Be Proactive: Overcoming Bias and Microaggressions in the Workplace
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Learning Outcomes

• Participants will be able to:
  – identify biases and microaggressions and how they impact the various aspects of the workplace
  – learn strategies for reducing bias in library recruitment, hiring, and retention, and
  – explore effective practices for minimizing biases and microaggressions in the workplace to create a positive and inclusive work environment
Implicit Bias

• Attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner

• We generally tend to hold implicit biases that favor our own in-group

• Are pervasive and permeate the workplace at all levels
Implicit Bias

- In the workplace, biases can stymie diversity, recruiting and retention efforts, and unknowingly shape an organization’s culture

- Do not necessarily align with our declared beliefs

- Are malleable
Workplace Bias

- Affinity Bias
- Halo Effect
- Perception Bias
- Confirmation Bias
- Group Think
Recruitment

• Include a diversity statement
• Vet your job postings
• Widen your recruitment “net”
• Add a personal touch
Hiring

• Strip certain identifiers from applications
• Script your interviews
• Diversify your search committee
• Institute a “Rooney Rule”
• Establish clear compensation policies
Retention

- Cultural awareness training
- Create an inclusive work environment
- Mentoring programs
- Promotions
- Constant assessment
What types of bias exist in the classroom?

- Teacher to Student
- Student to Teacher
- Student to Student
Creating an Inclusive Classroom

- Course content/reading material
- Planning considerations
- Increasing awareness of problematic assumptions
- Getting to know your students
- Incorporating sensitive topics into your curriculum
Microaggressions Activity
What are microaggressions?

“Microaggressions are the everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership”

-Derald Wing Sue
Types of Microaggressions

Microassault (overt)

Explicit racial derogations characterized primarily by a verbal or nonverbal attack meant to hurt the intended victim through name-calling, avoidant behavior, or purposeful discriminatory actions.
Types of Microaggressions

**Microinsult (often unconscious)**
Communications that convey rudeness and insensitivity and demeans a person’s heritage or identity

**Microinvalidation (often unconscious)**
Communications that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiences
Workplace Examples

- “Just so you know, you are very articulate.”
- “I have a really tough legal research question, is there a man available who can help me?”
- “Your English is very good, you should fit in well here.”
- “Aren’t you a bit overqualified?”
- A college or university with buildings that are all named after White heterosexual upper class men
Effects of Microaggressions in the Workplace

- Contribute to a hostile and invalidating campus and work climate
- Devalue social group identities
- Lower work productivity
- Contribute to physical and mental health issues due to stress, low self-esteem, and emotional turmoil
Preventing Microaggressions: As a Manager

- Accept that microaggressions are happening in the workplace
- Foster an environment that encourages honest discussion
- Acknowledge the occurrence (whether you committed or witnessed a microaggression)
- Call out inappropriate behavior
Addressing Microaggressions

• Pause before proceeding
• Decide whether you want to engage
• Assume no malicious intent (until otherwise shown)
• Ask follow-up questions
• Explain your point of view
• Listen
Overcoming Microaggressions

- **Victim**
  - Support networks
  - Self-care
  - Forgiveness

- **Offender**
  - Apologize
  - Forgive yourself
  - Seek education
Micro-Affirmation Behaviors
(within context of cultural values)

• Greet employees, colleagues and customers with *sincerity*

• **Connect person-to-person**: bring a personal element to your interactions and acknowledge each employee beyond the role or position they occupy

• **Be present** to the other person: focus your complete attention on them when they are speaking. Let your body language and facial expression demonstrate that you are listening
Thank you!

Q/A

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