

# RACIAL MICROAGGRESSIONS

| Theme                                                                                                                                                       | Microaggression                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Message                                                                                                                         |
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| <p><b>Alien in own land</b><br/>When Asian Americans and Latino Americans are assumed to be foreign-born.</p>                                               | <p>Asking an Asian co-worker, "Where are from? No, where are you <i>really</i> from?"</p> <p>Telling an American born Latino student she speaks such good English.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <p>You are not American.</p>                                                                                                    |
| <p><b>Ascription of intelligence</b><br/>Assigning a degree of intelligence to a Person of Color on the basis of their race.</p>                            | <p>A school counselor reacts with surprise when an Asian American student had trouble on the math portion of a standardized test.</p> <p>A career counselor asking a Black or Latino student, "Do you think you're ready for college?"</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <p>All Asians are smart and good at math.</p> <p>It is unusual for People of Color to succeed.</p>                              |
| <p><b>Color blindness</b><br/>Statements which indicate that a person does not want to acknowledge race.</p>                                                | <p>When a staff member of color attempts to discuss being the only Person of Color at her job and feeling alienated and dismissed by her co-workers, another staff member says, "I think you are being too paranoid. We should emphasize similarities, not people's differences."</p> <p>When a student complains that a teacher is racist another teacher replies, "We don't see color here at MLK High School. He was probably just having a bad day."</p> | <p>Race and culture are not important variables that affect people's lives.</p> <p>Your racial experiences are not valid.</p>   |
| <p><b>Criminality/assumption of criminal status</b><br/>A Person of Color is presumed to be dangerous, criminal, or deviant on the basis of their race.</p> | <p>Black students in a school are consistently asked for hall passes while their White peers are not.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <p>You are a criminal.</p>                                                                                                      |
| <p><b>Denial of individual racism</b><br/>A statement made when Whites renounce their racial biases.</p>                                                    | <p>A parent of color asks an administrator how race affects his or her view of students. The administrator replies, "Race does not affect the way I treat students. I treat all students the same."</p> <p>A student of color brings up racism with a female teacher. She replies, "I totally understand. As a woman, I face discrimination too."</p>                                                                                                        | <p>Your racial/ethnic experience is not important.</p> <p>Your racial oppression is no different than my gender oppression.</p> |

| Theme                                                                                                                                           | Microaggression                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Message                                                                                                                                                           |
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| <p><b>Myth of meritocracy</b><br/> Statements which assert that race does not play a role in succeeding in career advancement or education.</p> | <p>A school counselor tells a Black student, "If you work hard, you can succeed like everyone else."<br/><br/> When test results show a racial achievement gap, a school <i>only</i> focuses on ways to motivate students of color to work harder to close the gap.</p> | <p>People of color are lazy and/or incompetent and need to work harder.<br/><br/> If you don't succeed, you have only yourself to blame (blaming the victim).</p> |

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| <p><b>Pathologizing cultural values/ communication styles</b><br/>The notion that the values and communication styles of the dominant/White culture are ideal.</p> | <p>A Black student is loud, emotional, and confrontational in class. The teacher refers her to special education for a behavior disorder.</p> <p>A student of Asian or Native American descent has trouble maintaining eye contact with his teacher. The teacher assumes he is being defiant.</p> | <p>Assimilate to dominant culture.</p> <p>Leave your cultural baggage outside.</p>                                |
| <p><b>Second-class citizen</b><br/>Occurs when a White person is given preferential treatment as a consumer over a Person of Color.</p>                            | <p>White students get called on more often in class when students of color have their hands raised as often.</p> <p>A White person is served first by the office staff when a Person of Color arrives before them.</p>                                                                            | <p>Whites are more valued than People of Color.</p> <p>White families are more valued than families of color.</p> |
| <p><b>Environmental</b></p>                                                                                                                                        | <p>A school website features only</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <p>You don't belong/Only White</p>                                                                                |
|                                                                                                                                                                    | <p>A student of Asian or Native American descent has trouble maintaining eye contact with his teacher. The teacher assumes he is being defiant.</p>                                                                                                                                               | <p>Leave your cultural baggage outside.</p>                                                                       |
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| <p><b>Environmental microaggressions</b><br/>Visible microaggressions, which are more apparent on a systemic level.</p>                                            | <p>A school website features only pictures of White historical figures.</p> <p>White people are the protagonists of all of the required reading in a classroom.</p>                                                                                                                               | <p>You don't belong/Only White people can succeed.</p> <p>You are an outsider/You don't exist.</p>                |