



Microaggressions. What are they and why is it important to understand?

Key Points:

- Microaggressions are a form of discrimination.
- Microaggressions are subtle and often occur despite best intentions.
- Microaggressions can be verbal or nonverbal messages.
- Microaggressions can imply stereotypical expectations even when intended to be complimentary.

Further Learning

The context in these videos is a post secondary school setting. But the videos are well done and contain really relevant and useful strategies.

- [This](#) 3 minute video describes microaggressions and strategies to use to respond in the moment.
- [This](#) 3 minute video goes through examples of microaggressions and how to reflect on those situations.

Support:

Contacts:

Lisa Riddell
Community Development Manager
lriddell@town.jasper.ab.ca
780-852-6540

Leanne Pelletier
Community Development Coordinator
lpelletier@town.jasper.ab.ca
780-852-6540



How stereotypes lead to bias, prejudice and discrimination:

- There are **stereotypical** or overgeneralized beliefs (positive or negative) about different groups of people that are reinforced throughout life in books, movies or advertisements etc.
- This leads to **implicit bias** which is subconscious attitudes that influence our understanding, actions and behaviour when interacting with different groups of people.
- **Prejudice** is an unjustified, typically negative attitude toward an individual or group.

Stereotypical beliefs + prejudicial attitudes + emotion can drive the behaviour we call discrimination.

Microaggressions are a form of discrimination consisting of subtle, verbal or nonverbal messages or insults that are directed toward an individual.

Examples:

- "Wow, you're so articulate!"
- "I feel so OCD today."
- "I can't say your name. I'll just call you J."
- "You want me to say *they/them/theirs* when you're a woman?"
- "Where are you from? Where are you *really* from."
- "I bet you're really good at math."

Check your biases:

- What was my **intention**?
- What **assumptions** were behind what I said or did?
- What was the **impact**?