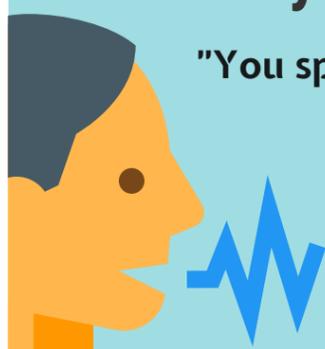


Microaggressions: Revealing Indirect Racism

Have you ever had someone say to you...



"You speak really good English"

"You look so exotic"

"You must be really good at math"

"Nee Hao"

"Where are you **REALLY** from?"

"You're actually a really good driver"

...Or has anyone ever...

Tried to guess your ethnicity

Assumed you were not in a position of leadership when you were

Served someone else before you

PURPOSELY AVOIDED YOU

Asked you to teach them your "native language"

Asked you what is the "weirdest" Asian food you have eaten

If so, then you may have experienced a **microaggression**

"Simply stated, microaggressions are brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to people of color because they belong to a racial minority group." (Sue et al., 2007, p 72)

Microaggressions happen often in daily interactions and may be dismissed or thought of as innocent or well-meaning. The victim of microaggressions may also be accused of being "too sensitive".

Microaggressions exist in several forms:

- **Microassault** - conscious racist attacks, can be through name-calling or other explicit discriminatory actions
- **Microinsult** - subtle "put downs" or snubs that carry a hidden, demeaning message. Can also happen non-verbally (ignoring the person of colour in a business meeting).
- **Microinvalidation** - communication that excludes and invalidates experiences of person of colour.

Environmental Microaggressions



Microassaults, microinsults, microinvalidations observed in the systemic and environmental realm. For example, television shows and movies that feature mostly White people, public buildings or roads being all named after White Anglophone historical figures

"Some racism is so subtle that neither victim nor perpetrator may entirely understand what is going on - which may be especially toxic for people of color." (DeAngelis, 2009)



In a 2007 study, Sue et al. found that instances of microaggression caused Asian Americans to have negative experiences including:

Why does it matter?

Acknowledging racial microaggressions matters because it negatively impacts racialized people. If microaggressions are left "invisible", then these acts of everyday discrimination will continue to happen.

- Feeling like an alien in their own land (made to feel like a perpetual foreigner)
- Denial of racial reality (made to feel their experiences of discrimination were invalid)
- Cultural values/communication styles made to feel like a deficit
- Second-class citizenship

Sources

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