Cultural Competency & Microaggressions

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Some Agreements

- Suspend judgment until the end.
- We are human; therefore we all can commit microaggressions.
- Questions and comments are welcome
Some Caveats

- Background in Education and Psychology
- School Psychology Trainee
- Course in Psychological Adjustment
  - Social Influence
    - Microaggressions
- I am a facilitator
- Some videos contain explicit wording on screen
PollEverywhere

Get out your cell phones!
Participating with Poll Everywhere

How to vote via text messaging/web browser

What did you have for breakfast this morning?

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I received adequate education and training in cross-cultural competency development.

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Talking about culture, race, ethnicity, discrimination, or racism in my life/daily work is difficult.

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Culture, Race, & Ethnicity

A Brief Return to SOC 101
“sometimes we cannot separate ourselves from our own cultural backgrounds and biases to understand the behavior of others”
–Matsumoto (2004)
Definitions....A Review?

- Culture, Race, & Ethnicity
  - Culture
    - Set of attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors, shared by a group of people, communicated from one generation to the next via language or some other means of communication
    - (i.e. deaf culture; culture of poverty; culture of school)
  - Everyone has a culture
  - Individuals may share culture, but behave differently
  - Differences exist between and within cultures
Definitions....A Review?

- Culture, Race, & Ethnicity
  - Race
    - Biological concept; phenotypically distinct groups
    - (i.e. Hispanic; African American; Native American)
    - Broader in scope than culture or ethnicity
Definitions….A Review?

- Culture, Race, & Ethnicity
  - Ethnicity
    - Microcultural group or collectivity that shares a common history and culture, common values, behaviors, and other characteristics that cause members of the group to have a shared identity
    - By definition, similar to culture
    - Narrower in scope than race
Definitions....A Review?

- **Culture, Race, & Ethnicity**
  - Members of any race may comprise many different ethnic and cultural groups
  - Members of a particular ethnic or cultural group may comprise a multitude of different races

- **Puerto Ricans**
  - Well circumscribed ethnic group
  - Tri-racial heritage
    - Taino and Western European Anglos; the Spanish/French/Portuguese explorers; and African (from slavery)

- Cultural traits represent the main attributes of an ethnic group
Definitions....Take Away

- Neither race nor ethnicity automatically implies an individual:
  - Has had a cultural experience that is similar or identical to any other member of the same racial or ethnic group
  - This knowledge prevents making attributes or generalizations that are unfair/untrue
Definitions....Take Away

- Take a moment:
  - How would you describe/define your.....
    - Culture
    - Race
    - Ethnicity

- Remember there can be multiple cultural or ethnic identities and some persons can consider themselves multiracial
Why is this knowledge important?

- Failure to appreciate the manner in which one’s own culture influences interactions with individuals from a different culture can:
  - often lead to difficulties in social interaction
  - negatively affect working with students, parents, and colleagues
Microaggressions

The Confluence of Dealing with Culture, Race, & Ethnicity in Real Life
A Review.....

- Schemas: frameworks to help organize or interpret information; efficient

- Stereotypes: widely held beliefs that people have certain characteristics because of particular group membership

- Discrimination: behaving differently, unfairly, toward members of a group
The Changing Face of Racism

- ....modern racism, symbolic racism, aversive racism
  - More likely to be disguised and covert
  - Evolved from “old fashioned form” (overt racial hatred and bigotry, publicly displayed)
  - Nebulous, ambiguous
  - Difficult to identify and acknowledge
The Problem Remains....

- Controlling explicit biases contributes to implicit biases

- Implicit attitudes and beliefs leak out through....
  - Non-verbal
  - Subtle avoidance behaviors
    - Eye contact, speech errors, unease
    - Controlling explicit biases contributes to implicit biases
What are microaggressions?

The Office
Microaggressions

- Brief, commonplace, daily
- Verbal, behavioral, or environment indignities
- Intentional or Unintentional
- Communicate hostile, derogatory, negative slights and insults toward marginalized groups

Perpetrators are....

