

Addressing Microaggressions Personally & Institutionally

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Agenda

1. Ground Rules
2. Microaggressions, Introduction
3. Race in New Jersey
4. Microaggressions, Examples
5. Strategies for Addressing
Microaggressions

Ground Rules

- Listen actively, without interruption, and respect others when they are talking.
- Allow everyone the chance to speak.
- Speak from your own experience, don't generalize.
- Do not be afraid to ask questions but refrain from personal attacks; criticize ideas, not individuals.
- This is a learning experience, not a debate. Comment to share information.
- Avoid blame, speculation, and inflammatory language.
- Our ultimate goal is not to agree but rather to gain a deeper understanding and take personal and institutional action.

Adapted from “Guide for Setting Ground Rules”, EdChange & “Guidelines for Discussing Difficult or Controversial Topics”, UMD Center for Research on Learning and Teaching

Questions?

My reaction when I discovered the word “microaggression”



What is a microaggression?

“Microaggressions are brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial, gender, sexual-orientation, and religious slights and insults to the target person or group. Perpetrators of microaggressions are often unaware that they engage in such communications when they interact with...minorities”

-Derald Wing Sue, *Racial Microaggressions in Everyday Life*

**Microaggressions can be expressed toward any marginalized group in society

Another definition from [Microaggressions.com](https://www.microaggressions.com/)...

this project is a response to “it’s not a big deal” – “it” is a big deal. “it” is in the everyday. “it” is shoved in your face when you are least expecting it. “it” happens when you expect it the most. “it” is a reminder of your difference. “it” enforces difference. “it” can be painful. “it” can be laughed off. “it” can slide unnoticed by either the speaker, listener or both. “it” can silence people. “it” reminds us of the ways in which we and people like us continue to be excluded and oppressed. “it” matters because these relate to a bigger “it”: a society where social difference has systematic consequences for the “others.”

but “it” can create or force moments of dialogue.

#LISmicroaggressions

Environmental Microaggressions

Environmental microaggressions: demeaning and threatening social, educational, political or economic cues that are communicated to marginalized groups

Examples:

- “Colorblindness” as a stated philosophy
- Hostile and invalidating campus climate; threatening work environments
- An all white male campus administration
- Representation reflected in curriculum, textbooks, library collections

Social Identities & Intersectionality

Race

Ethnicity

Gender

Sexual Orientation

Religion

Ability
(Physical & Mental)

Age

Class

National Origin

Geographic
Background

Language

Effects of microaggressions

Impact: Why does this matter?

At the individual level:

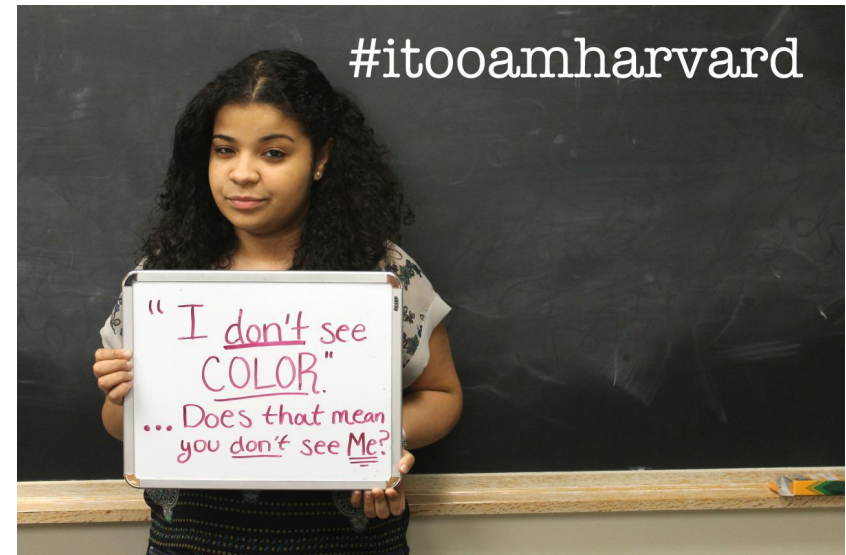
- Feelings of powerlessness, invisibility
- Saps the energies of recipients
- Leads to low self-esteem
- Depletes or diverts energy for adaptive functioning and problem solving

At the institutional & societal level:

- Affects team morale and productivity
- Denies equal access and opportunity in education and employment

LIS Microaggressions Project

- Documentation project/website on tumblr since Spring 2014, inspired by student organized documentation such as I, Too, Am Harvard (right)
- Storytelling to highlight untold/undertold experiences of marginalized persons in LIS
- Anonymous submissions of microaggressions experiences



Questions?

