



# TYPES OF MICROAGGRESSIONS

Microaggressions can take a variety of forms. Here are some more specific terms and examples to be aware of.

## Microassaults

**Definition:** Microassaults are overt forms of discrimination in which actors deliberately behave in discriminatory ways, but do not intend to offend someone or may think that their actions are not noticed or harmful.

### Examples:

- When someone makes a racial joke or uses racial slurs, she or he intended to say the offensive comment, but would often end with “I was just joking” as a way of denying prejudice.
- When someone says “That’s so gay!” to connote that something is weird, the person is aware of the words that they choose; however, they may not realize that using such language is considered homophobic and can offend LGBT people.

## Microinsults

**Definition:** A microinsult is described as communications that convey rudeness, insensitivity, and demean a person’s racial heritage or identity.

### Examples:

- An example of microinsult is to ask a colleague of color how she got her job, implying that she may have landed it through an affirmative action or quota system.
- An example of a microinsult is when a person tells an Asian American that she or he “speaks good English” as a compliment. However, in reality, such a statement can be offensive to Asian Americans, implying that Asian people do not speak clearly.

## Microinvalidations

**Definition:** Microinvalidations are regarded as communications that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of certain groups.

### Examples:

- “There is one race, the human race” or “I don’t see color.” The notion of colorblindness is a major form of microinvalidation as it negates experiences and realities for people of color.
- When someone tells a woman that she is “being too sensitive”. Verbalizing this stereotype damages not only women’s experiences but also upholds ideals of toxic masculinity.

Source: [go.umd.edu/ncwwi](http://go.umd.edu/ncwwi)