**Microaggression**

**Definition:**

**Microaggressions are everyday actions and behaviors that have harmful effects on marginalized groups. Unlike other forms of discrimination, the perpetrator of a microaggression may or may not be aware of the harmful effects of their behavior.**

* Micro aggression as generally happening below the level of awareness of well-intentioned members of the dominant culture(Psychologist Derald Wing Sue).
* Microaggression as including statements that repeat or affirm stereotypes about the minority group or subtly demean it, that position the dominant culture as normal and the minority one as aberrant or pathological, that express disapproval of or discomfort with the minority group, the assume all minority group members are the same, the minimize the existence of discrimination again the minority group, seek to deny the perpetrator’s own bias, or minimize real conflict between the minority group and the dominant culture.

**The type of Microaggression**

**Microassaults:** Microassaults are the most overt microaggressions. With microassaults, the person committing the microaggression acted intentionally and knew their behavior might be hurtful. For example, using a derogatory term to refer to a person of color would be a microassault.

Some common examples are using racial epithets (or abusive, derogatory language or names), displaying confederate flags or swastikas, mocking another language, telling racist jokes, and serving White customers first.

What they all have in common is their explicitness. Whether verbal or nonverbal, microassaults are fairly direct forms of prejudice and discrimination.

**Microinsults:** Microinsults are more subtle than microassaults, but nevertheless have harmful effects on marginalized group members. Microinsults communicate rudeness and insensitivity towards someone based on their racial identity or heritage. These acts take away a person’s dignity or sense of self-worth, but they do so indirectly.

For example (because racism is so frustratingly relentless), the person crossing to the other side of the street at the approach of a Black or Latino man, or a storeowner carefully watching or following a customer of color.

Tell immigrants or international people “You speak English very well”

**Microinvalidations:** Microinvalidations are comments and behaviors that deny the experiences of marginalized group members. Microinvalidations exclude or negate the experiences, feelings, and experiential reality of a POC. One common microaggression involves insisting that prejudice is no longer a problem in society

For example, Sue and his colleagues write that a microinvalidation could involve telling a person of color that they are being “oversensitive” to a racist comment that was made.

Telling “Stop being so sensitive” or “Not everything’s about race!”

Another example is “I’m not racist – I have many LGBTQ friend!”

* Researchers report that most perpetrators of microaggressions consider themselves to be unprejudiced.
* Perpetrators are generally well-meaning and microaggressions are subtle, their recipients often experience attributional ambiguity, which may lead them to dismiss the experience and blame themselves as overly sensitive.
* If challenged by the minority person or an observer, perpetrators will often defend their microaggression as a misunderstanding, a joke, or something small that shouldn’t be blown out of proportion.
* Effect

The cumulative effect of microaggressions can lead to diminished self-confidence and a poor self-image, and potentially also to mental health problems.

* Microaggressions are actually more damaging than overt expression of bigotry precisely because they are small and therefore often ignored or downplayed, leading the victim to feel self-doubting rather than justifiably angry, and isolated rather than supported.
* The culture of microaggression lead to a culture of victimhood.
* Racial Microaggression, Gender Microaggression, Sexual-Orientation Microaggression, Environmental Microaggression