Legalized Racial Discrimination in New Jersey: A Brief History

Racial Segregation in the United States

“I was taught the popular folktale of racism: that ignorant and hateful people had produced racist ideas, and that these racist people had instituted racist policies. . . It was actually been the inverse relationship--racial discrimination led to racist ideas which led to ignorance and hate. Racial discrimination-->racist ideas-->ignorance/hate: this is the casual relationship driving America's history of race relations.”

Kendi, Ibram X. *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America*. Nation Books, 2016.

Racial Segregation in New Jersey

In the USA NJ:

- Has the 3rd highest Black/White youth incarceration disparity ranking
- Has the 6th most Black/White segregated schools
 - Neighborhood segregation

Black/White Youth Incarceration Disparity in NJ

NJ has the 3rd highest Black/White incarceration disparity rate in the nation with Black kids 24.3 times more likely to be incarcerated than white kids.

Latinx youth are 5.4 times more likely to be incarcerated than white youth in NJ.

New Jersey Institute of Social Justice (NJISJ). *Bringing Home Our Children: Ain't I a Child?* 2016,
https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/njisj/pages/465/attachments/original/1482183464/Ain't_I_A_Child_Final_.pdf?1482183464. Accessed 27 Dec, 2017.

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Black/White Youth Incarceration Disparity in NJ

Arrests of Black youth in NJ are also higher than arrests of White youth. For example:

- In 2012 Monmouth County arrested 11.2% of its Black youth population, and only 2.3% of its white youth.
- In Glassboro 70% of youth arrested were minority, even though minorities represented only 39% of the town's population.

New Jersey Institute of Social Justice (NJISJ). *Bringing Home Our Children: Ain't I a Child?* 2016,
https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/njisj/pages/465/attachments/original/1482183464/Ain't_I_A_Child_Final_.pdf?1482183464. Accessed 27 Dec, 2017.

NJ Professor's Role in Incarceration Racial Disparity

1980s and 1990s myth of “super-predators” -- “as many as half of these juvenile superpredators could be young black males.”

-- Princeton Professor John Dilulio

“Super-predators” were described as “fatherless, jobless, and Godless” aggressors who were “radically impulsive, brutally remorseless youngsters, including ever more pre-teenage boys, who murder, assault, rape, rob, burglarize, deal deadly drugs, join gun-toting gangs and create serious communal disorders.”

Becker, Elizabeth. “As Ex-Theorist on Young 'Superpredators,' Bush Aide Has Regrets.” New York Times, 9 Feb 2001.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2001/02/09/us/as-ex-theorist-on-young-superpredators-bush-aide-has-regrets.html>. Accessed 28 Dec 2017.

New Jersey Institute of Social Justice (NJISJ). Bringing Home Our Children: Ain't I a Child? 2016,

https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/njisj/pages/465/attachments/original/1482183464/Ain't_I_A_Child_Final_.pdf?1482183464. Accessed 27 Dec, 2017.

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NJ Professor's Role in Incarceration Racial Disparity

As a result of Dilulio's "research," many states passed legislation for more restrictive juvenile justice laws. In New Jersey, for example, the state legislature passed juvenile waiver laws—to allow juveniles to be waived to adult criminal court—in 1982 to provide harsher penalties for juveniles who committed serious acts or were repeat offenders.

Becker, Elizabeth. "As Ex-Theorist on Young 'Superpredators,' Bush Aide Has Regrets." *New York Times*, 9 Feb 2001.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2001/02/09/us/as-ex-theorist-on-young-superpredators-bush-aide-has-regrets.html>. Accessed 28 Dec 2017.

New Jersey Institute of Social Justice (NJISJ). *Bringing Home Our Children: Ain't I a Child?* 2016,
https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/njisj/pages/465/attachments/original/1482183464/Ain't_I_A_Child_Final_.pdf?1482183464. Accessed 27 Dec, 2017.

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How does NJ having the 3rd highest Black/White youth incarceration disparity affect librarianship?

When someone “looks” suspicious or “looks” like they are going to cause trouble, what is the background behind these assumptions?

How might youth -- and later adults -- act or act out if they know they are statistically likely to be accused of wrongdoing?

The Segregation of Black and Latinx Students

Between 1989 and 2015:

- # of NJ schools serving a majority minority student population more than doubled from 22% to 46%.
- the % of students in intensely segregated schools—schools serving a population with 0%–10% white students—nearly doubled from 11.4% to 20.1%.
- the number of students attending “apartheid schools”—schools serving 0%–1% white students—also nearly doubled from 4.8% to 8.3%.

The Racial Segregation of NJ Students

In 2015, the typical white student went to a school where 67% of the total enrollment was white.

The typical Latinx student also went to school where over 50% of their peers were from the same racial background.

The typical black student attended a school where 43% of students were black and 28% were Hispanic.

