

Microaggression Activity Instructions

Part One : Complete the worksheet

1. Instruct your students to match the microaggressions in column one, with the possible interpretation in column two by drawing a line between the columns.
2. Students should think critically about how a person could interpret the statements as insults.
3. After each student has individually completed the exercise, you may review the answers together, or have a group session where students are to vote on the answers.

Part Two : Review & Rethink

4. After completing the exercise, go through the microaggressions in column one and try to come up with neutral ways to express similar meanings, or perhaps, identify topics and phrases that should never be used.

Part Three : Class Discussion

5. Once answers are revealed answer the discussion questions in a talking circle (or as a class in assigned seats).

Suggested Discussion Questions:

1. Tiffany Alvoid refers to the impact of cumulative microaggressions as hundreds of paper cuts, whose impacts can be grave. Do you agree or disagree with this idea? Explain your answer.
2. When people discuss microaggressions, a common response is that they are “innocent acts or words” and that the person who experiences them should “let go” or “get over it” or “not make a big deal.” Do you agree or disagree with this point of view? Explain your answer.
3. If a person from a marginalized group told you that your words or behaviors had hurt them, how would you respond? Would this prevent you from making a similar comment in the future?
4. Studies show that acts of covert racism like microaggressions can be more harmful than blatant discrimination. Do you agree or disagree? Explain your answer.

Hot Tip: Our discussion questions are just suggestions, we encourage you to listen to your students and let the conversation flow, or come up with your own questions! Try to keep your discussion time between 5-10 minutes so you can get back to the lesson!

Copy of Student Activity Sheet (Answers)

Match the microaggressions in column one with their possible interpretations in column two.

≡ "Why are all Black women so loud?"	People of your background are rude and unrefined.
≡ "You are a credit to your race."	People of your race are unintelligent.
≡ "You throw like a girl."	Feminine traits are undesirable.
≡ "The only race is the human race."	Your experience as a minority is no different from anyone else's.
≡ "As a woman I understand being a minority."*	I'm not racist because I'm oppressed too.
≡ "No, where are you really from?"	You are not [Canadian].
≡ "I have lots of ethnic friends."	I'm not racist.
≡ "You don't even seem Black."	Everyone from your group acts the same.
≡ "You speak English very well."	I notice that you are different and not really from here.
≡ "Keep an eye on the Black shoppers."	Blacks are all criminals

*Said by a white woman to a woman of colour.