

Microaggressions to Microinterventions:

First Steps for Interpersonal and Institutional Inclusion




Kerri Fisher, Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion
Garland School of Social Work
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Agenda

- Welcome
 - Approach & Language Considerations
 - Institutional/Structural Definitions & Considerations
 - Interpersonal Considerations & Practice
 - Questions & Reflections
 - Wrap-Up
- 
- A yellow dashed line in the bottom right corner, composed of several short, curved segments that curve upwards and to the right.



Few Villains.
Few Dumb-Dumbs.

Intersectional



Intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991)



Race/Ethnicity	Socioeconomic Status/Education	Gender
HP: HO:	HP: HO:	HP: HO:
Ability	Gender-identity	Nationality/Status
HP: HO:	HP: HO:	HP: HO:
Orientation	Age	Religion
HP: HO:	HP: HO:	HP: HO:

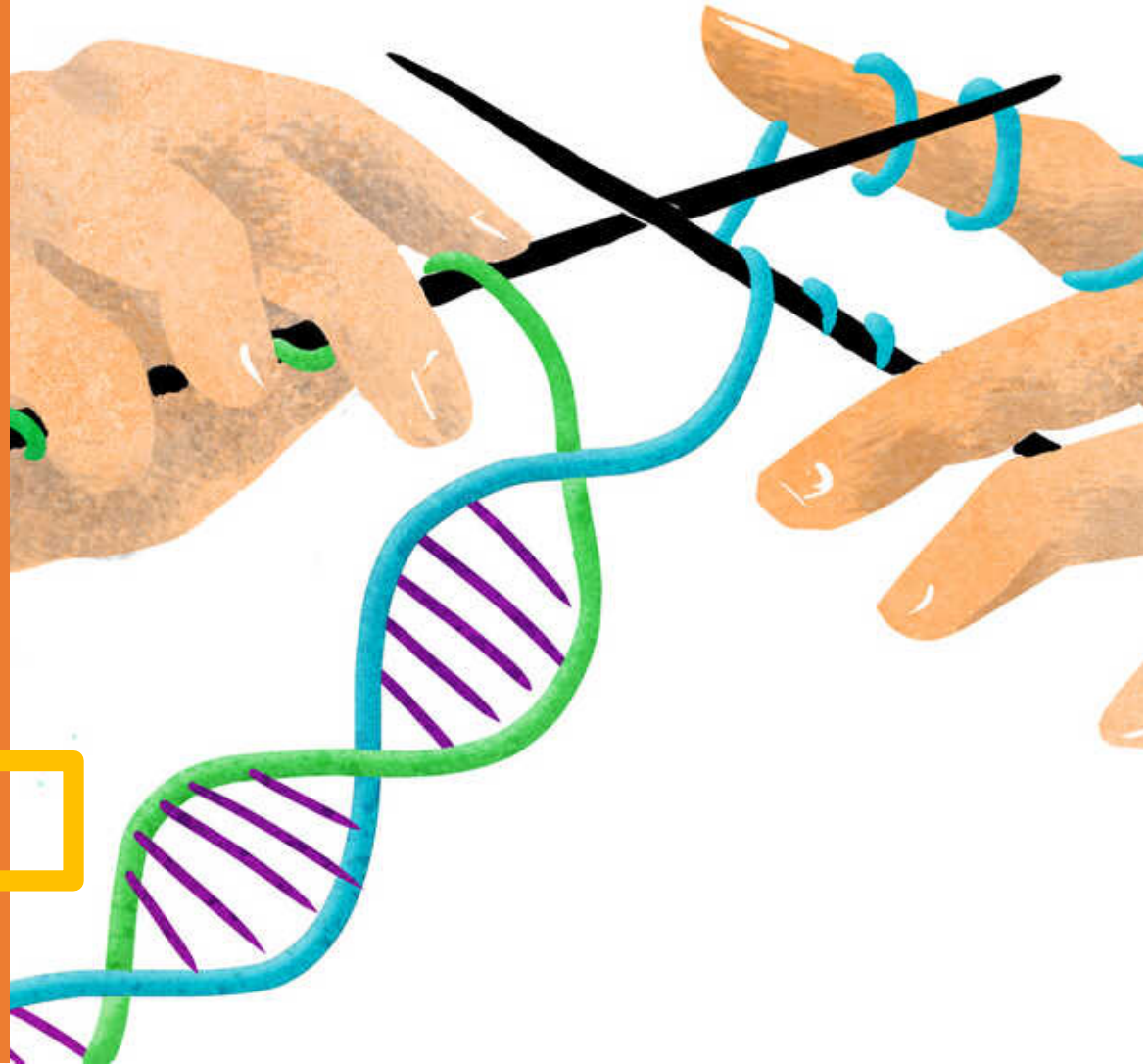
Nonbinary
(Diunital)
(Both/And)



