Navigating Microaggressions & Finding Your Voice
(formerly Strategies for Human-Human Interaction)
Setting the Stage

• No racist, xenophobic, misogynistic, homophobic, transphobic, ableist, classist, or other oppressive language is allowed.

• Be cognizant and respectful of other people’s identities and experiences as you discuss these topics.

• Understand intention != impact.

• Be kind, practice compassion, extend grace to yourself and others.

N. Washington, “Race, Gender, Class, & Computing” and 3C Fellows’ Community Agreements
Implicit Bias

• We all exhibit implicit bias
• Being aware of it, can help recognize and deal with it (somewhat)
• Implicit bias can lead to microaggressions, unfair outcomes, differences in treatment
• Example experimental studies on implicit bias:
  - Acceptances into college
  - Selection for awards
  - Paper acceptance based on gender and prestige of the institution
  - Recommendation letters differ between men and women
Microaggressions - Setting the Stage

• **Everyday verbal and non-verbal exchanges (whether intentional or unintentional) that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages that target members of marginalized groups.**

• Sue, Derald Wing, *Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Race, Gender and Sexual Orientation*, Wiley & Sons, 2010
- **Micro-insult**: Condescending or insensitive statements that degrade a person’s identity.
  - “Wow, you speak English so well!”

- **Micro-invalidation**: Rude or insensitive statements that degrade or deny someone’s experiences.
  - “All lives matter!”

- **Micro-assault**: Overt insult or discriminatory statement.
  - “Did you get into this school because of affirmative action?”
Common Doubts?

- Did that just happen? Did I hear that correctly?
- Was that really an insult directed at a marginalized group?
- Am I overreacting? Will others think I am?
- Should I speak up or stay quiet?
- Will speaking up make the situation better or worse?
Session Format

• Speaker introductions
  • One example of a microaggression they experienced.
  • How did you respond?
  • How do you wish you’d responded?

• Panel discussion

• Audience Q&A
Problems associated with Implicit Bias

• Members of marginalized groups tend to be:
  • Interrupted more
  • Have their ideas overlooked, discounted, or even confiscated, without attribution, by others
What’s been your experience?
5 Minute breakout:

• Share with the person next to you examples of microaggressions that are often experienced by marginalized students/professionals in computing.

• How could the victim of this microaggression respond to ensure the perpetrator doesn’t further harm them?

• Would you like to share this example with the whole room? Remember to de-identify the offender and their institution

• We’ll ask for volunteers
Microaggression: “You use big words, and you actually know what they mean.”

Microaggression: “But you can pass for white…”

How did you respond?

How do you wish you had responded?
Ayanna Howard, Dean/Professor, OSU

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• Microaggression: I could have had your job if I wanted it.