Although Asians made up less than 10% of the NJ student population, the typical Asian student went to a school where the Asian share was 28%.

The Racial Segregation of NJ Students: Private & Charter Schools

- 10% of school-age children in NJ attend private schools.
 - In 2011, nearly 70% of private school enrollment was white; less than 8% was Asian; and 20% was black or Hispanic.
- In 2015 3% of NJ students were enrolled in charter schools.
 - In 2015, 8% of charter school students were white, 55% were African American, 5% were Asian, and 31% were Latinx.

The Racial Segregation of NJ Students: Public Schools & Housing Segregation

NJ's public schools are mostly accurate reflections of the racial diversity in the districts where they are located. 75% of public schools in NJ serve a student population that is proportional to the overall racial composition of their districts. **Most school segregation is the result of segregation among districts not within districts.**

Comparing the districts to the much larger counties, only 1 district in 5 has student enrollment that is racially proportional to the county where it is located.

Outreach Outside the Box

What does it mean when someone does not “look” like they are part of your community / campus? What is the history behind this assumption?

What is your library’s stance on providing programs or services to people outside of your tax-paying patrons / tuition-paying students?

A Brief History of Asian Exclusion

In the 18th century Chinese laborers were in high demand by US companies.

- By 1870 there were 63,000 Chinese in the USA.
- In 1867 Chinese represented 90% of the Central Pacific Railroad.

By the early 1900s, Chinese immigrants had spread out to the big cities across the country and mostly supported themselves by running small businesses:

- laundries
- restaurants
- stores

A Brief History of Asian Exclusion

Despite the high demand of Chinese laborers, the US passed a series of laws forbidding Chinese from entering the country:

- The 1862 Coolie Trade Act outlawed coolie labor and US involvement in the coolie trade.
- The 1875 Page Act banned Asian women suspected of prostitution as well as Asian laborers brought to the US involuntarily.
- In 1882 the Chinese Exclusion Act was passed. This barred the entry of Chinese laborers for a period of 10 years, allowed entry only to certain exempt classes of Chinese (students, teachers, travelers, merchants, and diplomats), and prohibited all Chinese from obtaining naturalized citizenship.
- In 1888, a second law, known as the Scott Act, imposed further restrictions. Laborers who had returned to China were forbidden to reenter the US unless they had wives, children, parents, or property or debts in excess of \$1,000 there.

A Brief History of Asian Exclusion

- In 1892, the exclusion laws were extended for another 10 years under the Geary Act. Beginning the next year, all Chinese in the US were required to register with the federal government to obtain certificates of residence (precursors to today's Green Cards) that proved their legal right to be in the US.
- The Chinese Exclusion Act was renewed again in 1902 and made permanent in 1904.
- The Immigration Act of 1924 explicitly excluded “aliens ineligible to citizenship,” a reference to all Asians.
- The 1922 Cable Act revoked the citizenship of women who married “aliens ineligible for citizenship.” This law would not be changed until 1931.
- The Chinese Exclusion Act was not repealed until 1943 under the Magnuson Act, although there were quotas on the number of Asian immigrants allowed into the US.

Modern Day Asian America

“Out of the 1960s a new Asian America was formed. **First came the passage of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, which liberalized the nation’s immigration policy and ushered in new generations of immigrants from throughout Asia, many of whom had no connection to pre-World War II communities.**

“In addition to other changes, the law created immigration preference categories based on family reunification and professional skills. Recent immigration laws have continued that trend. **The 1990 Immigration and Nationality Act, for example, increased the flow of highly skilled “guest workers” from abroad with temporary visas known as H-1B visas, and US companies, especially in the high-tech sector, have actively recruited high skilled workers from Asia.** Asian immigrants receive about three quarters of these visas; Indians alone received 56% of the 129,000 H-1B visas granted in 2011.”

Questions?

Redlining and the Segregation of Wealth

- The development of impoverished urban areas in the US is the result of the institutional racism inherent in New Deal era responses to the Great Depression.
- Through various government agencies and several pieces of national legislation, the federal government set out to create a broad American middle class.



