

Understanding Microaggressions and their Impact

Video Discussion Guide



The short animation video, *Understanding Microaggressions and their Impact*, follows a conversation between a client and their therapist, as they discuss microaggressions and unpack the harmful impact of them. By understanding the effect of these words or actions (whether intentional or unintentional), providers can become equipped to disrupt microaggressions and support clients who experience them. Recognizing that microaggressions have a detrimental impact on the therapeutic relationship as well as treatment outcomes, it's critical that clinicians become aware of these biases and validate them for clients.

Learning Objectives

This video aims to define important concepts with animations. After watching it, viewers will:

- Be able to understand and define various types of microaggressions
- Recognize the ways in which microaggressions can occur across identity groups and the impact they hold
- Gain insight that everyone holds the responsibility of addressing microaggressions and creating more inclusive and respectful (therapeutic) spaces where individuals are valued

Plan a Viewing

There are several ways to share this animated video with mental health providers including therapists, peers advocates, supervisors, and directors. Staff members can view it on their own or there can be a planned gathering with several staff members.

It is very important to follow-up after viewing the video to support making connections between microaggressions and how they impact our lives and the lives of the people we serve.

Establish some opportunities to support everyone and create a judgement-free environment when discussing the video.

Some suggestions include using 'I' statements and being respectful of others' perspectives. You can use the provided discussion questions on the next page to guide this conversation.

Discussion Questions

1. Where do microaggressions come from? How are they linked to our implicit biases?
2. In thinking about microaggressions, which groups of people or identities are more likely to be negatively affected? What might the impact be for anyone who experiences a microaggression?
3. Describe the difference between 'intent' and 'impact' as they relate to microaggressions.
4. Have you ever witnessed, perpetrated, or experienced a microaggression? How did that experience feel for you in each of those roles?
5. Have microaggressions affected the way you interact with your colleagues? What about your clients?
6. What challenges have your clients experienced due to microaggressions?
7. Which of your identities tend to hold more power or privilege (ie: race, class, able-bodied, native English speaker)? How can they lead you to unintentionally commit a microaggression?
8. How can you respond to and repair the harmful impact of microaggressions?
9. As a mental health practitioner, what can you commit to doing to create space for discussion, reflection, and education around microaggressions?
10. How can you hold yourself accountable and extend compassion when you make a mistake?

Suggestions for Supervisors and Administrators

- Explore what structures and sources of information inform microaggressions.
- Explore the ways to disrupt microaggressions and ways to be accountable if you participate in them or experience them.
- Establish how providers' unattended biases lead to committing microaggressions in the mental health continuum and explore ways to confront these effectively.
- Discuss how supervisors can effectively create a safe and accountable space to attend to biases and their impact, including microaggressions and their impact.
- Assess your organizational culture for verbal, nonverbal, and environmental microaggressions that can contribute to stress, decreased job satisfaction, and high turnover in staff.
- Examine and revise organizational practices and policies to reduce and prevent microaggressions within the larger workplace and therapeutic spaces. Prioritize and allocate funds for training programs.

CTAC Resources

- Understanding Microaggressions and their Impact (Video)
 - Discussion Guide to Understanding Implicit Bias (Tool)
- Cultural Humility (Online course)
- Identity, Bias, and Cultural Humility: Connecting to Ourselves and Others (Webinar)
- It Starts with You: A Conversation on Race, Racism, and Clinical Practice (Webinar)
- Race, Racism and Clinical Practice (Online Course)
- Creating Inclusive Environments in Peer Roles: Navigating Mental Health in the LGBTQ+ Community & Understanding Gender (Webinar)
- A Resource for Providers: Liberation Psychology with Youth and Families (Tool)
- How to Support the Application of Intersectionality in Mental Health Services (Webinar)

External Resources

- Examples of Verbal and Nonverbal Microaggressions (Tool)
- Examples of Racial Microaggressions (Tool)
- Microaggressive Experiences of People with Disabilities (Book Chapter)
- That's so Gay! Microaggressions and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community (Book)
- The Impact of Racial Microaggressions on Mental Health: Counseling Implications for Clients of Color (Article)
- Responding to Microaggressions and Unconscious Bias (Tool)
- Speaking of Psychology: How to Combat Microaggressions (Podcast)
- How to Respond to Microaggressions- NYT (Article)
- CALM Microaggression Repair Tool (Tool)
- UCLA Microaggressions and Everyday Biases: Confronting Bias Toolkit (Tool)
- Microintervention Toolkit (Part 1): Individual Actions and Best Practices to Disarm and Neutralize Microaggressions (Tool)
- Eliminating Microaggressions: The Next Level of Inclusion, Tiffany Alvoice (TED Talk)

Access the Video

Visit ctacny.org and go the Tools tab.

Scroll down to *Defining Important Concepts with Animations* and select the video title “**Understanding Microaggressions and their Impact**”