Embodied



Embedded



Ist

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ic



INDIVIDUAL

SYSTEMIC

INTERPERSONAL

INDIVIDUAL

A *person's* beliefs & actions that serve to perpetuate oppression

- conscious *and* unconscious
- externalized *and* internalized

The *interactions* between people—both within and across difference

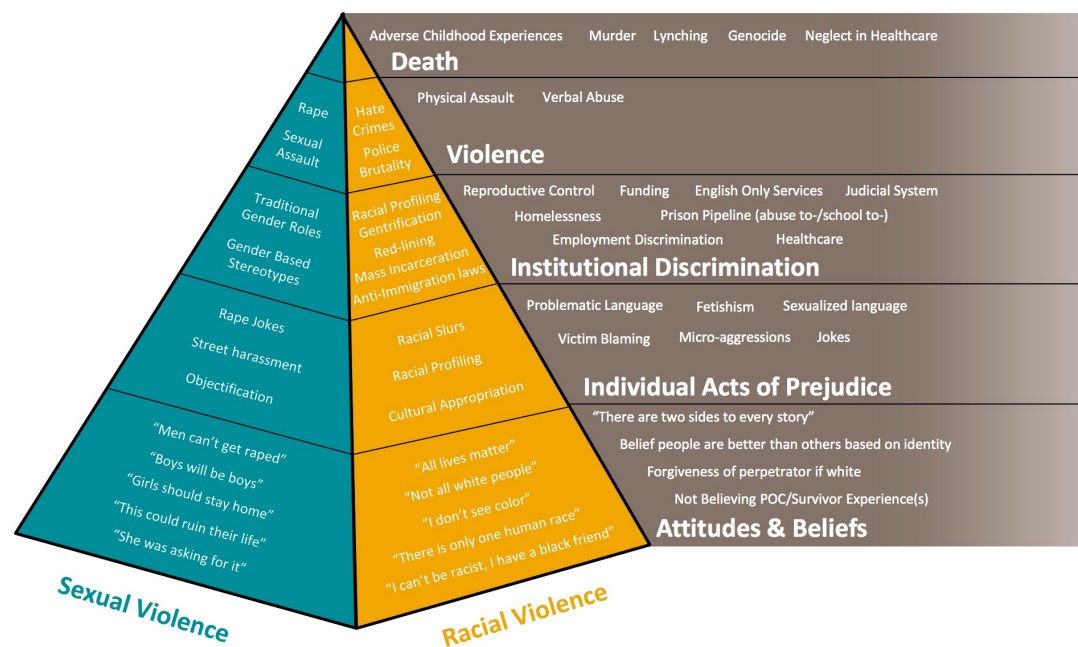
INSTITUTIONAL

Policies and practices at the *organization* (or “sector”) level that perpetuate oppression

STRUCTURAL

How these effects interact and accumulate *across institutions*—and across history

Racial and Sexual Violence Pyramid



Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape
2101 N Front St, Governor's Plaza North, Bldg #2, Harrisburg, PA 17110
www.pcar.org

Authors: Tatiana Piper & Jackie Strohm, LSW
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Institutions & Institutional Power