Redlining and the Segregation of Wealth

- The GI Bill of Rights gave returning servicemen an opportunity to pursue higher education.
- The National Housing Act of 1934 created the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), which made homeownership possible for ordinary workers by insuring private mortgages.
 - In the 1930s only 48% of Americans owned homes versus 66% today.
- **Latinx, recent immigrants, and especially African Americans were legally and extralegally denied New Deal opportunities.**

Redlining and the Segregation of Wealth

- For instance, the "redlining" rules created by the Chicago Realtors Association created maps and manuals that helped systematize home appraisals while promoting exclusion of Blacks and others from lending markets.
 - On the maps, green areas, rated "A," indicated "in demand" neighborhoods that lacked "a single foreigner or Negro." These neighborhoods were considered excellent prospects for insurance.
 - Neighborhoods where black people lived were rated "D" and were usually considered ineligible for FHA backing. They were colored in red.
- These guidelines were adopted nationally by the Home Owners Loan Corporation in 1938, institutionalizing the practice that locked Black buyers into segregated housing markets while opening wealth acquisition to millions of Whites in subsidized suburbia. **The very presence of Black neighbors signaled an area's decline, and bank lending was mostly denied.**

Redlining and the Segregation of Wealth

Today African-American incomes on average are about 60% of average white incomes but African-American wealth is about 5% of white wealth. Most middle-class families in this country gain their wealth from the equity they have in their homes. So this enormous difference between a 60% income ratio and a 5% wealth ratio is almost entirely attributable to federal housing policy implemented through the 20th century.

Coates, Ta-Nehisi. "The Case for Reparations." The Atlantic. June 2014, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>. Accessed 30 Dec. 2017.

Gross, Terry and Richard Rothstein. "A 'Forgotten History' of How the U.S. Government Segregated America." NRP. 3 May 2017, <https://www.npr.org/2017/05/03/526655831/a-forgotten-history-of-how-the-u-s-government-segregated-america>. Accessed 30 Dec. 2017.

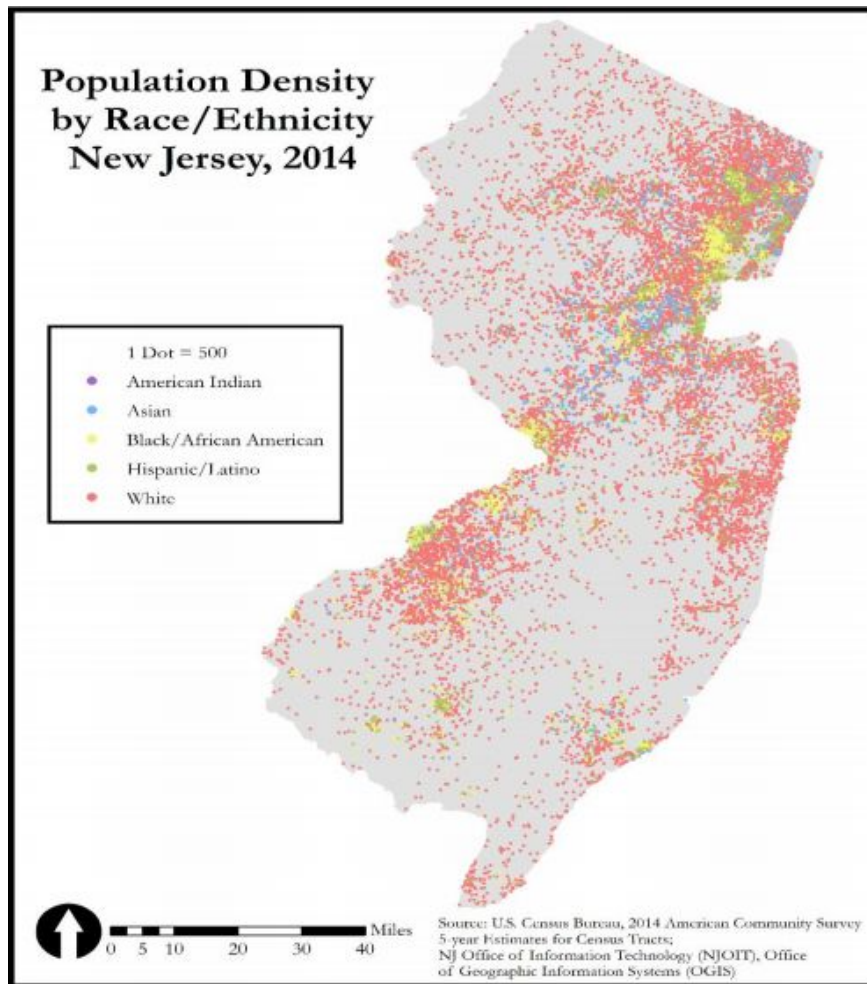
United States Census Bureau. Historical Census of Housing Tables. 31 Oct. 2011, <https://www.census.gov/hhes/www/housing/census/historic/owner.html/>. Accessed 30 Dec. 2017.

Anti-Poverty Network of New Jersey and the Structural Racism and Poverty Working Group. The Uncomfortable Truth: Racism, Injustice, and Poverty in New Jersey. 19 Sept. 2017. <http://www.antipovertynetwork.org/resources/Documents/The%20Uncomfortable%20Truth%20Final%20-%20web.pdf>. Accessed 27 Dec. 2017.

