Racial Microaggressions: Learn, Understand, Speak Up and Advocate!

Starting Strong Conference
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Equity in Education, Early Learning
Puget Sound Educational Service District
Who’s Land Are We On?
Who’s Shoulders Do You Stand On to be Here Today?
Five Agreements to Guide our Courageous Conversations

Stay Engaged
  Don’t Let your heart and mind check out!

Experience Discomfort
  Agree to experience discomfort so that we can deal with issues of race in an honest way.

Speak your truth
  Be honest about your thoughts, feelings and opinions. Say them in a way that is true for you.

Expect and accept non-closure
  Accept that you will not reach closure in your understandings about race and race relations. There is no such thing as a “quick fix.”

Intent and Impact
  Recognize that what we say may have an unintended impact, even though we may have positive intent. We need to own the impact.

_Courageous Conversations About Race_, by Glenn Singleton
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PSESD INTERNAL GOAL</th>
<th>PSESD EXTERNAL GOAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Becoming an antiracist multicultural organization characterized by equity, inclusion, and justice; an organization where no one is unjustly treated based on social identity or status</td>
<td>Success for Each Child &amp; Elimination of the Opportunity Gap</td>
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Why Lead with Race?


- Disparities are often created and maintained inadvertently through policies and practices that contain barriers to opportunity.

- If opportunities in all key areas of well-being are equitable, then equitable results will follow.

- It’s possible -- and only possible -- to close equity gaps by using strategies determined through an intentional focus on race.

The opportunity gap is evident in the first few weeks of kindergarten. The percentages of students who demonstrate characteristics of entering kindergarteners, by race and ethnicity, are shown in the bar chart. The chart compares social emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, and math skills among different racial and ethnic groups:

- American Indian or Alaska Native (695–722 students)
- Asian (1,658–1,743 students)
- Black/African American (2,005–2,074 students)
- Hispanic (12,401–12,919 students)
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (454–464 students)
- Two or More Races (2,739–2,806 students)
- White (15,724–16,082 students)
The opportunity gap is evident in the first few weeks of Kindergarten.

Percentages of Students Who Demonstrate Characteristics of Entering Kindergartners, by Race and Ethnicity

- American Indian/Alaskan Native
- Asian
- Black/African American
- Hispanic/Latino of any race(s)
- Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
- Two or More Races
- White
Three Types of Racial Inequity

**Individual racism**
Pre-judgment, bias, or discrimination by an individual based on race.

**Institutional racism**
Policies, practices and procedures that work to the benefit of white people and to the detriment of people of color, often unintentionally or inadvertently.

**Structural racism**
A history and current reality of institutional racism across all institutions. This combines to create a system that negatively impacts communities of color.
Joy DeGruy

“Cracking the Codes” The Grocery Store

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wf9QBNPK6Yg
“Racial microaggressions are the brief and everyday slights, insults, indignities and denigrating messages sent to people of color by well-intentioned people (often White folk) who are unaware of the hidden messages being communicated. These messages may be sent verbally ("You speak good English."), nonverbally (clutching one's purse more tightly) or environmentally (symbols like the confederate flag or using American Indian mascots). Such communications are usually outside the level of conscious awareness of perpetrators.”

_Racial Microaggressions in Everyday Life,_
Derald Wing Sue, Ph.D & David Rivera, MS
#itooamharvard

"CAN YOU READ?"
"YOU'RE NOT REALLY ASIAN"
#itooamberkeley

“You’re Mexican... why aren’t you a Chicano Studies major?”
Please, don’t pet my hair...
I am not an animal.

#itooamharvrd
“So, like, what are you?”
MY CULTURE IS NOT A COSTUME
"You don't sound black... You sound smart."
When I gave a speech about racism, the emcee introduced me as “Jaime García.” My name is Jaime Rodriguez; not all Latinos have the last name García.
BUT YOU DON’T LOOK NATIVE AMERICAN
“...but where are you REALLY from?”
"Can you see as much as white people? You know, because of your EYES...?"
My voice is NOT the voice of all black people
So... you're a Medical Student?
... Typical Asian
But I'm honoring you, dude!
"YOU'RE SO ARTICULATE"

#ittooamberkeley
At your table:

1. Read through the handout
2. What about this information:
   - Helps develop your awareness?
   - Confuses you?
   - Makes you uncomfortable?

