UNM-DEI Interrupting RIMAs Handout Packet

- Review of frameworks and toolkits to mitigate bias and interrupt RIMAs
- Racial Microaggressions: Doing the Hard Work of Building a Diverse and Inclusive University Community (Mendenhall, Harwood, Huntt, and McKee)
- An Overview of Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity & Expression (SOGIE) Microaggressions (Nadal)
- Toolkits: Interrupting Microaggressions (adapted by Mendendall and colleagues from Kenney 2014, Kraybill 2008, and Peavey 2013)

UNM DEI - Review of frameworks and toolkits to mitigate bias and interrupt RIMAs

Taking CHARGE² to mitigate your own bias

C- Change your context: is there another perspective that is possible?
H- Honesty: Be honest with yourself, acknowledge and be aware
A- Avoid blaming yourself; know that you can do something about it
R- Realize when you need to slow down
G- Get to know people you perceive as different from you
E- Engage: Remember why you are doing this
E- Empower your patients and peers

INTERRUPT

I- Inquire: Encourage elaboration, leverage curiosity. “I’m curious, what makes you think that?”
N- Non-threatening: Convey the message with respect. Separate the person from the action or behavior. “Some may consider that statement to be offensive.” Communicate preferences rather than demands. “It would be helpful to me if…”
T- Take responsibility: If you need to reconsider a statement/action, acknowledge and apologize, if necessary. Address micro-aggressions and revisit them if they were initially unaddressed. “Let’s go back…”
E- Empower: Ask questions that will make a difference. “What could you/we do differently?”
R- Reframe: “Have you ever thought about it like this?”
R- Redirect: Helpful when and individual is put on the spot to speak for their identity group. “Let’s shift the conversation…”
U- Use impact questions: “What would happen if you considered the impact on…”
P- Paraphrase: Making what is invisible (unconscious bias), visible. “It sounds like you think…”
T- Teach by using “I” phrases: Speak from your own experience. “I felt x when y happened, and it impacted me because…”


Racial Microaggressions: Doing the Hard Work of Building a Diverse and Inclusive University Community

Background Handout from: Ruby Mendenhall, Stacy Harwood, Margaret Browne Huntt, Malaika McKee and the Racial Microaggressions Team

Racial Microaggressions

Definition: “Racial microaggressions are brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color” (Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2007).

Microinsults: Convey rudeness and insensitivity and demean a person’s racial heritage.
Microassaults: Explicit derogatory comments or violent verbal or nonverbal attacks.
Microinvalidations: Exclude, negate, or nullify the experiential reality of people of color.
Environmental RMAs: “Racial assaults, insults and invalidations which are manifested on systemic and environmental levels” (Sue et al., 2007).

Examples of Racial Microaggressions

- “Where were you born?” (You are not American/You are a foreigner) [Microinvalidation]
- “You are so articulate.” (It is unusual for someone of your race to be intelligent) [Microinsult]
- “When I look at you, I don’t see color.” (Denying racial experiences) [Microinvalidation]
- “Why do you have to be so loud? Just calm down.” (Assimilate to dominate culture) [Microinvalidation]
- Being ignored at a store counter/in class as attention is given to the White customer/student behind you. (Whites are more valued customers than people of color) [Microassault]
- Only one or a few students of color in a classroom or major (don’t belong here) [Environmental RMA]
- Environmental symbols like mascots and Illini music, chief dances, etc. [Environmental RMA]

Campus Climate and BIPOC Students’ Sense of “Not Belonging”

- 2 out of 3 students of color who responded to the 2011-2012 online survey have experienced harassment (emotional, verbal or physical) on campus because of race.
- 60% of students of color reported experiencing racism on campus.
- 59% of students of color reported having stereotypes made about them in the classroom because of race.
- 80% percent of students of color have felt that the campus is informally segregated based on race.

**Doing the Hard Work of Building a Diverse and Inclusive Community**

**Faculty and Staff**

- Give students power. Tell them it is ok to tell you when you said something that was offensive.
  - Possible Statement on Syllabus: “All students are encouraged to let me know if I say or do something that makes you feel uncomfortable at any point in this class. Please tell me in class or leave an anonymous note under my office door or in my mailbox.”
- If you witness an RMA, consider speaking up and not being a bystander. Conduct power analysis.
- Be aware of possible stereotypes that you may have about certain racial and ethnic groups. Student reported the following stereotypes: Asians are intellectually superior and good at math and science. African Americans are academically unprepared and intellectually inferior. African Americans and Latino/as are admitted because of their race and not their merit/genius.
- Be aware of subtle messages that you give students around “belonging” in the department.
- Be aware of signs of stress and try to address issues early before escalate, know reporting procedures.
- Different Microaggressions (e.g., physical disabilities, sexual orientation, etc.) & inclusive language
  - Gender neutral terms – “you guys” vs. “you all or everyone” and “girlfriend” vs. “partner”
  - Mental Health as a Disease – “committed suicide” vs. “died of depression”

**Students**

- Try to address issues when they first start to happen (see interrupting microaggression handout).
- If you witness an RMA, consider speaking up and not being a bystander. Conduct power analysis.
- Be aware of your stress and know reporting procedures.
- Find safe spaces: clubs, organizations, classes, a network of friends and family members where you can talk about experiences.
- Decide ahead of time what may say when someone comments about why they feel you are at university let them know your gifts and talents or not.
- See if you can do research on this issue. We are developing a RMA phone app and would like to test it.
Administration

