# Microaggressions

Microaggressions are a verbal and non-verbal cues given in interactions with others that display racial bias and can hurt and intimidate individuals, regardless of their initial intent. Here are some of the forms microaggression take on.

## Microassault

**VERBAL**

- **TELLING A RACIST JOKE**

**NON-VERBAL**

- **USING A DEROGATORY TERM**
- **SYMBOLS OF OPPRESSION; CONFEDERATE FLAG/SWASTIKAS**

An overt form of discrimination and/or prejudice. While behavior is overt, a person may openly deny their prejudice, i.e. "It was just a joke."

## Microinsult

**VERBAL**

- **YOU'RE CUTE FOR A ____________________**
- **YOU'RE ONE OF THE GOOD ____________________**
- **RACIALIZED COMPLIMENTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA & DATING APPS**

**NON-VERBAL**

Microinsults assume that "good" behavior/presentation is tied to whiteness.

**VERBAL**

- **I'M COLOR-BLIND. I DON'T SEE COLOR.**
- **WHY DO YOU ALWAYS MAKE IT ABOUT RACE?**
- **EYE-ROLLS OR OTHER DISMISSIVE BODY LANGUAGE AS YOU SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES**

## Microinvalidation

Statement or behavior which an individual (usually unintentionally) communicates a discriminatory message to someone based on their racial identity or heritage.

**VERBAL**

- **Statements/behavior that exclude or negate the experiences, feelings and experiential reality of a person of color.**

**NON-VERBAL**

- **I'M COLOR-BLIND. I DON'T SEE COLOR.**
- **WHY DO YOU ALWAYS MAKE IT ABOUT RACE?**
- **EYE-ROLLS OR OTHER DISMISSIVE BODY LANGUAGE AS YOU SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES**

## Am I Overreacting?

No. Microaggressions are real and they are harmful.

If someone's words or actions caused you to feel unsafe, unwanted, or angry:

1. Acknowledge your sense of discomfort, hurt, anger, etc.
2. If you feel like addressing the behavior (YOU BY NO MEANS HAVE TO), ask the perpetrator to explain why they chose to act in that way, and use "I" statements.
3. Do what works for you to minimize the impact of the event through a safe outlet, like writing, meditation, or exercise.
4. Reach out to friends, family, or campus resources who can validate your feelings/experiences.

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For support and resources, contact AU Center for Diversity & Inclusion

- [cdl@american.edu](mailto:cdl@american.edu)
- [american.edu/oc/dci](http://american.edu/oc/dci)
- MGC 201 & 202, M-F 9-5 (202)885-3651