

Table 2.1 Examples of Racial, Gender, and Sexual-Orientation Microaggressions

THEMES	MICROAGGRESSION	MESSAGE
Alien in One's Own Land When Asian Americans and Latino Americans are assumed to be foreign-born.	"Where are you from?" "Where were you born?" "You speak English very well."	You are not American.
	A person asking an Asian American to teach them words in their native language.	You are a foreigner.
Ascription of Intelligence Assigning intelligence to a person of color or woman based on their race/gender.	"You are a credit to your race."	People of color are generally not as intelligent as Whites.
	"Wow! How did you become so good in math?"	It is unusual for a woman to be smart in math.
	Asking an Asian person to help with a math or science problem.	All Asians are intelligent and good in math/sciences.
Color Blindness Statements that indicate that a White person does not want to acknowledge race.	"When I look at you, I don't see color."	Denying a person of color's racial/ethnic experiences.
	"America is a melting pot."	Assimilate/acculturate to dominant culture.
	"There is only one race, the human race."	Denying the individual as a racial/cultural being.
Criminality/Assumption of Criminal Status A person of color is presumed to be dangerous, criminal, or deviant based on their race.	A White man or woman clutches their purse or checks their wallet as a Black or Latino approaches or passes.	You are a criminal.
	A store owner following a customer of color around the store.	You are going to steal/ You are poor/You do not belong.
	A White person waits to ride the next elevator when a person of color is on it.	You are dangerous.
Use of Sexist/Heterosexist Language Terms that exclude or degrade women and LGBT persons.	Use of the pronoun "he" to refer to all people.	Male experience is universal. Female experience is meaningless.

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Table 2.1 (Continued)

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	Two options for relationship status: married or single.	LGB partnerships do not matter/are meaningless.
	An assertive woman is labeled a "bitch."	Women should be passive.
	A heterosexual man who often hangs out with his female friends more than his male friends is labeled a "faggot."	Men who act like women are inferior (women are inferior)/gay men are inferior.
Denial of Individual Racism/Sexism/Heterosexism	"I'm not racist. I have several Black friends."	I am immune to racism because I have friends of color.
A statement made when bias is denied.	"As an employer, I always treat men and women equally."	I am incapable of sexism.
Myth of Meritocracy	"I believe the most qualified person should get the job."	People of color are given extra unfair benefits because of their race.
Statements which assert that race or gender does not play a role in life successes.	"Men and women have equal opportunities for achievement."	The playing field is even so if women cannot make it, the problem is with them.
Pathologizing Cultural Values/Communication Styles	Asking a Black person: "Why do you have to be so loud/animated?" "Just calm down."	Assimilate to dominant culture.
The notion that the values and communication styles of the dominant/White culture are ideal.	To an Asian or Latino person: "Why are you so quiet? We want to know what you think. Be more verbal." "Speak up more."	
	Dismissing an individual who brings up race/culture in work/school setting.	Leave your cultural baggage outside.
Second-Class Citizen	Person of color mistaken for a service worker.	People of color are servants to Whites. They couldn't possibly occupy high status positions.
Occurs when a target group member receives differential treatment from the power group.	Female doctor mistaken for a nurse.	Women occupy nurturing roles.

Table 2.1 (Continued)

THEMES	MICROAGGRESSION	MESSAGE
	Having a taxi cab pass a person of color and pick up a White passenger.	You are likely to cause trouble and/or travel to a dangerous neighborhood.
	Being ignored at a store counter as attention is given to the White customer behind a person of color.	Whites are more valued customers than people of color.
	A lesbian woman is not invited out with a group of girlfriends because they thought she would be bored if they were talking to men.	You don't belong.
Traditional Gender Role Prejudicing and Stereotyping Occurs when expectations of traditional roles or stereotypes are conveyed.	When a female student asked a male professor for extra help on a chemistry assignment, he asks "What do you need to work on this for anyway?"	Women are less capable in math and science.
	A person asks a woman her age and, upon hearing she is 31, looks quickly at her ring finger.	Women should be married during child-bearing ages because that is their primary purpose.
	A woman is assumed to be a lesbian because she does not put a lot of effort into her appearance.	Lesbians do not care about being attractive to others.
Sexual Objectification Occurs when women are treated as though they were objects at men's disposal.	A male stranger puts his hands on a woman's hips or on the swell of her back to pass by her.	Your body is not yours.
	Whistles and catcalls as a woman walks down the street.	Your body/appearance is for men's enjoyment and pleasure.
Assumption of Abnormality Occurs when it is implied that there is something wrong with being LGB.	Two men holding hands in public are stared at by strangers.	You should keep your displays of affection private because they are offensive.
	Students use the term "gay" to describe a fellow student who is socially ostracized at school	People who are weird and different are "gay."