Microaggressions in the Learning Environment

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Learning Objectives

- **Define** microaggression, stereotype, and other related terms
- **Determine** patterns of microaggressions in the learning environment
- **Practice** strategies to diminish improper communication through role play
Why is this Important?

- Awareness
- Role modeling
- Inclusive learning environment
- Positive learning and working environments
Challenging Blindspots

Improving the cultural competence of pharmacists and pharmacy students is an important necessity to help overcome health care disparities. Reports of health disparities among racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic sectors of the US population have hastened the development of educational strategies to address this issue.

Informal messages VS Formal, didactic curriculum
Terminology

- Bias
- Stereotype
- Microaggression
- Privilege
- Inclusion
Bias

- Rests in the subconscious
- In favor of or against
- We all have them
- Forms
  - Weight
  - Language/Accent
  - Religion
Definitions

- **Stereotype**: Blanket beliefs, unconscious associations about members of a certain group that present an oversimplified opinion, or prejudice.

- **Privilege**: A right, license, or exemption from duty of liability granted as a special benefit, advantage or favor.

- **Inclusion**: Promotes and sustains a sense of belonging.
Microaggressions

Every day verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized membership.

-Derald Wing Sue, Ph.D.
The Importance of Understanding Microaggressions

• AAMC requirement to create a safe learning environment
• Those who experience microaggressions:
  – Disengagement
  – Dissatisfaction
• As faculty and program leaders, you have the opportunity to:
  – Empower students
  – Foster safe and supported environments
  – Take action
Learning Climate

4 BASIC HUMAN NEEDS FOR ENGAGEMENT

THE NEED FOR TRUST

AT THE HEART OF TAPPING PASSION & EFFORT OF PEOPLE

THE NEED TO FEEL A SENSE OF WORTH

PEOPLE DERIVE TREMENDOUS SENSE OF WORTH FROM WORK

REWARDS & RECOGNITION

THE NEED TO HAVE HOPE

LEADERS ARE DEALERS OF HOPE

FOSTER HOPE

THE NEED TO FEEL COMPETENT

CHALLENGING WORK THAT HELPS PEOPLE GROW

https://leadingwithtrust.com/2016/09/04/the-4-unmet-needs-that-lead-to-disengaged-employees/
### Microaggression in the learning environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
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| 2014 | 49%        | Medical Students

- Van Ryn, et al
- Asked to report formal and informal curricula and Race IAT in Y1 and Y4
- Heard negative comments about African American patients from attendings or residents
Death by a Thousand Paper Cuts

MICROAGGRESSIONS

"You don't seem gay."
"Where are you really from?"
"You'd look prettier if you smiled more"

"You're the whitest Black person I know."

"You must have dated a lot of guys."

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THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI
SCHOOL OF PHARMACY
To Say or Not To Say

Attempt to make meaning of the event. Am I:

- Being too sensitive
- Attacking someone as a ____
- If I don’t say anything, will they...

Stereotype Threat
Microaggression Activity

This activity teaches participants to recognize how different audiences can interpret language and microaggressions. The objective of this activity is to help understand the implications of our speech.

Match the statements in column A with the possible interpretation in column B

http://breakingprejudice.org/teaching/group-activities/microaggression-activity/
So Now What?

- Inquire
- Impact/Preference Statements
- Reflect
- Reframe
- Revisit
Role Modeling

Intentional  Consistent  Genuine
Role Modeling, continued...

- Keep an open mind
- Recommend tools based on your prior experience
- Don’t be defensive
- Share stories of experienced microaggressions
- Challenge yourself
- Set expectations for a sage learning environment
- Be open to all perspectives
- Encourage all to speak up when they feel uncomfortable about situations
Plan of Action Suggestions

• Create a curriculum at all levels about diversity and inclusion topics, specifically around microaggression and bias
• Incorporate this topic into orientation (possibly tying into sexual harassment talks)
• Conduct climate surveys
• Create, educate, and share policies with entire community
Conclusion

- Awareness and education
- Constant self-reflection
- Counter behaviors
- Authentically engage with those viewed as “others”
- Encourage feedback
Questions and Discussion
References


