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Focus on Team Norms for Addressing Microaggressions

Engaging campus members in a discussion about group norms and guidelines is an essential step in fostering community and creating a productive campus environment (Boettcher & Conrad, 2016; Palloff & Pratt, 2007; Stavredes, 2011). Involving staff, faculty, and leaders in these discussions raises their awareness and helps them to adhere to guidelines more effectively regarding a productive community. It is also a terrific way to start building community throughout the institution.

Research shows that microaggressions are extremely commonplace; therefore, it can be helpful to discuss them with staff, faculty, and leaders when creating community norms or agreements (Sue, 2015). Explaining what they are, their impact, and your commitment to addressing them provides a solid foundation for addressing microaggressions when they arise.

Define Microaggressions

Share the definition of microaggressions and a few relevant examples with your colleagues. Explain that your goal for creating an inclusive environment includes avoiding microaggressions and addressing them should they arise. You may also share that if you commit a microaggression, you welcome colleagues to share their concerns with you.

Going Deeper

If you would like to devote more time to a discussion of microaggressions, consider showing the videos linked below to demonstrate microaggressions or engaging your colleagues in an activity that asks them to explore microaggressions in more depth.

[Look Different videos](#) created by MTV: People share their experiences with microaggressions in this series of short videos.

[Activity from Breaking the Prejudice Habit](#): This activity teaches staff, faculty, and leaders to recognize how different audiences can interpret language and microaggressions and teaches them to understand the implications of their speech.

Ask for Assistance

You may find additional assistance by asking for help from your campus diversity office. Consider checking to see if they have someone available to speak to your team on the issue of microaggressions. This can be particularly helpful because they can often share resources available to campus members.

References

Boettcher, J. V., & Conrad, R.-M. (2016). *The online teaching survival guide: Simple and practical pedagogical tips* (2nd ed.). Jossey-Bass.



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Palloff, R. M., & Pratt, K. (2007). *Building online learning communities: Effective strategies for the virtual classroom* (2nd ed.). Jossey-Bass.

Stavredes, T. (2011). *Effective online teaching: Foundations and strategies for student success*. Jossey-Bass.

Sue, D. W. (2015). *Facilitating difficult race discussions: Five ineffective strategies and five effective strategies*. Wiley.