- Often unaware that they engage in such communications
Microaggressions: Three Forms

- Microassault
- Microinsult
- Microinvalidation
Microassault

- Explicit derogation
- Verbal or nonverbal attack
- Meant to hurt
- Name calling, avoidant behavior, purposeful discriminatory actions
- Similar to “old fashioned” racism
- Conscious, deliberate
- Although in “private” situations (micro)
- Hold notions of inferiority privately, only display publicly when
  - Lose control
  - Feel relatively safe to engage in microassault
Microinsult

- Convey rudeness, insensitivity
- Demean a person's identity or racial heritage
- Subtle snubs, nonverbal, avoidance
- Frequently unknown to perpetrator
- Clearly conveys hidden, insulting message
- Not necessarily aggressions, but context is important

Higher Education
Microininvalidation

- Exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality
  - “I don’t see color; I’m colorblind”
  - “We are all human beings”
  - “Don’t be so sensitive”

- What Kind of Asian Are You?
The Power of Microaggressions

- Invisible to the perpetrator and recipient
- Can be explained away by nonbiased or valid reasons
- Nagging question... "Did that just happen?!?"
- Difficult to identify
Racial Microaggressions

- Comments or situations potentially classified as racial microaggression
  - Alien in one’s own land
  - Ascription of Intelligence
  - Color Blindness
  - Criminality/Assumption of Criminal Status
  - Myth of Meritocracy
  - Pathologizing Cultural Values/Communication Styles
  - Second-Class Status
  - Environmental Invalidation
Figure 1: Categories of and Relationships Among Racial Microaggressions

**Racial Microaggressions**
Commonplace verbal or behavioral indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults.

- **Microinsult** (Often Unconscious)
  Behavioral/verbal remarks or comments that convey rudeness, insensitivity and demean a person’s racial heritage or identity.

- **Microassault** (Often Conscious)
  Explicit racial derogations characterized primarily by a violent verbal or nonverbal attack meant to hurt the intended victim through name-calling, avoidant behavior or purposeful discriminatory actions.

- **Microinvalidation** (Often Unconscious)
  Verbal comments or behaviors that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of a person of color.

**Environmental Microaggressions** (Macro-level)
Racial assaults, insults and invalidations which are manifested on systemic and environmental levels.

- **Ascription of Intelligence**
  Assigning a degree of intelligence to a person of color based on their race.

- **Second Class Citizen**
  Treated as a lesser person or group.

- **Pathologizing cultural values/communication styles**
  Notion that the values and communication styles of people of color are abnormal.

- **Assumption of Criminal status**
  Presumed to be a criminal, dangerous, or deviant based on race.

- **Alien in Own Land**
  Belief that visible racial/ethnic minority citizens are foreigners.

- **Color Blindness**
  Denial or pretense that a White person does not see color or race.

- **Myth of Meritocracy**
  Statements which assert that race plays a minor role in life success.

- **Denial of Individual Racism**
  Denial of personal racism or one’s role in its perpetuation.
Microaggressions
Implicit Message
Activity
Handout
Can there be other types of microaggressions?

Yes!
Sexual Orientation Microaggressions

- Two gay men hold hands in public and are told not to flaunt their sexuality
  - Hidden message: Same-sex displays of affection are abnormal and offensive. Keep it private and to yourselves.
Gender Microaggressions

- An assertive female manager is labeled as a “bitch” or “forceful leader”
- Hidden message: Women should be passive and allow men to be decision makers
OCCUPATION: JUST A HOUSEWIFE...
Microaggression Activity-Perpetrator and Recipient

- In this activity, you will critically examine the perspectives of both the perpetrators and the recipients of microaggressions.
- Microaggressions Website
Microaggression Activity—Perpetrator and Recipient

- Describe one experience from your own life in which you were the recipient of an intentional or unintentional microaggression.

- Remember that microaggressions may relate to gender, race, age, social economic status, geography, sexual orientation or other characteristics.

- What might have been the implicit bias behind the perpetrator’s comment? What was the hidden message you interpreted?
Microaggression Activity-Perpetrator and Recipient

- Describe one experience from your own life in which you were the perpetrator of an intentional or unintentional microaggression.