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Redlining in New Jersey

“Few states produced greater disparities in opportunity between suburbs and cities [than NJ]. Few states erected such distance between the two economic worlds. This is attributable to several factors. First, our cities were manufacturing hubs hit hard by deindustrialization. Second, White flight from Newark, Camden, Trenton and Paterson was significant and nearly total, diminishing the community of interests that still holds in states where cities retain economic and cultural relevance for Whites. Third, profoundly segregated suburbs in our state are the cumulative result of multiple forms of racial discrimination -- much of it now institutionalized and colorblind. Lastly, those processes of exclusion have complemented the state's political culture -- fragmented and local control -- without a centralizing force to counteract parochial decision making.”



Civil Rights Project at UCLA. *New Jersey's Segregated Schools: Trends and Paths Forward*, 2017. <https://www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/k-12-education/integration-and-diversity/new-jerseys-segregated-schools-trends-and-paths-forward/New-Jersey-report-final-110917.pdf>. Accessed 27 Dec 2017.

For an interactive map of NJ's racial segregation, visit:

<http://www.njspotlight.com/stories/16/12/01/interactive-map-segregation-continues-to-be-nj-s-state-of-the-state/>

What does NJ education and housing segregation, as well as exclusionary US immigration laws, mean for library services?

When we see a patron or student who “looks” like they “don’t belong” in our library or like they’re “not part” of the community, what does that mean? What is the history behind this perception?

#LISmicroaggressions

What does this mean for NJ Libraryship?: A Brief Overview of NJLA's Elected and Paid Positions

NJLA was founded in 1890. In this 127 year history, the number of people of color (POC) who have served on the Executive Board are:

- POC Presidents: 4
 - The last POC Pres. served 20 years ago
- POC Treasurers: 0
- POC Secretaries: 4
 - The last POC Sec. served 10 years ago
- POC Executive Directors: 1
 - The only POC ED only served for 1 year

Questions?

Examples of Microaggressions in NJ & Broader LIS

Theme: Alien in One's Own Land

Belief that visible racial/ethnic minority citizens are foreigners.

Examples:

- “Where are you from?”
- “You speak English so well!”
- “Can you teach me words in your native language?”
- Continued mispronunciation of a coworker's name after correcting the person repeatedly

Theme: Assigning intelligence to a POC based on their race

Belief that visible racial/ethnic minority citizens are foreigners.

Examples:

- “You are a credit to your race.”
- “You are so articulate”

I am a white, straight, cisgendered female librarian who works in youth services. Our library serves a diverse urban population. 57.4% of this population speaks a language other than English in the home. Most commonly, the language we need to communicate in is Spanish.

However, of our 11 librarians on staff, no librarian speaks Spanish (and there is no administrative support for those who wish to learn). Recently, we were hiring a new Children's librarian. I asked my assistant director, who was reviewing applicants and interviewing candidates, to please seek someone who could speak Spanish, given that the overwhelming majority of families using the Children's room are parented by non-English speakers. My assistant director immediately denied that this was possible; that there were "no librarians out there" with this skill, and that it was a waste of time to seek such an applicant. Thus, though we have non-MLIS staff who can speak the language, when they are not available, there is little to no way to communicate with families in a way in which they feel comfortable, welcomed, and served.

Theme: Denial of Individual Racism / Sexism / etc.

Denial of personal racism or one's role in its perpetuation.

Examples:

- “I’m not racist. I have several black friends.”
- “As a woman, I know what you go through as a racial minority.”

Colleague asked me the plans for the Hillel expansion (because he was worried about construction in his neighborhood) just because I am Jewish. I had no knowledge: not responsible for every Jewish organization in the county!

Tokenism:

Including someone in a group for the sole purpose of appearing more diverse.

A colleague asked me to join a search committee, and then immediately rejoiced when I volunteered because "now we can meet the diversity requirements for the committee!!"

Responses that are always bound to make you sound worse:

- I'm not racist.
- I'm a good person.
- I have coffee with black people.
- One of my relatives is gay.
- I'm (a member of one marginalized group) so there's no way I can discriminate against (another marginalized group).
- I'm (a member of the marginalized group in question) so there's no way I can say something offensive about my own group.

How similar responses would sound if someone pointed out there was something in your teeth:

- I'm not dirty.
- I'm a clean person.
- I have coffee with dentists.
- One of my relatives owns a toothbrush.
- I'm a physician so there's no way there's something in my teeth.
- I brush my teeth twice a day so there's no way there's something in my teeth.

— — —

Adapted from Jay Smooth's 2011 TEDxHampshireCollege Talk
"How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Discussing Race."
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MbdxeFcQtaU>

Developing Cultural Literacy: Understanding Microaggressions within Marginalized Communities

“What have *I* done to educate myself about the marginalized communities I serve?”

