The Power of Microaggressions and Microaffirmations

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Micro-inequities are fiendishly efficient in perpetuating unequal opportunity, because they are in the air we breathe, in the books we read, in the television we all watch, and because we cannot change the personal characteristic which leads to the inequity. Micro-inequities are woven into all the threads of our work life and of US education. They are "micro", not at all in the sense of trivial, but in the sense of miniature. - Mary Rowe
Definitions

…Small events which are often ephemeral and hard-to-prove, events which are covert, often unintentional, frequently unrecognized by the perpetrator. Micro-inequities occur wherever people are perceived to be different. – “Barriers to Equality, the Power of Subtle Discrimination to Maintain Unequal Opportunity.” Mary Rowe, 1990

“Brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to certain individuals because of their group membership.” - Derald Wing Sue
Micro-Inequities: 40 Years Later

- Checking emails or texting during a face-to-face conversation
- Consistently mispronouncing a person's name
- Interrupting a person mid-sentence
- Making eye-contact only with males while talking to a group containing both males and females
- Taking more questions from men than women
- Confusing a person of a certain ethnicity with another person of the same ethnicity
- Rolling your eyes
- Sighing loudly
- Raising your voice, even though the other person has no difficulties hearing you

Source: Jennifer Owens
“Unos Cuantos Piquetitos”
Microaggressions

#ITooAMNYU

When you speak your mind, it's 'confidence.' When I do it, it's 'sassy.' DO NOT change your vocabulary because of my SKIN COLOR.

When I gave a speech about RACISM, the emcee introduced me as "Jane Garcia." My name is Jasmine Rodriguez, not all Latins have the last name GARCIA.

"ARE YOU A MAN OR A WOMAN?"

"I don't see COLOR. ...Does that mean you don't see me?"

#ITooAMHarvard

English is my first language.
Diversity AND Inclusion

MACRO-INEQUITIES

Racism

Sexism

Homophobia

Islamaphobia

MICRO-INEQUITIES

Ageism

Unconscious Bias

Anti-semitism
Small Group Discussions

• Reactions to what you have heard?

• What are some microaggressions that you have experienced/seen?

• Do you see microaggressions in your organization? How are they addressed?

• What can you take away from this dialogue today?
Facilitators

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Micro-affirmations are apparently small acts, which are often ephemeral and hard-to-see, events that are public and private, often unconscious but very effective, which occur wherever people wish to help others to succeed.” – Mary Rowe, 2008