

RESPONDING TO MICROAGGRESSIONS AND BIAS

(Can be used alone or in combination)

First consider: Goal, Relationship, Context, Timing, Power Dynamics, Risk, Emotional Resources, Support

- **STAY STOP.**
 - “Just stop. It’s not funny.”
 - “Come on. Cut it out.”

- **RESTATE OR PARAPHRASE.**
 - “I think I heard you saying _____ (paraphrase their comments.) Is that correct?”

- **ASK FOR CLARIFICATION OR FOR MORE INFORMATION.**
 - “Could you say more about what you mean by that?”
 - “I’m wondering how you’ve come to think that.”

- **SEPARATE INTENT FROM IMPACT.**
 - “You probably didn’t realize this, but when you _____ (comment/behavior), it was hurtful/offensive because _____. Instead, you could _____ (different language/behavior).”

- **SHARE YOUR OWN PROCESS.**
 - “I noticed that you _____ (comment/behavior). I used to say/do that too, but then I learned _____.”

- **EXPRESS YOUR FEELINGS.**
 - “When you _____ (comment/behavior), I felt _____ (feeling), and I would like you to _____.”

- **CHALLENGE THE STEREOTYPE.** Give information, share your own experience and/or offer alternative perspectives.
 - “In my experience _____.”
 - “I think that’s a stereotype. I’ve learned that _____.”
 - Another way to look at it is _____.”

- **APPEAL TO VALUES AND PRINCIPLES**
 - “I know you really care about _____. Acting in this way undermines whose intentions.”

(Responding to Microaggressions and Bias cont.)

- **PROMOTE EMPATHY.** Ask how they would feel if someone said something like that about their group, or their friend/partner/child.
 - “I know you don’t like the stereotypes about _____ (their group), how do you think he feels when he hears those things about his group?”
 - “How would you feel if someone said that about/did that to your sister/friend/girlfriend?”

- **TELL THEM THEY ARE TOO SMART OR TOO GOOD TO SAY THINGS LIKE THAT.**
 - “Come on. You’re too smart to say something so ignorant/offensive.”

- **MIRROR.** Repeat what they just said or did.
 - “Where are YOU really from?”
 - “Can I touch YOUR hair?”

- **USE HUMOR.** Exaggerate the comment, use gentle sarcasm.
 - “She plays like a girl? You mean like Serena Williams?”

- **POINT OUT WHAT THEY HAVE IN COMMON WITH THE OTHER PERSON.**
 - “I’m tired of hearing your Muslim jokes. Do you know they’re also studying _____ and like to _____? You may want to talk with them about that. You actually have a lot in common.”

- **W.I.I.F.T (What’s in it for them.)** Explain why diversity or that individual/group can be helpful/valuable.
 - “I know you’re uncomfortable with _____ but they can help us better reach out/serve other groups in the community.
 - “We are going to have to work with all sorts of people, so we might as well learn how to do it here.”

- **REMIND THEM OF THE RULES OR POLICIES.**
 - That behavior is against our code of conduct and could really get you in trouble.”

Adapted from: Goodman, D. (2011). *Promoting Diversity and Social Justice: Educating People from Privileged Groups* (2nd ed.) New York: Routledge.

Available at: <https://dianegoodman.com/free-materials/>