SUZANNE PHARR

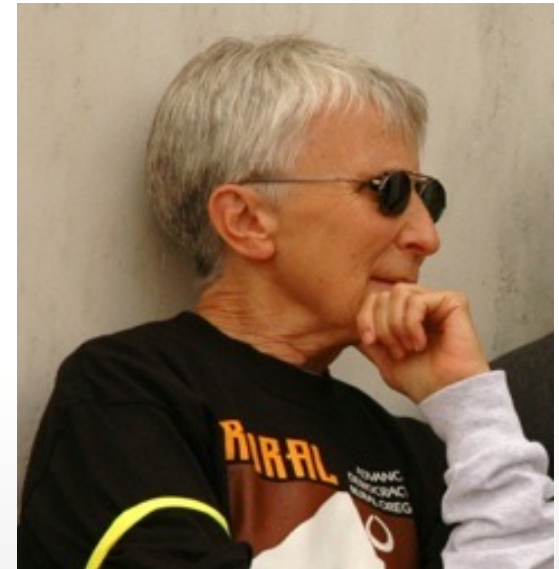
Homophobia

A
Weapon
of
Sexism

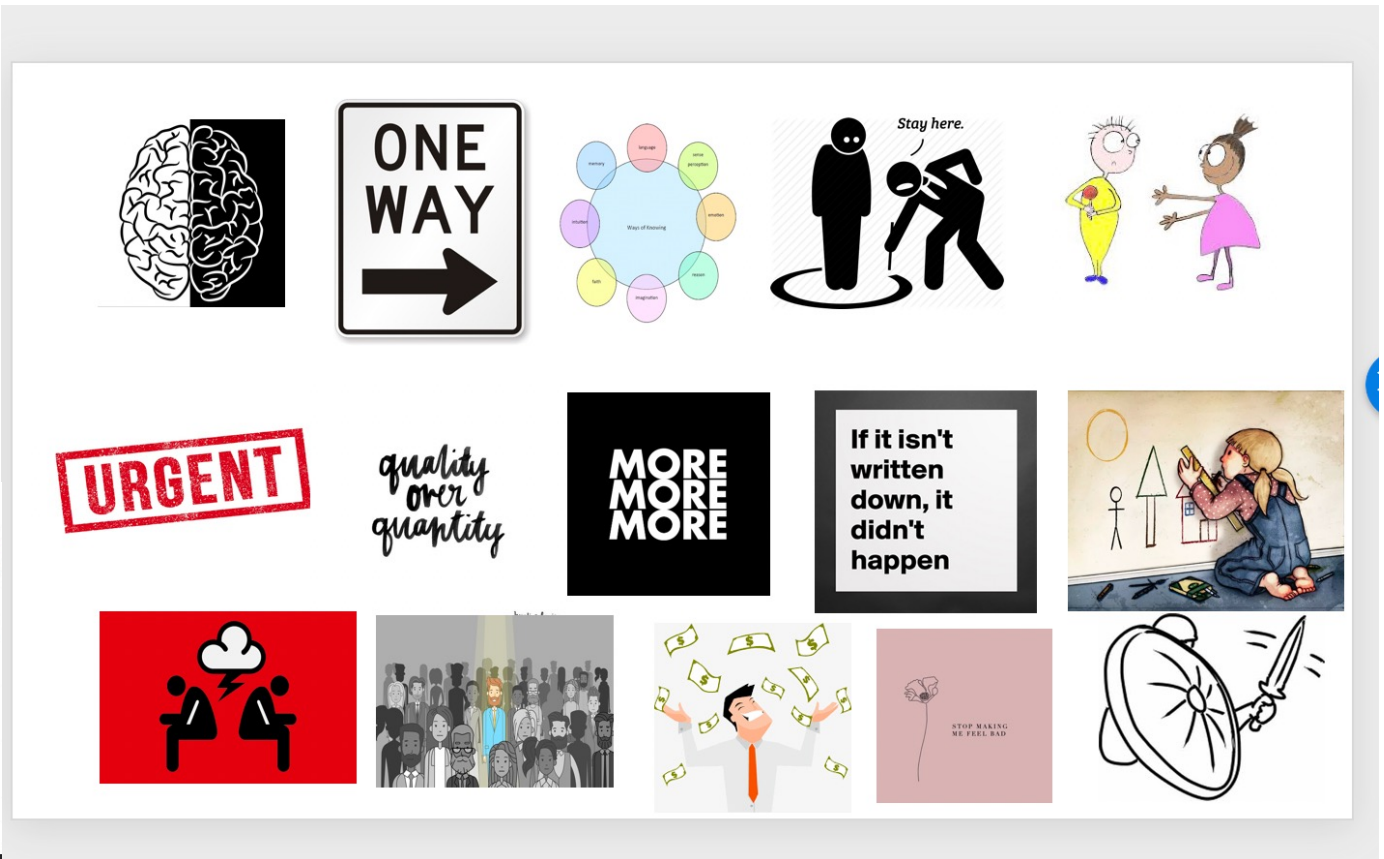
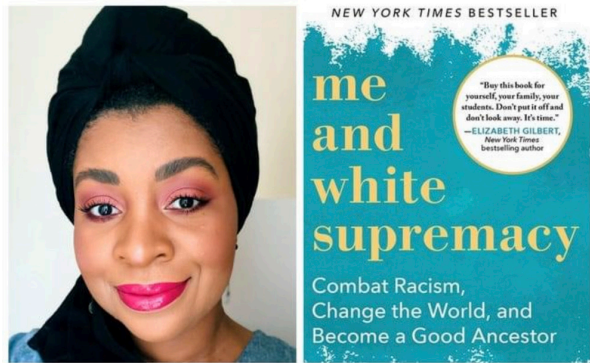
Elements/Mechanisms of Oppression

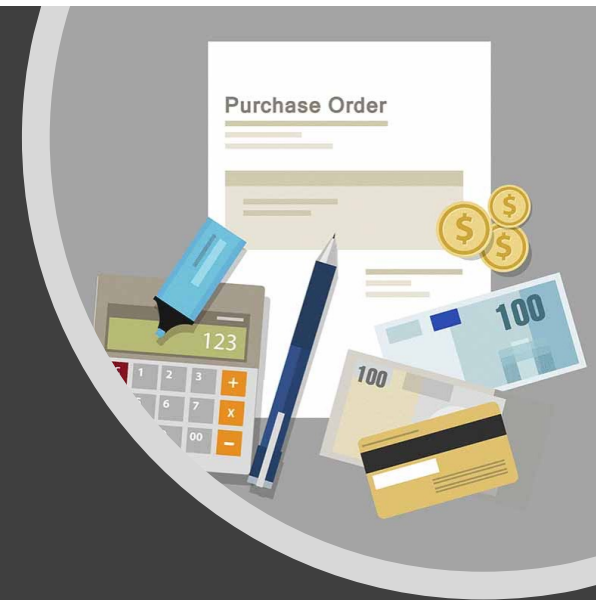
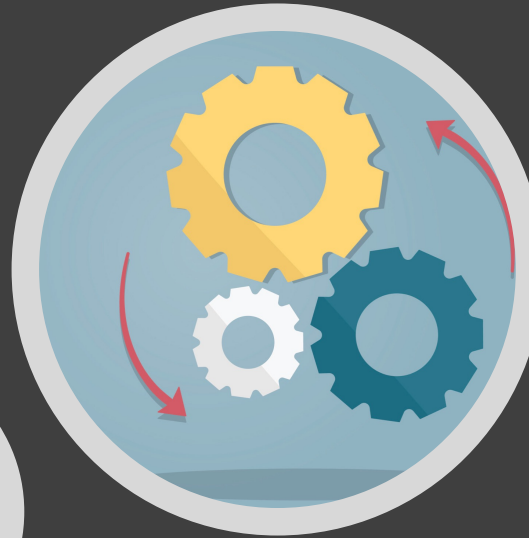
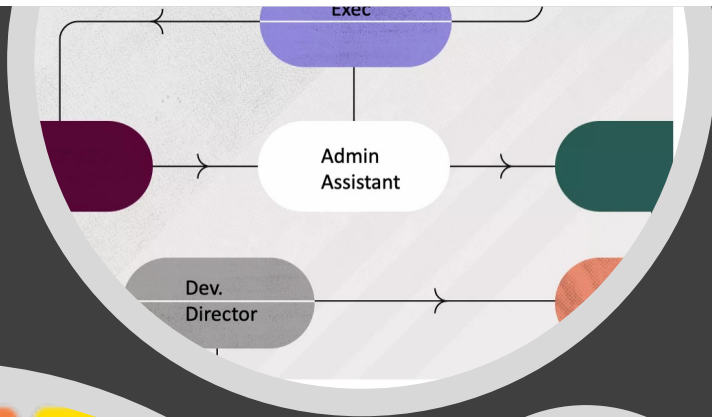
Economic Power and Control	Limiting of resources, mobility, education, and employment options to all but a few
Myth of scarcity	Myth used to pit people against one another; suggests that resources are limited and blames people (e.g. poor people, immigrants) for using too many of them
Defined Norm	A standard of what is good and right, against which all are judged
The Other	Those who fall outside "the norm" but are defined in relation to it; seen as abnormal, inferior, marginalized
Invisibility	Keeping "the other's" existence, everyday life, and achievements unknown
Distortion	Selective presentation or rewriting of history so that only negative aspects of "the other" are included
Stereotyping	Generalizing the actions of a few to an entire group, denying individual characteristics and behaviors
Violence and the Threat of Violence	Laying claim to resources, then using might to ensure a superior position
Lack of Prior Claim	Excluding anyone who was not originally included and labeling as disruptive those who fight for inclusion
Blaming the Victim	Condemning "the others" for their situation, diverting attention from the roles that dominants play in the situation
Internalized Oppression	Internalizing negative judgments of being "the other," leading to self-hatred, depression, despair, and self-abuse
Horizontal Hostility	Extending internalized oppression to one's entire group as well as to other subordinate groups, expressing hostility to other oppressed persons and groups rather than to members of dominant groups
Isolation	Physically isolating people as individuals or a "minority" group
Assimilation	Pressuring members of "minority" groups to drop their culture and differences and become a mirror of the dominant culture
Tokenism	Rewarding some of the most assimilated "others" with position and resources
Emphasis on Individual Solutions	Emphasizing individual responsibility for problems and individual solutions rather than collective responsibility and collective solutions