“Have I only relied on information given to me by individuals or have I done qualified research?”

Developing Cultural Literacy:

Understanding Marginalization within Marginalized Communities

— — —

- Is there an “Indian” cultural organization in your community / on campus that only focuses on Hindu traditions?
- Is there an Indian organization that focuses on northern and central Indian culture?
 - Are you aware of the marginalization of people from the South and Northeastern Indian states?
- Is there a Latinx organization that excludes Afro-Caribbean and/or Afro-Latin American culture? Or excludes Asian-Caribbean culture?
- Does your library call it Chinese New Year or Lunar New Year?
 - Are there non-ethnically Chinese people in your community who celebrate this holiday?

Cultural Appropriation

Passive aggressive emails and face-to-face comments to get me to participate in an event. After considering and praying about it, I explained it would be disrespectful to my ancestors. Despite refusing and explaining this, I was still contacted 6 times by the same people. It wasn't even a library related event, it was tabled passing out info during a cultural parade. The activities they wanted me to do had absolutely nothing to do with the beliefs behind the tradition, in contrast, they supported appropriation. And then I was asked to do it the next year...

Questions?

Theme: Myth of Meritocracy

Statements that assert that race does not play a role in life successes.

Examples:

- “I believe the most qualified person should get the job”
- “Everyone can succeed in society, if they work hard”

When encouraged to hire students who have federal work study awards (for part-time student positions), a library supervisor responded that they didn't think they would receive any qualified applicants.

Theme: Second-Class Citizen

Treated as a lesser person or group.

Examples:

- POC is mistaken for a service worker
- Patron being ignored by librarian at reference desk as attention is given to the white patron who just walked up
- The only elevator in the library is out of service for 6 months
- Young, female librarian being mistaken for a technician
- Speaking louder or slower when addressing a blind patron

I am an elected university senator at my university...I have been attending monthly senate meetings since the beginning of the academic year. At today's senate meeting, I arrived early, registered my name on the sign up sheet for elected senators and proceeded to my seat, as I have done for the 11 months. Upon sitting down, I was approached by the senate's secretary, who told me that "All visitors (non-senator guests) need to sign in here!" I replied, "I AM a senator and I already signed in. Thanks!" I sit in the same area each month, which is within shouting distance of the secretary.

I know who he is and frequently see him on campus, although he never recognizes or acknowledges me. I am at a loss for how he could not know who I was or at least be familiar with my face. It was quite clear to me that in his mind, a caramel young woman with an afro puff couldn't possibly hold such a position of power at the university. He apologized, but the damage was done. I sat in the room for the rest of the meeting wondering if others wondered why I was there, too.

My old department head often confused the names of two of the African American women in my department. She'd claim it was her eyesight, but her eyes were good enough to recognize me from about 50 yards away so nobody was buying her excuse.

Theme: Sexist / Hetero-sexist or Transphobic Language

Terms that are exclusionary or derogatory towards women and LGBTQ individuals

Examples:

- Using incorrect pronouns
- Being forced to choose between Male or Female when filling out forms
- Two options for relationship status: married or single

Theme: Sexist / Hetero-sexist or Transphobic Language

“I was consistently misgendered by my boss (director) and coworkers after coming out at work. I was formally reprimanded for suggesting ways to support my coworkers in consistently using the correct pronouns and name.”

As a recent MLIS graduate, I've been diligently applying to LIS jobs. Invariably, I'll be forced to select my gender on a form that only has two options. So I have to lie about a significant part of myself and be made invisible. Out of several dozen applications, only one had a "Transgender" option. I actually wept with gratitude.

Theme: Traditional Gender Role Prejudicing & Stereotyping

Expectations of traditional roles or stereotypes.

Examples:

- Labeling an assertive female director as overly aggressive while describing a male counterpart of equal assertion to be a “strong leader”

My colleague was at the reference desk and a student asked for information on same sex marriage. My colleague went into my office (while I was teaching a class), gave this student my business card and said, we have a gay librarian (me) and he is an expert in same sex marriage (not true- I was married in Canada to my partner who is now deceased). This all occurred at a public university campus in New York City (not Canada). Just because I'm gay, that does not mean I'm an expert in same sex marriage.

Environmental Microaggressions

Macro-level microaggressions which are more apparent on systemic and environmental levels.

After some ugly anti-lgbt incidents in our community, the library held lgbt ally training. It was mandatory for all librarians and staff—except for people who opted out due to “personal beliefs.”

Environmental Microaggressions

“My director is constantly saying how ‘diverse’ our library's staff is. 100% of management is white. I am the only librarian of color; all the other librarians are white. Somewhere between 25%-50% of the low-paid front line staff are minorities. 50% of the custodians are poc. Every person on staff at all levels is straight and cisgender. Where is the diversity my director is talking about? Even though he talks about our ‘diverse’ staff in a positive manner, I can't help but feel like he's saying, ‘See, I'm such a good person. I hire people of color (even though they mostly have the lowest paid positions).’”

