Making the “invisible” visible: recognizing and responding to microaggressions

Confronting Racism Virtual Series

Association of Pediatric Program Directors &

Academic Pediatric Association

Pediatric Hospital Medicine SIG

Format for Today's Meeting

- Turn on video so we can see each other
- Keep audio on mute unless talking to avoid background noise
- We will share a few thoughts, and then open up for discussion
- If any questions/comments come up as we are presenting, please record them in the chat box

Upcoming Sessions

- 12/17 Cognitive Bias: Implicit and Explicit
- 1/21 Allyship

Session Evaluation

- Please complete this evaluation to give us feedback on the session:

Introductions



Courtney Gilliam, MD
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Associate Professor, Keck School of Medicine, University of Southern California
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Group Norms



Assume positive intent



Listen to each other with respect & an open mind



Speak respectfully



Maintain confidentiality



Embrace discomfort

Objectives

1. Define forms and themes of microaggressions

2. Illustrate impact of microaggressions in the learning environment

3. Describe at least 2 frameworks for interrupting microaggressions

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Definitions

Association of Pediatric Program Directors

The ADDRESSING Framework: A model of cultural influences and their relationship to the social construct of ***power*** – Dr. Pamela Hayes

Cultural Characteristic	Power	Less Power
Age and Generational Influences	Adults	Children, Adolescents, Elders
Developmental Disability	Temporarily Able-Bodied	Individuals with disabilities
Disability Acquired Later in Life	Temporarily Able-Bodied	Individuals with disabilities
Religion and Spiritual Orientation	Christian	Non-Christian
Ethnicity/Race Identity	White or Caucasian	Persons of Color
Socioeconomic Status	Upper and Middle Class (Access to Higher Education)	Lower status due to occupation, education, income, rural habitat
Sexual Orientation	Heterosexuals	Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual
Indigenous Heritage	Non-Native	Native
National Origin	U.S. Born	Immigrants, refugees, International students
Gender	Male	Women, Transgender, Intersex

Targets

- People who are objects of prejudice, discrimination

Allies

- People who belong to groups in power who support those in less power; work to eradicate prejudice, discrimination

Bystanders

- Individuals with a superficial or nebulous awareness of racially biased behaviors and institutional policies/practices

Microaggressions

- Brief, commonplace statement, action or incidence
- Often indirect, subtle or unintentional
- Communicate hostile, derogatory or negative views against members of a marginalized group

Three categories of microaggressions

Microassaults (Often conscious)

- "Old fashioned" racism

Microinsults (Often unconscious)

- Communications (including non-verbal) that convey rudeness, insensitivity

Microinvalidation (Often unconscious)

- Communications that exclude, negate thoughts, feelings, or experiences

Themes of Microaggressions—Sue et al 2007

Themes	Microaggression	Message (Metacommunication)
Alien in their own land	"You speak good English"	You are not American
Ascription of Intelligence	"You are so articulate"	It's unusual for someone of your race to be intelligent
Colorblindness	"When I look at you, I don't see color"	Denies a person of color's racial/ethnic experiences
Denial of Individualized Racism	"My best friend is Asian"	I'm immune because I have friends of color
Environmental	TV Shows/movies without representation of POC	Your people are not important and don't exist
Gender	"Smile, you're too pretty for people not to see you smile"	Your appearance defines what people think of you
Religion	"You don't look Jewish"	All Jewish people look the same
Sexual Orientation	"I like you but why do others have to shove it in our face?"	The LGBTQ experience is offensive and abnormal