## Racial Microaggressions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Microaggression</th>
<th>Message</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alien in own land</td>
<td>Asking an Asian co-worker, “Where are from? No, where are you really from?”</td>
<td>You are not American.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Telling an American born Latino student she speaks such good English.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ascription of intelligence</td>
<td>A school counselor reacts with surprise when an Asian American student had trouble on the math portion of a standardized test.</td>
<td>All Asians are smart and good at math.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>A career counselor asking a Black or Latino student, “Do you think you’re ready for college?”</td>
<td>It is unusual for People of Color to succeed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colorblindness</td>
<td>Statements which indicate that a person does not want to acknowledge race.</td>
<td>Race and culture are not important variables that affect people’s lives.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>When a staff member of color attempts to discuss being the only Person of Color at her job and feeling alienated and dismissed by her co-workers, another staff member says, “I think you are being too paranoid. We should emphasize similarities, not people’s differences.”</td>
<td>Your racial experiences are not valid.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>When a student complains that a teacher is racist another teacher replies, “We don’t see color here at MLK High School. He was probably just having a bad day.”</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Criminality/assumption of</td>
<td>Black students in a school are consistently asked for hall passes while their White peers are not.</td>
<td>You are a criminal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>criminal status</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Denial of individual racism</td>
<td>A parent of color asks an administrator how race affects his or her view of students. The administrator replies, “Race does not affect the way I treat students. I treat all students the same.”</td>
<td>Your racial/ethnic experience is not important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A student of color brings up racism with a female teacher. She replies, “I totally understand. As a woman, I face discrimination too.”</td>
<td>Your racial oppression is no different than my gender oppression.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Help me understand . . .

Tell me more about that . . .

Can we go back to what you just said. I’d really appreciate some help understanding . . .

I’m not sure of your intent when you ______________________,
(behavior only)
and the impact on me was _________________________________.
(describe effect)
Focusing Frame

I observed/heard
___________________________________________________________.

(behavior - see/hear statement)

Can you help me understand what your intent was? or

Can we talk about what this means? or

What conclusions would you form?
Listening for Bias
OUR LIVES BEGIN TO END THE DAY WE BECOME SILENT ABOUT THINGS THAT MATTER

Martin Luther King Jr.
Choose two examples from the worksheet. Each of you will have the opportunity to respond to one of these microaggressions.

Decide who will be the speaker and who the responder. Using the opening statement you wrote for one of the selected items, begin a conversation that uses intent vs impact or a focusing frame to address the bias you heard in the statement. Practice for 3 – 5 minutes.

Change roles and repeat the process for the second example you chose.
Mirrors of Privilege

Theater Experience
When You Hurt or Offend: 
Owning the...
Video Vignette
Cracking the Codes

PSAT

CRACKING THE CODES
THE SYSTEM OF RACIAL INEQUITY
How To Ask Sensitive Questions

Preface the question:  
“**I’m wondering and I’d like to ask . . . “**

Ask permission to ask a personal question.  
Be sure you have permission to ask. If you don’t, STOP. Don’t ask.  
Express your gratitude when you get a response.
Key Resources

http://www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/downloads/publication/SPLCspeak_up_handbook_0.pdf

http://cdna.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/general/Speak_Up_at_School.pdf

Martin Niemoller (1892-1984)

First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out—Because I was not a Socialist.

Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out—Because I was not a Trade Unionist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—Because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me—And there was no one left to speak for me.
I have come to believe over and over again that what is most important to me must be spoken, made verbal and shared, even at the risk of having it bruised or misunderstood.

(Audre Lorde)
Joy DeGruy

From “Cracking the Codes”
King Kong at the Movie Theater