Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
Because we honor everyone, this work is for everyone.
Stereotypes, Implicit Bias, and Microaggressions

What are they? How are they defined?

**Stereotype:** a set of cognitive generalizations (e.g., beliefs, expectations) about the qualities and characteristics of the members of a group or social category.

**Implicit Bias:** the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. We tend to develop negative attitudes toward people who are perceived as unlike us. Many of us have implicit biases due to the society we are raised in.

**Microaggression:** brief and commonplace verbal, behavioral, or situational indignities that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative slights or insults, especially toward members of minority or oppressed groups. They are a result of an individual’s unconscious, implicit bias.

How can microaggressions be identified?

Microaggressions are not the same as overt racism, homophobia, or other bias, so they are hard to identify. Frequently, they are made unknowingly, not meant to illicit harm.

Here are some examples,
“Your English is very good,”
“You’re so brave—I could never live with a disability,”
“You’re pretty for a 60-year-old,”
“You act so White,”
“How are you bisexual when you’re dating a man?”
“Where are you really from?”

When we can all listen to others with respect and without judgement, we can learn so much from one another. Treating everyone fairly and with kindness can make all the difference when attending college.
- MACC student

**TYPES OF UNCONSCIOUS BIAS**

- **Affinity Bias**
  Feeling a connection to those similar to us

- **Perception Bias**
  Stereotypes and assumptions about different groups

- **Halo Effect**
  Projecting positive qualities onto people without actually knowing them

- **Confirmation Bias**
  Looking to confirm our own opinions and pre-existing ideas.

Image Source: BeApplied.com
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How can we improve our interactions with others and be more inclusive?
Micro-affirmations are subtle, private or public acts of inclusion and kindness that work to acknowledge the value of others and a desire for them to succeed. These acts offer messages of support, openness, and opportunities. Examples include active listening, recognizing and validating experiences, and supporting emotional reactions.

Lead by example, respecting and showing appreciation to all. Recognize and work through our own stereotypes and biases. “Is race, religion, or identity relevant to this situation?” “In what ways do I make assumptions about a person’s identity?”

Facilitate honest discussions by asking questions when witnessing others’ biases.
“What do you mean by that?” “Are you aware of how that might be interpreted?” “Is there another, more inclusive way to explain your ideas?”

Educate others and openly discuss stereotypes. “I know you meant well, but that stereotype is hurtful.” “I felt like that statement reflected some racial bias and may not be an accurate representation.”

Be an active bystander and voice disapprovals. “I don’t agree with what you just said.” “What you said made me feel uncomfortable.”

Seek help from an appropriate advisor, mentor, or supervisor.
It can be hard and scary to speak up in these instances. However, remember that such actions are important in building a welcoming working and learning environment – to building a community where everyone feels welcome, safe, and accepted.

Further reading and viewing:
For all:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BSguud-t1kc;
https://www.nea.org/resource-library/implicit-bias-microaggressions-and-stereotypes-resources;
https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html;
https://mindremakeproject.org/2021/09/20/microgressions-that-target-lgbtq/

For Staff and Faculty:
https://www.shl.com/resources/by-type/blog/2020/how-to-reduce-microaggressions-in-the-workplace/;
https://www.slu.edu/ctl/t/resources/resource-guides/microaggressions.pdf;
https://earth.stanford.edu/dei/dei-library.academia-more-inclusive#qs.8bp5In