

Sharing Knowledge

Humber College is committed to fostering a respectful and inclusive culture in which all members of the College community study, work and live free from discrimination and harassment. To this end, it is imperative that we understand the definition of key equity terms that will enrich our capacity to prevent all forms of harassment and discrimination. Over the summer months, the Centre for Human Rights, Equity & Diversity will be providing definitions of key terms and concepts pertinent to our work in building a more inclusive College.

Key Term	Definition
Microaggressions	<p>Microaggressions are 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 association.¹</p> <p>Microaggressions are manifested into three forms: Microassaults, Microinsults, and Microinvalidations.</p>
Manifestations of Microaggressions	Definitions and Examples
Microassault	<p>A microassault is an explicit racial derogations characterized primarily by a verbal or nonverbal attack meant to hurt the intended individual through name-calling, avoidant behavior, or purposeful discriminatory actions. Microassaults are most similar to what has been called “old fashioned” racism conducted on an individual level.²</p> <p>Example: Refusal of service to racialized folks.</p>
Microinsult	<p>A microinsult is characterized by communications that convey rudeness and insensitivity and demean a person’s racial heritage or identity. Microinsults represent subtle snubs, frequently unknown to the person conveying the message, but clearly convey a hidden insulting message to the marginalized recipient.²</p> <p>Example: Saying “Everyone can succeed in this society, if they work hard enough.”</p>
Microinvalidation	<p>A microinvalidation is characterized by communications that subtly exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of a marginalized person.²</p> <p>Example: Ignore a Black employee’s contribution in meetings, while validating others who speak.</p>

This document is available in an alternate format upon request.

¹ Sue, Derald Wing. 2010. *Microaggressions in everyday life: race, gender, and sexual orientation*.

² Sue, Derald Wing. 2010. *Racial Microaggression in Everyday Life*.