

It Starts With Me: Understanding Racial Micro-Aggressions

Sara Stahlberg, MPH
Associate Director, Programs

Neil Rana
Manager, Health Equity



Acknowledgments

This presentation was made possible with support from NCSD colleagues:



Lillian Pinto

Senior Manager, Adolescent Sexual Health



Leandra Lacy, MPH

Manager, Capacity Building

Objectives:

- Identify and define racial and other micro-aggressions
- Develop skills to effectively name, respond to, and prevent racial micro-aggressions and personal and professional settings

Ground Rules



Respectful and mindful



Assume good intent



Open-minded



Share experiences



Listen



Oops/ouch



What's learned here leaves here, what's said here stays here



One diva, one mic

Large Group Activity

- The purpose of this activity is to acknowledge how diverse a group we are, with varied identities, including different beliefs, values, cultural omnibet representations, etc.
- Please stand as you hear things that you identify with
 - If you do not wish to share, you do not have to.

Understanding Implicit Bias

Implicit bias refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner.

- Pervasive. Everyone possesses them
- Malleable. Can be unlearned.
- Related but distinct from explicit biases
- Do not necessarily align with core beliefs
- Usually favor our own ingroup

Defining Micro-Aggressions

Racial micro-aggressions are the **brief** and **everyday** slights, insults, and indignities and/or denigrating messages sent by **well-intentioned** people who are unaware of the hidden messages they communicate. (*Derald Wing Sue, Columbia University*)

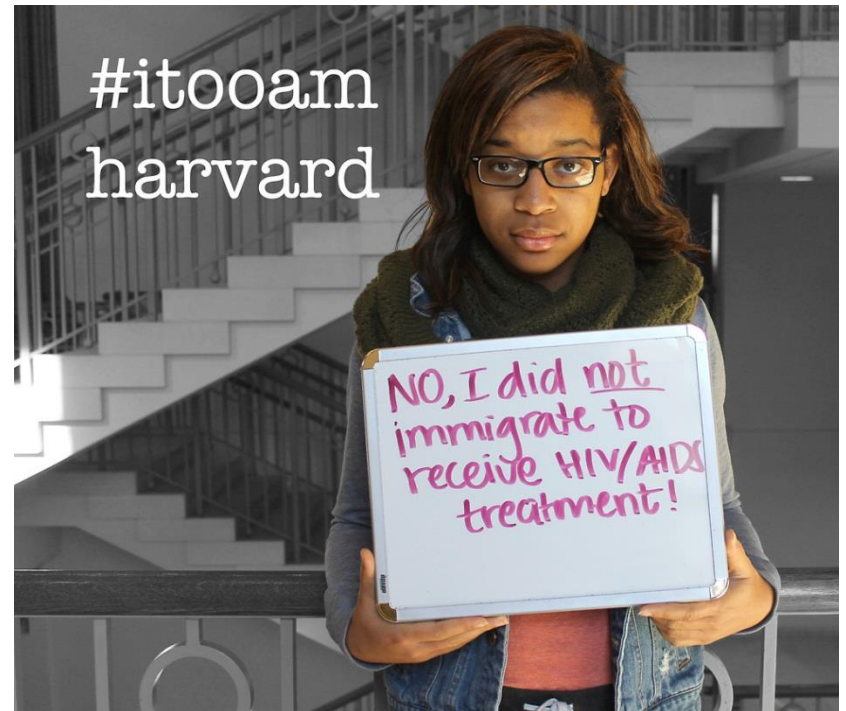


Other Varieties

Micro-Assaults: Conscious and intentional actions or slurs; Examples include: slurs, catcalling, intentionally mis-gendering or outing somebody

Micro-Insults: Subtly convey rudeness and insensitivity and demean a person's identity; Examples include: "that's so gay", purse grab, "articulate"

Micro-Invalidations: Alien in your own country, unintentionally mis-gendering, denial of individual racism/sexism/heterosexism, myth of meritocracy



