

## Racial Microaggression Themes

Theme	Microaggression	Message
<p><b><u>Alien in own land</u></b> When Asian Americans and Latino Americans are assumed to be foreign-born</p>	<p>Asking an Asian co-worker, “Where are you from? No, where are you <i>really</i> from?”</p> <p>Telling an American born Latino student they speak such good English.</p>	<p>You are not American.</p>
<p><b><u>Ascription of intelligence</u></b> Assigning a degree of intelligence to a person of color on the basis of their race.</p>	<p>A school counselor reacting with surprise when an Asian-American student had trouble of a math test.</p> <p>A career counselor asking a Black or Latino student, “Do you think you’re ready for college?”</p>	<p>All Asians are smart and good at math.</p> <p>It is unusual for people of color to succeed.</p>
<p><b><u>Color blindness</u></b> Statements which indicate that a person does not want to acknowledge race.</p>	<p>A staff member of color attempts to discuss being the only person of color on campus and feeling alienated and dismissed by her co-workers. A white staff member says, “I think you are being too paranoid. We should emphasize similarities, not people’s differences.”</p> <p>When a student complains that a teacher is racist another teacher replies, “We don’t see color here at our college. We just see individuals.”</p>	<p>Race and culture are not important variables that affect people’s lives</p> <p>Your racial experiences are not valid.</p>

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<p><b><u>Criminality/assumption of criminal status</u></b>  A person of color is presumed to be dangerous, criminal, or deviant on the basis of their race.</p>	<p>At night, black students are consistently stopped and questioned on campus while their white peers are not.</p>	<p>You are a criminal.</p>
<p><b><u>Denial of Individual Racism</u></b>  A statement made when whites renounce their racial biases.</p>	<p>A potential student asks admissions how race is addressed on campus. The administrator replies, "Race does not affect the way we treat students. We treat all students the same."</p> <p>A student of color brings up racism with a female teacher. She replies, "I totally understand. As a woman, I face discrimination too."</p>	<p>Your race/ethnic experience is not important.</p> <p>Your racial oppression is no different than my gender oppression.</p>
<p><b><u>Myth of Meritocracy</u></b>  Statements which assert that race does not play a role in succeeding in career advancement or education.</p>	<p>A school counselor tells a Black student, "If you work hard, you can succeed like everyone else."</p> <p>When a staff member of color complains about being passed over for promotion, his colleague replies, "Maybe if you work harder you'll get promoted next time."</p>	<p>People of color are lazy and/or incompetent and need to work harder.</p> <p>If you don't succeed, you have only yourself to blame (blaming the victim).</p>

Adapted from Hollins and Govan's adaptation of Sue, Capodilupo et al. Racial Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Implications for Clinical Practice. American Psychologist, 2007. Updated 8.12.2018

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<p><b><u>Pathologizing cultural values/communication styles</u></b> The notion that the values and communication styles of the dominant/white culture are ideal.</p>	<p>A Black student is loud and emotional in class while discussing issues of racism. The professor becomes fearful and sees the student is responding inappropriately.</p> <p>A student of of Asian or Native American descent has trouble maintaining eye contact with his professor. The professor assumes he is being defiant.</p>	<p>Assimilate to dominant culture.</p> <p>Leave your cultural baggage outside.</p>
<p><b><u>Second-class citizen</u></b> Occurs when a white person is given preferential treatment as a consumer over a black person.</p>	<p>White students get called on more often in class when students of color have their hands raised as often.</p> <p>A white person is served first by the office staff when a person of color arrives before them.</p>	<p>Whites' opinions are more valued than people of color.</p> <p>White students are valued more than students of color.</p>
<p><b><u>Environmental microaggressions</u></b> Macro-level microaggressions, which are more apparent on a systemic level.</p>	<p>The magazines in the lobby and the pictures on the walls are geared towards white dominant culture and norms.</p> <p>White people are the central characters of all of the required readings in class.</p>	<p>You don't belong/Only white people can succeed.</p> <p>You are an outsider/You don't exist.</p>