



“Did They Say That?”

“Yes, They Did!”

Dealing with Microaggressions in Supervision



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Agenda

Wednesday, September 27 | 11:00am – 12:15pm

- Introductions
- Learning Objectives
- Perspective Poll #1
- Defining Microaggressions
- Perspective Poll #2
- Meet Luis and Sandra
- Reactions
- Small Group Discussions
- Summation
- Strategies & Resources



Introductions

- New York City
- Long Island
- Hudson
- Central
- Western New York
- Outside of NYS – Where?
- Peer Specialists / Supervisors / Both / Other Titles

Learning Objectives

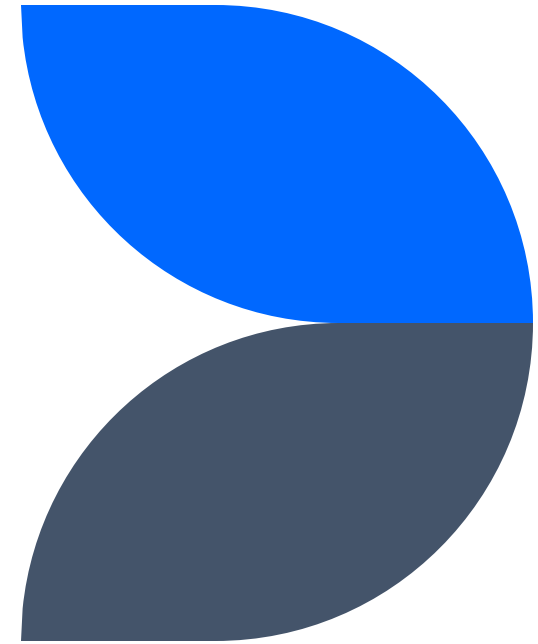
At the end of this workshop, participants will be able to:

- Define microaggressions: microinsults, microassaults, and microinvalidations
- Identify one self-empowering strategy supervisees can use to deal with microaggressions in supervision
- Demonstrate one strategy for deflecting microaggressions in the workplace

Perspective Poll #1

Which statement is not desirable communication in supervision?

- a. Respect and positive regard for supervisees
- b. Genuine concern for supervisees' wellbeing
- c. Therapeutic engagement solely to address supervisees' personal issues
- d. Curiosity about supervisees professional development goals



Microaggressions as framework for this workshop on supervision

- In business world, “microinequities” describes pattern of being overlooked, under respected, and devalued because of one’s race or gender (Sue et al, 2007).
- Supervision informed by clinical perspectives with inherent racial biases (Burkard & Knox, 2004; Sue, 2005).
- Implicit bias, stereotypes, and assumptions potentially infect the delivery of services (Richardson & Molinaro, 1996)
- “Aversive racism” or implicit bias are difficult to identify, quantify, and rectify because of their subtle, nebulous, and unnamed nature (Sue et al., 2007).
- Pervasiveness of microaggressions in daily interactions often dismissed and glossed over as being innocent and innocuous (Sue et al., 2007).
- Despite microaggressions generally discussed from the perspective of race and racism, any marginalized group in society may be targeted (Sue, 2010).

Defining Racial Microaggressions

Brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults to the target person or group. They are not limited to human encounters alone but may also be environmental in nature.

Example: A person of color is exposed to an office setting that unintentionally assails their racial identity which is minimized through the sheer exclusion of decorations or literature that represents various racial groups.

SOURCE: Sue et al., 2007

Microassault

Explicit racial derogation characterized primarily by a verbal or nonverbal attack meant to hurt the intended victim through name-calling, avoidant behavior, or purposeful discriminatory actions.

Example: Using racial epithets, discouraging interracial interactions, deliberately serving a White patron before someone of color, and displaying a swastika. Classified as “old fashioned” racism conducted on an individual level, most likely to be conscious and deliberate, and generally expressed in limited “private” situations (micro) that allow the perpetrator some degree of anonymity.

SOURCE: Sue et al., 2007

Microinsult

Statement characterized by communications that convey rudeness and insensitivity and demean a person's racial heritage or identity. Microinsults represent subtle snubs, frequently unknown to the perpetrator, but clearly convey a hidden insulting message to the recipient of color.

Example: A white employer tells a prospective candidate of color “I believe the most qualified person should get the job, regardless of race” or when an employee of color is asked “How did you get your job?”, signifying people of color are not qualified, and as a minority group member, the person must have obtained the position through some affirmative action or quota program

SOURCE: Sue et al., 2007

Microinvalidation

Sentiment characterized by communications that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of a person of color.

