“...DID THEY REALLY JUST SAY THAT?!”

BEING AN ACTIVE BYSTANDER

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Well, this has been sufficiently awkward.

Oh no baby, what is you doing???
YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

• In the last 2 months, have you experienced or observed a comment that made you uncomfortable or was inappropriate?
  – 62% yes
  – 38% no

• Did anyone intervene?
  – 20% yes
  – 70% no
YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

• If you chose not to intervene, please select why:
  – 11% fear for safety
  – 6% fear of judgement
  – 46% did not know what to do or say
  – 31% did not feel comfortable intervening
**Benefits of Inclusive Learning Environments**

- Outcomes for all students
- Student engagement
- Cognitive complexity in problem solving
- Innovation in problem solving in team environments

Milem and Hakuta, 2000; Gurin et al., 2002; Hurtado et al., 2003; Milem, 2003; Antonio et al., 2004; Page, 2007; Page, 2010
GOALS FOR THIS SESSION

• Gain an understanding of the bystander effect and what it means to be an active bystander
• Illustrate the importance and benefits of committing to being an active bystander
• Learn how to effectively communicate in challenging situations through strategies that can be tailored to the particular situation
• Practice being an active bystander
About the Kirwan Institute

Rigorous & Applied Research

Robust Community Engagement

We are a team made up of researchers, facilitators, listeners, learners, storytellers, mentors, problem solvers, and creative content producers.
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE AN ACTIVE BYSTANDER?
The Bystander Effect

• Diffusion of responsibility
  – The more people who are present, the less likely that someone will take action during a situation

• Social influence
  – Groups monitor behavior, individuals don’t want to violate norms

THE BYSTANDER EFFECT
Who Can Be an Active Bystander?

That Means You!
WHO CAN BE AN ACTIVE BYSTANDER?

• You can be an active bystander in relation to your own identities and identities that you do not hold
  – Self-empowerment
  – The power of allyship

• What roles do you play? How do these roles influence the way people interpret what you say?
Why Be an Active Bystander?
Implicit bias can turn even our best intentions into unwanted outcomes.
Attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner.
Understanding Implicit Bias

- Automatically activated
- Associative in nature
- NOT always based on accurate or objective information
- Formed through repeated exposure
- Does not always align with explicit intentions
BIASES MAY MANIFEST IN RELATION TO ANY PERCEIVED IDENTITY
Understanding Racial Inequities

Cognitive & Interpersonal Barriers

Structural & Institutional Barriers
DIVERSITY, INCLUSION,
EQUITY, AND LIBERATION
DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, EQUITY, AND LIBERATION

**DIVERSITY ASKS...**

"Who’s in the room?"

**EQUITY RESPONDS...**

"Who is trying to get in the room but can’t? Whose presence in the room is under constant threat of erasure?"

**INCLUSION ASKS...**

"Has everyone’s ideas been heard?"

**JUSTICE Responds...**

"Whose ideas won’t be taken as seriously because they aren’t in the majority?"

**DIVERSITY ASKS...**

"How many more of [pick any minoritized identity] group do we have this year than last?"

**INCLUSION ASKS...**

"Is this environment safe for everyone to feel like they belong?"

**JUSTICE Responds...**

"Whose safety is being sacrificed and minimized to allow others to be comfortable maintaining dehumanizing views?"

Adapted from the article "Colleges need a language shift, but not the one you think (essay)" by Dr. Dafina-Lazarus Stewart. Created by Sheri Atkinson, Ed.D.
MICROAGGRESSIONS
WHAT THEY ARE AND WHY THEY MATTER
MICROAGGRESSIONS

microaggression - is a form of "unintended discrimination".

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8RfwnibEd3A
DEFINING MICROAGGRESSIONS

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

Frequency of Microaggressions

- 78% of participants experienced at least 1 racial microaggression over the two week study period.
- Participants reported microaggressions occurred approximately once per week.
- Students of color reported experiencing an average of 291 microaggressions in the past 90 days.
- About a quarter of instructors and half of students perceived bias in their classrooms in the last year.
- 34% of undergraduates reported perceiving themselves as a target of subtle bias in the classroom in the last year.

Ong et al. (2013); Blume, Lovato, Thyken, & Denny (2012); Boysen, Vogel, Cope, & Hubbard (2009).
### Frequencies of Overt and Subtle Bias, Targets of Bias, and Types of Bias

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived Bias</th>
<th>Professor % (n = 333)</th>
<th>Graduate % (n = 443)</th>
<th>Undergraduate % (n = 1,747)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceived overt bias</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived subtle bias</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
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#### Target of bias

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target of bias</th>
<th>Professor %</th>
<th>Graduate %</th>
<th>Undergraduate %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexual orientation</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Type of bias

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of bias</th>
<th>Professor %</th>
<th>Graduate %</th>
<th>Undergraduate %</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stereotype</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offensive humor</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolation</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slurs</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insults</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Effects of Microaggressions

- Psychological distress
  - Anxiety
  - Depression
  - Suicidal ideation
- Binge drinking
- Pain, fatigue, physical illness

