

DETROIT BAR ASSOCIATION



Photo (l to r): Carla Young, Stephanie Hawkes, Greg Conyers, Darlene King

A Journey to Now: Beginning the Conversation on Implicit Bias and Microaggression

**REAL
CHANGE
STARTS
WITH US.**

Part 3 - Microaggression

Moderator – James Rosenfeld, Butzel Long

Diversity & Inclusion Committee Co-Chair

December 7, 2020



How are microaggressions like mosquitoes?

- <https://youtu.be/emz49wSnNcs>

Panelists

- **Carla Young** (K-12) – Director of Community and Multicultural Programs at Cranbrook Schools
- **Stephanie Hawkes** (Higher Ed) – Assistant Director for the Office of Multicultural Student Engagement (OMSE) at Wayne State University
- **Greg Conyers** (Legal) – Director of Diversity for the State Bar of Michigan
- **Darlene King** (Global) – Executive Director of the Michigan Diversity Council – MIDC

Definition of Microaggressions

- 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.

Source: Elizabeth Gehrman ,Harvard Correspondent , The Harvard Gazette November 20, 2019

Impact of Microaggressions

- Microaggressions contribute to an onslaught of injuries to the psyche that may seem unrelenting and can result in everything from depression, fatigue, and anger to physical ailments such as chronic infections, thyroid problems, and high blood pressure

Source: Elizabeth Gehrman, Harvard Correspondent, The Harvard Gazette, November 20, 2019

Examples of Microaggressions

- “You’re so articulate.”
- “You’re transgender? Wow, you don’t look like it at all.”
- “Oh, sorry, wrong person.”
- “Oh, you’re gay? You should meet my friend Ann. She’s gay, too.”
- “My boss is crazy.”
- “Where are you actually from?”
- “The way you’ve overcome your disability is so inspiring.”
- “Your name is so hard to pronounce.”

Source: Ward, Marguerite, and Rachel Premack. “What Is a Microaggression?
14 Things People Think Are Fine to Say at Work – but Are Actually Racist, Sexist, or Offensive.” Business Insider, July 24, 2020

Examples of Microaggressions

- “I think you’re in the wrong room – this is the programmer’s meeting.”
- “Do you even know what Snapchat is?”
- “Are you an intern? You look so young.”
- “Is that your real hair?”
- *interrupting* “Well, actually, I think...”
- “Why do you wear that?”

Source: Ward, Marguerite, and Rachel Premack. “What Is a Microaggression?
14 Things People Think Are Fine to Say at Work – but Are Actually Racist, Sexist, or Offensive.” Business Insider, July 24, 2020

