

Minneapolis Institute of Art

Microaggressions

Mia

What is a microaggression?

A microaggression is an “indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination against members of a marginalized group.”

(Seattle Art Museum, SAM Equity Team; Defining Micro-Aggression, PowerPoint.)

Microaggressions can be verbal, non-verbal, written or overheard, and they can be experienced by people of different races, genders, economic status', working groups, ages, and religions.

Examples of a microaggression

- **Racial microaggressions**
- **Gender microaggressions**
- **Age microaggressions**
- **Religious microaggressions**
- **Class/status microaggressions**

Examples of a microaggression specific for this exhibition

Jokingly saying “I have PTSD”

“You speak good English”

“Where were you born?”

Assuming all Asians or Asian Americans practice Buddhism

“Model” Minority

What to do?

Check in with yourself, do you want to walk away? Ignore the offense? Engage and redirect? Involve other staff/supervisor for support?

The choice is up to you. As a staff member at Mia, you are not required to brush off or ignore microaggressions. However, if you decide to respond to a microaggression, please include your supervisors in the process, either before, during, or after, so that we may lend our support.

Consider:

- 1. What is my comfort level?**
- 2. Who will benefit from not engaging or correcting?**
- 3. What is the person's intent?**

What if the microaggression came from me?

Microaggressions happen daily, and are often unseen and considered normal behavior. If you notice yourself saying or performing a microaggression, take a moment to own up, learn from it, and forgive yourself, we all make mistakes.

You could say:

- **Thank you for bringing it to my attention. I'm still learning.**
- **I'm sorry, and I did not meant to make you upset. Having these conversations is difficult for me as well. I'll try again.**
- **You're right, may I start over?**

Thank you!

And thank you to the Seattle Art Museum. This presentation has been adapted from SAM's Microaggression Toolkit.