

Innovative Educators

Supporting Academic & Professional Growth In Higher Ed

Creating & Sustaining An Inclusive Campus Culture By Addressing Microaggressions, Implicit Bias & Other Exclusionary Incidents

Naomi Sigg
Vice President for Diversity, Equity, &
Inclusion
John Carroll University



1

Tell Us About Yourself

Please use the chat feature

- Where are you from?
- If you are with a group, who is in your group?
- What do you hope to learn from today's session?
- Are there any specific challenges you are facing in this area?

2

Audience Poll

Using the chat feature, please let us know who is participating from your institution today.

- A. Administrator
- B. Academic Advising
- C. Admissions/Enrollment Management
- D. Student Affairs
- E. Faculty
- F. Other (please specify)

3

Let's Define the Issue

Microaggressions

- Microaggressions are the everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership.

-Dr. Derald W. Sue

4

Microaggressions Characteristics

- **Everyday actions** that occur all around us
- By people **who believe they are fair-minded, without prejudice**
- Possibly, **without any conscious intent or malice**
- **Usually unaware** of how their comment, tone, or behavior negatively impact others



5

Microaggressions Characteristics



- May be considered **“no big deal”**
- Few **recognize the cumulative, enduring impact** of constant barrage of microaggressions
- Some **may not even recognize** they experienced a microaggression until later

6

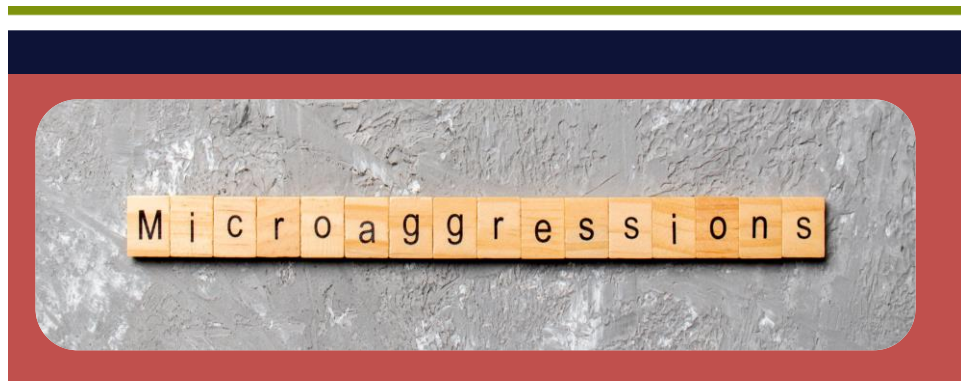


- You're only here because you're a scholarship kid
- Racist, sexist, or homophobic jokes or social media memes or posts
- Not being served in setting like a restaurant or store

- Talking slowly or loudly to someone with an accent
- Where are you really from?
- You're not like other_____. You're cool.
- Not inviting someone to dinner because you don't think they can afford it

- I'm colorblind; I don't see race
- What's your **real** name?
- Misgendering a person
- It's just a joke; don't be so sensitive
- Why do you always have to talk about race, gender, ability, etc....

7



Cumulative Impact of Microaggressions

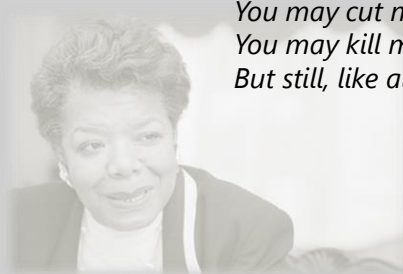
- Hypertension
- Depression
- Dehydration
- Lower self-esteem
- Diabetes
- Cardiovascular disease
- Stress
- Obesity
- Anxiety
- Urinary tract infections
- Rashes

8

Still I Rise

*You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may tread me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.*

*You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I'll rise.*



Maya Angelou
1928-2014

9

Reflection

- Think about a time when you either experienced a microaggression or heard/observed one in action.
 - What feelings come up?
 - Was this the first time you experienced something like this or was it familiar?
 - What do you think was the intent of the other person(s) in the situation?
 - How did you process this if you did at all?
 - What could be the messaging or cumulative impact of this situation on you or others?

