



UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

How to Respond to Microaggressions

Often, when a target receives a microaggression, they might be unable to address the act of bias. We encourage the witness, or bystander, to step up and act.

What to Consider

Regret

If you say nothing, will you regret it?

Now or Later

Will you wait to speak to the person alone later or will you address the comment now?

Assume Good Will

Minimize an aggressive response by assuming the person is not intending to offend.

Use "I" Statements

Use "I" statements to explain how the remark feels to you and explain why the comment is offensive.

What to Say if You Hear/Receive a Microaggression

Ask a Question

What do you mean by that?

Make it About the Behavior, Not the Person

The speaker is not a bad person, but the comment/action is harmful.

Share Personal Process

Explain how you might have made the same assumption in the past and what you have learned.

How to Respond if You Made a Microaggression

Listen

Be humble and curious about what is being said to you.

Intent vs. Impact

Your intentions may not have been bad, the impact was negative. The impact matters more.

Apologize

Don't make it about you needing forgiveness from the person. Make it about the negative impact. Acknowledge that depending on circumstances of the microaggression, you may need to work to repair the relationship.

Be Forgiving

To yourself. We all make mistakes. Learn and move on.

When someone says, "I was just joking" what do you do?

I will not get into a discussion with you about whether or not the comment was a joke. I feel uncomfortable by it and I am asking that you not speak like that in front of me.