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What Are Microaggressions? 2011

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Microaggressions

What is a microaggression?

Microaggressions are the subtle ways in which body and verbal language convey oppressive ideology about power or privilege against marginalized identities. To put it simply, it is the way that people act differently in subtle ways around people that make them feel uncomfortable.

What are some examples of microaggressions and how do I spot one?

- When a racist person walks on the other side of the road when someone of a difference race is coming towards them.
- When an LGBT organization has a booth at an event and people keep their distance from it.
- When someone says to another person: “You're pretty cute for an overweight girl.”

There are many different types of microaggressions that are different from these examples as well. Watch a person's facial expressions, body language, and word choice and notice whether or not they are using microaggessions.

What should I do when I encounter someone using microaggressions?

- Correct people when they speak in ways that might be subtly offensive.
- Welcome people with a friendly hello when they seem to be keeping their distance from you.
- Be yourself. Let your personality shine through and show others that you are not a stereotype.

Most importantly, Don't use microaggressions in response to microaggressions. If you see someone make a rude facial expression or uncomfortable body movement, confront it, don't mirror it. You have to be the change that you want to see in the world.