10

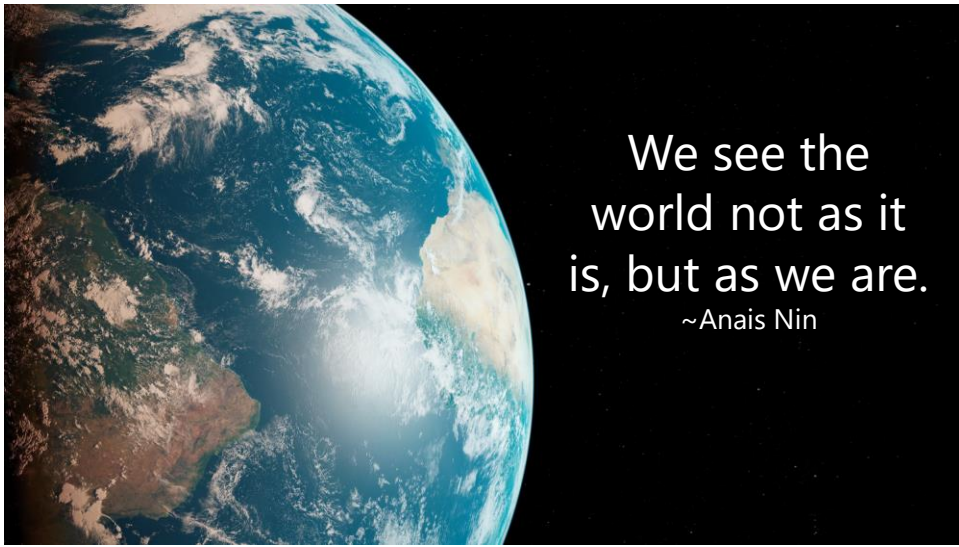
Microaggressions Pushback

- The language isn't strong enough. It's not as "micro" as people think.
- I've done these things and they aren't that big of a deal.
- What about free speech or academic freedom?
- We are "coddling" our students and are not preparing them for the "real" world
- Isn't this all just political correctness?
- What about microaggressions towards dominant communities?

11



12



13



Individual

Group

Organizational

14



15



16

- **Unconscious Biases** are social stereotypes about certain groups of people that individuals form outside their own conscious awareness. Everyone holds unconscious beliefs about various social and identity groups, and these biases stem from one's tendency to organize social worlds by categorizing.

Unconscious bias is often incompatible with one's conscious values. Certain scenarios can activate unconscious attitudes and beliefs. For example, biases may be more prevalent when multi-tasking or working under time pressure.

- These unconscious beliefs can negatively impact recruitment, how we pick programs, how we see leadership in others



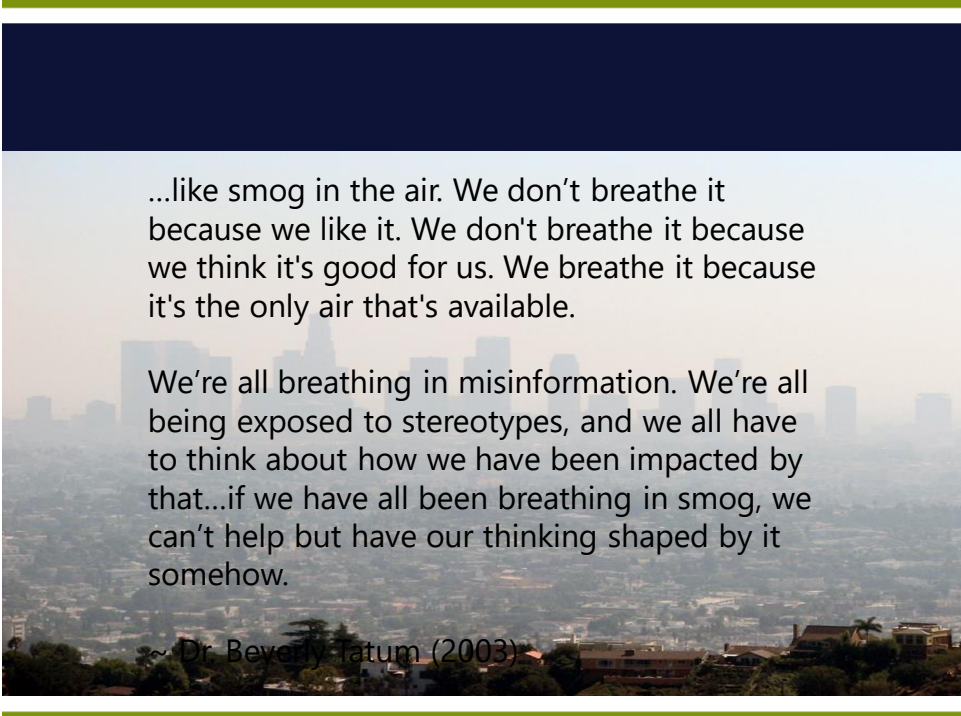
17

In that same time, our conscious brain processes only 40 bits.

