



# ELEVATE PEOPLE SOLUTIONS

GROWING LEADERS • EMPOWERING TEAMS • STRENGTHENING ORGANIZATIONS



*“Did I Say That?”*

Recognizing and Responding to Microaggressions  
in the Workplace

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## Microaggressions Defined

Microaggressions are the everyday verbal, non-verbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership.” *(e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, ability, or class.*

## 3 Types of Microaggressions

1. Microassault
2. Microinsult
3. Micro-invalidation

Why do microaggressions occur?

Examples of microaggressions

Effects of microaggressions

## Psychological effects of microaggressions

### Responding to Microaggressions - Target

Express your feelings	• “That hurts my feelings” “That’s offensive.”
Appeal to values	• “Do you really believe that?”
Get them to explain	• “What did you mean by that?”
Empathize with underlying feeling	• “I know X, but have you considered Y”
Give more information	• “Persons w/disabilities are able to accomplish a lot.”
Use humor	• (laughing) “Interesting, you sound like my grandpa.”
Involve others	• Talk to trusted others; seek advice
Non-verbal response	• Look shocked, confused, disappointed, etc.

### Responding to microaggressions – Aggressor

- Resist the urge to defend yourself.
- Acknowledge the other person’s hurt feelings sincerely apologize.
- Thank them.
- Acknowledge what you’ve learned.
- Don’t expect anything in return.
- Remember this doesn’t make you a bad person.
- Do your research.
- Try harder the next time.

<https://www.bustle.com/p/what-to-do-when-someone-calls-out-your-unintentional-microaggressions-because-being-a-good-ally-means-learning-from-your-mistakes-48685>

## Responding to microaggressions – Bystander

- Intervene
- Invite them to speak (gives the power back to the victim)
- Change the dynamics in the room by becoming an advocate
- Don't take part
- Don't encourage the behavior
- Approach the recipient
  - Let them know you are aware of the behavior and that it's not acceptable
  - Encourage them to ask for help, go with them to get help, or provide them with information about where to go for help
  - Let them know they are not alone

Source: Andrea Pohlsander "Overcoming Microaggressions & The Bystander Effect in The Workplace" July 2019

