Racial & LGBT Microaggressions

An Introduction for Library Leaders

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Sponsored by the Continuing Education Development Committee of LLAMA & the ALA Office for Diversity
Racial and LBGT Microaggressions: Speakers

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Safe Space and Ground Rules

• Discussions about race, sexual orientation, and gender identity can often bring up many feelings and opinions. During this webinar, remember to treat each other with respect and to continue to dialog in order to create a learning environment.

• In order to address questions as fully as possible, please note we will hold all questions until the Q&A portion of the session.

• Fred, our moderator, will record all questions and refer back to them during the Q&A, we will attempt to respond to all questions in the order they were asked.
Why we’re here:

• Develop an understanding of what microaggressions are and how they can negatively impact our profession and library users.

• Gain knowledge of how microaggressions can negatively impact different groups of people, including people of color and LGBT people.

• Identify ways to take action against microaggressions in order to create a more culturally competent organization and positive workplace environment for all library employees and patrons.
Poll

• My primary workplace is a:
  • Public library
  • Academic library
  • School library
  • Other type of library
  • Other workplace
Poll

- My familiarity with microaggressions is
  - Just beginning: I have heard the term.
  - Some experience: I have done some reading and have background knowledge.
  - Lots of experience: I have extensive knowledge of the terms and concepts, and can lead a group discussion on the topic
Social Identities & Intersectionality
Social Identities

- Sex
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Race
- Religion
- Age
- Ability
- Class
- Sexual Orientation
Social Identities - Simplified

**Biological Sex**
- Female
- Male

**Gender Identity**
- Woman
- Man

**Sexual Orientation**
- Lesbian, Gay
- Heterosexual

**Race**
- People of Color
- White
Social Identities

Biological Sex
- Intersex
- Female
- Male

Gender Identity
- Gender Queer
- Woman
- Man

Sexual Orientation
- Bisexual
- Lesbian, Gay
- Heterosexual

Race
- Multi-Racial
- People of Color
- White
Intersections of Identities
Microaggressions

Examples and Definitions
I was taking anatomy and physiology and during an open lab session one of my classmates (who is a white male) asked me what my major was. But before I could tell him he said “Wait you’re doing nursing right? Am I right ??” in a manner where he felt very confident in his answer. When I told him I was taking a class to be a medical lab technician, he sounded astonished and baffled all at the same time. He said that “It’s a shame that you’re not trying to be a nurse.”

I am a filipino female.

I overheard one of my husband’s co-workers tell him that “IT MUST BE NICE TO BE MARRIED TO AN ASIAN WOMAN, BECAUSE THEY'RE SO...”
Shrouded judges in academic evaluation procedures need some sunlight

I really don't think what happened to me is a microaggression because it's too huge. Despite evidence to the contrary, I have been deemed incompetent to fulfill my job despite me leading outreach efforts that resulted in additional grant funds for the university, visibility for the library, and continuing collaborative efforts to improve programs and services to students with special needs. The people who have laid this verdict on me neither knew me personally or even bothered to do so. But they have had a tremendous impact on me, my career.
Microaggressions are the brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative slights and insults toward members of oppressed groups” (Nadal, 2013, p.36).
Three Categories of Microaggressions

**Microassaults**
(Overt)
Intent is to harm/explicit derogations either verbally or nonverbally

*Example*: name calling, discriminatory actions toward a person

**Microinsults**
(Often unconscious)
Verbal or nonverbal, conveys insensitivity or rudeness and demeans a person’s heritage or identity

*Example*: back-handed compliments or subtle insults/snubs

**Microinvalidations**
(Often unconscious)
Messages or communications that deny experiential realities of marginalized groups

*Example*: invalidating a racial reality that a person of color experiences daily
Racial Microaggressions
I, Too, Am Harvard

A photo campaign highlighting the faces and voices of black students at Harvard College. Our voices often go unheard on this campus, our experiences are devalued, our presence is questioned--this project is our way of speaking back, of claiming this campus, of standing up to say: We are here. This place is ours. We, TOO, are Harvard. The #itooamharvard photo campaign is inspired by I, Too, Am Harvard, a play based on interviews with members of the black community exploring and affirming our diverse experiences as black students at Harvard College. The original play premieres on Friday March 7th, 2014 at 7 PM in Lowell Lecture Hall on the campus of Harvard College.

facebook.com/itooamharvard @ITooAmHarvard #itooamharvard 377634

#itooamharvard

"CAN YOU READ?"
Racial Microaggressions

“Where are you REALLY FROM?”

When I gave a speech about RACISM, the emcee introduced me as “Jaime Garcia.” My name is Jaime Rodriguez; not all Latinos have the last name GARCIA.

