

Microaggressions

RECOGNISING AND CHALLENGING MICROAGGRESSIONS

What are Microaggressions?

- Actions that (*intentionally or unintentionally*) communicate negative messages towards a person or group based on an aspect of their identity

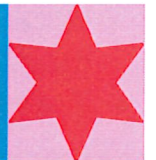
Verbal Microaggressions



Questions or comments that have a hidden meaning that reinforces negative beliefs about a person based on their background or appearance

Examples of this include statements like "you don't look old enough to do that" (implying that ability is determined by age), "where are you *really* from" or "that's a fine accent for Scotland" (implying that a person does not belong in Scotland based on race or accent) "did you study women's health" (implying a lack of knowledge in a medical area based on a person's gender).

Behavioural microaggressions



Where a person's actions communicate a hostile, derogatory or negative message

Examples of behavioural microaggression include refusing to make eye contact or acknowledge a person due to gender, race, or disability. Other examples include grimacing or rolling eyes indicating dislike or hostility towards someone. Behavioural microaggressions can occur by themselves or can be done alongside other kinds of microaggressions.

The Impact of Microaggressions



Why we need to stop microaggressions from happening, and how you can help

When staff are the recipients of microaggressions, it can be distressing. Over time, these subtle, insidious expressions of prejudice can lead to significant distress, which can impact staff morale and

happiness. Having a practice where our staff experience microaggressions can make it harder for us to recruit and retain staff members, which will impact patient care.

We value our patients hugely, and are grateful to you for reading this leaflet. Please help us ensure that Bank Street Medical Practice is a safe workplace where staff don't have to worry about experiencing microaggressions.

Now that you're aware of microaggressions, how can you change your behaviour so it isn't biased? The Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust's Toolkit on Microaggressions recommends the **"flip it to test it" check**. To do this, "mentally swap who you're dealing with to someone with distinctly different characteristics and ask yourself if your actions or words would still be the same". For example, if you wouldn't ask a white, Scottish doctor, "Did you train in this country?" but you would ask of a doctor from a visible minority or with a foreign accent, then that behaviour likely reflects a level of bias, and is a micro-aggression.

Do you want to know more?



These resources are helpful in understanding and addressing microaggressions:

- Sue, Derald Wing, *Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Race, Gender and Sexual Orientation*, Wiley & Sons, 2010
- Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust's **Toolkit on Microaggressions**:
https://www.imperial.nhs.uk/-/media/website/about-us/how-we-work/equality-and-diversity/microaggressions-toolkit_14_03.pdf?rev=afba9c4d147e4d4d872a631f84b04cd9
- **'Are you biased? I am'** by Kirsten Pressner https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bq_xYSOZrgU.