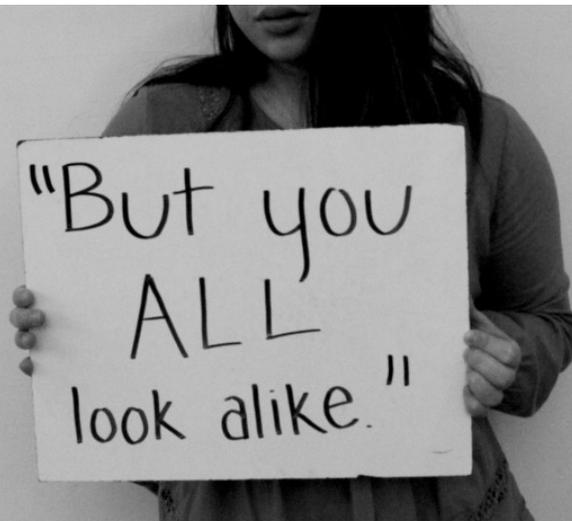


THE NEWS LETTER



**BULLYING
PREVENTION
CONSULTING**

January
2021

mi·cro·ag·gres·sion

A microaggression refers to a statement, action, or incident which is generally viewed as indirect, subtle or an unintentional form of discrimination against some marginalized group.

(Desmond-Harris, 2015)

MICROAGGRESSION AND WORKPLACE BULLYING

AN ASIAN AMERICAN STUDENT IS COMPLEMENTED BY HIS PROFESSOR FOR SPEAKING PERFECT ENGLISH BUT IN REALITY ENGLISH IS THE STUDENT'S FIRST LANGUAGE.

A BLACK MAN WANTS TO CONGRATULATE A WHITE WOMAN FROM HIS DEPARTMENT WHO JUST RECEIVED TENURE-BUT WHEN SHE SEES HIM IN THE HALLWAYS, SHE TIGHTENS UP AND LOOKS THE OTHER WAY.

A WOMAN TRIES TO SPEAK UP AT A DEPARTMENT MEETING, ONLY TO BE CONSTANTLY INTERRUPTED BY HER MALE COLLEAGUES.



"I WAS JUST JOKING"

In each of these cases, someone's bias against a marginalized group leaves the target feeling uncomfortable or insulted. Microaggressions are not just insulting, insensitive nor uncomfortable remarks or behaviors, but they are often pointed at groups who have been discriminated against or a group subjected to stereotypes.

People who express such behaviors-say there was no harm intended, but such behaviors can affect the mental health of their recipients or targets. The targets are left angry and depressed, and in the workplace such unresolved emotions can affect work productivity and thinking. People who engage in microaggressions are generally not even consciously aware of their statements and actions. It is important for all



individuals in the workplace to:

- ▶ be aware of their own biases and fears
- ▶ avoid being defensive, if someone calls out their behavior
- ▶ be open to discussing personal attitudes
- ▶ be an ally who stands against all forms of discrimination

In another source (Laboy, 2020) microaggressions fall into two categories-actions that feel discriminatory, or comments that feel insensitive and derogatory. There are three types of microaggressions that we should be cognizant of in the workplace:

- ▶ inferiority-people talk over you
- ▶ invisibility-people don't get credit for their ideas
- ▶ disrespect-the offender makes excuses for what they said--and states he/she 'was just joking.

If we don't stop such microaggressions-- they can escalate to bullying behavior, especially if expressed over a period of



time. What can we do at our workplaces to stop such behavior?

- ▶ identify potential risks by listening carefully to your colleagues and supervisors
- ▶ act promptly when microaggressions are perceived
- ▶ implement general reporting and response procedures, so colleagues know how they are accountable

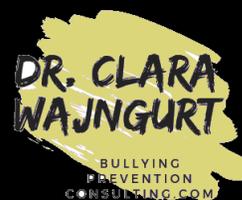
If we don't do anything about microaggressions in our workplaces, cultural awareness of others, and organizational culture are affected. We want healthy and positive interactions between our colleagues, so effective decision-making and policy development can occur.

About Clara:

Clara Wajngurt, is an executive coach, author, speaker and professor in higher education for thirty five years, an expert in the self-development of others, and in empowering those around her. She is also the founder of Bullying Prevention Consulting.



Bullying Prevention Consulting offers workshops and consults to small and large scale groups including individual sessions.



For more information or call us at: 347.301.6554