(Pharr 1988 adapted by Hutchison, 2015)



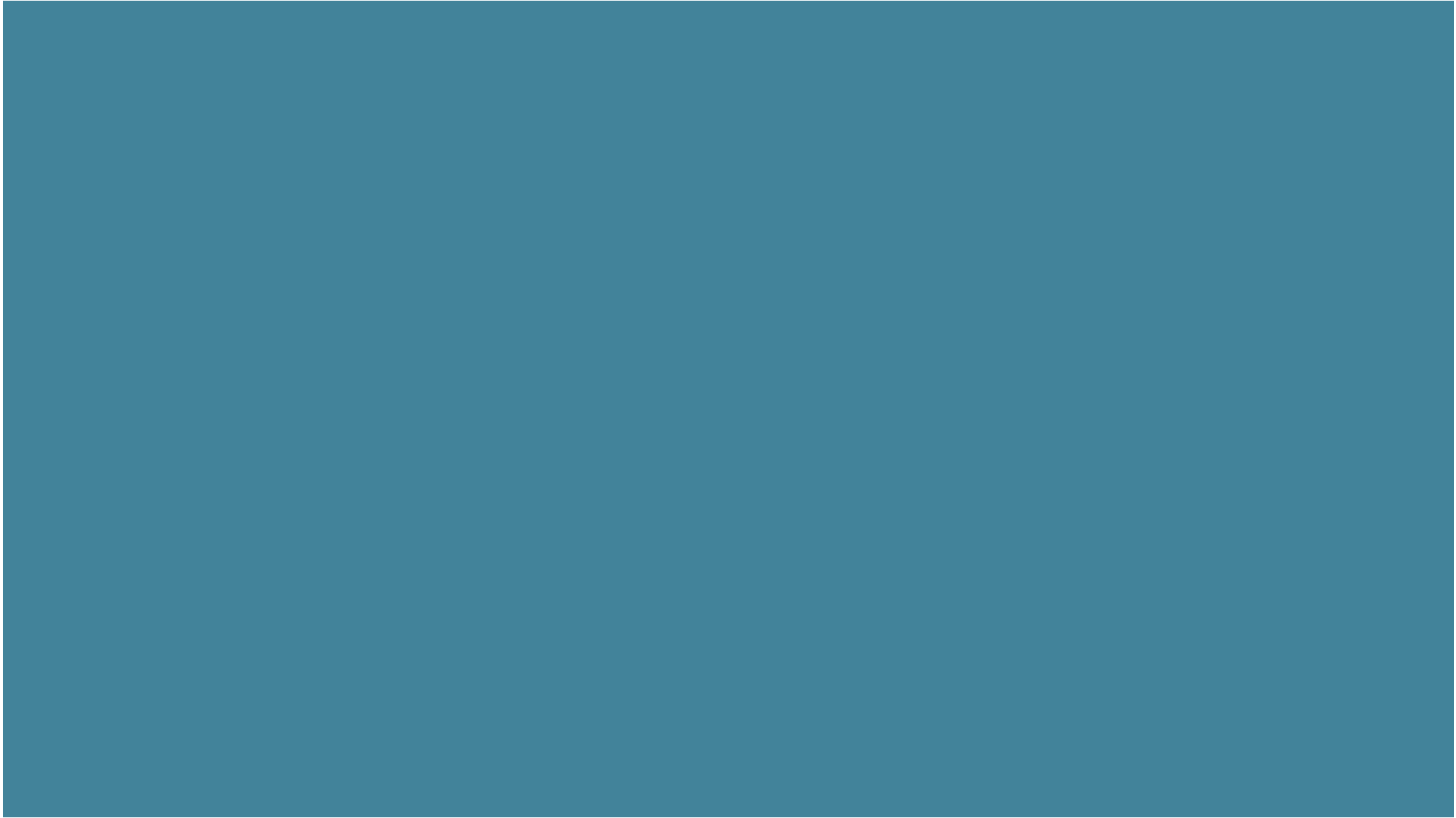
White Supremacy Tenets (Okun, 2011, Saad)





