

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND DECENTERING: A PATH TO ORGANIZATIONAL TRANSFORMATION

Presented by:

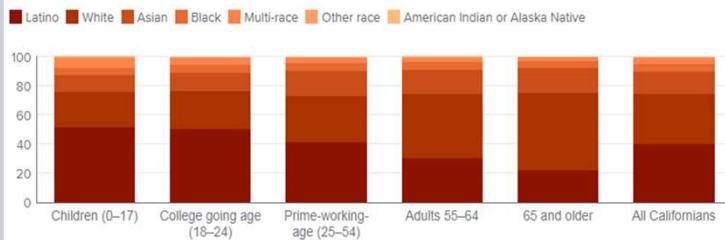
Elena Gerli
David Gonzalez
Yecenia Vargas



California's Population has become increasingly diverse



Percent distribution of the population by age groups



SOURCE: American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates 2021.
NOTES: Asian includes Pacific Islander.

Where We Are . . .

- ❖ 39% Hispanic or Latino
- ❖ 35% White
- ❖ 15% Asian American or Pacific Islander
- ❖ 5% Black
- ❖ 4% Multiracial
- ❖ <1% Native American or Alaska Natives (2020 Census)



The Why . . .

Experiences With Microaggressions, by Racial Group

In your day-to-day life over the past 12 months, how often did any of the following things happen to you?

	Black adults	Hispanic adults	Asian adults	White adults
	% Very often/Often	% Very often/Often	% Very often/Often	% Very often/Often
People acted as if they were better than you	32	21	17	10
People acted as if they thought you were not smart	25	12	9	5
You were treated with less courtesy than other people	22	8	7	4
You were treated with less respect than other people	20	7	5	4
People acted as if they thought you were dishonest	19	4	4	1
People acted as if they were afraid of you	18	3	4	2
You received worse service than other people at restaurants or stores	14	4	4	2

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Microaggressions

➤ Microaggressions are “the everyday slights, indignities, put downs and insults that people of color, women, LGBT populations or those who are marginalized experience in their day-to-day interactions with people.”

- ✓ Microaggressions can be intentional or accidental
- ✓ The person who made the comment or action may not mean any harm and/or may not be aware of the hurtful effect

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MICROAGGRESSIONS

Examples of Microaggressions include:

“You just need to man up.” [Toxic masculinity; silencing valid emotional expression; only one acceptable way to be]


“You are so articulate!” (for a Latina, e.g.) [Assumes inferior communication skills for a swath of people based on nothing but the color of their skin; surprise that someone is articulate is profoundly condescending.]

“I like your hair today. You look more professional.” [Hair styles that are not standard white American hairstyles are inherently inferior; forces people to straighten hair, e.g., silencing of culture, has health consequences.]

Ignoring an idea expressed by one employee and then praising another employee who offers the same idea.

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Microaggressions

- Why is this important?
 - ✓ The comments/conduct can have a negative impact, even when not intended
 - ✓ The comments/conduct decrease job satisfaction and sense of belonging
 - ✓ Contribute to turn-over

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Microaggressions

Strategies to Disrupt Microaggressions

Keep in mind power dynamics – be safe!

Micro affirmations

Use your privilege

Interrupt the interrupters

Pick up a thread by an underestimated individual, acknowledge, elevate

Decentering

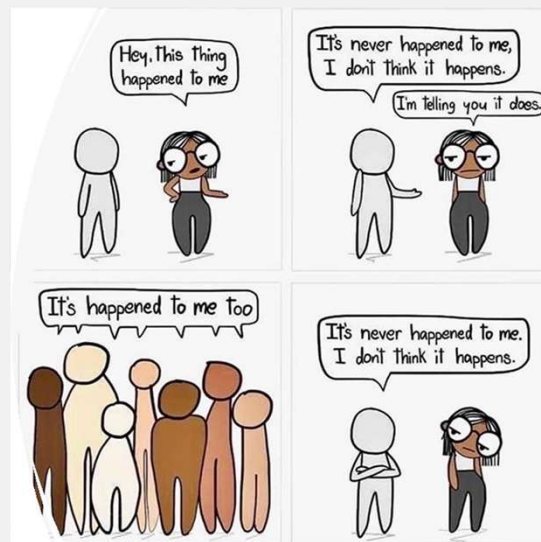
Call people in/out

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Decentering



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Decentering

- The practice of decentering our own experience, intention, and feelings as not relevant to the conversation, and putting the focus on the impact of what we say and do on other people. This includes taking the focus off our shame and feelings of guilt we might experience for saying or doing something that is offensive or exclusionary.
- This is an access to incorporating DEI into who you are in the world.
- Understanding what decentering is becomes easier by using examples of what isn't or rather examples that distinguish what centering is.

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Decentering

Listen

Believe them

Take focus off your feelings and focus on impact

Take responsibility; course correct

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Decentering

Avoid:

Don't beat yourself up or go on a shame spiral; try to be kind to yourself.

Don't make the person calling you in or out be your emotional caretaker, especially if they are the recipient of the harm (that is centering yourself and may add to their emotional labor).

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Calling People In/Out

Calling In

Calling in is an invitation to a one-on-one or small group conversation to bring attention to an individual or group's harmful words or behavior, including bias, prejudice, microaggressions, and discrimination

Calling Out

Calling out is bringing public attention to an individual, group, or organization's harmful words or behavior

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Calling People In/Out

Calling In: When?

Influence – You have influence with this person through a personal (e.g., close relationship) or professional (e.g., work colleague) connection

Safety – As one-on-one or small group conversation that will not compromise your safety or wellbeing

Openness – This person has demonstrated an openness and commitment to learning how to better foster spaces of inclusion and belonging

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Calling People In/Out


Calling In: How?

"I'm curious. What was your intention when you said that?"

"How might the impact of your words or actions differ from your intent?"

"How might someone else see this differently? Is it possible that someone else might misinterpret your words/actions?"

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Calling People In/Out


Calling Out: When?

Urgency – There is an urgent need to hit “pause” to prevent further harm to others or yourself, and make it clear to others present that you are not in agreement with what is being said or done

Influence and Safety – There is a specific power or relationship dynamic that would render calling in harmful, unsafe, or ineffective for you

Openness – Previous attempts to call in have been unsuccessful

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Calling People In/Out

Calling Out: How?

“That’s not our culture here. Those aren’t our values.”


“I don’t find that funny. Tell me why that’s funny to you.”

“It sounded like you said ____.
Is that what you really meant?”


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CALLING PEOPLE IN/OUT


*You've been called
in/out – now what?*




Recommendation:



Pause – take a breath. Ground yourself to receive what they have to say



Listen – with the intent of learning and seeing things from their point of view




Acknowledge – take responsibility for the impact of your words or actions

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CALLING PEOPLE IN/OUT


*You've been called
in/out – now what?*



Recommendation:



Reflect – process your thoughts and emotions. It may help to do so with a trusted partner who will not only have grace for your mistake, neither defending your actions nor condemning you.



Repair the harm done – change your behavior going forward, inviting trusted partners to hold you accountable to learning and doing better.

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THANK YOU!

Elena Gerli –
egerli@awattorneys.com

David Gonzalez –
dgonzalez@awattorneys.com

Yecenia Vargas –
yvargas@awattorneys.com

Visit us at www.attorneys.com



Aleshire & Wynder

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