

# Examples of Verbal and Non-Verbal Microaggressions

Microaggression	Theme	Implicit Bias/Context	Impact/Message
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Where are you from?"</li> <li>• "Where were you born?"</li> <li>• "You speak good English."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alien in own land</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When individuals who are Indigenous, Black or Persons of Colour (IBPOC) are assumed to be foreign-born</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You are not Canadian</li> <li>• You are a foreigner.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "You are a credit to your race."</li> <li>• "You are so articulate."</li> <li>• Asking an Asian person to help with a Math or Science problem.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ascription of Intelligence - assigning intelligence to a person of colour on the basis of their race.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People of colour are generally not as intelligent as Whites.</li> <li>• All Asians are intelligent and good at Math / Science.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is unusual for someone of your race to be intelligent.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "When I look at you, I don't see colour."</li> <li>• "There is only one race, the human race."</li> <li>• "All lives matter"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colour Blindness - statements that indicate that a White person does not want to acknowledge race.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Since race doesn't have an affect on me, I can't see why we can't all get along.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Denying a person of colour's racial / ethnic experiences.</li> <li>• You must assimilate / acculturate to the dominant culture.</li> <li>• Denying the individual as a racial / cultural being.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A White person clutching their purse or checking their wallet as a Black or Latinx person approaches or passes.</li> <li>• A store owner following a customer of colour around the store.</li> <li>• Crossing the street when a person of colour approaches.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Criminality –Assumption of criminal status on the basis of race.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A person of colour is presumed to be dangerous, criminal, or deviant on the basis of their race.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You are a criminal.</li> <li>• You are going to steal.</li> <li>• You are poor.</li> <li>• You do not belong.</li> <li>• You are dangerous.</li> </ul>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Don't you want a family?"</li> <li>• "Have you ever had real sex?"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heteronormativity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That people who aren't in heterosexual relationships are unable to have a family.</li> <li>• Assumptions that they all relationships must fall along heteronormative lines.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your relationship isn't real.</li> <li>• You can't be fulfilled.</li> <li>• You must pick a side.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "You're going to stay home with the kids, right?"</li> <li>• "What she's trying to say is..."</li> <li>• "You should smile more"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That women must fall into gendered roles from the 1950's.</li> <li>• That male affect, presence, behavior is the standard and everything else is contrary to.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You shouldn't be working.</li> <li>• You're a failure as a woman.</li> <li>• You're not good enough.</li> <li>• You're not being listened to and valued.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "You have a mental illness, but you seem so normal"</li> <li>• "Why don't you just get out of bed and get some fresh air"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invalidation of Severity of Mental Illness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That mental illness looks/behaves a certain way.</li> <li>• General misunderstanding of the effects that mental illness can have.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You must not be hurting that much.</li> <li>• It must not be that bad.</li> <li>• Why can't you get over this?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Oh! I wouldn't think you live here"</li> <li>• "Oh you haven't been to Europe, you really should go"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assuming someone doesn't live in a certain neighborhood because of how they look, talk, act.</li> <li>• Assuming that everyone has the means to travel.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You don't belong.</li> <li>• You're not going to lead a fulfilling life.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edmonton Eskimos, SFU Clan</li> <li>• Sir John A. Macdonald High School</li> <li>• Colleges with pictures of predominantly White heterosexual upper class males</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assumes that harm cannot take place by racist names or visuals that have negative connotations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You don't belong.</li> <li>• You're not welcome here.</li> <li>• Causes shame and embarrassment and creates unsafe situations for persons of colour</li> </ul>

**Dismissive reactions that occur when bringing up that a microaggression has taken place:**

- "You're making too big of a deal of things"
- Eye rolling
- "You're just being too sensitive"
- "You're always so difficult"

We'd like to acknowledge the City of Cambridge, Massachusetts for these examples.

Originally adapted from Sue, Derald Wing. *Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Race, Gender and Sexual Orientation*. Wiley & Sons, 2010.