

Microaggressions in Healthcare: Between Healthcare Providers

Christine McKay, LICSW
Katie Hara, LICSW LMHC
Madison Clinic Social Work Supervisors
Harborview Medical Center

Last Updated: July 8, 2021

Disclosures

No conflicts of interest to disclose or relationships to disclose.

CONTINUING THE DISCUSSION

Microaggressions can occur in a variety of ways in healthcare settings.

Goals of Presentation

- Continued understanding of how microaggressions present in healthcare
- Improved understanding of how microaggressions can impact maintaining a diverse workforce
- Changing the workforce to be more inclusive, including hiring practices
- Next Steps

Microaggressions: Definition

Commonplace behavioral indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, communicating hostile, derogatory or negative attitudes toward marginalized groups.

Not only can microaggressions affect one's access to power, resources, and opportunity, but they could also contribute to the persistent disparities faced by marginalized groups among healthcare professionals as well as patients.

Harmful Effects of Microaggression on Healthcare Providers

The following have been noted as effects of microaggressions on healthcare providers:

- Depression
- Low quality of life
- Job dissatisfaction
- Physician burnout

Workplace mistreatment, such as discrimination, can create harsh work environments that can lead to burnout and suicidality

Experiences from SW Staff of Color

- Often feel invisible to other team providers
- Are not consulted with as often as their white counterparts by physicians
- Do not feel included as part of the treatment team
- Often are the staff to raise concerns about discrimination and bias that they witness and experience when providers are discussing common patients of color

What can we do?

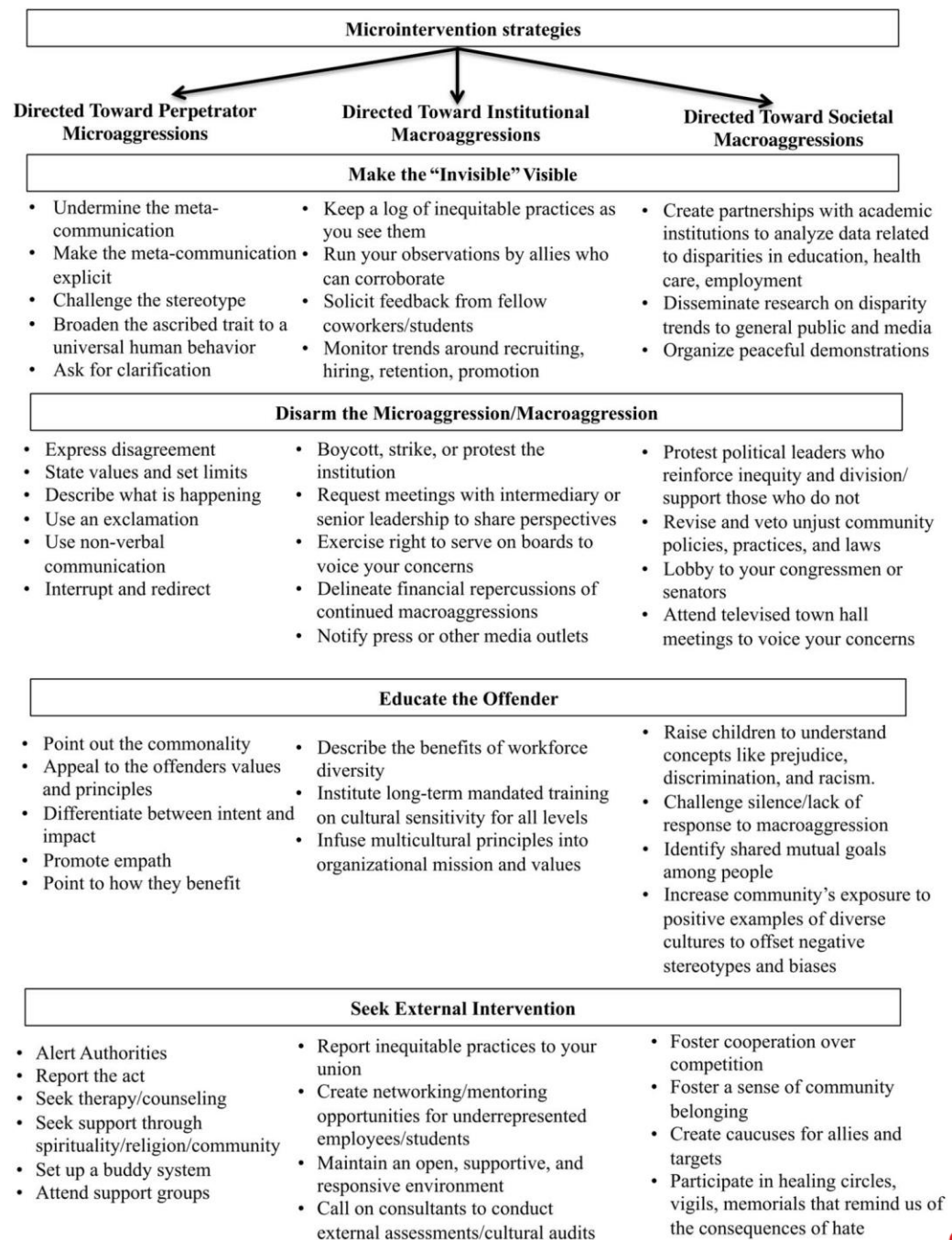
First, we must start with our institutions:

- Creating and supporting the work of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committees
- Institutional policy and codes of conduct:
 - Include ways to document microaggressions
 - Transparent about the frequency of such events
 - Approaches to address them
- Create systems of accountability to help mitigate such occurrences across student, resident, patient and faculty roles.
- Bystander to Upstander- develop skills to disrupt microaggressions

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

- Leaders of academic medical centers need to prioritize and encourage all team members to consider issues of DEI across all strategy areas.
 - Including approaches on how to address microaggressions, bias and discrimination
 - Fund required resources for training and professional development of facilitators to develop responsive programming

Disarming Microaggressions



Diversifying the Workforce

Racism impacts the health and well-being of patients, from the care we provide to the inequitable outcomes we see in the health disparities literature.

Despite efforts to diversify the workforce, POC continue to describe their work climate as hostile, invalidating and insulting because of the many microaggressions that assail their race, restrict their work options, and lower their productivity.

Discussion

- What are some ways that your organizations have made efforts to address institutional racism in healthcare?
- Is this a topic that your organization is addressing at all?
- What are some of the ways that you can move the conversation forward?

Acknowledgment

The Mountain West AIDS Education and Training (MWAETC) program is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of an award totaling \$2,886,754 with 0% financed with non-governmental sources.

The content in this presentation are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement by, HRSA, HHS, or the U.S. Government.

