

# Take **A.C.T.I.O.N.** AGAINST MICROAGGRESSIONS

Microaggressions are verbal or behavioral instances of relatively subtle indignities, slights, or insults that contribute to a hostile, derogatory, or negative environment. Because microaggressions can be unintentional and indirect, they can seem inconsequential in the moment. However, microaggressions become a cumulative burden over time, creating a tense culture and impacting the recipient's well-being.

**Raising our own awareness is key to preventing microaggressions and fostering a safe, inclusive environment for all. Beyond that, we can be ready allies and stop microaggressions when they occur.**

**A**

### Ask

Ask clarifying questions to assist with understanding the microaggressor's intentions.

*"I want to make sure I understand what you were saying. Were you saying...?"*

**C**

### Come from curiosity, not judgment.

Listen actively and openly to their response. Be aware that there are things you might not know about the person or situation that may be influencing what is said.

**T**

### Tell others

Tell others what you observed as problematic in a factual manner.

*"I noticed that..."*

**I**

### Impact consideration

Ask for or state the potential impact of such a statement or action on others.

*"What do you believe people think when they hear that type of comment?"*

**O**

### Own your response

Own your own thoughts and feelings around the impact by using first-person language.

*"When I hear your comment, I think/feel..."*

**N**

### Next steps

Request appropriate action be taken and check in with the target of the microaggression.

*"I'd appreciate it if you'd stop making these types of negative comments, because..."*



**Have you encountered these microaggressions?  
You're not alone!**

*"You're too young to be a doctor."*

*"Where are you really from?"*

*"You'd be prettier if you smiled."*

*"You're lucky minorities get into medical school easier."*

*"Nurse, can you call my doctor?"  
(said to female doctor)*

#### Additional Resources

Souza, T. J. (2018). Responding to Microaggressions in the Classroom: Taking A.C.T.I.O.N. *Faculty Focus Premium*, Madison, WI: Magna Publication

Ganote, C.M., Cheung, F., & Souza, T. J. (2015). Don't Remain Silent! Strategies for Supporting Yourself and Your Colleagues via Microresistance and Ally Development. POD Diversity Council White Paper

Cheung, F., Ganote, C.M., & Souza, T.J. (2016). Microaggressions and microresistance: Supporting and empowering students. *Faculty Focus Special Report: Diversity and Inclusion in the College Classroom*. Magna Publication.

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