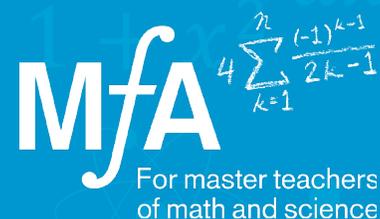


Facilitator Guide:

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE AND PRACTICES AT MfA

Interrupting Biases



It is our responsibility as facilitators to address biased language and behavior from ourselves and in our interactions within our workshops. Many use the term “microaggression” to refer to biased language and behavior. Microaggressions are “brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial, gender, sexual orientation, and religious slights and insults to the target person or group.”¹

There are common barriers to combating microaggressions, including being oblivious, trying to minimize the harm or maintain harmony, working to avoid conflict, being fearful of repercussions, or simply not knowing what to do. We can work to overcome these barriers by learning to recognize microaggressions, creating norms that counter conflict avoidance, improving our ability to engage in racial dialogues, and obtaining the skills and tactics needed to respond to microaggressions.

To interrupt biases when they happen, we need to challenge them. We should *make them visible, educate perpetrators, disarm the microaggression, and seek external support.*²

At the very least, as facilitators, we should get into the habit of calling out bias when:

- There is an opportunity to explore deeper, make meaning together, and find a mutual sense of understanding across differences;
- We need to let someone know that their words or actions are unacceptable and will not be tolerated;
- We need to interrupt in order to prevent further harm;
- We need to hit the “pause” button and break the momentum; and
- We want to help imagine different perspectives, possibilities, or outcomes.

Calling out bias is a type of *microintervention*, or an everyday anti-bias action you can take to counteract, challenge, diminish, or neutralize microaggressions.³ These can come in the form of:

- Affirmations: compliments, supports, or validations
- Protections: developing racial literacy, critical consciousness, or preparing for racism
- Challenges: confronting biased language, behavior, or practices

For more information on being anti-racist and how to interrupt biases, see [Being Antiracist](#), and continue reading for other strategies.

¹ Sue, Derald Wing. *Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation*. John Wiley & Sons, 2010.

² Sue, D. W., Calle, C. Z., Mendez, N., Alsaidi, S., & Glaeser, E. (2020). *Microintervention Strategies: What You Can Do to Disarm and Dismantle Individual and Systemic Racism and Bias*. John Wiley & Sons.

³ Sue, D. W., Calle, C. Z., Mendez, N., Alsaidi, S., & Glaeser, E. (2020). *Microintervention Strategies: What You Can Do to Disarm and Dismantle Individual and Systemic Racism and Bias*. John Wiley & Sons.

In this guide, we present two frameworks for interrupting biases and discuss the common practice of introductions and pronouncing names.

- ▶ Calling Out Behavior - Calling In the Person
- ▶ Responding to Microaggressions: RAVEN Framework
- ▶ Introductions: Pronouncing Names Correctly

Calling Out Behavior - Calling In the Person⁴

We can affirm, protect, or challenge bias by calling someone out or calling someone in. The table below provides some examples of what you can say when faced with being a witness to a microaggression or other forms of biases.

I don't want to put you on the spot, but that comment makes me feel uncomfortable.	That's not our culture here. Those aren't our values.	It sounded like you said _____. Is that what you meant?
I wonder if you've considered the impact of your words.	What do you mean when you say _____?	When I hear you say _____, it makes me feel _____.
Wow. Nope. Ouch. That hurts. I need to stop you right there.	Is the fact that the person was Asian / Black / Latinx / Trans relevant to your story?	It sounds like you're making some assumptions that we need to unpack a bit.
What sort of impact do you think your decision / comment / action might have?	How might someone else see this differently? Is it possible that someone might misinterpret your words / actions?	How might the impact of your words / actions differ from your intent?
It sounds like you are assuming _____. What if we assumed _____ instead?	How is _____ different from _____? What is the connection between _____ and _____?	How did you decide / determine / conclude _____?

⁴ Adapted from [Calling In Calling Out](#) and [What did you just say? Responses to racist comments collected from the field](#) Created collectively by CFEI grads across Oregon.

Responding to Microaggressions: RAVEN Framework⁵

Another way of thinking about how to respond to microaggressions when they occur is to consider using the RAVEN framework that is particularly useful when responding to bias in public space, such as our workshops. This five-step approach includes the following:

R: Redirect the interaction: *"I'd like to pause this conversation right here, because I'm concerned with the language that is being used."*

A: Ask a probing question: *"I think I heard you say that the student barely speaks English and doesn't belong in this class. What did you mean by that?"*

V: Value clarification: *"At the beginning of the workshop, we all agreed to create an environment that was safe and welcoming. The statement you just made is not aligned with these values."*

E: Emphasize your own thoughts and feelings using "I" statements: *"I was saddened to hear you say that about people from that neighborhood. I think someone from that community would be hurt by what you said."*

N: Suggest next steps to the aggressor to correct or change their behavior moving forward: *"Maybe you can offer an authentic apology to the person or persons who were targeted and be more mindful of their actions in the future. I have an article that talks about implicit bias and microaggressions that I can share with you."*

This is not a sequential process, but rather a way to help guide our thinking and actions to disrupt unintentional microaggressions. Intentional bias requires a direct and stern response.

⁵ Wood, J. Luke, and Frank Harris. "How to Respond to Racial Microaggressions When They Occur." *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*. 5 May, 2020.

Introductions: Pronouncing Names Correctly

A common practice in many MfA spaces is to have people introduce themselves. A common microaggression that occurs in these moments is having a non-Western appearing name avoided in the space or mispronounced. Mispronouncing someone's name negatively impacts them - it may affect their social-emotional well-being and hinder their ability to fully participate in the space. Mispronouncing names of people of color is also a racial microaggression because it creates shame and dissociation from their culture. "Learning to pronounce a colleague's name correctly is not just a common courtesy but it's an important effort in creating an inclusive workplace, one that emphasizes psychological safety and belonging." (Tulshyan, 2020).

Suggestions for getting it right include (from Tulshyan's 2020 article, [If You Don't Know How to Say Someone's Name, Just Ask](#)):

- Ask and actively listen
- Don't make it a big deal
- Observe and practice
- Clarify
- Be an ally
- Don't be arrogant or flippant
- Do something when you realize you've mispronounced a name

In general, don't make the interaction xenophobic by saying how unfamiliar their name is to you or laugh about how you are having a hard time. Just say, "Can you say your name for me? I don't want to mispronounce it."

And when mistakes happen, apologize as soon as you realize. Something as simple as, "I'm sorry I mispronounced that. Could you please repeat your name for me?"

You can also make a point to educate yourself about different names and pronunciations - make a note of the name and practice it privately until you have it right. The internet is an amazing resource to help with this. Two potential websites to use yourself or direct others to include:

- [The Guide on How to Pronounce Names](#)
- [NameDrop: A name pronunciation service](#)