Blume, Lovato, Thyken, & Denny (2012); Smith (2004); Hwang & Goto (2009)
CREATING AN INCLUSIVE CAMPUS
HOW CAN I BE AN ACTIVE BYSTANDER?
Steps to Being an Active Bystander

- Notice that something is happening
- Decide that something needs to be addressed
- Speak out
STRATEGIES FOR SPEAKING OUT

• Use humor

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DWynJkN5HbQ
Strategies for Speaking Out

• Be literal/refuse to rely on the assumption being made
  – A lot of common phrases rely on figurative language, unspoken assumptions, and stereotypes. Being literal can illustrate how these phrases don’t actually make sense and can be harmful
Strategies for Speaking Out

• Ask questions that invite discussion
  – Asking questions can bring further clarity to the person’s intentions and what they’re trying to communicate
  – Questions can help to open up dialogue by inviting the person into a conversation where they feel heard rather than shut down
STRATEGIES FOR SPEAKING OUT

• State that you are uncomfortable
  – This can serve as a speedbump in the conversation: slowing it down to acknowledge that something is amiss and opening up discussion in the present or future
  – You can elaborate on why or keep it simple
  – This can cue other people to chime in and state that they are also uncomfortable
STRATEGIES FOR SPEAKING OUT

• Use direct communication

  – Speak honestly and from the heart, using “I statements” to communicate how you are feeling, why that is the case, and what could be done
CONTEXT MATTERS

• Safety
• Power dynamics
• Self-preservation
• Identities of those present and absent
• Your personal values and priorities
CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION

• Offer support to people who may have been directly affected by the biased comment

• Consider what could be done in order to prevent the situation next time

• Be a consistent champion of challenging bias
WHERE DO I GO FROM HERE?
Look Out for the Poop!
Look out for the Elephants!

“I suppose I’ll be the one to mention the elephant in the room.”
BEING AN ACTIVE BYSTANDER
WAYS TO CHALLENGE THE PRESENCE OF BIAS

THE KIRWAN INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF RACE & ETHNICITY | 2017

Thank you for your commitment to challenging explicit and implicit biases in your professional roles and day-to-day life. It can be difficult to know what to say when a family member, friend, colleague, or acquaintance makes problematic comments. However, we will only be able to overcome racism in its current forms if we are brave enough to challenge racism in what it most common forms. The Kirwan Institute invites you to utilize these strategies in order to empower yourself to speak up against biased comments. In the words of Audre Lorde, "When we speak we are afraid our words will not be heard or welcomed. But when we are silent, we are still judged." It is better to speak.

Below is a description of how individuals can be active bystanders when faced with the emergence of bias in interpersonal interactions. These suggestions encompass a variety of approaches to opening a conversation about bias. Each person should consider which strategy or strategies might be most appropriate to employ based upon the context of the situation, as well as their own personal strengths and comfortableness with using the strategy. This document is intended to provide some tools for being an active bystander while recognizing that there is not one-size-fits-all solution to challenging every manifestation of bias.

Steps to Being an Active Bystander

- Identify the emergence of bias.
- Decide to address the situation.
- Take action.
  - The goals of these strategies are to educate people and invite them to do better, rather than to criticize or ostracize them. They are intended to help address the situation while avoiding making the person defensive, a common reaction to challenging bias. There is a difference between calling someone in (inviting discussion and learning) and calling someone out (shouting down the conversation). Both approaches can be valid in various circumstances, so choose which one is most appropriate for the situation.
- Continue the conversation.

Strategies for Speaking Out

- Use humor.
  - "What are you?" "Human! How about you?"
  - "Your accent is so good!" I should hope so since it’s the language I’ve been speaking my entire life!"

BYSTED

Uncovering implicit biases in daily interactions

- Myth: Implicit bias is nothing more than beliefs people choose not to tell others. They know how they feel; they just know they cannot or should not say those beliefs aloud, so they hide them.

- Myth: Implicit bias is not more than stereotyping.

- Myth: Implicit biases and stereotypes are closely related concepts that can be easily confused. Both are automatic associations that can be positive or negative.

- Myth: Implicit biases make me a bad person.

- Myth: Implicit biases are a natural phenomenon.

- Myth: Implicit biases are unaffected by our awareness or intentional efforts to reduce them.

- Myth: Implicit biases are not influenced by our awareness or intentional efforts to reduce them. Implicit biases are difficult to change and can remain strong even with interventions or training.

- Myth: Implicit biases can be reduced through awareness-raising programs and training.

Be a part of the solution by challenging implicit biases in your interactions and encouraging others to do the same.

General Resources


Specific Words: History, Meanings, Alternatives

- "Words That Hurt" [http://diphre.uchicago.edu/advanced/words.html]

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
Let’s Practice!
SCENARIO

• When choosing groups for the semester-long collaborative project, a student says that they “don’t want to work with that guy who looks like a football player. He’ll probably drag our group down and we’ll end up having to do more work.”

• What would you do? Discuss with a neighbor.
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
“When we speak we are afraid our words will not be heard or welcomed. But when we are silent, we are still afraid. So it is better to speak.”

—Audre Lorde
Want to learn more?

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