Example



Example



Impact



Depression and trauma



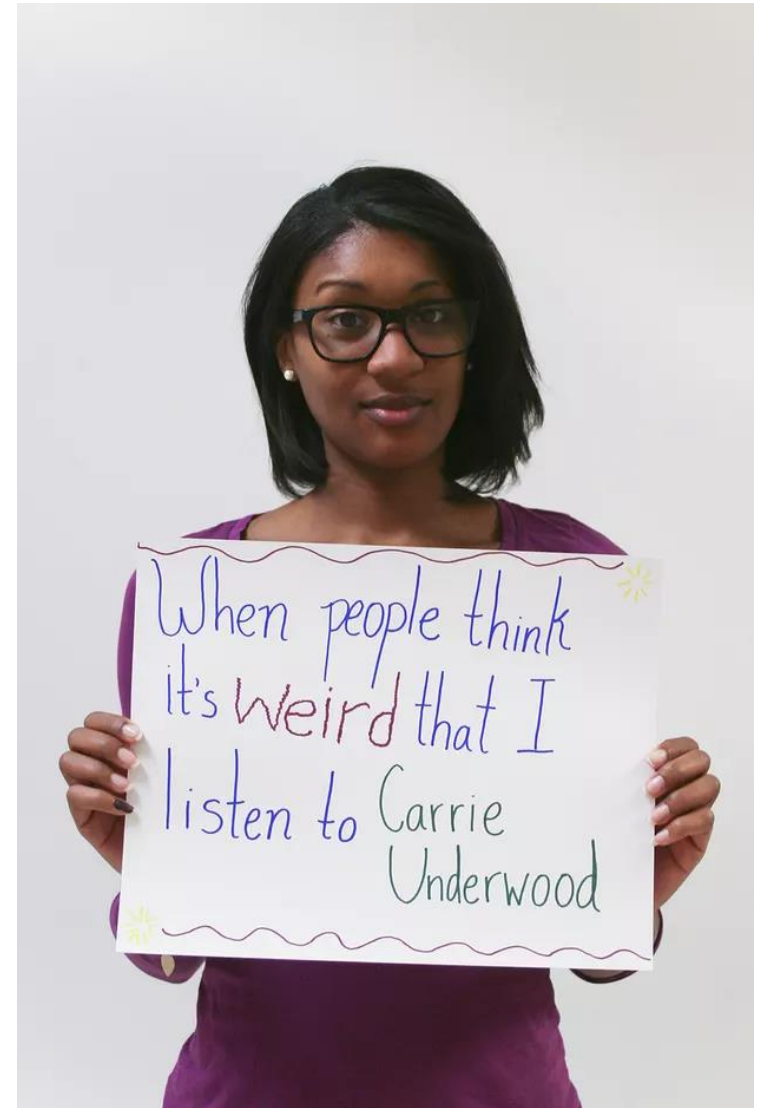
Suicide ideation



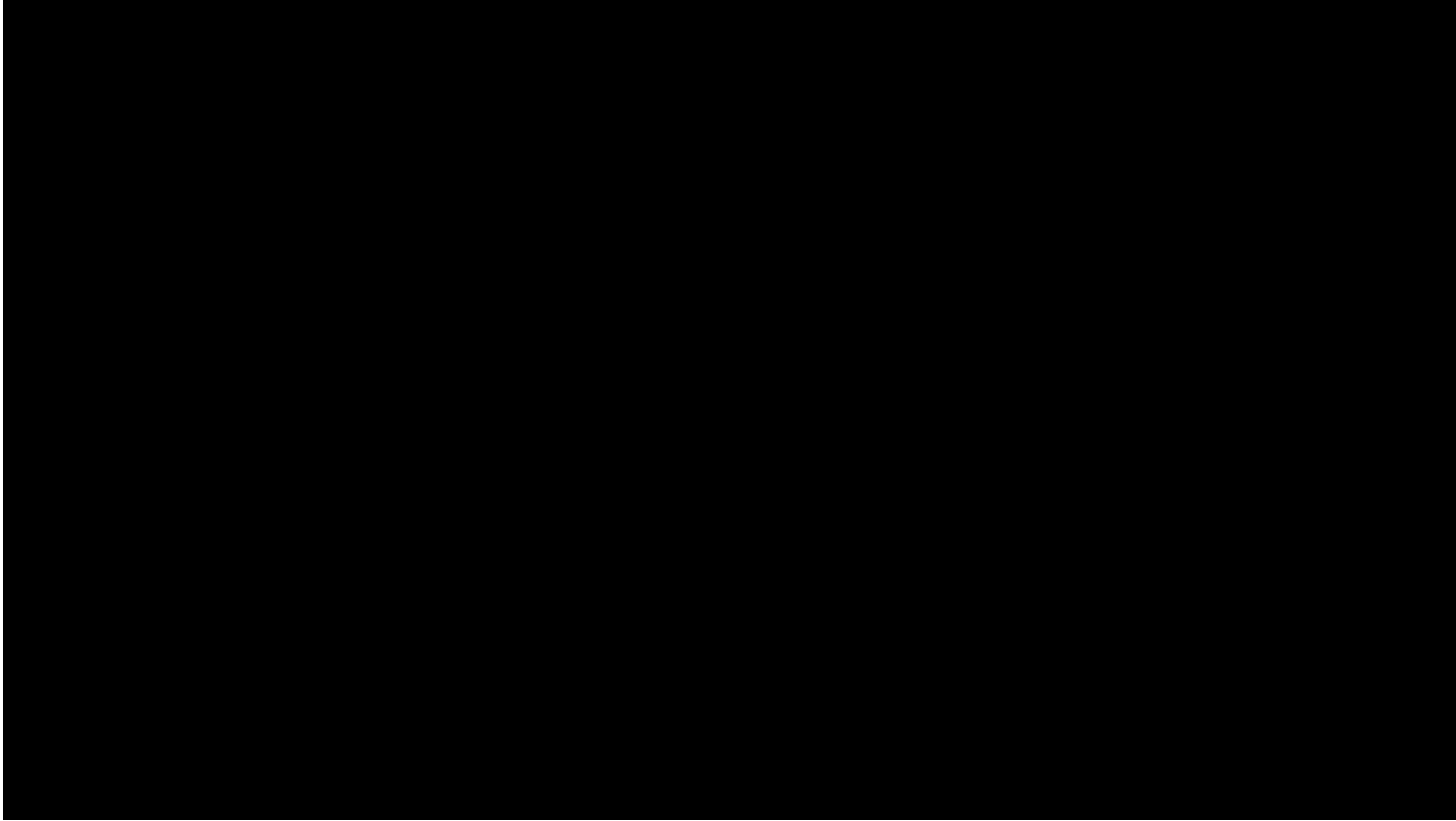
Trust in service providers



Medication adherence



Video Example



<https://youtu.be/hDd3bzA7450>

Examples and Themes

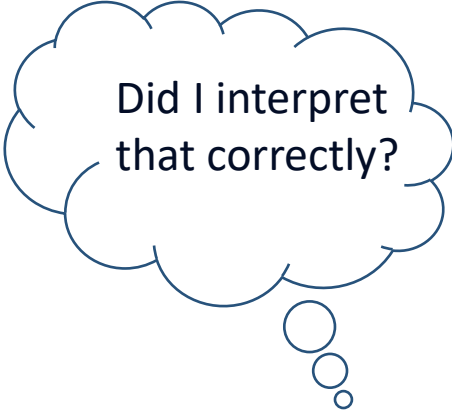
Theme	Microaggression	Message
Alien in own land	“Where are you really from?”	You aren’t American
Ascription of intelligence	“You are so articulate”	It is unusual for someone of your race to be intelligent
Color blindness	“When I look at you, I don’t see color”	Denies a person of color’s racial/ethnic experiences
Assumption of criminal status	A store owner follows a customer of color around the store	You are going to steal
Denial of individual racism	“My best friend is black” or “as a woman, I know what you go through”	I’m immune because I have friends of color. Your racial oppression is not different than my gender oppression

Activity

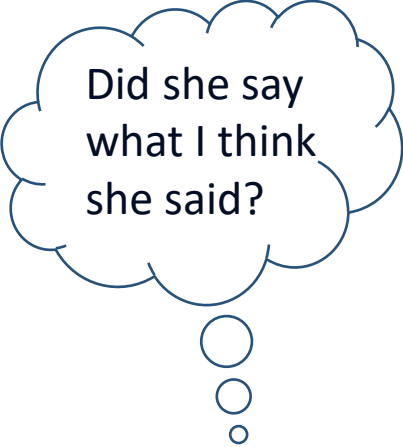
EXAMPLE

[Professor to Latina student during class] “What do Latinas think about this situation?”