Embedded Institutional Change (6Ps)





Interpersonal Considerations: Microaggressions

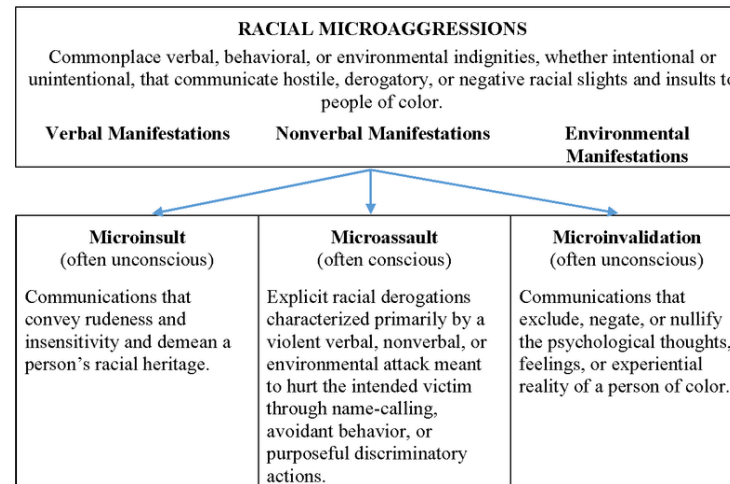




WAIT BUT WHY

Microaggressions

(Pierce, 1970s; Sue, 2010)



Thomas Theorem

IF A PERSON PERCEIVES
A SITUATION AS REAL,
IT IS REAL
IN ITS CONSEQUENCES.
-THOMAS THEOREM



Assaults



**For example
or
Such as
or
Like**

Verbal: Hate speech of any kind (Check APA or Journalism websites for inclusive speech guidelines)

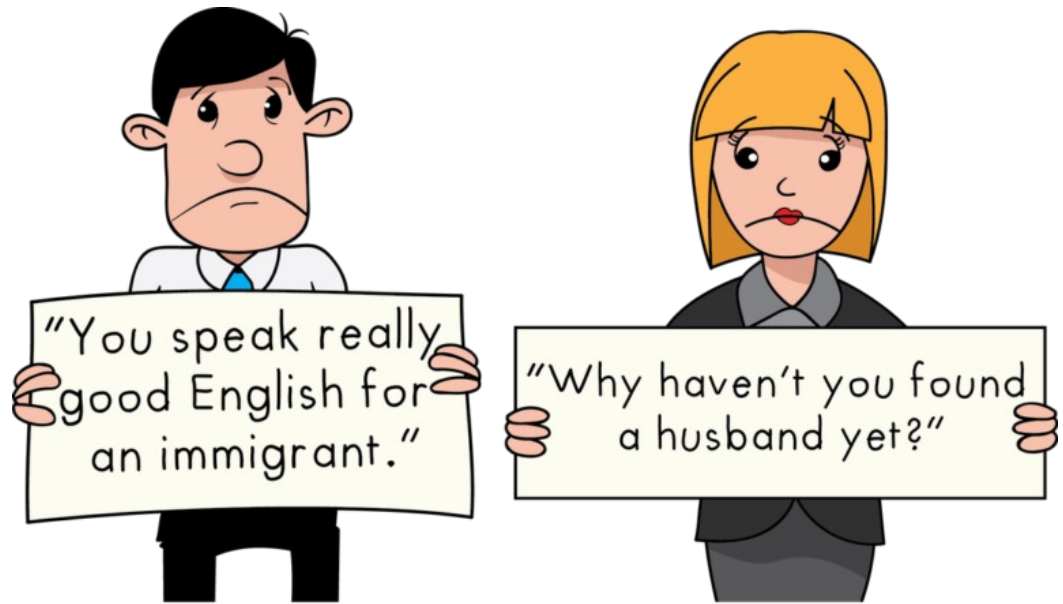
Behavioral:

- Following/stalking/physically intimidating anyone with a marginalized identity in work halls/bathroom/parking lot
- Policies, Processes, Paperwork, Administrator Personalities that allow for the above or below without action/consequence

Environmental:

- Nooses hanging in someone's office as a "joke"
- Buildings/Awards named for sex offenders, "owners"/terrorizers of enslaved people,

Insults



©Turner Consulting Group Inc.

**For example
or
Such as
or
Like**

Verbal:

- Telling a new older employee that you took them off the technology committee because you figured they'd prefer that.
- Employee refusing to learn how to pronounce an employee or client's name who is from a different racial/ethnic/national identity than the employee

Behavioral:

- Employer allows an employee to aggressively avoid sitting near or being partnered with a colleague who is neurodivergent--making clear that it is this difference that is the reason for this showy distance.
- Employees are encouraged to come to a white tr*sh or "ghetto" dress up day on the last Friday before a long break
- Policies, Processes, Paperwork, Administrator Personalities that allow for the above or below without action/consequence

Environmental:

- cubicle poster that depicts a woman as an object,
- shirt worn to the office that says, "God made Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve",
- confederate flag in the office window

Invalidations



**For example
or
Such as
or
Like**

Verbal:

- Employee intentionally and consistently misgenders a client who is trans/nonbinary
- A supervisor explains to a POC that the “racism” the POC is reporting is all in their head and they are too sensitive.

Behavioral:

- A boss routinely ignores women in meetings who raise their hands or post items in the meeting chat
- Policies, Processes, Paperwork, Administrator Personalities that allow for the above or below without action/consequence

Environmental:

- A building is consistently inaccessible for someone who uses a wheelchair.
- A website is inaccessible for individuals with a variety of disabilities, diagnosis, or divergences.