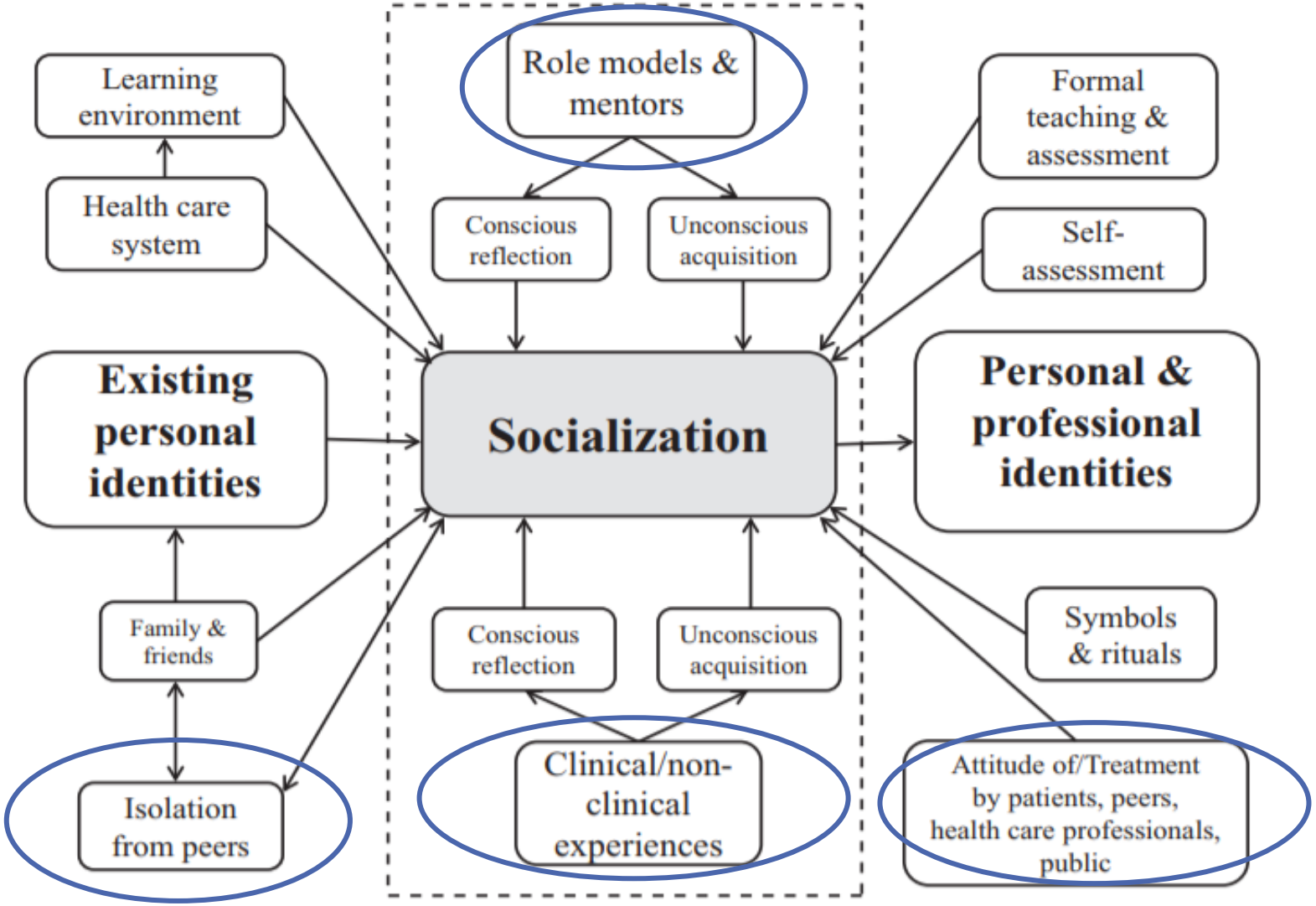
The impact of microaggressions

- Well-being and burn-out
- Negotiating professional development while being othered
- Harsh learning climate
  - Negatively affect learning, performance, wellness
- Linked to development of
  - Anxiety
  - Depression
  - Hypertension

Osseo-Asare et al; Molina et al, 2020

Professional Identity Formation

- Carnegie Report 2010
  - Medical education … is fundamentally about becoming a dedicated physician…
  - …Therefore the professional identity formation of physicians – meaning the development of their professional values, actions and aspirations – should be a major focus of medical education.

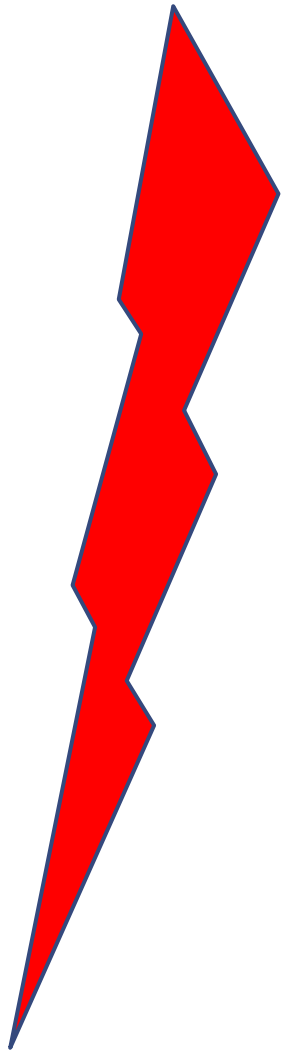


Cruess, RL et al. *A Schematic Representation of the Professional Identity Formation and Socialization of Medical Students and Residents: A Guide For Medical Educators*. Acad Med. 2016 90(6)