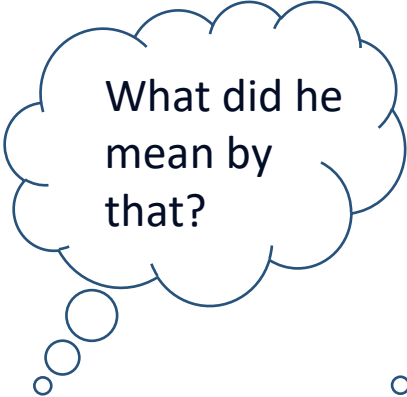
Experiencing a Micro-Aggression




Did I interpret that correctly?



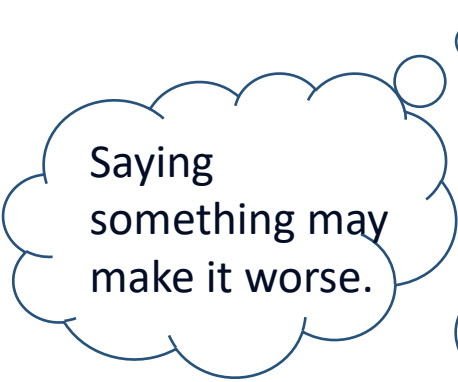
Did she say what I think she said?



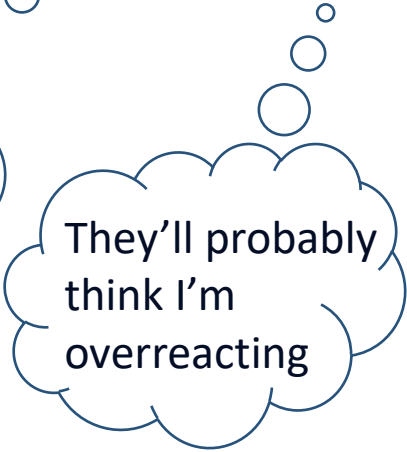
What did he mean by that?



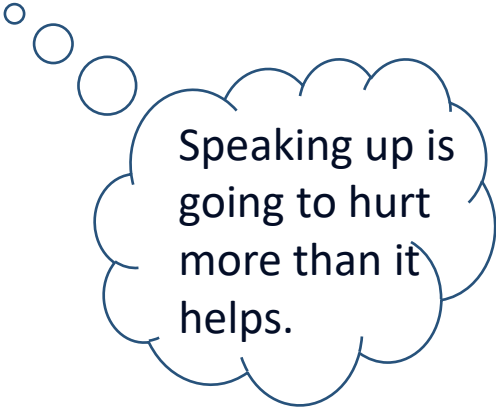
Should I say something?



Saying something may make it worse.

