressions sometimes occur as well
- Microaggressions target those with a wide variety of minority identity statuses

Reminder: What Are Microaggressions?

- Subtle forms of discrimination
- Manifest daily in speech, behaviors, interpersonal interactions, environment
- Intentional or unintentional
- May be due to implicit or explicit bias
- Cause cumulative harm to individuals
- Impacts mental and physical health and organizational morale

Common Microaggression Targets



Common Microaggressions Themes

Ascription of Intelligence

- Assuming level of intelligence based on race

Color Blindness

- Statements indicating that a White Person does not want to acknowledge race

Criminality

- Assumption of danger, criminality, deviance based on race

Common Microaggressions Themes

Alien in Own Land

- Asian American and Latinx People are automatically assumed to be foreign-born

Second Class Citizen

- A White Person is given preferential treatment over a person of color

Myth of Meritocracy

- Asserts race does not play a role in success

Common Microaggression Themes

Pathologizing Cultural Values and Communication

- Assumes values and communication styles of the White/dominant culture are ideal

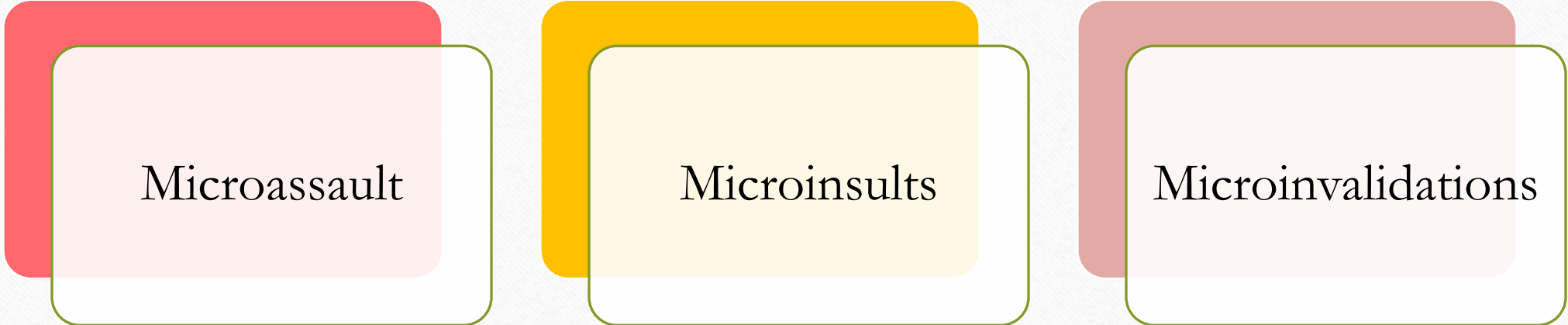
Denial of Individual Racism

- Statements made when White People deny their own racial biases

Environmental Microaggressions

- Macro-level microaggressions
- Apparent in systemic/environmental levels

Types of Microaggressions



Microassault

Microinsults

Microinvalidations

Microassaults

- Explicit derogation of character
- Verbal or nonverbal attack
- Name-calling
- Avoidant behavior
- Purposefully discriminatory actions
- Ex: “Colored” or ”Oriental”
- Ex: Discouraging racial interactions
- Ex: Serving a White patron before someone of color
- Ex: Displaying a swastika
- “Old fashioned” racism

Microinsults

- Communications (verbal/non-verbal) that convey rudeness, insensitivity, demean a person's heritage or identity
- Subtle snubs, may be unknown to perpetrator
- Convey hidden insults to target
- Ex: “How did you get your job?” conveys person of color was not qualified, affirmative action took place
- Ex: Avoiding eye contact with a POC, being distracted during a conversation, turning away; message: their contributions are not important

Microinvalidations

- Communications that exclude, negate, nullify psychological thoughts, feelings, reality of POC or other minority group members
- Ex: Saying to an Asian American born in the USA: “You speak good English” – negates their USA American heritage, perpetual outsider
- Ex: “I don’t see color” negates racial cultural experiences of POC
- Ex: Someone shares an experience of racism, sexism, discrimination, and they are told to “Stop being so sensitive”

Lateral Microaggressions

- **Lateral Microaggressions**

- Microaggressions enacted by perpetrators whose identities closely align with the intended target
- Identified target has at least one dissimilar identity status which is privileged
- Indicative of internalized oppression, beliefs of superiority, or peer bonding

Understanding Privilege

- **Privilege**

- A right, immunity, or benefit enjoyed by a person or restricted group of people beyond the advantages of most
- Unearned, mostly unacknowledged societal advantage that a group of people has over another group

Privilege

- Ex: White privilege (skin color)
- Ex: Male privilege (gender)
- Ex: Children of privilege (financial, SES)
- Ex: Identical resumes submitted to potential employers with a “White sounding name” are more likely to be offered interviews than resumes with “Black sounding names”

Microaggression Examples

- **Race, Ethnicity**
 - Ex: Telling a black woman that her natural hair “looks unprofessional”
 - Imposes White racial ideals on her of what hair “should look like”- reinforces White phenotypes are superior

Microaggression Examples

- **Nationality, Immigration Status**

- Ex: “All Americans are immigrants”
- Invalidates the entire history of the original peoples of the land; Indigenous Peoples are not immigrants

What Kind of Asian Are You?



