



Idaho State
University

Microaggressions, Microinterventions & Repair

COH Retreat - 2022
Jennifer Hightower, PhD, NCC

ROAR



Idaho State
University

Our Context



Defining Microaggressions

“Everyday, subtle, intentional – and oftentimes unintentional – interactions or behaviors that communicate some sort of bias toward historically marginalized groups”



Nature of Microaggressions

- Reflect all levels of oppression
- Different from everyday rudeness
 - Constant and continual
 - Cumulative – lifelong burden
 - Continuous reminder of status
 - Symbolic of structural injustices



Examples of Microaggressions



Micah Johnson
@jomichah24



[#BlackintheIvory](#) Feeling dread every time you have to ask a prof to re-explain something out of fear of being looked at like you're dumb or being met with "maybe this isn't the right field for you" while your peers receive enthusiastic responses for asking the same questions.

8:35 AM · Jun 8, 2020



25 Reply Copy link



Dr. Asmeret Asefaw Berhe (she/her) 🌍
@aaberhe



Being [#BlackintheIvory](#) is being told by senior WW Professor "of course NSF would fund your CAREER award, you are a black woman."
... in one fell swoop invalidating my hard work, expertise, position in the academy, and recognition that I earned.

2:34 PM · Jun 8, 2020



[Read the full conversation on Twitter](#)

939 Reply Copy link



Microinterventions

Make the "Invisible" Visible

- Undermine meta-communication
- Make meta-communication explicit
- Challenge stereotypes
- Name universal human behaviors
- Ask for clarification

Disarm the Microaggression

- Express disagreement
- State values and set limits
- Describe what is happening
- Use an exclamation
- Use non-verbal communication
- Interrupt and redirect



Microintervention Example

Microaggression

During a meeting of the faculty search committee on which you are serving, almost every time a female colleague tries to speak, she is interrupted by a male colleague. No one says anything when this happens. Finally, your female colleague stops trying to offer contributions to the discussion.

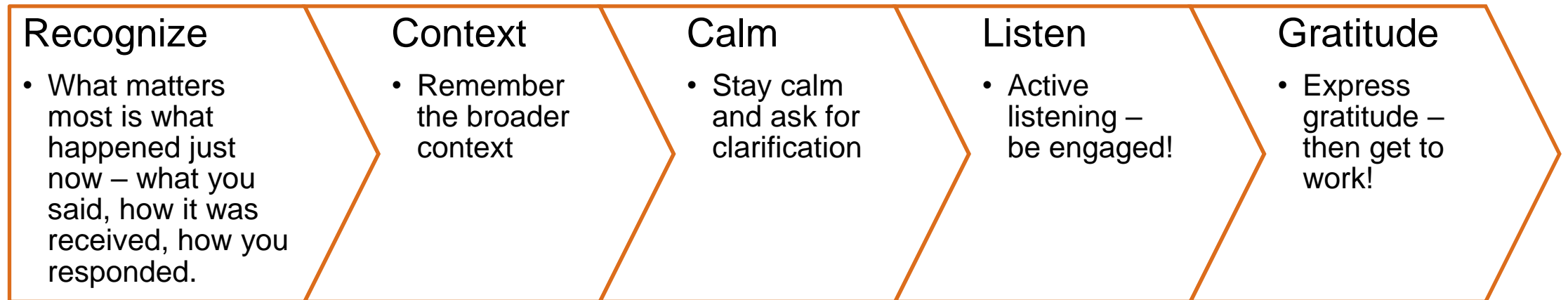
(UNHAdvance, Accessed 2022)

Potential Microintervention

I see that _____ has been wanting to say something and keeps getting interrupted. I would like to hear her contribution.



Repair & Example





Idaho State
University

Small Group Discussion



Idaho State
University

Questions?