“Every year the library is decorated for Christmas. Trees, lights, wreaths, even mangers. They put up one menorah and call it ‘equal.’”

I have to state that this was from my manager. . . In 2016, I worked at the circulation desk with my previous assistant manager, and a young African-American lady came to the desk. Someone broke into her car, stealing her items checked out from the library. She also had a police report with her, explaining the situation. The asst. manager did not believe her, contacted a manager from a different branch that the patron frequented, and got my main manager to help. They did not help her, and continued to give her the “run around.” Now, I have seen this same manager. . . waive large fines and not charge patrons for damaged items—usually white patrons.

I felt like I was stuck, and could not say anything. I felt like I had a target on my back for many years regarding an issue from 2011. . . The manager used this to try and get rid of me for three years, specifically by waiting until my annual review to find “issues” to put on the review and not address them during the year.

Other Themes

- Color blindness: Denial or pretense that a white person does not see color or race
 - Ex: “I don’t care if they’re black, white, purple, or green!”
- Assumption of universal experience
 - Ex: Assuming all LGBTQ persons have the same experience
- Denial of privacy
 - Ex: Asking a PWD “What happened to you?”

Other Themes

- Pathologizing Cultural Values/ Communication Styles: Values and communication styles of POC are abnormal
 - Ex: Asking an Asian person, “Why are you so quiet? We want to know what you think. Be more verbal. Speak up more.”

Other Themes

- Secondary Gain: A person expects to feel good or be praised for doing something for a PWD
 - Ex: News article about a “hero” for helping a PWD without any quotes from the actual PWD
- Denial of experience
 - Ex: “Everyone has SOME sort of disability!”

Not only “micro”!

Discrimination and prejudice
is still alive and a very real threat,
including racism, sexism, heterosexism,
homophobia, transphobia, ageism, and
classism.

Feeling Unsafe Speaking Out about Microaggressions / Discrimination

My boss (director) called the police on a patron for asking to use the phone in a way that was clearly based on the patron's race and economic status. I filmed the police interactions without my boss knowing to ensure the physical safety of the patron, but was too scared to speak out directly to my boss or coworkers at the time. I quit several weeks later as a direct result of this incident and the ongoing harassment of myself as a transperson by coworkers.

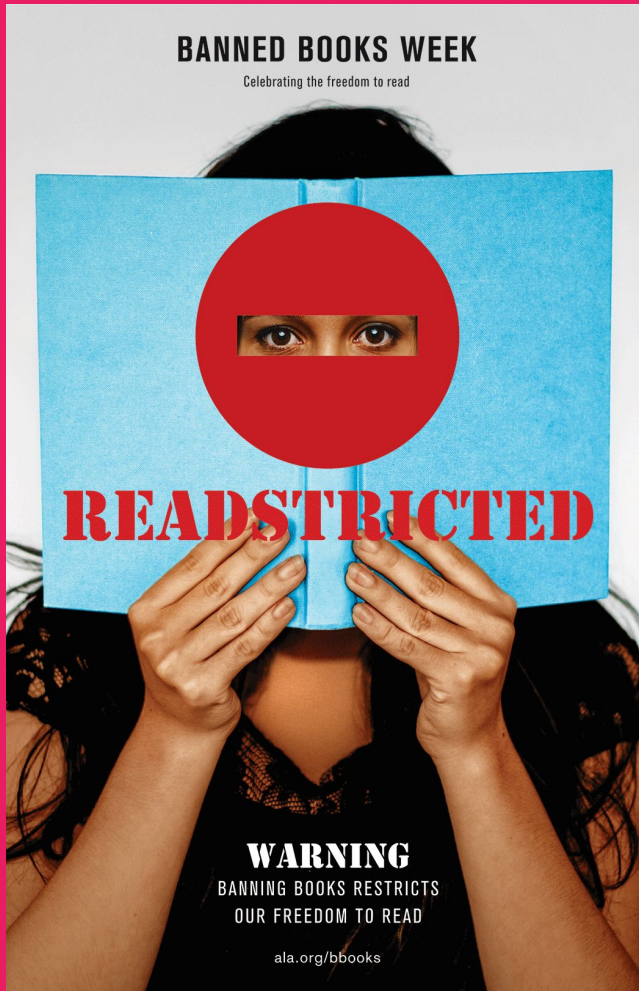
I worked in a library where I was the only minority and everyone else was white, including the director. Several of the staff members made overtly racist comments to me and minority patrons. One time a staff member screamed at a black woman to leave at closing time and that she “should know better” than to still be in the building, but meanwhile three white women were also in the building talking and the staff member said nothing to them. I brought this to my director, who said that I was overreacting. Shortly thereafter I was formally written up that I was "rude" to other staff members. That was it: that I was rude and not as nice as I could be and should make a better effort to get along with everybody. I quit shortly thereafter as I had gotten to point where just thinking about going into work gave me anxiety.