Our unconscious brain processes 11 million bits of information a second.



18

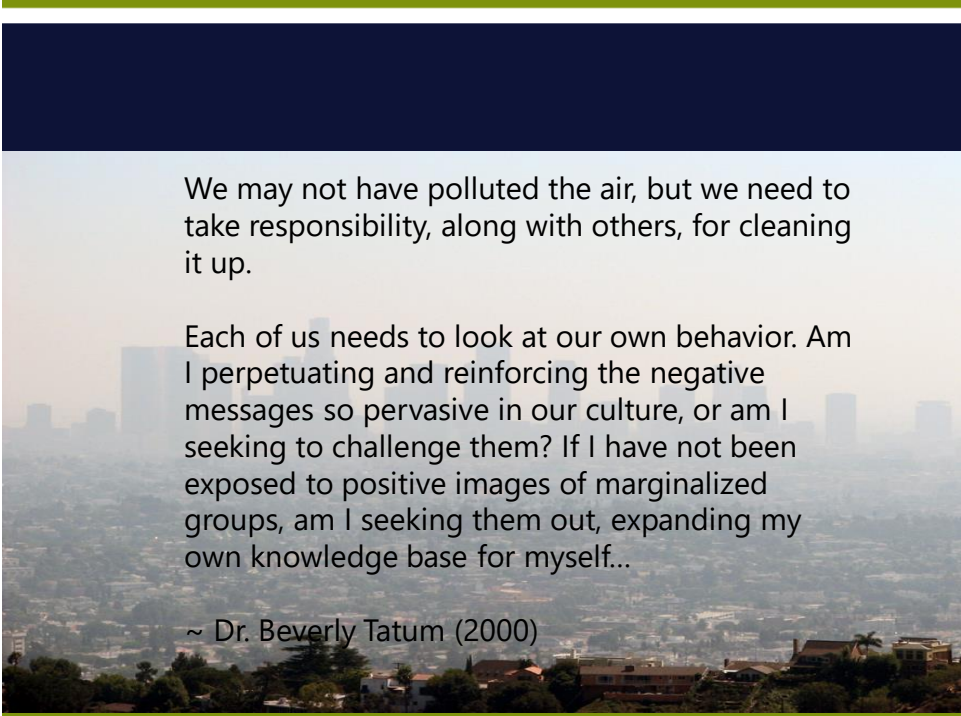


...like smog in the air. We don't breathe it because we like it. We don't breathe it because we think it's good for us. We breathe it because it's the only air that's available.

We're all breathing in misinformation. We're all being exposed to stereotypes, and we all have to think about how we have been impacted by that...if we have all been breathing in smog, we can't help but have our thinking shaped by it somehow.

~ Dr. Beverly Tatum (2003)

19



We may not have polluted the air, but we need to take responsibility, along with others, for cleaning it up.

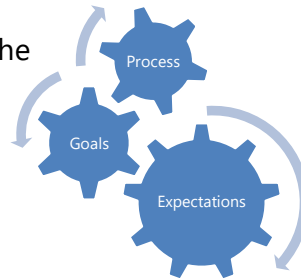
Each of us needs to look at our own behavior. Am I perpetuating and reinforcing the negative messages so pervasive in our culture, or am I seeking to challenge them? If I have not been exposed to positive images of marginalized groups, am I seeking them out, expanding my own knowledge base for myself...

~ Dr. Beverly Tatum (2000)

20

Creating Brave Spaces

- Cultivating the Environment
 - Expectations and Learning Agreements
- Everyone must know the goal and the process
- Experts on Your Campus
- Where Do These Spaces Exist



21

“DIALOGUE is a process of genuine interaction through which human beings LISTEN to each other deeply enough to be changed by what they learn. Each makes a serious effort to take other's concerns into their own picture, even when disagreement persists.

No participant gives up their identity, but each recognizes enough of the other's valid human claims that they will act differently toward the other.”

