



Interactions Matter

Meaning in the Minimal



Overview

1. **Why small interactions matter**
2. **What are microaggressions?**
3. **What can you do?**
4. **Why is this important?**

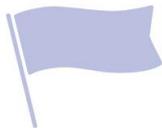


Why small interactions matter



Defining small interactions

- They're interpersonal
- Passerby conversations
 - Small talk
 - Meeting someone new
- Part of bigger interactions
 - Presentations
- Not always verbal
- It's easy to brush these off as inconsequential

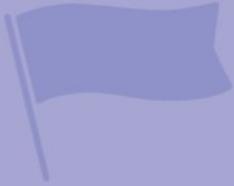


How I ask you to challenge these assumptions:

- Begin to recognize the importance of small interpersonal interactions
- Why?
 - Because they shape larger relations
 - Because what may feel inconsequential to you may not feel inconsequential to someone else
 - Because impacts matter just as much (or more) than intents
- Learn to recognize the impact and patterns of these behaviours



Microaggressions



What is a microaggression?

Everyday verbal and non-verbal cues and actions that may be intentional or unintentional, that degrade members of marginalized groups.

Can be based:

- Race/ethnicity
- Gender
- Sexuality
- (Dis)ability
- Etc



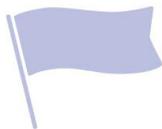
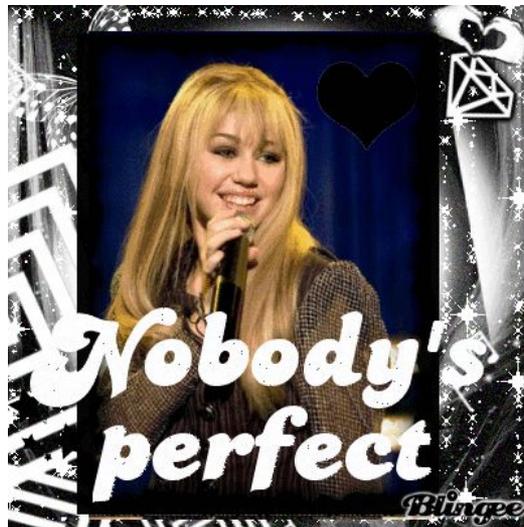
What's wrong with microaggressions?

- On giving end:
 - They render relationships and interactions inequitable
 - They lose trust
 - They can build up barriers over time
 - They can lead to further marginalization
- On receiving end:
 - They're harmful (to varying levels)
 - They isolate and other
 - They can lead to further marginalization



Intent vs. Impact

- Intent:
 - Purposeful?
 - Honest mistake?
- Impact:
 - Hurtful
 - Harmful
- Which matters most?
 - Regardless of intent, we should always strive to recognize the impacts of our actions and how they affect those around us
 - We create better impacts by better analyzing our intents and thinking through how they show in our actions



What can you do?



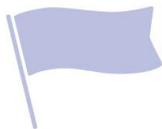
Question how things are done

- Who is involved? Who isn't? Why/why not?
- How is people's presence being acknowledged?
- Who is being put into what position?
- Is this a conversation this person may want to have?
- What drives your curiosities?
- How am I asserting authority?
- Does this show a pattern of treatment?



Stand up for others

- Confronting others about their actions towards you can be quite scary, and especially if they had no intent to harm you
- A common one to practice: “I don’t think x was done talking yet”
- Doesn’t always have to be a call-out
- Allyship sometimes means taking a hit
 - IE: If you’re always given a opportunity over certain peers that are just as knowledgeable, step back to allow them the same opportunity



Acknowledge your mistakes

- If you catch yourself, acknowledge it, and recognize the issue
 - Doesn't mean the impact isn't there, but it doesn't go unacknowledged
- Don't get defensive if someone explains to you why what you did was an issue
- A common one to practice "Sorry, I realize I interrupted you"
 - It's hard to unlearn many things, but when we can recognize ourselves doing them, we can also react faster or unlearn them
- Learn to identify places where you may have interacted in this way, or have seen people interact in this way



Make space

- Space for people to discuss issues
 - With you
 - With others
- Don't discredit people and the ways in which they feel they've been treated
- If you don't need to, don't speak for people





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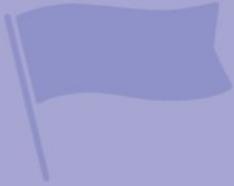
@DrSuad



You don't need to be a voice for the voiceless. Just pass the mic.

2/12/17, 12:00 PM

Why is this important?



The systems we take part of are based on interactions

- Microaggressions exclude and isolate
 - Break down relationships
 - Break down opportunities for self-actualizations
 - Break down opportunities to engage
- We're not actually better off when we unfairly exclude people
- Microaggressions don't just hurt opportunity to get better work, they also just hurt



We become leaders because we want to make a change

- It's hard to make a positive change if you're hurting or discrediting people on the way there
- Leadership demands action, but leadership also demands listening and understanding
- We become better leaders when we act in more equitable ways



Thank you!