The limited representation of my race in your Classroom does not make me the voice of all Black People.

http://www.buzzfeed.com/hnigatu/racial-microaggressions-you-hear-on-a-daily-basis
Racial Microaggressions

“The power of racial microaggressions lies in their invisibility to the perpetrator and, oftentimes, the recipient […] Microaggressive acts can usually be explained away by seemingly nonbiased and valid reasons. For the recipient of a microaggression, however, there is always the nagging question of whether it really happened” (Sue et al., 2007, p. 275).
LGBT Microaggressions
Microaggressions & The LGBT Community

- **Sexual Orientation**: The preferred term used when referring to an individual's physical and/or emotional attraction to the same and/or opposite gender.

- **Gender identity**: Refers to a person's innate, deeply felt psychological identification as a man, woman or some other gender, which may or may not correspond to the sex assigned to them at birth (e.g., the sex listed on their birth certificate).
Microaggressions Towards LGBT People Can Include:

- Use of Heterosexist or Transphobic Terminology
- Endorsement of Heteronormative Culture or Gender Normative Culture and Behaviors
- Assumption of Universal LGBT Experience
- Exoticization
Microaggressions Towards LGBT People Can Include (continued):

- Discomfort With or Disapproval of LGBT Experience
- Assumption of Sexual Pathology, Deviance or Abnormality
- Denial of the Reality of Heterosexism or Transphobia
- Denial of Individual Heterosexism
LGBT Microaggressions

http://www.buzzfeed.com/hnigatu/19-lgbt-microaggressions-you-hear-on-a-daily-basis
Intersections of identity in regards to microaggressions

• Intersectional Identities: Unique combination of individuals multiple social groups and the identification, experiences, and worldviews that result from this combination

• Intersectional Microaggressions: Subtle forms of discrimination that are based on individuals’ multiple social identities
Consequences & Coping Strategies
Decreased productivity and satisfaction

Self-doubt

Frustration

Isolation

Exhaustion

Anger

Departure
Coping Strategies for Individuals

- Establish support networks and allies
- Seek counterspaces
- Respond to microaggressions — both positive and negative repercussions
Bystander Behavior Continuum: Responding as Allies

- Participate in behavior
- Observe and deny behavior
- Educate self and others
- Interrupt behavior, engage and support target
- Organize response
Suggested Organizational Responses

- Demonstrate commitment to change
- Seek out and listen to minority voices
- Embrace multiculturalism rather than color-blind philosophy
- Empower diversity committee with authority
- Employ clear objectives and timeline in diversity action plan
- Offer and participate in training and workshops
- Evaluate organization’s performance appraisal criteria
  - “The standards used to hire applicants are generally based up on White, male, and heterosexual criteria that determine ‘qualified.’ Good oral communication skills, for example, may equate to speaking without an accent” (Sue, 2010, p. 218).
Poll

• My organization has (check all that apply):
  • A diversity plan
  • A diversity committee
  • Diversity training opportunities
  • Diverse recruitment and hiring practices
Suggested Next Steps

• Think of how you’ll use/incorporate what you’ve learned or discussed today into your everyday work life.

• Discussions about diversity often lead us to think about what we can and should do. As library leaders, you have an important role to play in shaping not only your organization but also our profession. Continuing to think and act on diversity issues will transform our organizations and associations into more inclusive and responsive environments for ourselves and our users. We hope you will continue the dialogue.

• Complete the evaluation form distributed by LLAMA—help us to continue to make this content better!
Suggested Next Steps: Part 2

- ACRL 2015 Conference, Friday, March 27: Defining the Nonverbal: Examining Microaggressions and Social Capital workshop with Kiyomi Deards & Charlene Maxey-Harris

- ALA Annual 2015, EMIERT Program: Librarians of Color: The Challenges of "Movin' On Up" (Part II) (time and date TBD)

- LIS Microaggressions (http://lismicroaggressions.tumblr.com/) just finished collecting Post-it submissions to be included in their first ever zine, which will be distributed at the upcoming ARLIS, ACRL and REFORMA conferences. The zine will also be available for download on the site.
Additional Resources

Alabi, J. (2014, June). “Race is a social construct and does not exist”: What academic librarians have to say about racism in the profession. Poster presentation at ALA 2014 Annual Conference, Las Vegas, NV. Available at http://hdl.handle.net/11200/46630.


Additional Resources


**Continuing the Conversation**

**Diversity MIG:** [http://connect.ala.org/node/229994](http://connect.ala.org/node/229994)

**Office for Diversity:** diversity@ala.org | 312-280-5295

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Thank you for joining us!

Please use the question box to type your questions. Fred will also now share any questions that were submitted earlier in the presentation. The presenters will seek to respond to all questions as time permits.

If the session concludes and you have additional questions please refer to the previous slide in this presentation and the recorded session for more information on where to address your questions and comments.