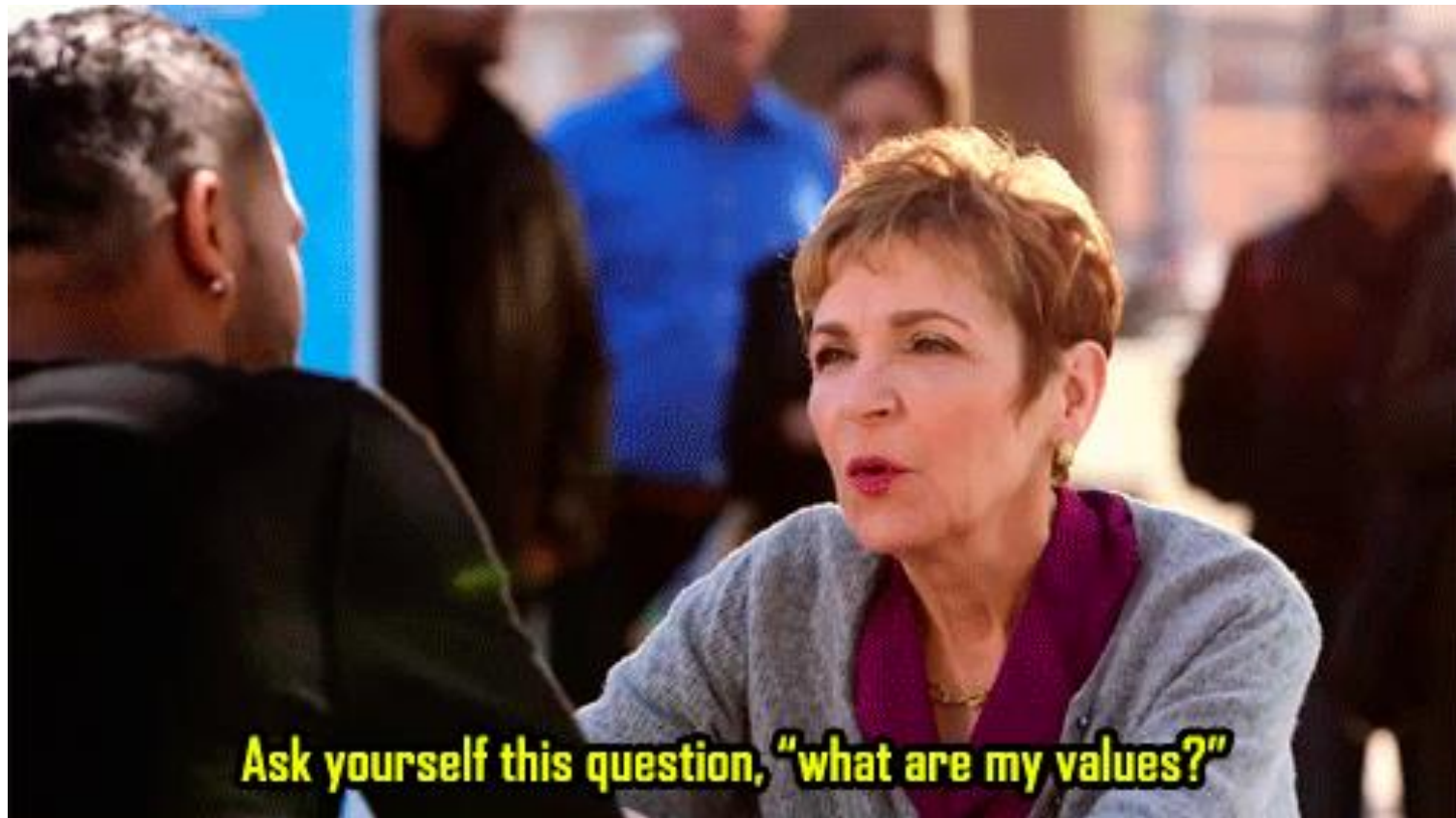


They'll probably think I'm overreacting



Speaking up is going to hurt more than it helps.