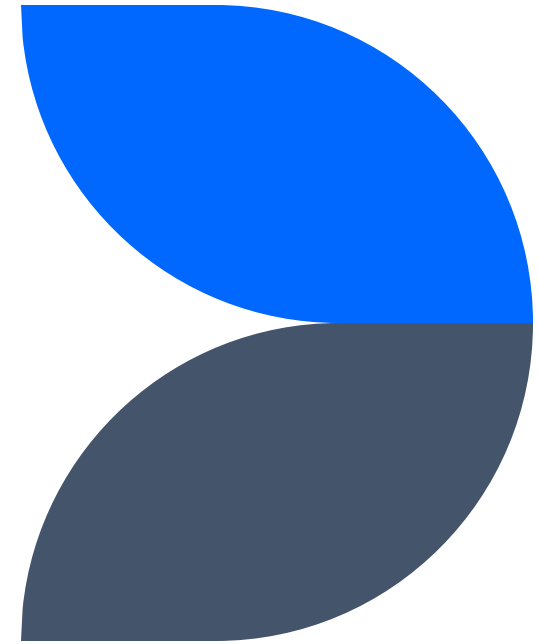
Example: Asian Americans (born and raised in the U.S.) complimented for speaking “good” English or are repeatedly asked where they were born, the effect is to negate their U.S. American heritage and to convey that they are perpetual foreigners. When Blacks are told that “I don’t see color” or “We are all human beings,” the effect is to negate their experiences as racial/cultural beings.

SOURCE: Sue et al., 2007

Perspective Poll #2

According to the microaggressions framework we just introduced, which of the following statements is true:

- a. Any marginalized group in society may be targeted for microaggressions
- b. Microaggressions occur only in supervision
- c. Therapeutic boundaries are often crossed in supervision
- d. None of the above



Meet Peer Specialist Luis & Supervisor Sandra



Reactions?

1. Identify a skill Luis used in interacting with Sandra
2. In what ways was Sandra effective / ineffective in her role as a supervisor?

“Oh No, Girl!”



Small Group Discussions

“

A: Identify a microaggression you observed in the video.

B: Briefly state how would you as a supervisor respond to Luis.

”

Knowledge Check



- ✓ Define microaggressions: microinsults, microassaults, and microinvalidations
- ✓ Identify one self-empowering strategy supervisees can use to deal with microaggressions in supervision
- ✓ Demonstrate one strategy for deflecting microaggressions in the workplace



Responding to Microaggressions: Five Key Considerations

If you are at least moderately certain that a microaggression did in fact occur, you must ponder the potential risks or consequences of responding or not responding. Below is guidance to help you assess the following:

1. If I respond, could my physical safety be in danger?
2. If I respond, will the person become defensive, and will this lead to an argument?
3. If I respond, how will this affect my relationship with this person (e.g., coworker, family member, etc.)
4. If I don't respond, will I regret not saying something?
5. If I don't respond, does that convey that I accept the behavior or statement?

SOURCE: Nadal, 2014

Responding to Microaggressions: Three Possible Approaches

If you are at least moderately certain that a microaggression did in fact occur, you must ponder the potential risks or consequences of responding or not responding. Below is guidance to help you assess the following:

1. **Passive Aggressive:** making a joke, sarcastic comment, or bodily gesture as a way of communicating upset or annoyance
2. **Proactive Reaction:** providing an active verbal response as a therapeutic way to release accumulated anger and frustration
3. **Assertive/Direct:** addressing the person and referring to the statement or behavior rather than the person. This may potentially minimize defensiveness, e.g., “I am not a racist!”

SOURCE: Nadal, 2014

Responding to Microaggressions: Practical Suggestions

1. Use “I” statements: “I experienced the comment you made as...”
2. Arrange time to have the conversation; let the person know that you value the relationship (if you actually do), or let the person know that it is important to work together optimally.
3. Discuss with a trusted individual beforehand, ensuring they will keep your concerns confidential.
4. Seek support and employ self-care throughout the process (e.g., breathing, meditating, journaling)
5. Embrace the teachable moment: create an opportunity to educate other(s) on the impact of the hurtful/harmful statement, action, behavior, exclusion, or invisibilization

SOURCE: Nadal, 2014

What if I Commit a Microaggression?

1. Everyone commits microaggressions; we have all done or said something by which another person experienced hurt
2. If even slightly aware that we may have committed a microaggression, own it, apologize, and practice self-awareness
3. When confronted, try to hear and connect with the person; try not to become defensive and jump to denial of their experience
4. Stay on the cutting edge of language conventions, e.g., seek guidance on what people prefer to be called rather than labels assigned by society
5. Connect with your own vulnerability and possible experiences of marginalization to foster empathy

SOURCE: Nadal, 2014

Thank You from Today's Presenters



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