THE MACRO AFFECT OF LGBQ & TGNC MICROAGRESSIONS ON THE COMMUNITY

Teaching & Learning Committee
February 13, 2012

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Microaggressions
What are they? What do they look like?

**Microaggressions** are “the subtle ways in which body and verbal language convey oppressive ideology about power or privilege against marginalized identities” (The Microaggressions Project). They are the small moments and instances of everyday oppression that build up over one’s lifetime. They often seem insignificant to those not within the targeted marginalized positions.

Microaggressions can manifest in three different ways: **Microassults, Microinsults, Microinvalidations**
**Microassaults**

- **Microassaults** are outright instances of oppression “meant to hurt intended victims through name-calling, avoidant behavior or purposeful discriminatory actions” (Sue & Constantine, 2007). These are different than other types of microaggressions because they are intentional in their aim to discriminate or oppress. Microassaults look like “old fashion” homo/transphobia.

Example:

- A student walks into class holding hands with their same-sex significant other and another student says “Fags, get a room! Stop flaunting!”

- “I don’t get that tranny. What should I call it a he/she?”
Microinsults

- Microinsults are “words and actions that convey rudeness, insensitivity, or demeaning attitudes” towards others based on their perceived identity and/or background. Microinsults can be verbal or non-verbal, and are often unintended in their impact by the perpetrator.

Example:

- A professor continuing to forget to use a TGNC student’s preferred name and/or preferred gender pronoun (PGP).
- “Before you meet your new lab partner, I should warn you: she’s a lesbian.”
- “He is so gay. Have you seen the way he dresses?”
Microinvalidations

- **Microinvalidations** are made up by the dismissal, exclusion, or negation of marginalized thoughts, feelings, and experiences, often with the replacement of privileged experiences as the norm.

Examples:
- “No wonder you broke up. There is no passion in gay relationships.”
- “You mean you don’t feel like you were born into the wrong body.”
- A heterosexual person says “I don’t care about other sexual orientation we are all humans.”
Campus/Classroom Climate

- Campus climate is defined as “current attitudes, behaviors and standards, and practices of employees and students of an institution” (Rankin & Reason, 2008, p. 264).

  - What are some microaggressions you have experiences in your classroom and how did you respond?
  - What are some affects of ignoring microaggressions?
  - How do microaggressions to the LGBQ and TGNC community transmit messages about the climate and culture at Pomona?
Common microaggressive responses and invalidations?

When people point out microaggressions, a common response is to minimize or invalidate those experiences. This response is often microaggressive in itself.

- “Why do you have to make such a big deal about it?”
- “I don’t think that’s true. I don’t experience that.”
- “I don’t believe that happens.”
- “But I have a ___ friend and they don’t mind.”
- No response to a microaggression.
How to Respond to Microaggressions

- Trust someone’s marginalized experience.
- Speak up!
  - “Name It, Claim It, Stop It”!
- Challenge yourself.
- Be mindful of the ways microaggressions can manifest in a classroom discussions.
Prejudice tolerated is intolerance encouraged