### Interrupting Microaggressions

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<th><strong>APPROACH</strong></th>
<th><strong>MICROAGGRESSION</strong></th>
<th><strong>INTERVENTION</strong></th>
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<td><strong>INQUIRE</strong></td>
<td>A white student to a black student: &quot;Well, you're lucky you're here at Holy Cross.&quot;</td>
<td>Professor: &quot;What do you mean by that?&quot; White student: &quot;Well, you know, affirmative action.&quot; Then you have the opportunity to address the misconceptions and stereotypes about affirmative action (ie, that white women are the primary beneficiaries of affirmative action).</td>
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<td><strong>REFLECT</strong></td>
<td>&quot;As a woman, I know what you go through as a racial minority.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;So it sounds like you're equating gender and racial oppression. What are people's thoughts on that?&quot;</td>
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<td><strong>REFRAME</strong></td>
<td>&quot;If people of color just worked harder, they wouldn't have to go on Welfare or collect unemployment.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Let's try re-framing that for a moment. What are people's thoughts about systemic barriers that disproportionately affect people of color?&quot;</td>
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<td><strong>RE-DIRECT</strong></td>
<td>Heterosexual student to LGBTQ identified student: &quot;What do gay people think of the state of marriage equality?&quot;</td>
<td>Professor: &quot;Let's open the conversation up to everyone. What do you all think of the state of marriage equality?&quot;</td>
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**Key Phrases:**

**Theme: Myth of meritocracy**
- "Say more about that."
- "Can you elaborate your point?"
- "So it sounds like you think..."
- "The Myth of Meritocracy is a belief that everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed.
- "So, what I heard you say..." "Let's shift the conversation..."
- "What do gay people think..." "What do you mean by that?"
- "Can you elaborate your point?" "Let's try re-framing that for a moment. What are people's thoughts about systemic barriers that disproportionately affect people of color?" "Professor: "Let's open the conversation up to everyone. What do you all think of the state of marriage equality?""
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<td><strong>REVISIT</strong></td>
<td>&quot;Yeah, but HC Puerto Ricans aren't normal Puerto Ricans.&quot;</td>
<td>Professor: &quot;Last week in class when we were talking about diversity at HC, someone remarked that the Puerto Rican students on campus don't act like &quot;normal&quot; Puerto Ricans. Let's revisit that. What do we mean by &quot;normal&quot;?&quot;</td>
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| Even if the moment, or microaggression has passed, go back and address it.  
*This is important, as research indicates that unaddressed microaggression can leave just as much of a negative impact as the microaggression itself.** |  
**KEY PHRASES:**  
"I want to go back to something that was brought up in class last week."  
"Let's rewind five minutes..." |

| **CHECK IN** | **Heterosexual student in class (with an LGBTQ identified student who has come out to you):"I just don't understand why gay people don't try conversion therapy. It's much easier to be straight."** | Professor: "I just wanted to check in about class today when we were talking about sexual orientation and the conversation turned to conversion therapy. How are you doing?" |
| After class, during office hours, over email, etc check in with students -- both those who verbalized microaggressions and those who may have been affected or offended by the microaggression.  
*This is important, as research indicates that unaddressed microaggressions can leave just as much of a negative impact as the microaggression itself.** |  
**KEY PHRASES:**  
I'm going to interject here...  
What do you mean by that....  
Let me pause you there...  
Say more about that...  
So, it sound like you're saying...  
Let's try reframing this... |

Avoid starting questions with "Why" -- it leaves people feeling defensive. Instead try "Tell me more about that."

When addressing a microaggression in class, try to avoid using the pronoun "you" -- it leaves people feeling defensive, and it keeps the conversation narrow (between the professor and the one student). Instead, try using the pronouns "we" or "us" -- it opens the conversation up to the entire class.

Adapted from Northnode Domestic Violence Curriculum, 2008

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