Professional Identity Formation

Discourse of Diversity

- Respect for the individual
- Value of unique life experiences
- Student idiosyncrasies
  - Incorporate
  - Preserve
  - Leverage



Discourse of Standardization

- Competency Based Education
- Specific Standards (Core Competencies)
- Designed to limit variability
- Single definition of a "competent physician"

Frost HD, et al. *"I AM a Doctor": Negotiating the Discourses of Standardization and Diversity in Professional Identity Construction.* Acad Med. 2013

Professional Identity Formation



Diversity

Standardization



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Responding to microaggressions

Guiding principles

- Challenging to do without frameworks or practice
- Targets may not always want an ally/bystander to respond
- Tips
  - Pick your battles
  - Pick when and where to address the offender
  - Adjust response (confront versus educate)

Assess the challenges

- Power/hierarchy dynamic
  - Training hierarchy
  - Patient versus provider
- In group setting (i.e., on rounds), better to respond later
- The onus falling on the microaggressed→ assess your energy

Frameworks

Framework	Setup
Open **T**he **F**ront **D**oor	**O**bserve: Make concrete, objective statement about microaggression **T**hink: State your thoughts based upon the observation **F**eel: State your emotion **D**esired outcome: State your desired outcome
DEAR	**D**escribe: Describe the situation. Stick to the facts. **E**xpress: Express your feelings using "I" statements. **A**sk/Assert: Ask for what you want. **R**einforce: Reward (reinforce) the person ahead of time by explaining the positive effects of getting what you want.

Adapted from Adapted from Linehan, 2014; Sue et al, 2019; Molina et al, 2020; and Toolkit for APPD Workshop: What's that, DEAR? Approaches and techniques to address microaggressions and white fragility in the workplace (Developed by Roberto Montenegro, MD, PhD)

D.E.A.R. Demonstration

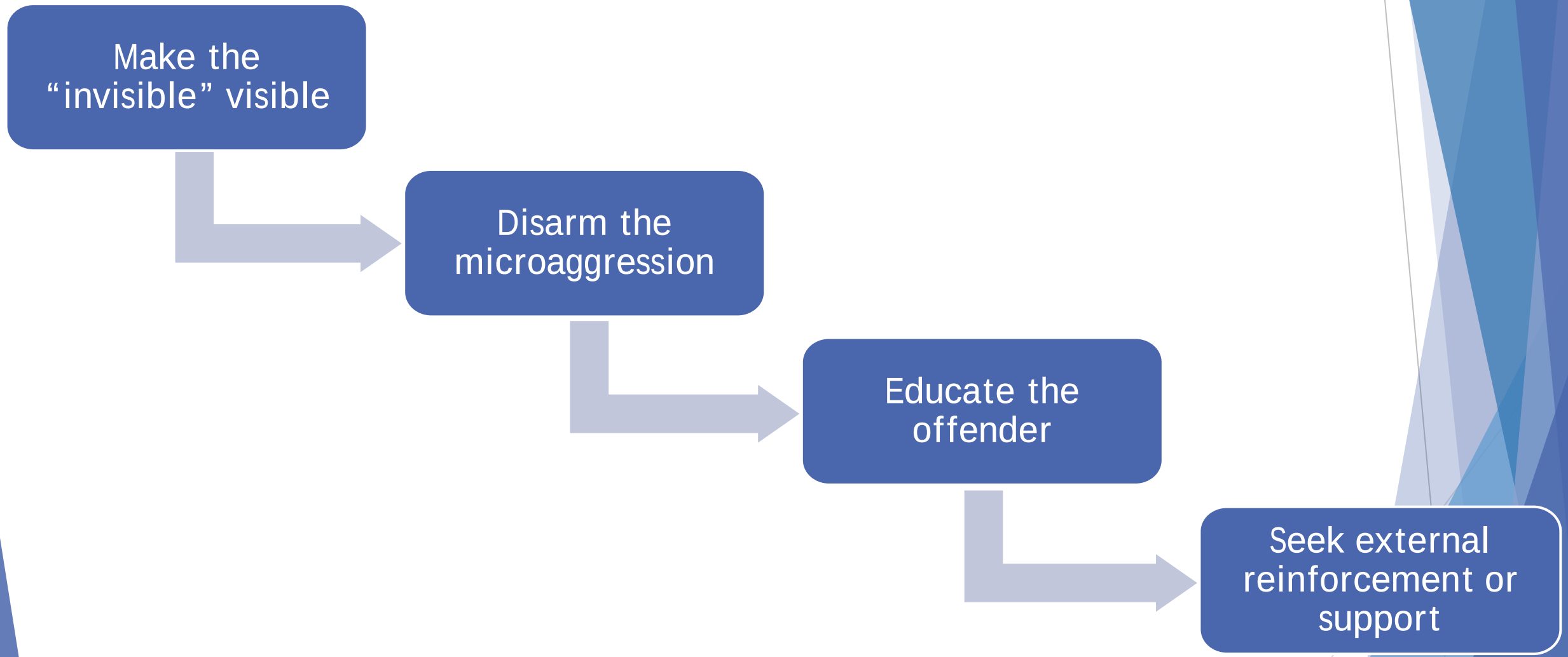
- **Describe:** “Hey Dr. Russell, remember yesterday in the team meeting when you use misgendered our mutual patient and sighed when I corrected you.”
- **Express:** “I wanted to share with you that I left that conversation feeling upset. Your dismissal of our patient’s wishes made me feel like our hospital does not value the diversity of our patient population.”
- **Ask/Assert:** “I would like you to be aware of how reactions like that can have a negative impact even though that was probably not your intent.”
- **Reinforce:** “Thanks for hearing me out. It’s really refreshing to see that you’re open to having these discussions with your staff. It makes me feel that you are here to listen and support.”

