UNPLEASANT EVERYDAY LANGUAGE

MICROAGRESSION
THE NEW FACE OF RACISM
COMMON IDENTIFIERS:

• COMMON PLACE VERBAL, BEHAVIORAL OR ENVIRONMENTAL INDIGNITIES
• INTENTIONAL OR UNINTENTIONAL
• HOSTILE, DEROGATORY OR NEGATIVE RACIAL, SEXIST, OR HOMOPHOBIC SLIGHTS AND INSULTS
WHAT IS IT?
WOULD YOU PEG IT TO IGNORANCE,
INDICTIVENESS
CONDESCENSION
POOR JUDGEMENT
LIBERAL ASSUMPTION
CASUAL INFERENCE
GENERALIZATION

Colleague: Well Kate thank-you for meeting with us...its been a pleasure listening to your beautiful accent.

Which part of the Caribbean are you from?

Kate: Ghana...😊

Colleague: Oh...😊

😊😊😊😊...
WHERE? EVERYWHERE!

• AT THE WORKPLACE:
  • OFFICE
  • LIBRARY
  • STORE
  • BANK
• ON THE BUS
• CAMPUSES
• IN CONVERSATIONS
• LUNCH ROOMS
• RESTAURANTS, etc.
When I lived in New York, I had a Scholarship to a private college.

Am I to play sports?

You're the whitest black person I know!

I am a black person if I do something that means I'm a thing that black people do. Associating qualities that you like with whiteness is offensive.

Calling me "white" isn't a compliment.
I actually don't aspire to one day be white.
Your English is flawless, do you speak any Chinese at home? Why would I? I’m not Chinese. Was your father in the war? No, my father has never been to war.

Oh, you definitely look oriental, are you sure you do not have oriental/Chinese blood?
TRIGGERS

• LOOKS
• SKIN COLOR
• ATTITUDE OTHER GENERAL COMPLEXES SUCH AS PEOPLE OF A PARTICULAR RACE, RELIGION, NEIGHBORHOOD, ETC.
• NAME
• ACCENT
• AGE
When your ethnicity is in question, what do you do?

WILHELMINA?
YOUR NAME
DOESN’T SOUND
AFRICAN.
WERE YOU
ADOPTED?
“You’re not like the other Black people I know. You speak so well.”
EVEN AMONG MY OWN AFRICAN PEOPLES:
There are those who feel they are better than others, or that certain people from certain countries or tribes have specific characteristics that makes them stand out. Really? And what about careers? Talk to a typical African couple, tell them you have two (or three) children, and the assumption is that they are either a doctor, lawyer, or engineer.

African career options:
1) Doctor
2) Lawyer
3) Engineer
4) Disgrace to the family
“WHEN I SAY I’M FROM AFRICA”
What people think...

What I mean.
SO WHAT DO WE DO?

• CHANGE YOUR APPROACH TO PEOPLE: UNLESS YOU ARE ABSOLUTELY SURE THAT YOU HAVE THE RIGHT INFORMATION, DO NOT MAKE ASSUMPTIONS

• DO NOT LUMP EVERYONE IN THE SAME RACIAL MOLD SIMPLY BECAUSE THEY LOOK OR TALK A CERTAIN WAY

• EDUCATION IS KEY
AT THE LIBRARY

• REMEMBER, YOU ARE IN A PUBLIC SERVICE ARENA – USE THE RIGHT APPROACH TO CUSTOMER SERVICE

• BE POLITE, CARING AND UNDERSTANDING - NOT CONDESCENDING. A SMILE GOES A LONG WAY WHEN TRYING TO DIFFUSE TENSION

• DO NOT LOOK ANNOYED THE AGGRESSOR PROBABLY DOESN’T KNOW THAT HE/SHE HAS SAID SOMETHING OFFENSIVE

• BE PATIENT, AND EXPLAIN AS CAREFULLY AS YOU CAN. A GENTLE CORRECTION GOES A LONG WAY

• DO NOT BE JUDGEMENTAL NOR EMBARRASSING

• TRY NOT TO LET THE PATRON SEE HOW “FLUSTERED YOU ARE”
MICROAGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR AND COMMENTS OCCUR MORE FREQUENTLY AT THE SERVICE DESKS. WE GET MORE “THE CHINESE LADY DOWNSTAIRS IN THE COMPUTER AREA WAS HELPING ME YESTERDAY BUT SHE’S NOT HERE TODAY.” “YOU KNOW HOW THE CHINESE ARE, VERY SMART. I WANT TO COME BACK WHEN SHE’S HERE. IS SHE COMING TO WORK TOMORROW?”

THE “CHINESE LADY” IS REALLY NOT CHINESE, AND SAYING THAT THE CHINESE ARE VERY SMART IMPLIES THAT THE REST OF US, OR THE REST OF THE STAFF IS NOT!
• IN THE CASE OF A CO-WORKER, SPEAK TO HIM/HER PRIVATELY AND LET YOUR OBJECTIONS BE KNOWN WITHOUT BEING ARGUMENTATIVE
• DO NOT HAVE A CONFRONTATION IN PUBLIC
• REMEMBER MICROAGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR IS OFTEN NOT NOTICEABLE BY THE AGGRESSOR