

**Maya Addai**

101086138

CHST 3205 A

Nov, 29th 2021

# Microaggressions in the Classroom



## Youth Workshop

This workshop is designed for students in grade 9-12 to learn and fill their toolboxes with new learning strategies, social justice issues, scenarios and other concepts to use in their daily life. Students will be able to cultivate experiences shared between different high schools in their city. This can be further used or implemented in school curriculum or after school programs to set students up for success and will leave the workshop more prepared and educated.

# Objectives

- Increase understanding of the experience and impact of racial microaggressions that are seen in the classroom.
- Identify forms of racial microaggressions comments and behaviours
- Discuss and develop mini-action plans of prevention and awareness.
- Increase understanding and awareness of students' roles corresponding to microaggressions.
- Effectively addressing and responding to subtle discrimination.
- Explore racial discrimination in class environments.

## Workshop Agenda

9:30 - Welcome: Mingling and Grouping (get to know each other and introduce concepts/issues, finish with groups of same colour name)

10:00 - Small groups Name Game

10:40 - First topic { Microaggressions }

11:10 - Debrief with sticky notes

11:45 - Lunch

12:15 - Warm up activity ( Reflection of next topic)

12:25 - Second Topic { Anti-Racism }

12:35 - Debrief with sticky notes

1:00 - Discussion Groups: What do these issues look like at your school?



What can you do about it?

1:35 - Break

2:30 - Activities

3:00 - Closing Circle (one word that sums up what you will bring with you)

# Understanding The Issue

## What is Microaggression?

Microaggressions are defined as “brief and common place daily verbal, behavioral and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory or negative racial slights and insults that potentially have harmful or unpleasant psychological impact on the target person or group” (Solorzano, Ceja & Yosso, 2000).



Microaggression in the classroom is an issue that is overlooked due to students fearing the repercussions of stepping up against other students, teachers, or faculty members. “Students report that they are often subjected to microinsults and microinvalidations by faculty and other students based on race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity, disability, age, socio-economic status, and other diverse dimensions. Inappropriate jokes; malicious comments; singling-out students; setting exams and project due dates on religious holidays; and stereotyping” (Microaggressions in the Classroom DU CME, 2013,1 ) Microaggressions cuts across all social identities and these insults and invalidations start at a young age in the classroom but are overlooked because there are so many common

occurrence that students find it within the 'norm' and do not ever know a form of microaggression is occurring in front of them. Some common examples being:

- Continuing to mispronounce the names of students after they have corrected you time and time again.
- Expressing racially charged political opinions in class assuming that the targets of those opinions do not exist in class.
- Assigning projects that ignore differences in socioeconomic class status.
- Discouraging students from working on projects that explore their own social identities
- Forcing students with non-obvious disabilities to "out" themselves or discuss them publicly.

(Microaggressions in the Classroom DU CME, 2013)



Addressing an issue like this is possible but should be approached from multiple different angles from different groups of people; the administration would need to evaluate the classroom and the learning practitioners in each room. This analyzes the classroom environment and the types of students that are seen in the class and the actions/ behaviours that are demonstrated.

- Set high expectations for all students, talking to the class as a whole reciprocates that for students to be doing the same.
- Simple strategies for students involve encouraging each other to speak of experience and diminishing anything in the moment and shutting down microaggressions.
- Humour is also a common cover up that is seen but to an extent this still leads people to become uncomfortable and assume that it can continue to happen because others are enjoying the humour.

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hDd3bzA7450>**

## What's Going on Around Us?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iL9oqSoctAo>

Video

<https://rsekn.ca/equity-podcast-ep06-streaming-and-educational-pathways/>

Podcast

### How to find reliable sources!

A common difficult trend for youth of different ages and ethnicities is finding news articles, journals, Instagram posts, facebook posts, websites etc. that are reliable and trustworthy to demonstrate the correct information to learn from that is not demonstrated in the classroom.

*Tools to use when checking a source:*

1. Examine the sources and the author's credentials
2. Ensure source is up to date
3. Check if the publisher of the source is reputable
4. Check the reviews the source has received
5. Ensure source does not use vague terms to support itself

Below shows an example of a credible source about race created by people of the BIPOC Community. This gives viewers a sense of commonality and helps ensure that the content being talked about is from people of common intersections.

**[https://embracerace-prod.imgix.net/assets/action-guides\\_drawing-across-color-lines\\_1.pdf](https://embracerace-prod.imgix.net/assets/action-guides_drawing-across-color-lines_1.pdf)**





## Drawing Across the Color Line with Kids



## Activities



1. Brainstorm a list of three to five microaggressive comments that you have encountered or were subject to. You can use any of the ones that you discussed today.
  - a. Examples:
    - What are you?
    - How can I be racist when I have black friends?
    - Why are you acting like such an angry woman?
2. Video Scenarios
  - a. Break students into various diverse groups ( gender, ethnicity, ability etc.) and get students to watch videos and discuss:
    - i. What occurred? Was there a clear aggression?
    - ii. How would you feel/ react?
    - iii. Have you or someone experienced this situation?
    - iv. Do you think this happens in your school?
  - b. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LGT5fOxeKVY>
  - c. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WXRjO28F\\_0g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WXRjO28F_0g)
3. Group activity

a. Know the Unknown

- i. Have everyone close their eyes and coordinators move everyone into pairings or small groups, backs facing each other if preferred. Students are to keep their eyes closed for the duration of the game. Each student will ask 3 questions once answered the partner will do the same. Each pairing will stay together for 3-5 minutes then switch to new partners. Students will each ask each other questions regarding their personality and interests etc. (Within a comfortable range) Allow for discussion if pairings are comfortable; some students may connect better with others, but it is not mandatory. This allows students to create an image of each other based off of who they are and what they define themselves as rather than having preconceived ideas, before actually seeing their outer appearance.

**1. Questions to ask - Use sticky notes**

- a. What was your initial response to the activity?  
How did it make you feel?
- b. What kind of questions did you ask? Was there a trend in the type of questions asked?
- c. After talking with a few different students, was your mental image different than the person in front of you?

b. Molecules Game

- i. Have students spread out walking or running if able around the room. The coordinator then yells a number and students have to get into that grouping of number(s) as fast



as they can. The coordinator can then choose any category and students have to gather according to the category. Ex. all blue shirts, live in the suburbs, have siblings etc.

- ii. Depending on the age range and comfortability , coordinators may decide how personal or specific categories may be involving, visible or non- visible disability, religion, culture etc.
- iii. This game is to emphasize diversity and intersectionality, while destigmatizing negative connotations on certain experiences, traits, categories etc. This game is also able to show that various amounts may fall under different categories. For example: If the coordinator calls out "if you have been stopped by the police before" and that group may involve fewer students try not to make it to point out a group of students because reasoning may be different and interpreted differently..

#### **1. Questions to ask - Use sticky notes**

- a. Were there moments in this activity that made you feel uncomfortable? Explain
- b. At any point did you feel like you stood out? Explain
- c. Did anything surprise you? Explain



# References

<http://mcos.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Anti-Racism-Youth-Leadership-Workshop-Facilitation-Guide-2014.pdf>

<https://www.thrivecyn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Rising-Youth-Workshop-Guide-copy.pdf>

<https://teaching.washington.edu/topics/inclusive-teaching/addressing-microaggressions-in-the-classroom/>

<https://otl.du.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/MicroAggressionsInClassroom-DUCME.pdf>

<https://www.edutopia.org/article/look-implicit-bias-and-microaggressions>