Is this a microaggression?

- Microaggressions aren't always clear--members of the same marginalized group do not always agree what is and isn't a microaggression
- Microaggressions are about how people from marginalized groups feel--do not deny or dismiss how someone feels

- Microaggressions can be hard to recognize when you are part of the dominant group
- Be aware of the power of your words and actions

Is this a microaggression?



If someone points out something you say/post is offensive...

Do Say:

“I didn’t think about it that way.”

“I didn’t realize this could be hurtful/offensive.”

“I’m sorry I hadn’t thought about this perspective before.”

“I hadn’t considered that before. Can I have some time to think about this before responding?”

#LISmicroaggressions

Is this a microaggression?



Michele Filgate ✓
@readandbreathe

I'm at an amazing bookstore in Kingston, NY called Rough Draft. Check out this display.



Amy Siskind is with Michele Filgate at Rough Draft Bar & Books.
January 12 at 9:50pm · Kingston, NY · 🌐

This is SOOOO good!

If someone points out something you say/post is offensive...

DON'T Say:

“You’re wrong.”

“This isn’t offensive.”

“You’re the one who’s racist.”

“There are bigger issues in the world. Why are you making a big deal about this little thing?”



#LISmicroaggressions

Interpretation & Meaning Behind Microaggressions

You do not belong.

You are abnormal.

You are intellectually inferior.

You are not trustworthy.

You are all the same.

Questions?

Strategies for Responding to Microaggressions

Strategies: For the Microaggrieved

In general...

- Find allies and support groups – in your department, on your campus, and/or in online spaces
- Practice self-care

In (or after) the moment...

- Take a step back and decide how you want to respond
- Turn the situation into a teaching/learning moment (ONLY if you're up for it!)

Strategies: For the Microaggressed

Sample Responses:

- “I don’t think that comment was inclusive.”
- “What do you mean by that?”
- “This makes me feel uncomfortable.”
- “I’m offended by that.”
- “Can I give you some feedback?”

The Catch-22 of Responding to Microaggressions

Did that just happen? Did they do that on purpose or was it unintentional? How should I respond? Should I try to let it go, or, more likely, let it ruin my day? Or should I confront the person? If I bring it up, how do I prove it? Is it worth the effort? Should I just drop it?

-Adapted from Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2007

Gaslighting:

“to manipulate (someone) by psychological means into questioning their own sanity”

Strategies: For the Bystander

Acknowledge power dynamics!
(without speaking FOR the microaggressed)

Sample Responses:

- “I don’t think that comment was inclusive.”
- “What do you mean by that?”
- “This makes me feel uncomfortable.”
- “I’m offended by that.”
- “Can I give you some feedback?”

Strategies: For the Microaggressor

Don't...☹️

- Fake apologize #sorrynotsorry
e.g. “I’m sorry you were offended” or “I’m sorry you feel that way”
- Dismiss
- Ignore
- Rely on the microaggressed to teach you

Strategies: For the Microaggressor

Do...😊

- Check yourself: Call yourself out and apologize immediately...or whenever you realize it
- Acknowledge your biases and be intentional about overcoming them
- Listen & reflect
- Research & learn!

Don't be a bystander...

**Be an
UPSTANDER!**



<https://www.museumofimpact.org/>

#LISmicroaggressions

Let's be critical about our libraries!

- Model inclusive work environments: how we treat one another in our departments, in committees, etc.
- Implement diversity & inclusion training and policies
- Take a closer look at...
 - Physical Spaces
 - Hours of service
 - Hiring and promotion
 - Assessment and feedback
 - Professional development and opportunities for advancement
 - Collections and services
 - assumptions about our colleagues and patrons
 - Celebrating our identities

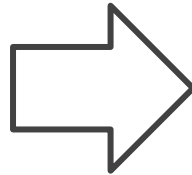
Questions?

Interpretation & Meaning Behind Microaggressions

~~You do not belong.~~

You belong!

~~You are abnormal.~~



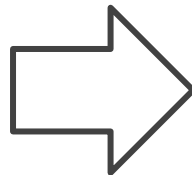
You are normal!

~~You are intellectually inferior.~~

You are intellectual!

You are trustworthy!

~~You are not trustworthy.~~



You are unique and celebrated!

~~You are all the same.~~

You are a valued & respected member of our campus and our community!

Thank you!



Anna Coats

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