

An aerial photograph of a university courtyard. The courtyard features a brick building on the left, a paved walkway, and several circular tables with chairs where students are sitting and talking. There are trees and green spaces throughout the area. The text "Fostering Inclusion: Microaggressions Learning Byte" is overlaid in white, bold font across the center of the image.

# Fostering Inclusion: Microaggressions Learning Byte

**Naropa**  
UNIVERSITY

Transform Yourself, Transform the World

# What are Microaggressions?

“Microaggressions are the brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial, gender, sexual-orientation and religious slights and insults to the target person or group.”

Source: Sue, D. (2010). *Microaggressions in everyday life: Race, gender, and sexual orientation*. Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley.



# History of This Terminology

- The term “microaggression” was first used in the 1970s by Harvard professor Dr. Chester M. Pierce.
- At the time, Pierce used the term ‘racial microaggression’ to refer to “the everyday subtle and often automatic “put downs” and insults directed toward Black Americans.”

Source: Sue, D. (2010). *Microaggressions in everyday life: Race, gender, and sexual orientation*. Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley. and [NY Times Article ‘Students See Many Sights as Racial ‘Microaggressions’](#)

# Use of the Term Today

Although the roots of the term are in racial differences, today, this terminology is used more broadly as our opening definition suggests.





# Characteristics of a Microaggressions

- May be intentional or unintentional.
- Often subtle and may include facial expressions, gestures, or withdrawing from an individual.
- Directed at an individual because of gender, race, religion, or sexual orientation, or other characteristics.



# Microaggressions in Everyday Life

How do you learn to recognize them?

- Review examples
  - [Click here](#) for a list from University of Colorado's Center for Multicultural Affairs
- Spend some time in others' experiences
  - [Microaggressions.com](#): a blog where individuals can share their experiences with microaggressions

# Addressing Microaggressions



Michelle Bollinger, Marvyn Arevalo Avalos, Andre Brown, & Bryana French, presenters of the 2012 University of Missouri Diversity Summit 'Can We Talk? Addressing the Effects of Microaggressions' presentation share the following suggestions on dealing with microaggressions (based on D.W. Sue) :

“Make the invisible visible

1. Learn from constant vigilance of your own biases and fears
2. Engage in experiential reality: interact with people who are different from you in social identities
3. Don't be defensive
4. Be open to discussing your own attitudes and biases and how they might have hurt others or may have revealed biases on your part
5. Be an ally – Stand personally against all forms of bias and discrimination”

Source: 'Can We Talk? Addressing the Effects of Microaggressions'  
[https://diversity.missouri.edu/summit/session-mats/can\\_we\\_talk-ppt.pdf](https://diversity.missouri.edu/summit/session-mats/can_we_talk-ppt.pdf)

# Want More Information?

Microaggressions in everyday life: Race, gender, and sexual orientation, by Derald Wing Sue

Microaggressions and Marginality: Manifestation, Dynamics, and Impact, edited by Derald Wing Sue