Frameworks

Framework	Setup
ACTION	**A**sk clarifying questions **C**uriosity: Come from curiosity, not judgement **T**ell: State your observations in an objective manner **I**mpact exploration: Ask/state potential effect microaggression has on others **O**wn your own thoughts/feelings **N**ext steps: Request appropriate action to be taken
"Micro"intervention	Make the "invisible" visible Disarm the microaggression Educate the offender Seek external reinforcement or support, if needed

Adapted from Adapted from Linehan, 2014; Sue et al, 2019; Molina et al, 2020

Microinterventions—Sue et al., 2019



Step 1: Make the "invisible" visible

- Undermine the metacommunication
- Name and make the metacommunication explicit
- Ask for clarification

Step 2: Disarm the microaggression

- Express disagreement
- State values and set limits
- Describe what is happening
- Non-verbal communication
- Interrupt and redirect
- Remind the of the rules

Step 3: Educate the offender

- Differentiate between intent and impact
- Appeal to the offender's values and principals
- Point out the commonality
- Promote empathy

Step 4: Seek external reinforcement or support

- Alert leadership
- Report
- Buddy system
- Support group

Microintervention Demonstration

- **Make "invisible" visible:** "Dr. Russell, when you mention having to be politically correct when I pointed out your misgendering of our patient, it suggests that the trans experience is abnormal."
- **Disarm the microaggression:** "I disagree that it is 'PC' to address our patients as they request. At our hospital, all patients deserve the right to be addressed in a respectful manner."
- **Educate the offender:** "Transgender people often experience misgendering, which impacts their health. How would you feel if someone misgendered you or your child?"
- **See external support:** "I'd be happy to provide additional resources about this topic or arrange for a talk from our DEI office."

Post-encounter tips

- Debrief with those involved outside the room

- Acknowledge the event and everyone's discomfort:
  - "When I heard X, it made me feel uncomfortable."
  - "How did others feel during that encounter?"

Summary

- Microaggressions based upon differences in power
- Pick one or two frameworks to use consistently to respond to microaggressions
- Practice responding to microaggressions before having to do

Thank you!

- Courtney Gilliam: @DrCourtneyAnn
- Chris Russell: @cjrussellMD
- Pat Poitevien: @DocPatTeachOne

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Extra slides

Response frameworks if you committed the microaggression

Framework	Setup
PAUSE	**P**ause: Pause before reacting. **A**cknowledge: Acknowledge the negative impact this may have had on the recipient. Accept your role in the cause and repair of the event. **U**nderstand: Understand how and why this microaggression occurred. **S**elf-reflection: Examine the reactions and emotions that emerge wit **E**mbrace/explore: Embrace and Explore how to be part of institutional change and equity in a respectful and inclusive manner.

Adapted from Linehan, 2014;
Molina et al, 2020

P.A.U.S.E. in action

"Hey there, I was wondering if I could talk to you for a second. The other day (**pause**) I confused you for Luis and I know that was a microaggression. I have thought about it and I want to apologize to you. I know my words have an impact (**acknowledge**) and I am sorry for the impact they had on you. I value our relationship and want you to know I am aware of what I said (**understand**). I take responsibility for it, and I am working on improving. (**self-reflection** and **embrace/explore**)."