(Desjarlais, 2022; Youtube, 2021)

Microaggression Examples

- **Gender**

- Ex: “You throw like a girl”
- Invalidates the athletic prowess of women and girls including those who are elite athletes
- Athletic testing and events show us that many women excel in sports and athletic events well beyond the capabilities of the average man
- Reinforces the idea that women are inferior to men

Microaggression Examples

- **Gender**

- Ex: “Maybe you should stick to doing the dishes.”
- Affirms beliefs that women are incapable of emotionally and physically demanding work
- Reinforces the notion that women’s role is in the home, and they are incapable of contributing meaningfully in the workplace
- Reinforces sentiments that contribute to the wage gap between men and women, and the glass ceiling; wherein women are not hired as CEO’s or leaders of organizations or into positions of power, leadership, or authority
- Underscores that men are more capable and competent than women

Microaggression Examples

- **Gender**
 - Ex: “Be a man and grow a pair.”
 - Assumes that men are strong, brave, etc., and women are weak
 - Assumes gender is connected to biological sex

Microaggression Examples

- **Sexual Orientation**

- Ex: “That’s so gay”

- Disparages and demeans those with an LGBTQIA2+ identity status
 - Assumes those with an LGBTQIA2+ status are synonymous with a negative connotation or “bad” or “undesirable” thing happening

Microaggression Examples

- **Sexual Orientation**

- Ex: Asking a woman: “Do you have a husband?”
 - This assumes that the woman is heterosexual, while she may have a wife, girlfriend, or a partner, normalizes heterosexuality and ostracizes “others” those who identify as LBGTQIA2+ as not being “typical” or “normal” – endorses heteronormativity

Microaggression Examples

- **Religion, Spirituality**

- Ex: “You don’t celebrate Christmas? That’s so sad. What do even you do during the holidays?”
 - Assumes that everyone celebrates Christian holidays, and that these days are important to them
 - Negates other celebrations they may be a part of such as Hanukkah, Solstice, Kwanzaa

Microaggression Examples

- **Religion, Spirituality**

- Ex: Asking an Indigenous Person: “Do you use peyote in your ceremonies just to get high?”
 - Assumes that all Indigenous People have the same beliefs, and engage in this ceremony (seeing the whole culture as a monolith)
 - Assumes Indigenous spiritual customs are excuses for drug use

Microaggression Examples

- **Language**
- Ex: “Speaker proper English.”
 - Conveys that those with an accent who speak English as a second language should be embarrassed of their accent
 - Discourages communication with others
 - Invalidates their ability to speak two or more languages

Microaggression Examples

- **Language**
- Ex: Asking an Asian American; “What is your language of origin?”
 - Assumes they are not born and raised in the USA
 - Insinuates that they are a perpetual foreigner and outsider

Microaggression Examples

- **Socioeconomic Status; Education, Financial Indicators, Position or Ranking**
 - Ex: A co-worker constantly dismisses, ignores, and avoids the ideas of a colleague who is of lower rank in the organization
 - Conveys that their opinions, thoughts, perspectives are not worth considering, in the meantime they may offer a fresh perspective, outside the box thinking, innovation, creativity, etc.
 - Conveys that only those who rank highly have ideas worth following up with
 - Conveys elitism and discourages teamwork

Microaggression Examples

- **Socioeconomic Status; Education, Financial Indicators, Position or Ranking**
 - Ex: Saying “*nice car*” to someone who drives an older vehicle
 - Conveys sarcasm and elitism
 - Judges their financial state
 - Imposes own values on prioritization of spending

Microaggression Examples

- **Socioeconomic Status; Education, Financial indicators, Position, Ranking**
 - Ex: Avoiding making friends with those who make a lesser income
 - Assuming people of a “lesser status” will “need something” or “ask for something”
 - Assumes others are “lazy” or “inept”
 - Implies that they rely on the pity of others to get by, assumes they have negative traits and qualities; fails to consider other factors that may contribute to their SES status including childhood poverty, hiring discrimination, etc.