Discuss/ Practice





Interpersonal Considerations: Microinterventions



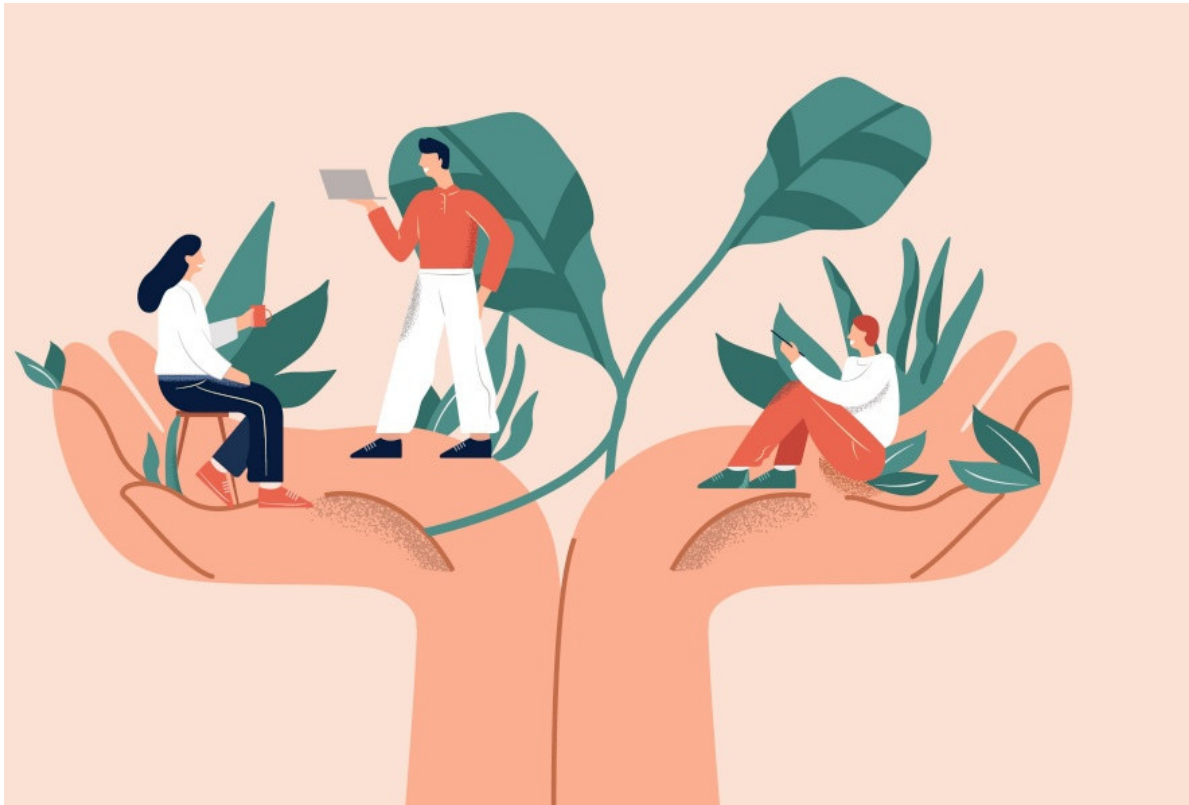
Microaffirmations Typology-Adapted

(Rolon-Dow & Davison, 2020)

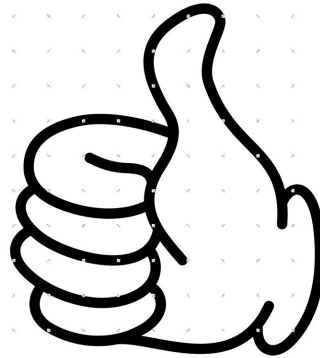
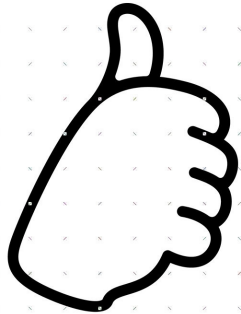
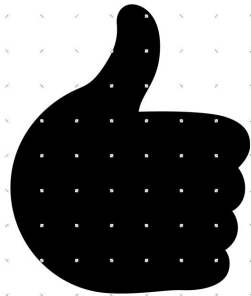
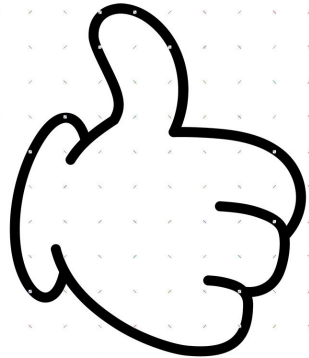
Microrecognition	Microvalidations	Microprotections
Leads the recipient to feel that their presence, identity, or experiences as a member of particular social identity group(s) or those of a group they belong to is made known, made visible, appreciated, or included.	Leads the recipient to feel that their thoughts, feelings, sensations, and behaviors associated with their social identity(ies) or those of a group they belong to are accepted, corroborated, legitimized, or given value.	Leads the recipient to feel shielded or protected from harmful or derogatory behaviors, practices, and policies tied to their identity(ies). The recipient feels supported or feels advocacy on their behalf when they are experiencing duress related to their identity(ies).

THE PLATINUM RULE:
INSTEAD OF TREATING
PEOPLE HOW YOU WANT
TO BE TREATED, TREAT
OTHERS HOW THEY
WANT TO BE TREATED.

@OptionB



Microprotections
(Your Turn!)



