Combatting Microaggressions: How Can I Help?

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– Dean of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences at the University of Vermont
– Financial compensation from ASHA

Nonfinancial:
– ASHA SIG 14 affiliate
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An **ally** is someone who belongs to dominant social groups (e.g., Whites, males, heterosexuals) who supports nondominant groups (BIPOC, women, LGBTQ individuals) by **actively eradicating prejudicial practices** they witness.

(Sue & Spanierman, 2020)
Wait, are the dominant social groups in our professions of audiology and speech-language pathology different?

Not necessarily... Consider that while a very small percentage of ASHA members are male, 62% of ASHA Honors recipients between 1940 and 2015 were men.

Allies are intrinsically committed to social justice and equity and to ending social disparities.

Allies are motivated to take action at the interpersonal and institutional levels by actively promoting the rights of those in non-dominant groups.

[Sue & Spanierman, 2020]
What does that **look like?**

Let’s look at the systems of **our own professional context.**

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**Consider this scenario...**

Over the past few years, African American parents in the school I work in have expressed concerns about the **large number of disciplinary actions, dismissals, and dress code infractions** being **directed toward BIPOC students.**
And this scenario...
I was asked to submit the results of my research to a national journal on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). When discussing it with my tenure mentor, he cautioned that the journal wouldn’t be regarded as “top tier” by the university promotion and tenure committee.

And this one...
BIPOC individuals face obstacles to accessing my services. To name just a few:
• Unique challenges accessing primary care
• Disparities in insurance coverage
• Lack of support in navigating the complexities of health care systems
Resources

- ASHA Self-Assessment for Cultural Competence
- That’s Unheard Of
  [www.thatsunheardof.org/](http://www.thatsunheardof.org/)
- Lawrence University Diversity 101 Toolkit
- Best Practices in Engaging Diverse Families

Coming up next

We’ve explored the concept. In the next activity, we’ll review some examples.
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REVIEWING EXAMPLES

My Clients

Who are the clients that I work with? Who aren’t I working with?

Can I trust my eyes to show me the full picture?

What sorts of barriers could people, especially those from marginalized communities, have in accessing my services?

How are people accessing my services, from the first contact to arriving at my office?
My Clients
I decided to evaluate my caseload using a checklist resource, which asks:

- What’s the racial and ethnic composition of my work or local community?
- How many clients of each race and ethnicity are on my caseload?
- Are the numbers proportionate? Why do I think that is?

How Can I Help?

What is the racial and ethnic composition of my work or local community?

I don’t know...

I could check:

- National Center for Education Statistics
  [https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/](https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/)
- My local education agency
- My administrators
- The American Community Survey or National Center for Health Statistics
My Clients: How many clients of each race and ethnicity are on my caseload?

How Can I Help?

The numbers don’t match well. In particular, bilingual speakers are overrepresented on my caseload. Why could that be?

My Clients: Looking back over my notes, I realize that I used assessment scores that were normed for monolingual English speakers, which do not provide valid scores for bilingual speakers.

How Can I Help?

I’m exploring dynamic assessment as an alternative.
My Black colleague confided to me that she’s frustrated that a White colleague who just finished her CFY was asked to supervise a student while she, who has been working there for 5 years, has not been given that opportunity.

She expressed that this is a pattern of being overlooked because of her race.

I hadn’t noticed, until now...

After looking into it, it sounds like opportunities are handled informally.

I know my team wants equity in opportunity, but without clear and transparent policies, we’re making it much harder to achieve that goal.

We need support from administrators, and we need a written policy.
My supervisor welcomes input, so I had an informal conversation to share what I’ve noticed and broach the idea of creating a policy. I offered to look into it.

I found several resources on fair workplace policies and highlighted important elements.

Now I’m getting input from my colleagues, especially BIPOC staff.

I’ve been taking courses on the topic and I wanted to learn if my workplace had a policy in place to handle microaggressions.

If we do, are supervisors provided the resources to support the policy?

What are the consequences for violating the policies?
We don’t have a policy...

On my team, we share our similarities and celebrate our differences. We’re committed to the idea that all staff deserve dignity and respect.

Given that, how could I help establish a policy on microaggressions?

What are some of the questions we should think about when developing them?

- What happens when someone says something inappropriate?
- Are consequences clear?
- Do managers have the tools to support the policy?
- What else?
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<th>Policies &amp; Procedures</th>
<th>How Can I Help?</th>
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<td><strong>What are some next steps?</strong></td>
<td>A welcoming, safe, and inclusive culture. Microaggressions will not be excused. Microaggressees won’t be fearful or feel uncertain. Individuals feel safe to report incidents of microaggressions without fear of retaliation.</td>
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<td>Create a formalized anti-discrimination and anti-racism policy statement that sets firm expectations for a diverse, safe and inclusive environment.</td>
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<td>Create a policy that there is ongoing cultural humility, anti-implicit bias and anti-discrimination education.</td>
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<td>Create a policy that welcomes feedback and cites a clear avenue where concerns about microaggressions can be reported without retaliation.</td>
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<td>Make sure these policies become a part of the organizational culture.</td>
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### Coming up next

We’ve explored the concept and reviewed some examples. The next activities are your turn to plan, practice, and reflect.

#### WHO

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#### WHAT

Spend 5 minutes to create a plan to apply the course concepts.

#### YOUR PLAN

Think about systemic racism in your professional work setting. How will you heighten your awareness of biases that might be reflected in your approach to service delivery or in your workplace’s policies and procedures?

#### HOW

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Try It

Now it’s time to do the work! Committing to a plan of action — publicly and with a concrete deadline — will better empower you to follow through with your goals.

4

Trying Your Plan

Spend 5 minutes at work putting your plan into action.

Notes

Try it

Now it’s time to do the work! Committing to a plan of action — publicly and with a concrete deadline — will better empower you to follow through with your goals.

5

‘s Reflections

What happened

What worked well

Ideas for improvement

Speaker Tips

What did you find out and what will you do about it? Remember that this course models a process for trying new ideas at work. How can you use this experience to continue to take action after this course is over?
LEARNING ASSESSMENT

Spend 5 minutes to complete your learning assessment in the ASHA Learning Center.

You’ll have access to a certificate of completion immediately after you complete and submit your assessment.