Workplace Strategies for Mental Health

Compliments of Canada Life

WORKSHEET

Microaggressions

Microaggressions take place when a person indirectly, subtly or unintentionally discriminates. They're based on differences in race, gender identity or sexual orientation.

Implicit bias can occur without a face-to-face interaction. For example, the choice of images or written language can show bias. Microaggressions are more likely to occur through passive remarks and actions.

Where are you really from?

How could this question make someone feel uncomfortable?

What could be a better approach?

You don't look trans

How could this statement make someone feel uncomfortable?

What could be a better approach?

He's acting bipolar

How could this statement make someone feel uncomfortable?

What could be a better approach?

She must be on her period

How could this statement make someone feel uncomfortable?

What could be a better approach?

3-step approach to addressing bias and microaggressions in the workplace

If you witness bias or a microaggression in the workplace:



Identify

State to those involved what you saw or heard. Do this respectfully and with the intention to objectively reflect what you witnessed rather than adding in your opinion about the intent. For example, if you heard “where are you really from?” you might say, “they just told you.”



Reframe the narrative

Share why you think the exchange may be hurtful to some people. This is an opportunity for respectful dialogue. Give people the benefit of the doubt. They may not be aware of their own bias and the person on the other end may not have been offended in the least. By approaching this as a conversation instead of an accusation, you will find that people are much less likely to become defensive. In this example you might ask, “Why don’t you believe their first response?”



Educate

The more everyone understands the issues, the more they can avoid bias. Ask questions especially of those who may experience implicit bias. Seek to understand their experiences. Pursue professional development opportunities that focus on inclusion. This could be done privately with the person who spoke up or as a general education opportunity with an entire team without singling anyone out.

If you’re interested in doing more work in this area, check out **clwsmh.com/implicit-bias** on the Workplace Strategies for Mental Health website.

All Workplace Strategies resources are available to anyone at no cost, compliments of Canada Life. To learn more, visit **clwsmh.com**.

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