

LUNCH AND LEARN

Topic: Racial Microaggressions

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**LAND
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
AND POSITIONALITY**

AGENDA

- Steps towards anti-racism practices
- Types of racism
- Racial microaggressions
- Effects of racial microaggressions
- Discussion

The background features a vertical line on the left side. To the left of this line, there are concentric white circles on a light green background. To the right of the line, there are four colored triangular sections: a light blue one at the top, a light green one below it, a light pink one at the bottom left, and a light red one at the bottom right.

STEPS TOWARD ANTI-RACISM PRACTICES IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

What does it mean to be an anti-racist?

TYPES OF RACISM

(HENRY & TATOR, 2009; KOHLI & SOLÓRZANO, 2012):



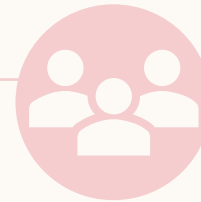
STRUCTURAL

- racial bias *among* institutions and *across* society
- laws, rules or official policies in a society that result in and support a continued unfair advantage to some people and unfair or harmful treatment of others based on race



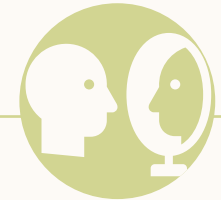
INSTITUTIONAL

- occurs *within* institutions and systems of power
- manifested in the policies, practices, and procedures of various institutions that may, directly or indirectly, consciously or unwittingly, promote, sustain, or entrench differential advantage or privilege for people of certain races



INTERPERSONAL

- occurs between individuals
- the many and sometimes small ways in which racism is experienced by racialized people in their interactions with the members of the dominant White culture



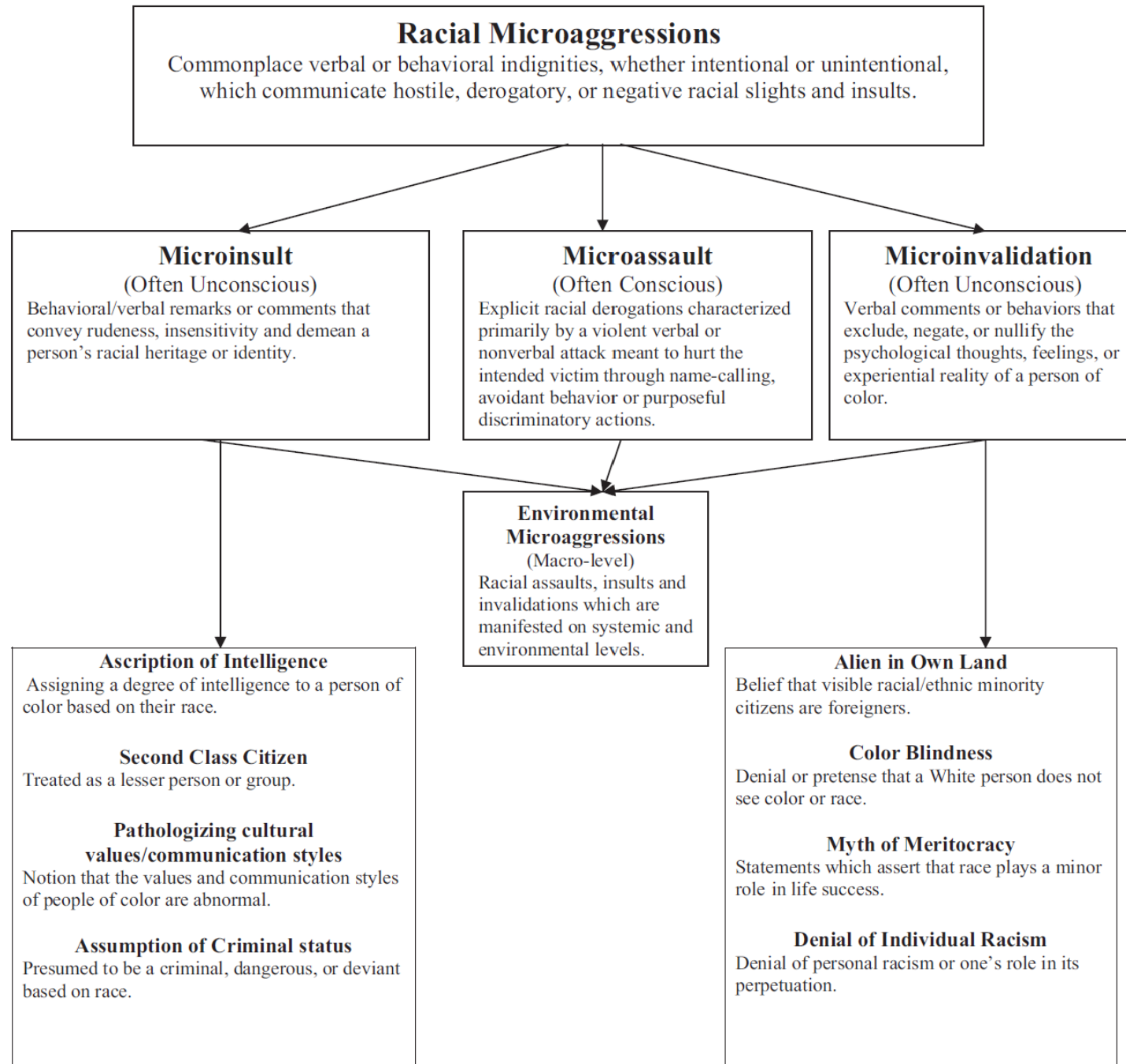
INTERNALIZED

- occurs within the individual
- the conscious and unconscious acceptance of a racial hierarchy
- internalization of the beliefs, values, and worldviews of the dominant culture