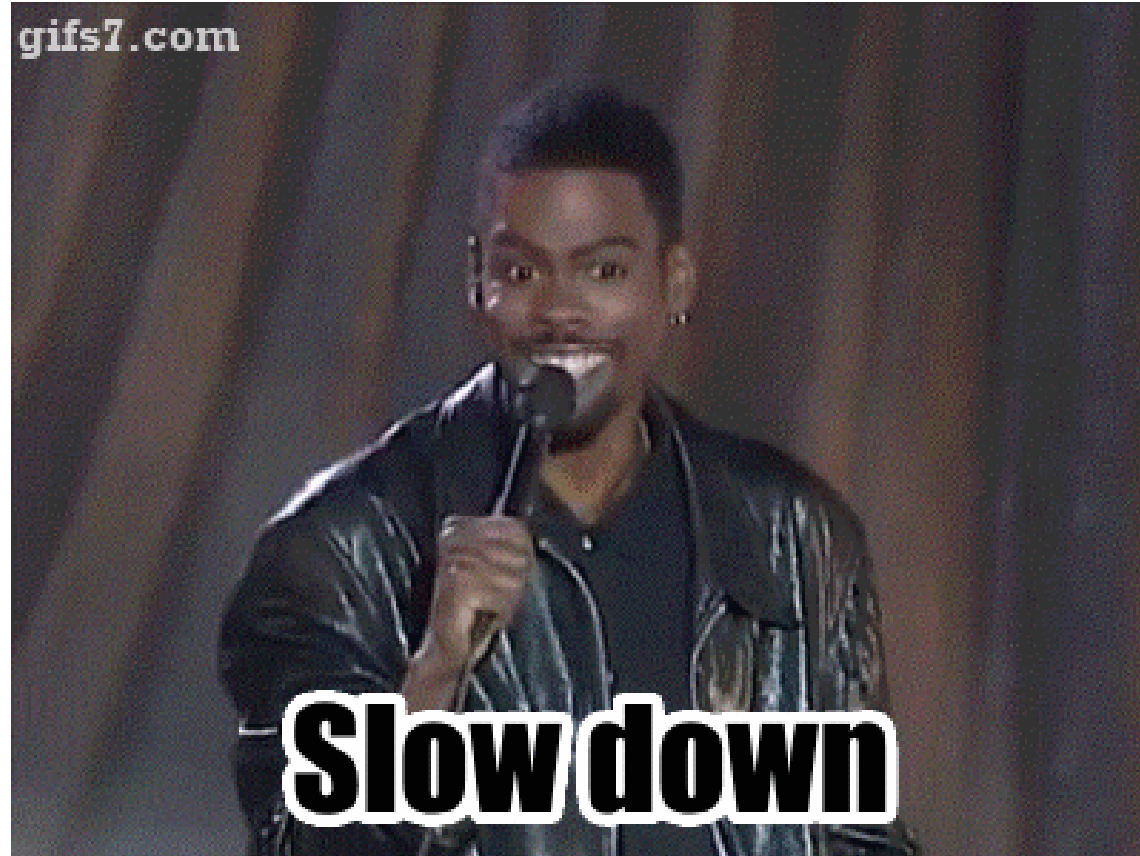
Speed of Thought

- The conscious mind can only process 40 bits of info per second
- The subconscious mind can process 20,000,000 bits per second
- So, the subconscious mind can process 500,000 times more than what the conscious mind is able to

**Your subconscious is 30,000 times more powerful
than your conscious mind**

Source: Bruce H. Lipton, Ph.D., The Biology of Belief: Unleashing the Power of Consciousness, Matter & Miracles; 2010 <https://www.brucelipton.com/>

So what do we do, so we don't unconsciously engage in microaggressions?



P.A.U.S.E.



Pay attention to what's actually happening, beneath the judgments and assessments



Acknowledge your own reactions, interpretations, and judgments



Understand other possible reactions, interpretations and judgments



Search for the most constructive, empowering, or productive way to deal with the situation



Execute your action plan

Subcategories of Microaggressions

- Microinsult
- Microinvalidations
- Microassaults

Responding to Microaggressions

Fix a Microaggression You Didn't Mean

Q Intent vs. Impact

Everyone knows you didn't mean to hurt someone's feelings. Instead of, "I never meant to..." Take responsibility for your impact, not your intent.

Q Don't be Defensive

It's not about you. If you appear defensive, it's not a genuine apology. Recognize the impact of your words and the harm they did.

Q Apologize

Remember, it is about the impact of your words.

Q Move Forward

Don't keep addressing it. Keep working on the relationship and realize that not everyone will accept an apology or it may take time.

Q Keep Learning

Addressing implicit bias and microaggressive behavior takes time, surround yourself with people, resources, and experiences that will encourage you to grow.

How to Respond Open The Front Door

Ganote et. al

Q Feel

How it made you feel

Q Observe

Clearly describe what was
observed

Q Think

Describe how you
interpreted the
comment/what you think
about it

Q Desire

What is a desired
outcome?

Q Example

"When you said
[microaggression], it made me
think that you [negative opinion].
I am concerned about this
because [reason], and I would
like us to talk about this more so
we can come to an
understanding."

Adapted from Arghavan Salles, MD, PhD

How to Respond

Ask clarifying questions

Come from curiosity, not judgement

Tell what you observed, in a factual matter

Impact exploration--discuss the impact

Own your own thoughts and feelings

Next Steps

Q Example

"I'm not sure that I understood what you meant when you said [microaggressive comment]. I want to better understand; can you explain that to me?"



Want more?

Know the Script

Emotional stereotypes

Defensiveness

Feeling Attacked

"I was joking"

Discomfort

Potential escalation

Back and forth

Bias for documentation (prove it)

Gaslighting

DARVO (deny, attack, reverse victim/offender Dr.

Freyd, 1997)



Adapted from Jodiann Burrey, 2020

Culture is key!

Create the space where being corrected is okay
Have the courage to speak up when you have power and influence
Pay attention to what is "the norm" and what goes unchecked
Do something about it

Courageous Conversations

- Dialogues in a space inclusive of all races, genders, abilities, and other lived experiences in which participants agree to engage honestly and with open-mindedness to actively seek to understand perspectives that may be different from their own.

Any
Questions

Additional Resources

- Active Bystander Response Tools <http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Being-an-Active-Bystander-2017.pdf>
- Implicit Bias Tests - <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>
- Implicit Bias Cleanse (not an end all be all!!) - <http://www.lookdifferent.org/what-can-i-do/bias-cleanse>
- Recognizing Microaggressions - https://academicaffairs.ucsc.edu/events/documents/Microaggressions_Examples_Arial_2014_11_12.pdf
- Responding to Microaggressions - https://www.aacap.org/App_Themes/AACAP/docs/resources_for_primary_care/cap_resources_for_medical_student_educators/responding-to-microaggressions-and-bias.pdf
- DAVRO- <https://dynamic.uoregon.edu/jjf/defineDARVO.html#:~:text=DARVO%20stands%20for%20%22Deny%2C%20Attack,whistle%20blower%20%2D%2D%20into%20an>
- Allies and Microaggressions - <https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2016/04/13/how-be-ally-someone-experiencing-microaggressions-essay>
- Jodi Ann Bury - <https://jodiannburey.com/>