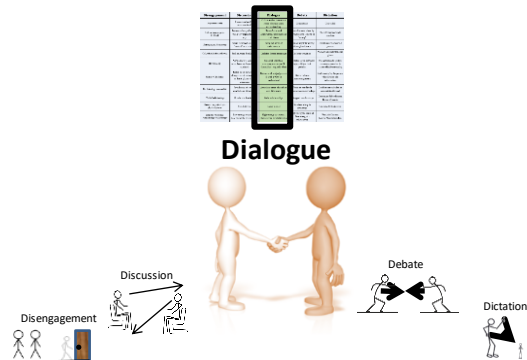
~ Sustained Dialogue materials, Hal Saunders

22

Disengagement	Discussion	Dialogue	Debate	Dictation
Appearance only	Conceptual and/or conversational	Collaborative, towards a sense of community understanding	Competitive	1 way
Little or inappropriate feedback	Presents ideas, often in a "clean" or "sophisticated" way	Re-evaluate and acknowledge assumptions and biases	Succeed or win, often by proving others' logic to be 'wrong'	No feedback
	Share information, seek 'neutral' conclusions	Bring out areas of ambivalence	Focus on 'right' & 'wrong' through evidence	My way is THE way
Only effort is directed away	Seek answers & solutions	Look for shared meanings	Look for weakness	
No follow up	Give answers, often in accordance with academic standards	Discover collective meaning; reexamine & destabilize long held ideas	Search for flaws in others' logic; critique their position	Silence & Obedience
Silence ≠ Obedience	Listen to find places of disagreement or to gather rational pieces of an argument	Listens without judgement & with a view to understand	Listen to form counterarguments	Listening = Silence
Not listening = no conflict	Avoid areas of strong conflict and difference	Articulate areas of conflict and difference	Focus on conflict & difference as an advantage	Only authority is in speaker. No external conflict
"Polite" relationship	Retain relationships	Build relationships	Disregard relationships	Subservient relationship
Silence = opportunity to physically leave	Avoid silence	Honor silence	Use silence to gain advantage	Silence only option for listener.
Content: No energy Relationship: Polite energy	Content: Low energy Relationship: Low energy	Content: High energy Relationship: High energy	Content: High energy Relationship: Low energy	Content: High energy Relationship: Minimal energy

23

Getting to Dialogue



24

Using Dialogue

- How can you infuse dialogue on your campus?
 - Staff Meetings
 - Campus Decision Making
 - Classroom Settings
 - Student Organizations



25

Creating a Dialogue Culture

- Campus Dialogue Groups
- Day of Dialogue Events
- Community Dialogue after Bias Incidents
- Classroom Dialogues
- Common Reading Groups
- Decision Making Processes

26

Intentional Dialogues

- Seek to understand then be understood
- Moderated
- Have clear expectations and learning guidelines
- Must include diverse perspectives
 - Need folks from all walks of life, experiences, philosophies, identities, belief systems
- Infuse relevant and timely topics
- Have common purpose and outcomes important to all members in the group

27

Intent \neq Impact



28

Potholes to Avoid

- That wasn't my intent/I didn't mean it that way.
- I'm a good person...
- Defensiveness and Explaining Things Away
 - The reason I said that was...
 - You took that the wrong way...
- Tug-of-war: You started it! You made me....
- You're too sensitive, over-reacting.
- Jumping to solutions

29

*Change does not roll in on the
wheels of inevitability, but
comes through continuous
struggle.*

~Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

30

Resource, Training, Activities

- Inclusive of the entire community, faculty, staff, students
- Ongoing, not just one thing at one time
- Training to build capacity
- Keep up to date on your campus climate, current issues, nationally, regionally, locally, and on your campus
- Infuse the work into your campus culture
 - Vision
 - Mission
 - Values
 - Onboarding/Orientation

31

Diversity 360

- **Partnership** with the Office of Multicultural Affairs and the Office of Inclusion, Diversity, and Equal Opportunity
- **3 hour module** for students
- Co-Facilitated by faculty, staff, or students who have undergone extensive training
- Interactive, relevant, and changing curriculum
- Flexible module for staff and faculty with pre-work assigned

32

Diversity 360 Program Goals

Increase **capacity to recognize and engage** in dialogue across the breadth of differences;

Deepen **awareness of types of microaggressions** and **how they effect experiences** on campus and in the local community.

Deepen understanding of how affiliations in **privileged and marginalized** groups impact treatment on campus, campus climate and productivity.

Discover ways to **become a change agent** and diversity champion with new knowledge, ideas, and resources about university policies, programs, and best practices.

33

Microaggressions Activity

- Collect microaggressions from students, faculty, and staff and create a list of 40-60 examples
- Have ten volunteers read one microaggression out loud to the group

• **Note your thoughts and reactions**

34

1. What are your reactions to reading these?

2. **Each person** share 3-4 microaggressions that got your attention or feel familiar.

