



Guelph Engineering Leadership Program 2022-23

Workshop 4: Embedding Social Justice in Engineering

Activity 2: Identifying and Responding to Microaggressions

Instructions:

For this activity you will pretend you are having a conversation with your friend and one other peer. Your friend uses a microaggression directed at the peer. Using the table below, describe how the peer might interpret the comment, and discuss how you could respond as a witness. For some guidance on responding to microaggressions see below.

Responding to microaggressions:

- A. Inquire - ask for clarification
- B. Reframe - give a different perspective
- C. Identify - directly state how it was offensive
- D. Diffuse - politely take a step away and process the situation

Your friend says to another peer...	Possible negative interpretation by peer	What could you say as a witness/observer?
"I couldn't even tell you were gay"		
[To a girl] "Math is hard. You would know that right?"		
"Your English is so good"		

[Asking a Latina peer] “What do Latina’s think about this?”		
“No where are you really from?”		

Discussion questions:

1. Choose a microaggression from Column 1. What do you think the possible intent was of the speaker? Does the intent change the impact of the statement for the person who experiences the microaggressions?
2. What can you do if you realize **you** have used a microaggression towards someone?
3. Dr. Sue, a psychology professor at Columbia University, suggested that the impact of subtle prejudice, such as microaggressions, is more harmful than the impact of blatant discrimination. Do you agree or disagree with this proposition? Explain your answer.

Choose a participant to volunteer to discuss your reflection in the main room! (Only need to speak for 30 seconds or so)