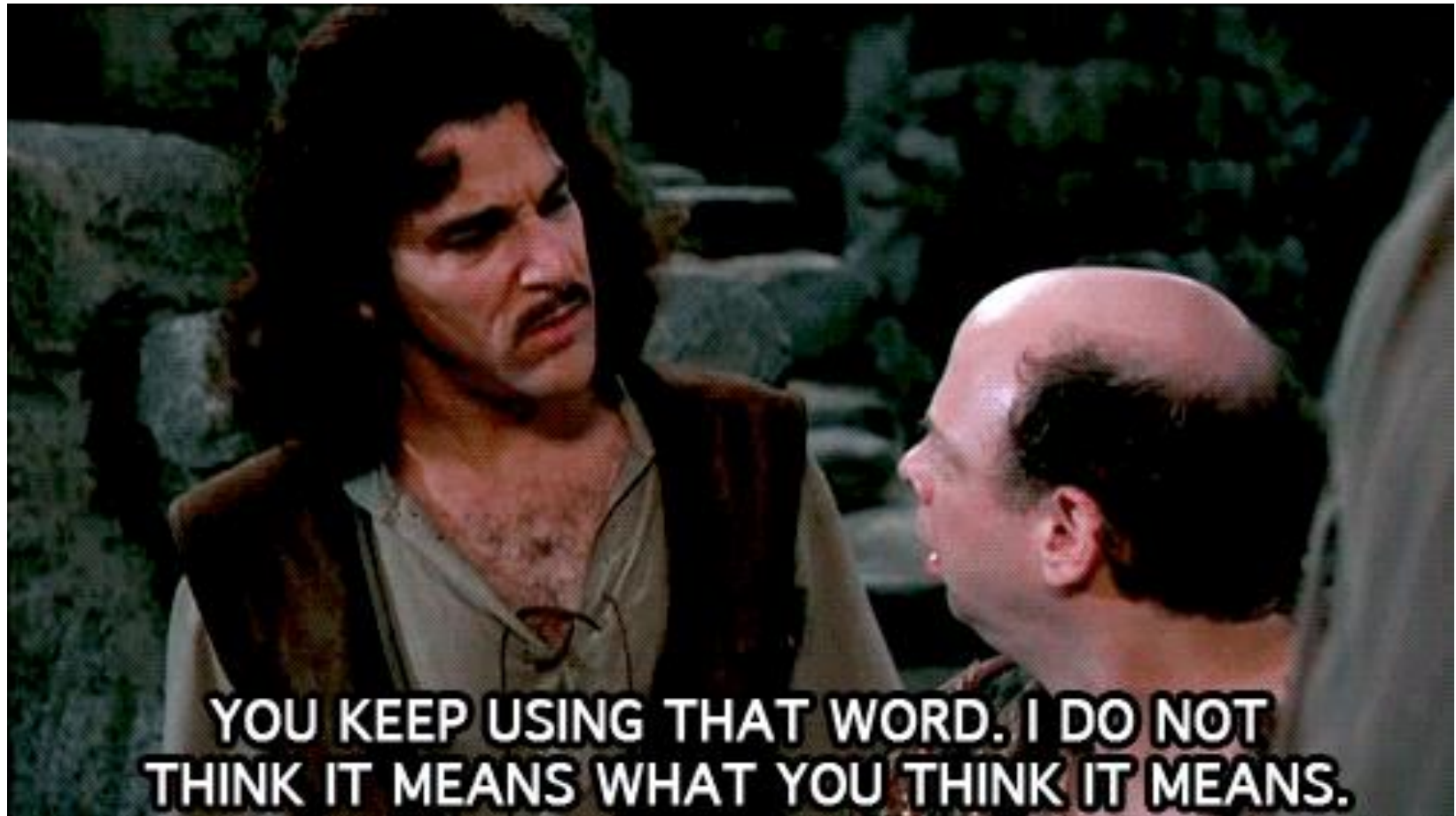
Appeal to Values



Express Your Feelings



Restate or Paraphrase



Empathize with the Underlying Feeling



Separate Intent from Impact



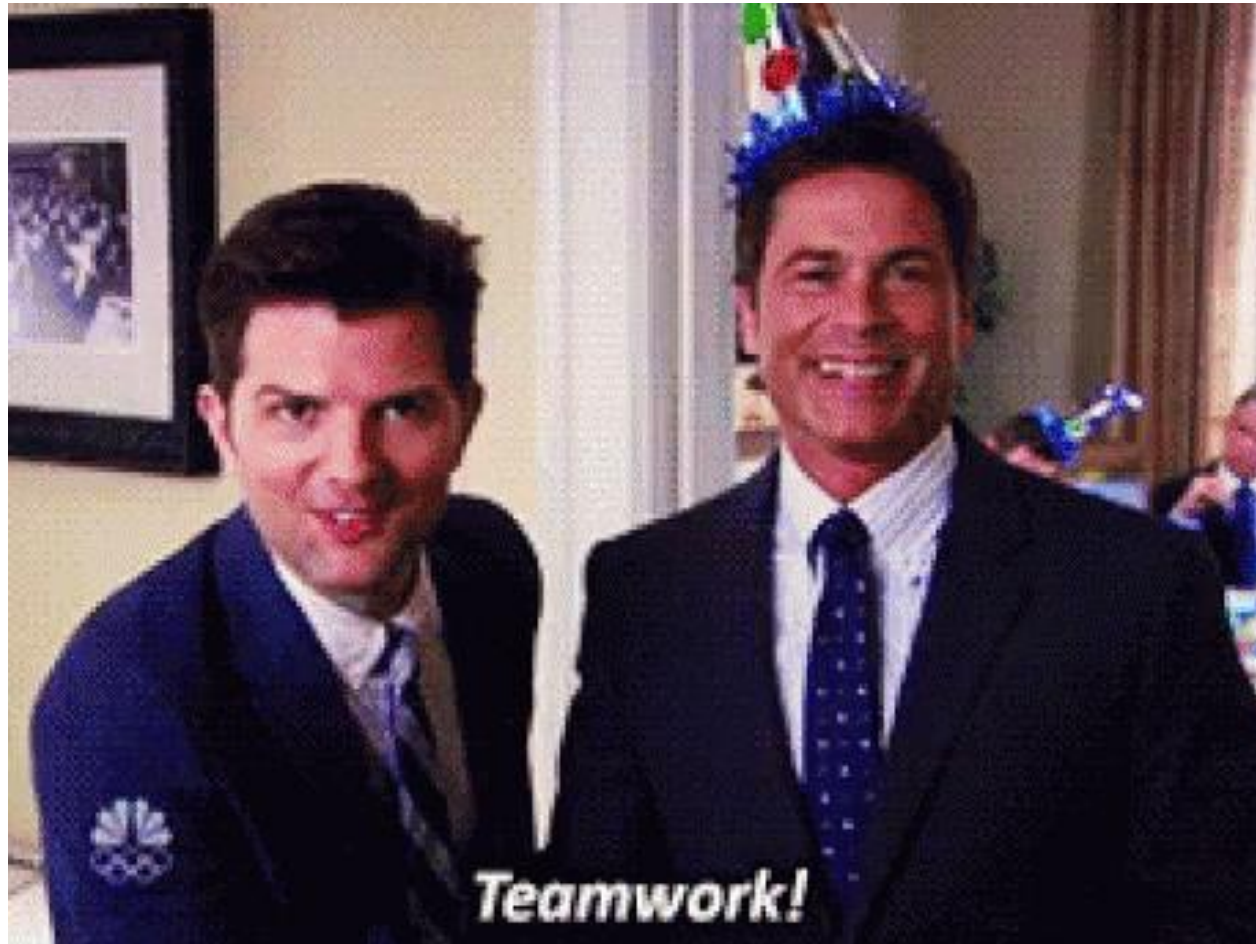