RACIAL MICROAGGRESSIONS

- Pierce et al. (1977): “Subtle, stunning, often automatic, and nonverbal exchanges which are “put downs” of blacks by offenders” (p. 65)
- Sue et al. (2007): “brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioural, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of colour”

Microaggressions are not limited to the experiences of people of colour (Banks et al., 2020; Nadal et al., 2016)



TYPES OF RACIAL MICROAGGRESSIONS

MICROINSULTS

behavioural remarks or comments that convey rudeness, insensitivity and demean a person's racial heritage or identity

MICROASSAULTS

explicit racial derogations characterized by a violent verbal or nonverbal attack meant to hurt the intended victim through name-calling, avoidant behaviour, or purposeful discriminatory actions

MICROINVALIDATIONS

verbal comments or behaviours that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of a person of colour

ENVIRONMENTAL

racial assaults, insults and invalidations which are manifested on systemic and environmental level

Microinvalidations (Sue et al., 2007)	
Theme	Microaggression
Alien in own land	“You speak good English.”
Colour blindness	“When I look at you, I don’t see color.”
Myth of meritocracy	“Everyone can succeed in this society, if they work hard enough.”
Denial of individual racism	“I’m not racist. I have several Black friends.”

Microinvalidations (Sue et al., 2007)		
Theme	Microaggression	Message
Alien in own land	“You speak good English.”	You are a foreigner.
Colour blindness	“When I look at you, I don’t see color.”	Denying a person of color’s racial/ethnic experiences.
Myth of meritocracy	“Everyone can succeed in this society, if they work hard enough.”	People of color are lazy and/or incompetent and need to work harder.
Denial of individual racism	“I’m not racist. I have several Black friends.”	I am immune to racism because I have friends of color.



A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE...

DILEMMAS

#1: Clash of Racial Realities

#2: The Invisibility of Unintentional Expressions of Bias

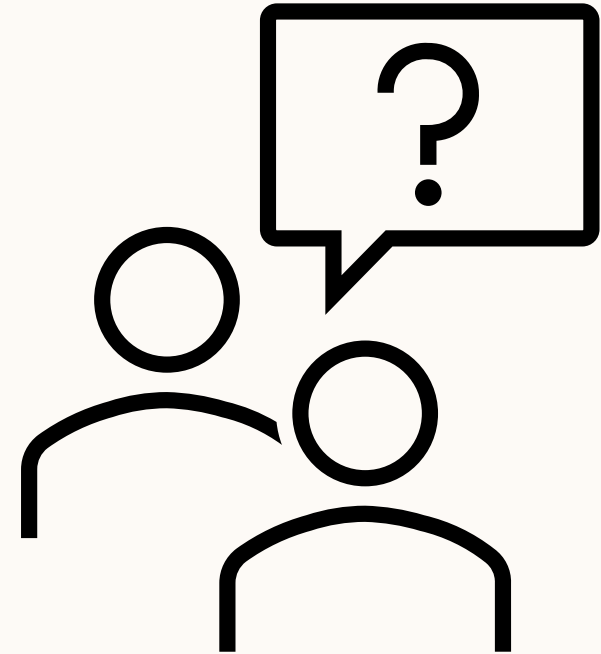
#3: Perceived Minimal Harm of Racial Microaggressions

#4: The Catch-22 of Responding to Microaggressions



RACIAL MICROAGGRESSIONS AS A BARRIER TO CLINICAL PRACTICE

- Importance of a strong therapeutic relationship between therapists and clients
- Cultural conditioning may make therapists susceptible to engaging in racial microaggressions
- May result in a decrease in the usage of mental health services from Black, racialized, and Indigenous groups



THE MANIFESTATION OF RACIAL MICROAGGRESSIONS

- The biggest challenge is the unintentional and unconscious nature of microaggressions
- Acknowledging one's position of power
- Make an effort to identify and monitor microaggressions within therapeutic context

Microinvalidations (Sue et al., 2007)

Theme	Microaggression
Alien in own land	A White therapist tells an American-born Latino client that he/she should seek a Spanish-speaking therapist.
Colour blindness	A therapist says “I think you are being too paranoid. We should emphasize similarities, not people’s differences” when a client of color attempts to discuss her feelings about being the only person of color at her job and feeling alienated and dismissed by her co-workers.
Myth of meritocracy	A school counselor tells a Black student that “if you work hard, you can succeed like everyone else.”
Denial of individual racism	A client of color asks his or her therapist about how race affects their working relationship. The therapist replies, “Race does not affect the way I treat you.”

Microinvalidations (Sue et al., 2007)

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Theme	Microaggression	Message
Alien in own land	A White therapist tells an American-born Latino client that he/she should seek a Spanish-speaking therapist.	You are not American.
Colour blindness	A therapist says “I think you are being too paranoid. We should emphasize similarities, not people’s differences” when a client of color attempts to discuss her feelings about being the only person of color at her job and feeling alienated and dismissed by her co-workers.	Race and culture are not important variables that affect people’s lives.
Myth of meritocracy	A school counselor tells a Black student that “if you work hard, you can succeed like everyone else.”	People of color are lazy and/or incompetent and need to work harder. If you don’t succeed, you have only yourself to blame (blaming the victim).
Denial of individual racism	A client of color asks his or her therapist about how race affects their working relationship. The therapist replies, “Race does not affect the way I treat you.”	Your racial/ethnic experience is not important.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

AND FUTURE SESSIONS

- Making the “invisible” visible
- Openly engage in uncomfortable dialogues about race and racism
- Continuing education and training that incorporate issues of race and culture
- Attend the next session in October! 😊

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LET'S DISCUSS