

This handout is a tool for examining microaggressions and coded language. It provides examples and reveals the system of oppression practiced by each question or statement. It also connects the minoritized groups in each system and the privileged groups who benefit from it.

Systems of oppression are not mutually exclusive. In fact, they often work together in intricate patterns. This table is not an exhaustive list of all systems of oppression. Add your notes and additions to the spaces provided.

Microaggression/Coded Language	System of Oppression	Minoritized Group(s)	Privileged Group(s)
"Where are you from?"	Nationalism	Non-Citizens, Immigrants, Indigenous peoples	Citizens (and those perceived as such)
"Where were you born?"			
"Your English is superb."			
"We speak English here."			
Commenting on the loudness/quietness of a racially/ethnically minoritized person.			
Referring to undocumented people as "illegals."			
Not taking the time to learn how to properly pronounce someone's name.			
Continuing to mispronounce someone's name after being corrected.			
"Where are you from?"	Classism and/or Racism	Ruralists, racially minoritized, non-locals	Urbanites, White people, localists
"Where were you born?"			
"You are so articulate."			
"You people..."			
Assuming a racially-minoritized person is in a subordinate status (i.e., service worker, student, or nurse).			
Ignoring or heavily surveilling a person in a store, at a restaurant, etc.			

"I don't see color."	Racism	Racially minoritized, "people of color"	White, Caucasian, people of European descent
"We are all part of the human race."			
"I'm not racist. My in-law is [insert racially minoritized group]."			
"As a [white] queer, I understand what you experience as a [insert racially minoritized] group."			
"That's ghetto."			
"You are so articulate."			
"You speak good English."			
Saying to someone who identifies as Asian, "Math probably comes so easily for you."			
"That's retarded."	Ableism	People with disabilities (visible and non-visible)	Able-bodied
"This is so depressing."			
"You're crazy."			
"Can I pray for you?"			
"Have you tried...?"			
"You don't look like you need that parking spot."			
Saying "Merry Christmas."	Religious Oppression	Non-Christians	Christians
"Did you have a bad Church experience?"			
Scheduling events on days or at locations that conflict with non-Christian religious holidays/norms.			
Jokes drawing on religious stereotypes (Muslims being terrorists, Jewish people being cheap, etc.).			
Interrupting or talking over a female colleague.	Sexism		Men

Assuming a female colleague will take notes or assume responsibility for housekeeping and other gender-normative behavior.		Women	
Telling a woman to smile more.			
Saying "You're being dramatic" when a woman expresses any emotion.			
Commenting on a woman's dress, hairstyle, body size, etc.			
Jokes about older people not being skilled with technology.			
Discussing the "fit" of job candidate who is older.	Ageism	Seniors	Young people
Excluding someone from tasks or events because of their age.			
"Tell me about your wife/husband?" (Assuming a colleague's partner is the opposite gender).			
"That's so gay!"			
Assuming interests based on queer identification. "Do you like Ru Paul's Drag Race?"	Heterosexism and Queer/transphobia	LGBTQIA, gender non-conforming, non-binary	Heterosexuals, cisgender
Assuming sexual orientation based on preferred pronouns or gender presentation.			
"You don't act like a typical _____."			
"I'm not homophobic/transphobic. I just don't _____."			
"That person is trashy."			
Assuming someone does not care about their appearance because their wardrobe lacks variety or name brand items.	Classism	Poor, working-class	Middle-class, upper-class

"I'm only eating clean foods."			
Assuming homelessness is a choice.			
Assuming employees wait for reimbursement for work travel.			
Not considering budgetary constraints when organizing a team lunch or outing.			
Assuming knowledge of dining etiquette.			
"You really aren't setting a good example with your weight."			
Calling someone brave for wearing a swimsuit.			
Assuming an overweight person does not care for themselves or lead an active lifestyle.	Fatmisia/Fatphobia	Fat people	Thin people
Giving unsolicited diet advice.			
Medical discrimination where a focus on weight loss prevents diagnoses or treatment of health problems unrelated to weight.			
Congratulating someone on their weight loss.			

Table adapted from the following sources:

DiAngelo, Robin. (2016). *What Does it Mean to Be White? Developing White Racial Literacy*. Peter Lang Publishing: New York.

Sue, Derald Wing; Capodiluopo, Christina M.; Torino, Gina, C; Bucceri, Jennifer M.; Holder, Aisha M. B.; Nadal, Kevin L.; Esquilin, Marta. (2007). "Racial Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Implications for Clinical Practice." *American Psychologist*, 62(4), 271-286.