



WELLINGTON

Microaggressions

What are they and how can we respond to them?

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Karakia Timatanga

Tukua te wairua kia rere ki ngā
taumata
Hai ārahi i ā tātou mahi
Me tā tātou whai i ngā tikanga a
rātou mā
Kia mau kia ita
Kia kore ai e ngaro
Kia pupuri
Kia whakamaua
Kia tina! TINA! Hui e! TĀIKI E!

*Allow one's spirit to exercise its
potential
To guide us in our work as well as in
our pursuit of our ancestral
traditions
Take hold and preserve it
Ensure it is never lost
Hold fast.
Secure it.
Draw together! Affirm!*

Objectives

By the end of the session you should be able to:

Define microaggression and the types of microaggressions.

Describe two frameworks that can be used to respond to microaggressions.

The plan

Over the next 50 minutes we will:

Discuss what microaggressions are

Talk about some of the challenges with identifying and responding to microaggressions

Describe two frameworks that can help to respond to microaggressions

Consider some stock responses that we can learn to help us in the moment



What are microaggressions?



Types of microaggressions

There are generally considered to be four types

Microaggression	Description	Example
Microassaults	Often conscious discriminatory statements intended to offend	“They are letting you people be surgeons now?”
Microinsults	Sometimes unintentional subtle snubs or humiliations that demean the recipient	“Is there any way you could dial back the accent a bit? It really makes you sound unscientific.”
Microinvalidations	Statements that exclude or dismiss lived experience	“I don’t believe Dr. Doe was being sexist with his comments, you’re blowing this out of proportion.”
Environmental microaggressions	Workplace reflections of the previous 3 microaggressions	A lack of childcare or breastfeeding facilities at professional conferences



30 seconds of thought

Think about your context.

Which of these types of microaggressions have you been the target of, witnessed, or perpetrated?

Did you feel able to respond in the moment?

The challenge of microaggressions

Breakout groups

In small groups discuss the following questions:

1. What are some of the challenges with recognising and responding to microaggressions?
2. How do you know when a microaggression has occurred?

When you return to the main room we will take a few minutes to debrief.

Be prepared to report back your groups' discussion.

How can we respond to microaggressions?

Tailor your approach to the situation.

Use “I” statements. Speak for yourself, not others.

Focus on the behaviour, not the person.

If the circumstances make immediate action difficult, try to follow up later.

Two frameworks

XYZ

This is a simple framework that can be used in many situations. It takes the form:

I feel **X** when **Y** because **Z**.

Example: I feel uncomfortable when you say that something you don't like is gay because it makes it seem that you don't like people who identify as LGBTQIA+.

GRIT

This acronym stands for the following:

Gather your thoughts – pause and decide if now is the time to address the microaggression

Restate – Restate or ask the speaker to restate and clarify their comment

Inquire – Seek further clarification about the comment

Talk it out – Describe how you or others might perceive the comment

Some responses to microaggressions

It can be helpful to memorise one or two of these so you are better prepared

That's not ok.

That's not funny.

I'm sure you didn't mean to, but I found that hurtful.

We don't use that language here.

What you said made me feel uncomfortable.

What did you mean by that?

I wonder what others might say to that.

I'd like to understand your perspective. Is there something that affected you that prompted your reaction?



Final thoughts

References

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Evaluation

We value your feedback.

We value your thoughts on this session so will give you 2 minutes to complete a short feedback form that has just been dropped into the chat.

https://otago.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_2mF8EzpEI9p83cy

You can also email us any time with feedback at edssu@otago.ac.nz



Karakia Whakamutunga

Unuhia, unuhia
Unuhia ki te uru tapu nui
Kia wātea, kia māmā, te ngākau, te
tinana, te wairua i te ara takatā
Koia rā e Rongo, whakairia ake ki
runga
Kia tina! TINA! Hui e! TĀIKI E!

*Draw on, draw on,
Draw on the supreme sacredness
To clear, to free the heart, the body and
the spirit of mankind
Rongo, suspended high above us
Draw together! Affirm!*