

## Pre-Training Introduction

**Microaggressions** can be defined as brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate derogatory, hostile or negative slights and insults toward people of marginalized experiences (i.e. race, sexual orientation, class, etc.)

**At the end of this VR training, you will be able to:**

Identify microaggressions and learn strategies to interrupt microaggressions when they occur in the health care setting.

## VR Training

### Instructions

We will ask you to go through a few scenarios through the lens of a woman of color in order to familiarize yourselves with sexual orientation and race microaggressions in the healthcare setting. The goal of this immersive training is to gain insights into the experiences of those holding identities different from your own, particularly female patients of color.

**Scenario 1: A patient asks the Receptionist for help on filling out forms for her prenatal check up appointment. The receptionist asks “Where are you from? Where are you really from” and the Patient responds “I’m from New Jersey” and the Receptionist continues with “No, No, Where are you really really from?”**

**Statement: What is the message of the microaggression being made?**

- A) Weakening the patient’s identity by playing into stereotypes and historical biases about social groups based on her physical appearance.
- B) Statements being made about someone’s intelligence based on their race.
- C) Statements that demonstrate a specific group doesn’t want to acknowledge another’s racial identity.

**Correct Answer:** Option A; The receptionist is purposefully undermining the patient’s identity based on stereotypes and social groups. Indicating they don’t belong here and will always be an outsider.

**You just witnessed a microaggression at the receptionist desk towards a woman of color. What would you do in this situation?**

- A) Tell the receptionist that she does not know the patients’ ethnic and racial identity and needs to immediately apologize for the comment she just made.
- B) Ask the receptionist why she would make such an unacceptable assumption about the patient’s racial background.

- C) Express how inappropriate her remark towards the patient is and how it can have serious consequences or impact on the patient.

**Correct Answer:** To prevent situations where the receptionist would feel attacked and offender for their actions, choice B would be the correct answer. You are kindly asking the receptionist for the reason on making a microaggression statement and possibly open up to allowing them to realize it's wrong.

Lesson: Instead of attacking the receptionist for their actions, starting a conversation slowly on why they acted that particular way can lead them to putting themselves in the patient's shoes rather than straightforwardly saying "what you said was unacceptable, apologize immediately!" Asking them "why" and "how" questions can give them chances to recognize their wrongdoings rather than bluntly accusing them for making such a racist comment.

**Scenario 2: *A resident asks your patient, who's a woman, "Do you have a husband?"***

Statement: What category does this microaggression statement falls under?

- A. Heterosexist assumption
- B. Assumption of criminality
- C. Ascription of intelligence

**Correct Answer A.** True; this is considered a microaggression because it stems from a heterosexist assumption that because she is a woman, that her partner must be a man.

So you just witnessed a micro-aggression, now what?

- A. Ask her why she would make an assumption about your patient's sexual orientation
- B. Tell her that she does not know the patient's sexual orientation and needs to apologize to your patient for this remark
- C. Question the behavior by suggesting more inclusive terminology

**Correct Answer C**

You could say "If the question is relevant, it is more inclusive to ask about someone's partner as opposed to assuming that we know to whom someone is physically attracted?"

**Lesson:** Ask questions about the behavior using "How..." or "What made you..." rather than "Why..." as this can make folks defensive.

**Scenario 3: *A new resident, in reference to a patient, says, "Ugh, I wish these people would really learn how to speak English. We're in America."***

Why is this considered a microaggression statement?

- A. It stems from xenophobia that anyone who speaks another language isn't American
- B. It stems from assumption of criminality that a particular race are most likely to be involved in criminal activities and goes to prison

- C. Basing someone's intelligence based on their race. Believing that the patient isn't smart so she doesn't understand treatment plans.

**Correct Answer A;** This stems from xenophobia and highlights the anyone who speaks another language is not American.

**You just witnessed a micro-aggression, now what?**

- A. Call her out for being racist
- B. Do nothing, if you respond, you will just add fuel to the fire
- C. Ask her about how she got to this conclusion

**Correct Answer C**

"Many languages are spoken in America. I'm wondering why someone who doesn't speak English makes them less American?"

**Lesson:** Separate the person from the behavior. For example, "that could be perceived as a racist remark," rather than "You're racist."

**Scenario 4: A patient is having a conversation with the nurse in the room next to you in the hospital. The nurse asks her "When's your due date?" and she responds "In two weeks, unfortunately a C - section is needed because my baby is in an abnormal position". The nurse says "I'm surprised that you know why you need a c - section. You probably don't even know the aftereffects `` and the patient says " I know that I may feel some soreness in the incision and may even have bleeding or discharge for up to 6 weeks and that's normal". The nurse then says "Wow, it's unusual for someone of your race to be intelligent"**

**Statement: The statement made by the nurse "Wow, it's unusual for someone of your race to be intelligent" fits in what themes below?**

- A) Assigning intelligence to a person of color on the basis of their race
- B) Statement made about a person of color presumed to be dangerous or related to criminal events
- C) Statements asserting that race doesn't play a role in life successes

**Correct Answer:** Option ; The message is that the nurse is assuming people of color are generally not as intelligent as Whites and therefore, surprised that she was able to have a whole conversation about a C - section.

**You have just witnessed another patient in the room next to you being a target of microaggressions by a nurse, what are you going to do now?**

- A) Stand up for the patient by approaching the nurse, calling her out "This isn't right, you are being very racist here!"

- B) Ask how she came up with the microaggression statement and what she could've said instead. Lead her to reflect on where the microaggression came from.
- C) Simply pretend you didn't hear anything and wait until your doctor comes to do your check up because you think it's better to not get involved to avoid conflicts.

**Correct Answer:** B is the correct answer. You should try to avoid attacking the person making the microaggression statement strongly because it may make the situation worse for the targeted patient. Asking the nurse on why she made such a statement and follow up questions will lead her to acknowledging that the patient is hurt and apologize. This way will allow her to reflect on her statement and where it came from. Possibly, even avoid similar mistakes in the future.

Lesson: Before jumping into conclusions and telling the micro-aggressor that they're wrong, slowly starting a conversation that leads them to reflecting their actions will increase the chances of them taking responsibility for understanding their own privileges and prejudices as well as putting themselves in the other person's shoes and recognize how such remarks can impact the victim.

## Post-Training Reflection

I feel confident...

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Identifying microaggressions				
Interrupting microaggressions when they occur				
Supporting patients when they experience microaggressions				