Microvalidations
(Your Turn)



Microrecognitions
(Your Turn)



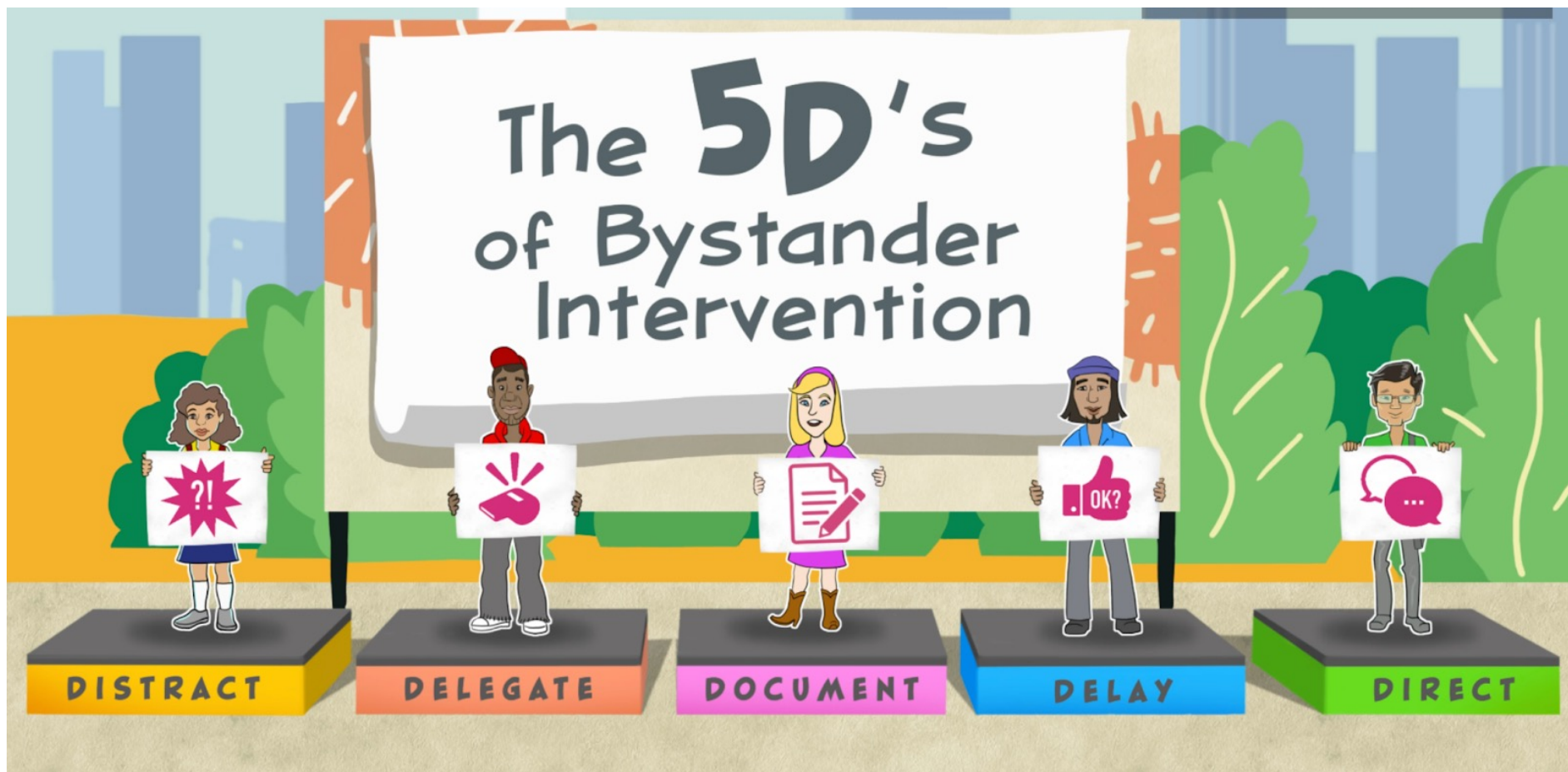
Table 7. *Microresistance Strategies for Potential Allies*

Interventive Experiences Tool 1: Microresistance Strategies for Potential Allies (Strategies for combating microaggressions interpersonally)	
Check In	Find Out More
Ask one or more of the following: 1. Do you want/would it be helpful to discuss/debrief? 2. How do you feel? 3. What do you need? 4. Anything else? ***Always be careful not to put the burden of responsibility/emotions/next steps on the victim, and always take into consideration what they have already requested in prior circumstances.	Sometimes we want to intervene, but we are unsure if a microaggression has even occurred or we don't feel we have relevant information to make the situation any better. If you find yourself in this situation take some time to seek and find what is needed through academic articles/texts, literature, art, media, and/or via appropriate conversations with willing friends/relatives/experts from the marginalized identity that are hoping to better understand/engage. Remember to ask the following: 1. Is my research current or seminal? 2. Is it from a reputable source? 3. Have I consulted the voices of those who have been oppressed?
Open the Front Door (OTFD) (Ganote et al., n.d.)	Self-Care
Tell the one who has aggressed what you observe, think, feel and want instead. (What do I) Observe : • Provide Empirical Data: What did you see, hear, taste, smell, feel? (What do I) Think : • Provide Relevant Data (research, resources, counter-stories) • Provide your opinion/belief (What do I) Feel : • For example: Offended, Confused, Sad, Frustrated, Angry (What do I) Desire • I'd prefer like it if... • In the future I would rather... • Instead of _____, please...	If you are the individual who has been microaggressed, if you are in a mental health crisis, or otherwise in danger outside of your own moral conviction , choose one or more self-care practices from the multidimensional list below. Allies also cannot intervene at all times at our highest capacity. Sometimes we have to take care of ourselves and choose to rest for a time in order to be effective and enduring long-term co-laborers. This option should be considered with extreme self-honesty. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Practical: Walk away and avoid engaging the situation further• Physical: eat well, rest, exercise, explore, play games, engage nature, etc.• Emotional: debrief with a safe person, journal, exercise, pray/meditate• Spiritual: breathe/be still, engage nature, attend a faith/community service,• Mental: Unplug from screens/devices, make a list, create something• Social: spend time with loved ones, attend a fun activity, make plans



