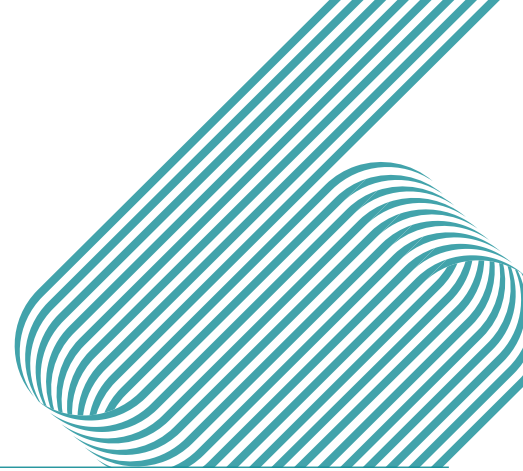


MICROAGGRESSIONS

NAVIGATOR TOPIC GUIDE

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What are microaggressions?

Microaggressions are the everyday verbal, nonverbal, 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 (Sue, 2010).

A 15-minute meeting?

The Journey for Teams educational modules are designed for a 15-minute block because veterinary workplaces are busy! We recognize that 15 minutes is not a ton of time to discuss microaggressions in depth. After the meeting, we hope the team will be inspired to explore this topic further as a team or individually. We invite everyone to check out Dr. Barajas' recommended resources at the end of this guide.

Let's begin!

Refer to the [Navigator Handbook 1.0](#) and the steps below to help you lead and facilitate discussion about microaggressions.

1 To begin the meeting, welcome everyone to the room by name.

2 Remind the group that the culture of a Journey for Teams meeting embodies engagement, open-mindedness, respect, and compassion.



ENGAGED



OPEN-MINDED



RESPECTFUL



COMPASSIONATE

3  Play the "Microaggressions" video.

- 4 Read aloud the 3 take-home messages from the 3-2-1 Discussion Guide:

Validate individuals who approach you when they have experienced a microaggression.

Your first reaction may be defensive or to explain away the situation. Instead ... listen, support, validate, and learn from the experience.

Microaggressions are impactful whether you mean them to be or not.

Microaggressions are often unintentional. Think about a time when you may have said something intended to be complimentary but could have actually been an insult, such as, “You are so articulate.”

Microaggressions evolve from stereotypes.

Recognize that societal and your own stereotypes contribute to unconscious bias and the resulting microaggressions.

- 5 Ask for 1-2 comments on the take-home messages. Try to keep it brief to respect the 15-minute time commitment.

- 6 Read aloud the 2 questions from the 3-2-1 Discussion Guide.

Question for the team:

Within our team, how can we create an environment to feel comfortable enough to share with others when we have been microaggressed and how can we minimize microaggressions in the first place?

Spend a maximum of 5 minutes discussing the team question.

Question for individual self-reflection:

No need to share answers or thoughts with anyone.

Now that you better understand microaggressions, can you think of a situation where you microaggressed and how might you handle it differently now?

The most important part of the meeting

7 As a team, decide on **1 actionable and measurable behavior change** to implement in your workplace. Consider 1 from the list below, or come up with your own idea.

- As a team, explore common microaggressions in the workplace. Read the article [“15 Things People Think Are Fine to Say at Work—but Are Actually Racist, Sexist, or Offensive.”](#) Next time you meet, share your thoughts.
- If you think you have observed a microaggression to anyone on your team, agree to check in with the targeted person to make sure they are okay.
- Read the article [“What Are Microaggressions? Their impact is anything but small!”](#) to learn more about the three types of microaggressions (microassault, microinsult, microinvalidation) and common verbal and nonverbal microaggressions.

Our actionable idea

8 Invite the team to self-reflect. Team members have the option to consider and commit to **1 personal behavior change** (no need to share them with anyone).

- The next time you think you might have microaggressed someone unintentionally, start a conversation with them (e.g., “I noticed that you seemed uncomfortable when I said...”)
- Use I-statements to emphasize the importance of intent versus impact (e.g., “When I heard you say this, I felt dismissed”). If you were the one who caused harm, consider starting the conversation with, “I apologize for my words and how I made you feel. What can I do differently?”

9 **Thank everyone for contributing, and congratulate yourselves on how much you accomplished in 15 minutes!**

RESOURCES

Greenhill, L. & Wong Lau, K. (Hosts). (2017, September 23). Microaggressions (No. 27) [Audio podcast episode]. In *AAVMC's Diversity & Inclusion on Air: Conversations about Diversity, Inclusion & Veterinary Medicine*. AAVMC.

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Sue, D.W. (2021). Microaggressions: Death by a thousand cuts. *Scientific American*.

Sue, D.W. & Spanierman, L. (2020). *Microaggressions in everyday life*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.

Yang, Y., & Carroll, D.W. (2018). Gendered microaggressions in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. *Leadership and Research in Education*, 4, 28–45.

The inclusion of resources by this author does not imply or constitute an endorsement by the American Veterinary Medical Association or the Veterinary Medical Association Executives.