3. What do you think could be the cumulative impact of these types of negative, exclusionary experiences?

* On **student persistence and success**?

* On **staff and faculty retention**? Morale Productivity?

35

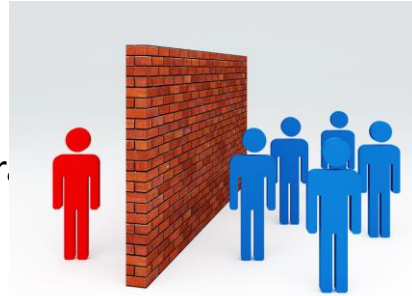
Bias Guides Behavior

- **What biases, assumptions, or stereotypes *MIGHT*** be fueling some of these microaggressions and exclusionary situations?
- **Where** do these biases come from?

36

Barriers to Intervention

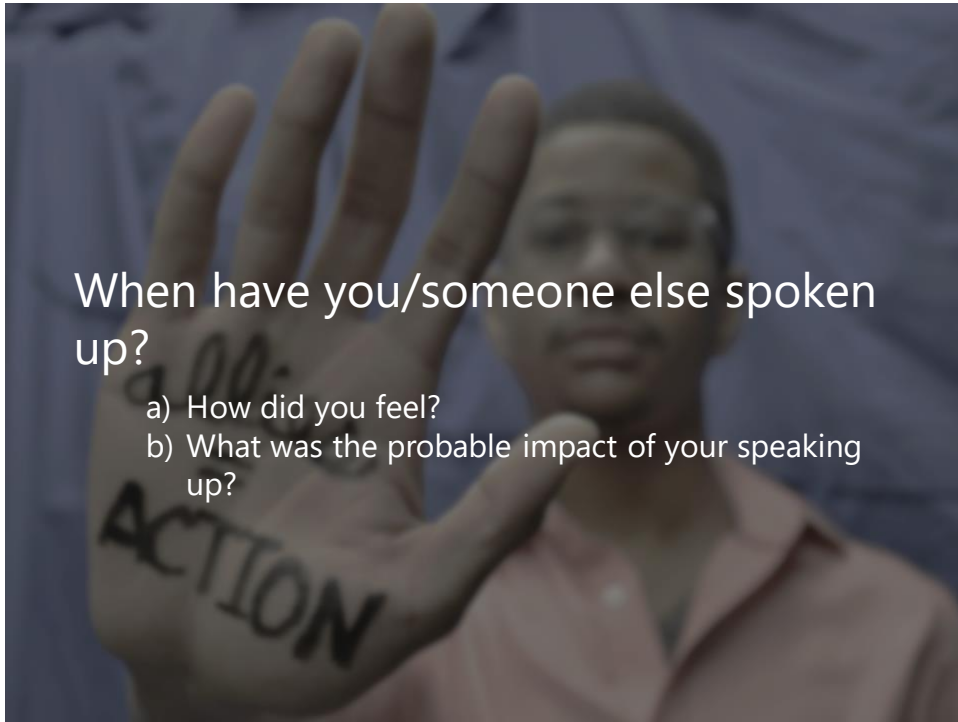
- Personal
- Relationships
- Organization/Structure
- Cultural