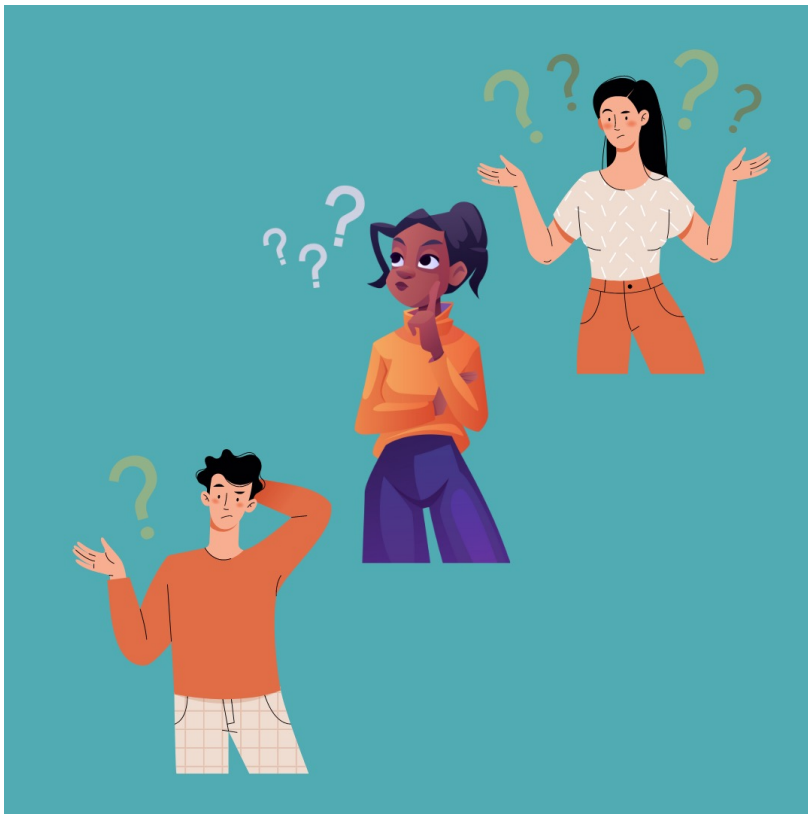
Table 8. *Macroresistance Strategies*

Interventive Experiences Tool 2: Macroresistance Strategies for Potential Allies (Strategies for changing systems and processes)	
Interrogate (Questioning People and Systems)	Disrupt (Interrupting Ignorance and Hate)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask “why” and other challenging questions of people in power to seek clarity about their language/actions. “What are we going to do to change things? By when? How? Who do I need to speak to?”• Identify potential allies willing to ask hard questions and offer answers along with you.• Check in with individuals/groups who might have been negatively impacted by a situation, program, policy to help you have a sense of what to question with power-players. Practice Counterintuitive Solidarity.• Use survey, focus group, & feedback loops to gather circumstance/agency specific data in order to better hold systems accountable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Say “stop”, “wait a second”, “please don’t”, “that’s not true” etc...• Provide relevant data. “Did you know?” or “Have you seen/heard/read/watched?”• Provide correction or modeling for misinformation, out of date language, etc. (In the moment, or at a later time)• Lead or commission a training on language, practices, processes• Report/Turn in “ist” or “ic” behavior• Refuse to participate boycott• Make a scene/protest• Run/volunteer for office/leadership position
Advocate (Using our Voices and Bodies for Change)	Create (Using our talents/skills)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meet with a power player• Levy privilege and pass the Mic• Spend/Donate/Raise Money• Raise awareness online or in person (beware of virtue signaling)• Vote/Campaign for candidate/team leader/award winner to see change	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make space: offer/highlight diverse storytelling/counter-storytelling (through language, art, media, etc.)• Start a group (support/educational/task)• Write a policy/process• Write a curriculum• Replace or overhaul a tradition• Develop a program• Make art/media that speaks to difference/justice



Hollaback,

“Reddyness”/Rationale



Getting “REDDY” Resistance Considerations

Relationships

- What are the levels of intimacy?
- What are the power dynamics?

•Environment/Setting

- What are the Spatial/Atmospheric/Architectural considerations?
- What are the Time considerations?

•Danger of Not Intervening (physical, psychological, social, spiritual)

- For the most marginalized individuals? (Those present and absent)
- For yourself?

•Danger of Intervening (physical, psychological, social, spiritual)

- For the most marginalized individuals? (Those present and absent)
- For Yourself?

•Yourself (Pushing oneself to be at least “comfortably uncomfortable”)

- Might I need to push myself to speak louder, longer, or to linger more readily than is strictly comfortable for me?
- Might I need to remain quiet, strategically speak, or generally be more careful than is strictly comfortable for me?

(Fisher, 2021)

Discuss/ Practice



Revisit, Repair, & Revise



The background of the slide is a repeating pattern of colorful speech bubbles. Each bubble is a different color (red, yellow, pink, white) and contains a large blue question mark. The bubbles are arranged in a staggered, overlapping grid. The text "Questions & Reflections" is centered over the middle of the image in a white, sans-serif font.

Questions & Reflections