- Require at least one question about racial climate in the classroom or general sense of belonging on ICES forms. Aggregate the data and make a yearly report to the campus.
- Add several questions about campus racial climate on student, faculty and staff exit surveys. Aggregate the data and make a yearly report to the campus.
- Create a supportive mechanism for students to report perceived racial microaggressions that does not create more stress for the student, but constitutes a record of the campus environment. Identify steps in the process and a timeline for when students will get a response from administration. Aggregate the data and make a yearly report to the campus.
- Paradigm shift to significantly decrease the weight placed on ACT/SAT/GRE as factors in admittance.
- Monitor majors with very low students of color each year and provide support to help them increase their numbers. Provide proper support for freshmen students of color as they transition to college.
- Conduct a racial disparity study of campus student discipline.
- Foster the land-grant mission by supporting Project 1,000 to address low enrolment for underrepresented groups with particular attention to the South and West side of Chicago and the North end in Champaign.
- Closely monitor the changes in the Cultural Studies General Education requirement that students take a U.S. people of color cultural course to ensure course content is appropriate.
- Fundamentally change the culture of the university!

References

- “Why It’s So Hard to Talk to White People about Racism” by Robin DiAngelo in the Huffington Post, April 30, 2015.
An Overview of Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity & Expression (SOGIE) Microaggressions

Presented by Dr. Kevin Nadal
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Shared via the Consortium of Higher Education LGBT Resource Professionals lgbtcampus.org

1) Use of heterosexist or transphobic terminology:

These types of microaggressions occur when someone uses disparaging heterosexist or transphobic language towards, or about, LGBTQ persons. For me, it is anytime someone says “That’s so gay” and “No homo” in my presence; for my transgender friends, it could be anytime someone says “tranny”, “she-male”, or other derogatory terms. In hip hop, it is common for rappers to unapologetically use the word “faggot”, which then gives permission for kids to use the term unapologetically in everyday life. Maybe this is why 9 out of 10 LGBTQ high school students report experiencing harassment at school and why 2/3 of them say they feel unsafe (Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network, 2010).

2) Endorsement of heteronormative culture and behaviors:

These kinds of microaggressions take place when an LGBTQ person is assumed to be heterosexual, or when they are encouraged to act in gender-conforming ways. I know that I’ve been told that I shouldn’t be so flamboyant or that I should act “more masculine”. As a child, my family forced me to play sports, yet sighed when I played with Barbie. As a young adult, when someone asked me “if I had a girlfriend” or “a wife or kids”, they were essentially telling me that they expected me to be heterosexual. Heterosexuals don’t realize that it is common for them to assume someone is straight, unless proven otherwise.

3) Assumption of universal LGBTQ experience:

These sorts of microaggressions transpire when heterosexual people assume that all LGBTQ persons are the same. For instance, sometimes, people tell me I’m not “a typical gay guy” because of some stereotype I don’t fulfill; other times, people assume that I would automatically get along with another gay guy simply because we are attracted to the same
gender. Lesbian women have reported that people presume that they should all be masculine, while bisexual people have reported that they are often stereotyped as being “confused” (Nadal, Issa, et al., 2011). Many transgender women have reported being arrested and falsely accused of being sex workers (Nadal et al., 2012), demonstrating that these biases and microaggressions could even have legal implications.

4) **Discomfort or disapproval of LGBTQ experience:**

These types of microaggressions include instances when LGBTQ people are treated with awkwardness, condemnation, or both. This takes place any time a couple looks at my fiancée and me in disgust as we hold hands in public. It also occurs when people proclaim that my sexual orientation is “an abomination” or that a transgender person’s gender identity is “unnatural.” One recent example of this in the media is the story of a transgender scientist who was outed and ridiculed for her gender identity by a journalist. While the article was supposed to focus on one of her inventions, the writer chose to instead focus the article on her gender identity. While instances like this may occur for many LGBTQ people, this story is especially tragic because the transgender woman who was targeted eventually committed suicide.

5) **Assumption of sexual pathology or abnormality:**

These microaggressions come about when heterosexual people consider LGBTQ people to be sexual deviants or overly sexual. One example of this on a systemic level is the federal ban for any man who has had sex with another man to donate blood. So even if a man is HIV-negative and has been in a monogamous relationship all of his life, he is considered to be at risk and therefore an ineligible donor. In the media, an example includes one time when Paris Hilton said that gay men are “disgusting” and “probably have AIDS” or recently when The Bachelor said that gay people were “more ‘pervert’ in a sense.” In everyday life, a common occurrence is when people assume that LGBTQ people would be child molesters and are wary about LGBTQ teachers or babysitters. Anytime that any straight man assumes that I would hit on them, not only are they mistakenly flattering themselves, they are communicating that they think that all gay men can’t keep their hands to themselves.
6) Denial of bodily privacy:

These kinds of microaggressions occur toward transgender people primarily and include interactions in which others feel entitled or comfortable to objectify transgender bodies. For instance, when Katie Couric recently asked Carmen Carrera about her genitals, she inappropriately and invasively asked a question that would never been asked toward a cisgender person (i.e., a person whose gender identity matches their birth sex). How would you feel if someone asked you about your genitalia on national television?

Why does this matter?

All of these microaggressions have a significant impact on people’s lives. While some of these experiences may seem brief and harmless, many studies have found that the more that people experience microaggressions, the more likely they are to report symptoms of depression, psychological distress, and even physical health issues. For instance, I recently published a study that found that the more racial microaggressions that people of color experience, the more likely they are to also report depressive symptoms and a negative view of the world (Nadal et al., 2014). In another study, LGBTQ participants described that when they experienced microaggressions, they felt depressed, anxious, and even traumatized (Nadal, Wong, et al., 2011). Furthermore, given that LGBTQ youth are known to have a higher prevalence of substance abuse, homelessness, and suicide (see Nadal, 2013 for a review), it is even more important for us to try to minimize microaggressions and make the world a better place for them.