Give Information



Use Humor



Involve Others

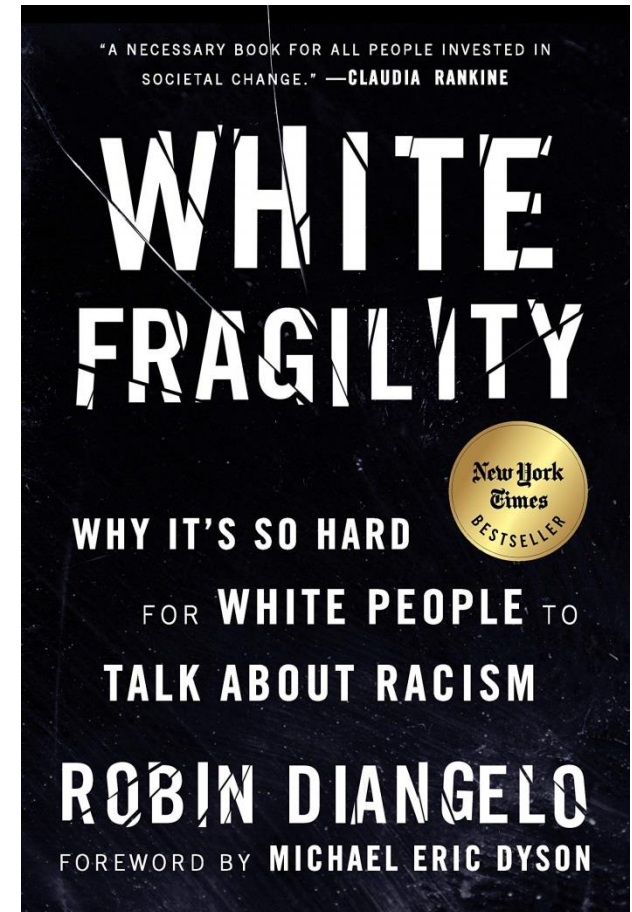


Responding as a Perpetrator

AWARENESS

ACCEPTANCE

ACTION



Resist the urge to defend yourself.