- Remember that microaggressions may relate to gender, race, age, social economic status, geography, sexual orientation or other characteristics.

- What might have been the implicit bias behind your comment? What might be the hidden message interpreted by the recipient?
Now You Know....
What You Can Do
Now....
Now You Know….What You Can Do Now…

- Combatting Prejudice
  - Cognitive Strategies: controlled processing not automatic processing; careful attention to what and how you think
  - Intergroup Contact: work together for a common goal; cooperative efforts must have successful outcomes
Intergroup
Contact

Remember the Titans
Now You Know….What You Can Do Now…

- Combatting Microaggressions
  - Learn from constant vigilance of own biases and fears
  - Experiential reality
  - Interact with people who are different from you by race, culture, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, etc.
Now You Know….What You Can Do Now...

- Combatting Microaggressions
  - Don’t be defensive
  - Be open to discussing your own biases and attitudes and how they might have hurt others or revealed bias on your part
  - Be an ally; Stand against all forms of bias and discrimination
The Bystander Effect

- Tendency for individuals to be less likely to provide help when others are present than when they are alone
  - Less likely to occur when the need for help is very clear.
  - Factors at work:
    - Conformity
    - Occurs in ambiguous situations---people look around to see whether others are acting as if there’s an emergency (or problem). If everyone hesitates, this inaction suggests help isn’t needed.
    - One dissenter significantly reduces conformity pressures.
Being the Bystander.....

- Make an effort to pay more attention to the social forces operating on you.

- If you find yourself in a situation where others are pressuring you, try to identify someone in the group whose views match yours.

- If you know in advance that you’re heading into this kind of situation, consider having a friend with similar views to go along.
Cultural Competence-Knowledge

- Personal Awareness
  - Understand your own culture.....Everyone has a culture!
    - How we view the world is influenced by our experiences
    - Examine the socialization process during your developmental years
    - Understanding how we have been socialized
    - How we have been socialized to deal with people different from ourselves and deal with race
Cultural Competence-Knowledge

- Knowledge of Other Cultures
  1. Reading Books
  1. Interacting with People from Diverse Cultures
    - Can act as cultural mediators
  2. Participating in the daily life of another culture
    1. Learning the language of the culture
Cultural Competence-Knowledge

- Equity & Diversity Issues with Marginalized Peoples
Reflect a Moment

Complete Self-Assessment
Homework (For Yourself)

- Implicit Bias Test

- Microaggression Log—Homework
  - Keep track of your own or others microaggressions
  - Note the implicit biases and hidden messages
  - Note your reaction and the reaction of others
  - Note if you employed any strategies to combat microaggressions
  - Note the impact/consequences
“The material covered this week was an eye opener. As a group we were a little offended that the main theme, at least in our minds was that— all White people particularly White Americans are racists. It was interesting and educational yet at the same time discouraging to read through the research article “Racial Microaggressions in Everyday Life” by Derald Wing Sue, Capodilupo, Torino, Bucceri, Holder, Nadal and Esquilin. The conclusion to this article stated that, “nearly all interracial encounters are prone to the manifestation of racial microaggressions” (Sue, Capodilupo, Torino, Bucceri, Holder, Nadal & Esquilin, 2007). As a group it was hard to agree with that statement…..as educated, relatively culturally experienced young adults we find hard to agree with.
There are racial, gender and sexual microaggressions covered in the readings. All of the examples of racial microaggressions are directed from a White person to a person of color. We would just like to know what the verbal, nonverbal, environmental slights, snubs, or insults directed toward White people from individuals of color are called? Yes, we do understand that there are still a lot of White-racist, sexist, anti-religious/atheist, homophobic people out there but there are also the same people like that of different races.”
Very Important!

- We are all subject to automatic cognitive processing
  - Leads to...... biases, stereotypes, and prejudicial attitudes

- Committing a microaggression/needling more cultural competence does not mean...
  - You are racist.
  - You are sexist.
  - You are a homophobe......etc.
It presents an opportunity.
Questions/Comments?
Thank You!

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