37



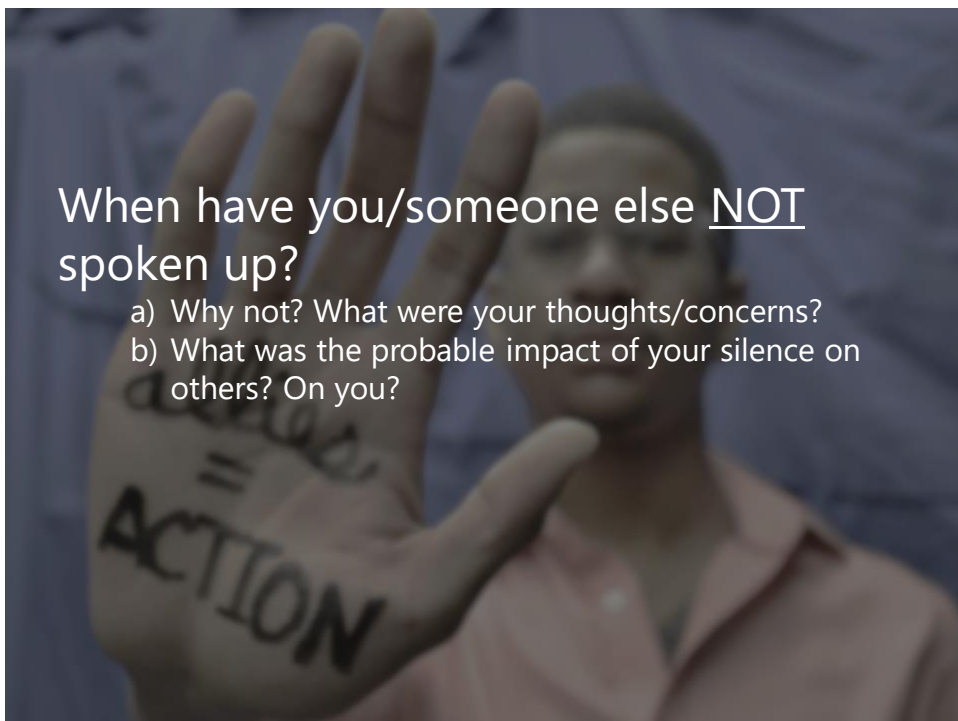
38



When have you/someone else spoken up?

- a) How did you feel?
- b) What was the probable impact of your speaking up?

39

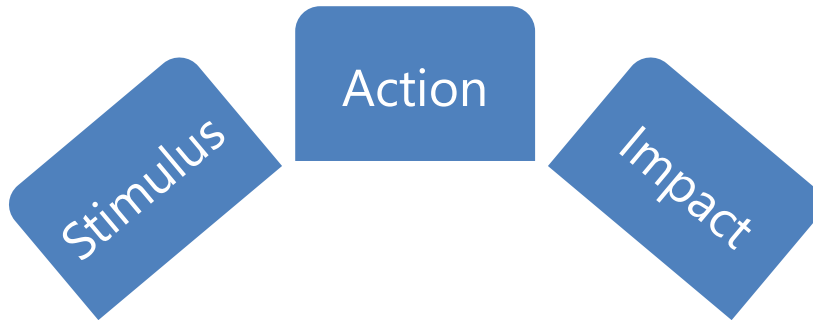


When have you/someone else NOT spoken up?

- a) Why not? What were your thoughts/concerns?
- b) What was the probable impact of your silence on others? On you?

40

Responding Effectively

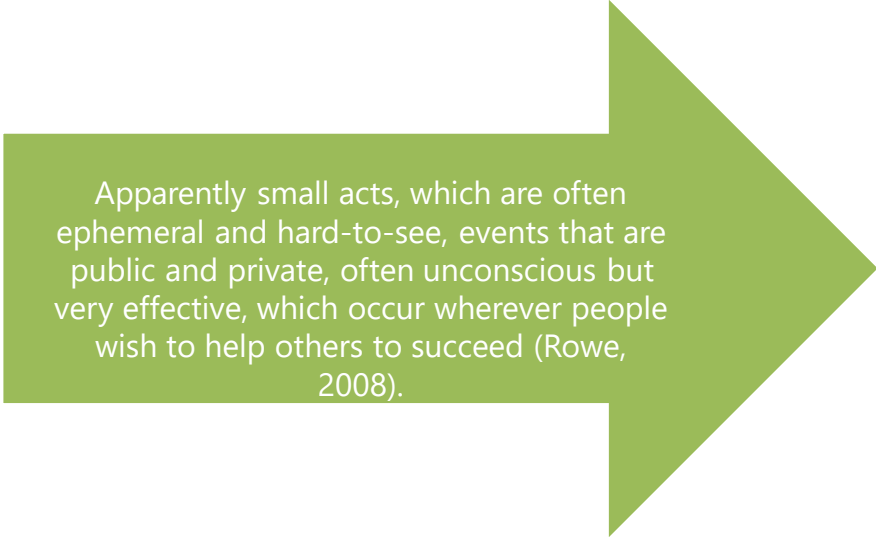


41



42

Micro-Affirmations



Apparently small acts, which are often ephemeral and hard-to-see, events that are public and private, often unconscious but very effective, which occur wherever people wish to help others to succeed (Rowe, 2008).

43

Examples of Micro-Affirmations

- Marketing/Publicity of Events
- Listening and Validating
- Acknowledgement of Presence and Contribution
- Appreciation Both Public/Private
- Bystander Intervention/ADDRESS
- Paying Attention to Details
 - Timing of Events
 - Food Options
 - Location Accessibility

44

Now It's Time for
Some Questions...

45

Innovative Educators
Supporting Academic & Professional Growth In Higher Ed



Naomi Sigg
Vice President for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion
John Carroll University
nsigg@jcu.edu

46