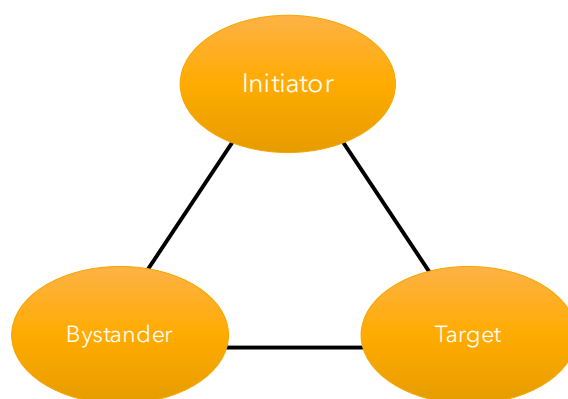


Managing a Microaggression Incident

The Microaggression Event



Microaggressions

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Target: What can I do if I experience microaggression?

- **No one way to respond.** Weigh the pros and cons and make the decision that's best for your own circumstances.
- **No need to minimize.** Recognize that microaggressions can have a real psychological impact.
- **Acknowledge your thoughts and feelings.** You have a right to them, given what you've just experienced.
- **Talk.** Share the microaggressions you've experienced with trusted friends, family, or a therapist. Silence protects the initiator and is emotionally and psychologically unhealthy for you.
- **Take time to process.** This will allow you to develop coping strategies and skill sets to handle these events in a way that feels best for you.
- **Own your power.** Request appropriate action be taken to address the microaggression.

Bystander: What can I do if I witness microaggression?

Dr. Luke Wood and Dr. Frank Harris III from the Center for Organizational Responsibility in Education propose an excellent 6-step intervention process a bystander can take when they witness microaggression. They call it the RAVEN method. They stress that these do not have to follow this specific path—or are even needed in all situations. What's important is having them in our toolkit to draw on when we see microaggression.

ACTION 1: REDIRECT. Re-direct the conversation; correct what was just said; and/or pull the initiator aside. Where, when, and how you do this will require judgement and assessment of the situation. The point is to stop further harm to the target of the microaggression.

ACTION 2: ASK A PROBING/CLARIFYING QUESTION. Examples: “I think I heard you say...” or “I want to make sure I understand what you were saying...Were you saying that...?”). This will sometimes ‘shock’ the person into realizing the effect of what they just said or did.

ACTION 3: VALUES CLARIFICATION. This is a good place to draw on the group or organization’s expressed values. Example: “You know, our organization is working hard to create a space that is safe and respectful of all members ...What you just said doesn’t align with those values of inclusiveness...”

ACTION 4: EMPHASIZE YOUR OWN THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS about the comment or action. Example: “When I hear your comment, I think/feel”; “Many people might take that comment to mean...”; or “In my experience...”

ACTION 5: NEXT STEPS...Encourage the initiator to reflect on and decide how next time they will handle the situation that triggered their microaggression.

Initiator: **What can I do if I am called out/corrected for a microaggression?**

1. **Practice humility.**

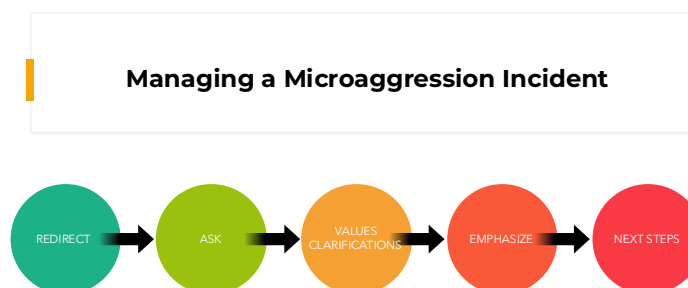
Reflect on where that statement or action might have come from within you.

2. **Engage in rigorous, intentional self-awareness.**

Be open to hearing different perspectives on your action and examine your own biases.

3. **Commit to change.**

Think about how you can avoid similar mistakes in the future and commit to change. Educate yourself on why when triggered you responded the way you did and on the harm that microaggression does to others.



People managers can take additional steps to discourage and address microaggressions on their team.

Challenging Microaggressions PEOPLE MANAGERS



Managing a Microaggression Incident

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When you witness or receive complaint of microaggression, acting on this information sends a powerful message. This way the receiver doesn't feel "gaslit" that they are imagining the slight they experienced.

1. **Bear Witness.** Check in with the person who experienced the microaggression. Respect their account of the incident. Remember, it's about the impact of what was said or done, not the intent.

After an incident if you're unsure whether a microaggression has happened, your check-in can be more general. Example: Instead of saying to a colleague or to the person who might have been targeted, "Wow, it was really bad when so-and-so said such and such", ask them instead "How did you find that meeting?" This could open a conversation that provides the details you need for further action.

2. **Validate.** Feelings of anger, frustration, shock, or disbelief are natural reactions to microaggression a person has experienced. Make sure you are not undermining the person's right to their feelings, by saying/implying they are 'overreacting' or 'sensitive'.
3. **Intervene.** Consult with the person affected to understand how best to support them. Depending on who did the microaggression—e.g., the CEO or a colleague—the recipient needs to be comfortable with the solution and you must be willing to use your power and/or access to make things right.
4. **Advocate.** This microaggression could be the tip of the iceberg of the workplace culture. Push for action to create a more respectful workplace.