Apologize (genuinely) ASAP



Thank them



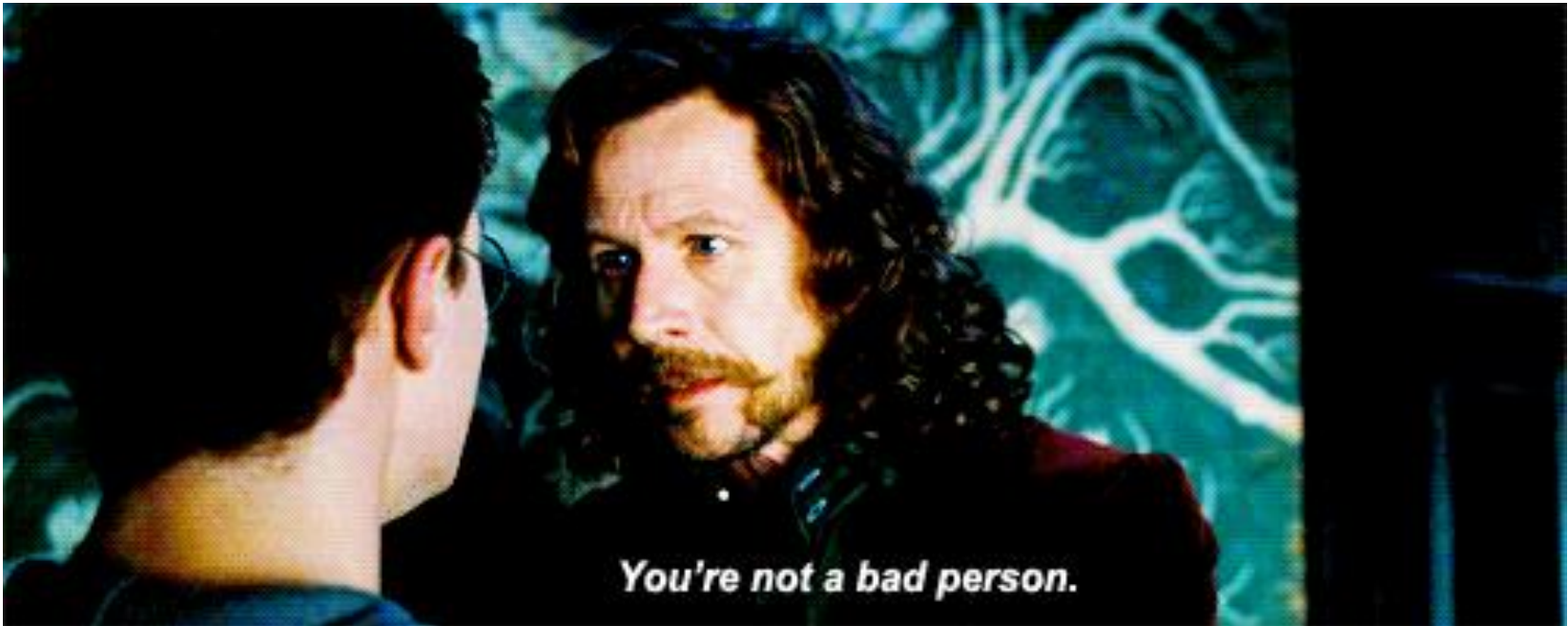
Acknowledge what you've learned



Don't expect anything in return



Remember this doesn't make you a bad person



Do Your Research!



Try Harder in the Future



Activity: Case Studies

- Which parts (if any) of this interaction are a micro-aggression? Why?
- If you overheard this interaction, how would you respond?

Case Study #1

- A black gay man works at a health department within the administrative division.
- He is constantly asked to speak to issues within the black gay community
- While he is happy to speak from his perspective, he has insisted that he does not and cannot speak for the entire community
- Staff refer to him as their “gay black representative” and sometimes ask him questions that make him uncomfortable related to his race and sexuality
- What are some micro-aggressions that this person’s coworkers might be exhibiting?

Case Study 2

A pregnant young woman of color walks into a clinic seeking prenatal health services. She is shown to an exam room and asked by the clinician if she would like to participate in a special program for pregnant unmarried women, which offers birth control and STD/HIV testing services free of charge.

Case Study #3

The local health department wants to order penis models for condom demonstrations at the local high school, and propose ordering them in a variety of skin tones. Leadership at their agencies denies the request, indicating that the darker toned models are too “explicit” and inappropriate for students.

Case Study #4

Sam, a young man born in Ecuador who has lived in the US for 15 years, recently started a new job. At his first staff meeting, he is asked to introduce himself and he mentions that he is from Ecuador. One of his colleagues responds by saying, "Wow! But your English is so good!"

Questions / Discussion



Resources

- Harvard University Project Implicit:
<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>
- MTV Look Different: <http://www.lookdifferent.org/>
- Recognizing Microaggressions and the Messages They Send:
https://academicaffairs.ucsc.edu/events/documents/Microaggressions_Examples_Arial_2014_11_12.pdf
- How Microaggressions Are Like Mosquito Bites (Video):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hDd3bzA7450>