

RESPONDING TO MICROAGGRESSIONS AND BIAS

(Can be used alone or in combination)

▶ **RESTATE OR PARAPHRASE.**

"I think I heard you saying _____ (paraphrase their comments). Is that correct?"

▶ **ASK FOR CLARIFICATION OR MORE INFORMATION.**

"Could you say more about what you mean by that?"

"How have you come to think that?"

▶ **ACKNOWLEDGE THE FEELINGS BEHIND THE STATEMENT.** Express empathy and compassion.

"It sounds like you're really frustrated/nervous/angry....."

"I can understand that you're upset when you feel disrespected."

▶ **SEPARATE INTENT FROM IMPACT.**

"I know you didn't realize this, but when you _____ (comment/behavior), it was hurtful/offensive because _____. Instead you could _____ (different language or behavior.)"

▶ **SHARE YOUR OWN PROCESS.**

"I noticed that you _____ (comment/behavior). I used to do/say that too, but then I learned _____."

▶ **EXPRESS YOUR FEELINGS.**

"When you _____ (comment/behavior), I felt _____ (feeling) and I would like you to _____."

▶ **CHALLENGE THE STEREOTYPE.** Give information, share your own experience and/or offer alternative perspectives.

"Actually, in my experience _____."

"I think that's a stereotype. I've learned that _____."

"Another way to look at it is _____."

▶ **APPEAL TO VALUES AND PRINCIPLES.**

"I know you really care about _____. Acting in this way really undermines those intentions."

- ▶ **PROMOTE EMPATHY.** Ask how they would feel if someone said something like that about their group, or their friend/partner/child.
 - “I know you don’t like the stereotypes about _____ (their group), how do you think he feels when he hears those things about his group?”
 - “How would you feel if someone said that about/did that to your sister or girlfriend?”

- ▶ **TELL THEM THEY’RE TOO SMART OR TOO GOOD TO SAY THINGS LIKE THAT.**
 - “Come on. You’re too smart to say something so ignorant/offensive.”

- ▶ **PRETEND YOU DON’T UNDERSTAND.** As people try to explain their comments, they often realize how silly they sound.
 - “I don’t get it…….”
 - “Why is that funny?”

- ▶ **USE HUMOR.** Exaggerate comment, use gentle sarcasm.
 - “She plays like a girl?” You mean she plays like Serena Williams?” Or Mia Hamm?

- ▶ **POINT OUT WHAT THEY HAVE IN COMMON WITH THE OTHER PERSON.**
 - “I’m tired of hearing your Muslim jokes. Do you know he’s also studying _____ and likes to _____? You may want to talk with him about that. You actually have a lot in common.”

- ▶ **W.I.I.F.T. (What’s in it for them).** Explain why diversity or that individual/group can be helpful/valuable.
 - “I know you’re not comfortable with _____ but they can help us reach out to/better serve other groups on campus/in the community.”
 - “In the real world, we are going to have to work with all sorts of people, so might as well learn how to do it here.”

- ▶ **REMIND THEM OF THE RULES OR POLICIES.**
 - “That behavior is against our code of conduct and could really get you in trouble.”

Adapted from: Goodman, D. (2011). *Promoting Diversity and Social Justice: Educating People from Privileged Groups*. New York: Routledge. Excerpt available at www.dianegoodman.com

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Facilitator Suggested Strategies for Addressing Microaggressions

- What you have said meant this to me. What was your intention? What do others think? I heard you say this. What it felt like to me Did any able feel that way. Okay, nobody else felt that way but I'd like to share
- Has anyone had an experience different from what was just said? Other perspectives might be . . . What's another way someone might feel about that?
- Let the group know that nobody is perfect but we strive to do including myself. (avoid providing a rationale or reason for avoiding self-improvement)
- Excuse me, can you repeat what you said?