Microaggression Examples

- **Socioeconomic Status; Education, Financial indicators, Position, Ranking**
 - Ex: Telling a co-worker who is a POC that they would “likely have made it further” in their career if they had ”just worked harder.”
 - Ascribes to the myth of meritocracy
 - Invalidates racial discrimination they may have faced
 - Invalidates barriers to accessing employment and education
 - Invalidates history of oppression, and intergenerational trauma

Microaggression Examples

- **Age**
 - Ex: “That guy is such a geezer, I wish he would retire already.”
 - Diminishes the wisdom and experience that elders may have, denies the ability to continue succeeding highly in old age
 - Ex: “Don’t pay any attention to him, that guy’s so green, he’s not a man, he’s still a boy.”
 - Demeans that ideas, thoughts, opinions of younger people and the fresh perspective and innovative and creative viewpoints they can bring to the table, assumes immaturity

Microaggression Examples

- **Ability Status**

- Ex: "She's so moody today, she must have forgot to take her meds. She's so Bipolar."
 - Explicitly demeans those who have mental health concerns, views them negatively
- Ex: "I'm sure he could work if he just tried harder. He's just making excuses."
 - Invalidates disability and the limitations and barriers that may be associated with a legitimate medical concern, including invisible disabilities

Microaggression Identification Exercise – A

A White woman remarks to her
Black colleague:

“No offense, but I had to work
very hard to become qualified
enough to be hired onto this
team.”

- What minority identity does it target?
- What are the underlying assumptions of this statement?
- What type of microaggression is this?

(Microassault, Microinsult,
Microinvalidation)

Microaggression Identification Exercise - B

A man says to his work team:

“Let’s go have a powwow in the meeting room and get this issue sorted out.”

- What minority identity does it target?
- What are the underlying assumptions of this statement?
- What type of microaggression is this?

(Microassault, Microinsult,
Microinvalidation)

Microaggression Identification Exercise - C

A man says to his coworker
Donna who identifies as a
cisgender woman:

“Wow, you’re being so catty
today. I guess it’s that time of
the month.”

- What minority identity does it target?
- What are the underlying assumptions of this statement?
- What type of microaggression is this?
(Microassault, Microinsult,
Microinvalidation)

Microaggression Identification Exercise – D

Lorrie jokes to her co-worker:

“I’m sorry, can you repeat that? I am super ADHD today; I just can’t seem to concentrate for some reason. I had better have another coffee. Sorry I’m so crazy today.”

(Lorrie does not actually have ADHD)

- What minority identity does it target?
- What are the underlying assumptions of this statement?
- What type of microaggression is this?

(Microassault, Microinsult,
Microinvalidation)

Microaggression Identification Exercise - E

A group of employees provide their RSVP's for a family-friendly event. One employee, Jonathan, says he'll be bringing his girlfriend to the event. Another co-worker snaps back saying:

“Don't you mean your boyfriend?”

Some of the employees laugh, while others look shocked and suddenly uncomfortable.

- What minority identity does it target?
- What are the underlying assumptions of this statement?
- What type of microaggression is this?

(Microassault, Microinsult,
Microinvalidation)

Microaggression Identification Exercise - F

Carly, a Latina woman, was in a meeting where she was repeatedly cut-off by her male colleagues while speaking. Frustrated by this dynamic, she points out this concern, and her male colleague says:

“Stop complaining and being so sensitive.”

- What minority identity does it target?
- What are the underlying assumptions of this statement?
- What type of microaggression is this?

(Microassault, Microinsult,
Microinvalidation)

Microaggression Identification Exercise - G

Steve, a White male turns to his co-worker Billy who is Asian and says:

“How long did it take you to learn proper English?”

- What minority identity does it target?
- What are the underlying assumptions of this statement?
- What type of microaggression is this?

(Microassault, Microinsult,
Microinvalidation)

Microaggression Identification Practice – H

Taylor, is a young, well-educated, person who identifies as non-binary. They are highly qualified for their position, and they volunteer to help with a project at work in an area they specialized in and are told:

“Let’s get someone who has experience on board to manage this project. One of the can take the lead and you can assist them.”

(Desjarlais, 2022)

- What minority identity does it target?
- What are the underlying assumptions of this statement?
- What type of microaggression is this?

(Microassault, Microinsult,
Microinvalidation)

- How might this impact the team dynamics?
- How might this negatively impact Taylor’s career?

Conclusions

- There are many types of Microaggressions including:
 - Microinsults
 - Microassaults
 - Microinvalidations
 - Possibly Lateral Microaggressions
- Minority groups are common targets of microaggressions
 - Those with intersecting identity statuses may experience additional microaggressions

Thank You

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Microaggression Resources

- <https://emtrain.com/blog/diversity/ableism-and-microaggressions/#:~:text=What%20are%20Ableist%20Microaggressions%3F,is%20over%2061%20million%20people>

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