

DISMANTLING MICROAGGRESSIONS

RESPECTFUL ENGAGEMENT IN THE WORKPLACE TRAINING WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

"Microaggressions are the everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership." Derald Wing Sue, Ph.D., Psychology Today in response to his book, Microaggressions in Everyday Life.

Very like sarcasm and/or passive aggressive language, microaggressions are woven into the fabric of how many people communicate unconsciously, in and out of the workplace. We witness it in media, where it is okay to be bias of others; some of us grow up with microaggressive language from in our families, schools, and/or community. Much of it is unconscious, and yet it can wreak havoc on our personal performance or the bottom line of our organizations, sometimes via high turnover, when it affects our teams.

This engaging training is designed to help your staff see through their bias, to their team members as individuals who are human, as they each other to achieve the goals of the organization.

By participating in this workshop, attendees will:

- Understand the lenses through which you view the world, and how they affect your perceptions and interactions.
- Understand how words, images, and behaviors can result in microaggressions and see their detrimental effect on an organization.
- Understand the ways to respond in the moment to microaggressions.
- Participants walk away with strategies, tools and actions for long term learning and practice



"Fresh is an engaging dynamic speaker who provides a compassionate opportunity for learning." Therapist, KIPP Schools, Bay Area

Fresh "Lev" White is a Certified Coach and experienced trainer, who has successfully spent over 5+ years releasing microaggressive communication, and enjoys encouraging and witnessing teams improve connection and teamwork on the job and in their communities after taking his trainings.

When we are sincerely kind and compassionate with ourselves, it helps reduce how much we judge ourselves. Practicing self-forgiveness, allows us to be more present and at ease in most situations, no matter when or how often they arise. This along with grounding (or mindfulness,) can allow for us to be more aware of our thoughts and actions which is how microaggressions are reduced.

What Do Microaggressions Look Like?

While microaggressions are generally discussed from the perspective of [race](#) and racism, any marginalized group in our society may become targets. Microaggressions can be used against anyone for their gender, sexuality, religion, disability, and social class and more. Some of these examples include the following.

Racial Microaggressions:

- A White man or woman clutches their purse or checks their wallet as a Black or Latino man approaches or passes them. (Hidden message: You and your group are criminals.)
- An Asian American, born and raised in the United States is complimented for speaking "good English." (Hidden message: You are not a true American. You are a perpetual foreigner in your own country.)
- A Black couple is seated at a table in the restaurant next to the kitchen despite there being other empty and more desirable tables located at the front. (Hidden message: You are a second-class citizen and undeserving of first-class treatment.)

[Gender](#) Microaggressions:

- An [assertive](#) female manager is labeled as a "aggressive," while her male counterpart is described as "a forceful leader." (Hidden message: Women should be passive and allow men to be the decision makers.)
- A female physician wearing a stethoscope is mistaken as a nurse. (Hidden message: Women should occupy nurturing and not [decision-making](#) roles. Women are less capable than men.)
- Whistles or catcalls are heard from men as a woman walks down the street. (Hidden message: Your body/appearance is for the enjoyment of men. You are a sex object.)

[Sexual Orientation](#) Microaggressions:

- A Young person uses the term "gay" to describe a movie that she did not like. (Hidden message: Being gay is associated with negative and undesirable characteristics.)
- "You don't look like a girl." An assertion that gender is defined by outward appearances.
- A lesbian client in therapy reluctantly discloses her sexual orientation to a straight therapist by stating she is "into women." The therapist indicates he is not shocked by the disclosure and that he knows many women who go through this stage. (Hidden message: Same-sex attraction is abnormal and not real or lasting.)
- Two gay men hold hands in public and are told not to flaunt their [sexuality](#). (Hidden message: Same sex displays of affection are abnormal and offensive. Keep it private and to yourselves.)

- Derald Wing Sue, Ph.D., [Psychology Today, Microaggressions: More Than Just Race](#)

Microaggressions are often not obvious, in fact they can be so insidious, one can take hours to figure out they were a victim of one. This workshop helps us to begin to unveil our unconscious bias, which are at the root of the harm microaggressions can cause.

"...we were all talking about something that we've needed to talk about for years and it's something many staff are (mostly) unaware of. James Baldwin said "Not everything that is faced can be changed. But nothing can be changed until it is faced". It was helpful to have kind but very skilled and direct trainers to work with the staff."

Team Member, Spirit Rock Mediation Center