Addressing Microaggressions in Academic Medicine

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TYPES OF MICROAGGRESSIONS AND WHAT THEY LOOK LIKE

Microaggressions are subtle verbal, behavioral, or environmental snubs, slights, and insults directed at individuals or groups based on their social characteristics (e.g., race, class, sexuality, gender)—whether intentional or unintentional—that implicitly communicate and/or engender a hostile, derogatory, or negative sentiment.1,2

MICROASSAULTS

Verbal or nonverbal acts aiming to attack a person’s group or identity or harm them through name calling, avoidance, and/or discriminatory actions.

A faculty member tells a joke that mocks an ethnic group.

MICROINSULTS

Subtle snubs or humiliations that convey a stereotype, insensitivity, or a demeaning message about a person’s group identity.

A Hispanic physician is mistaken for a nonphysician hospital worker.

MICROINVALIDATIONS

Comments or actions that disregard, exclude, or dismiss the thoughts, feelings, and/or experiential reality of an individual or a group.

A woman physician is not introduced by their title at a conference.

ENVIRONMENTAL

Microassaults, microinsults, and microinvalidations reflected in the policies, culture, and climate of the workplace.

Portraits on the wall reflect accomplishments of only White male colleagues.

REFERENCES


Note: The figure has been adapted with permission from Wolters Kluwer Health, Inc.: Ackerman-Barger K, Jacobs NN. The Microaggressions Triangle Model: A humanistic approach to navigating microaggressions in health professions schools. Acad Med. 2020;95(12 suppl):S28–S32.

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Regular exposure to perceived discrimination of any kind adversely affects:2

WHAT CAN RECIPIENTS DO?2,4 WHAT CAN BYSTANDERS DO?4 WHAT CAN INSTITUTIONS DO?

WHAT CAN RECIPIENTS BUILD RESILIENCE?2

HOW CAN INSTITUTIONS PROMOTE DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION?

WHAT CAN SOURCES DO?4

References:


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