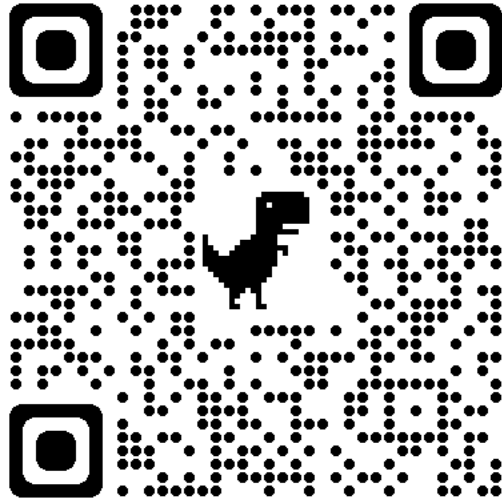


Please fill out the pre-session survey!



# Microaggression Awareness

Prepared for CCANB by Xiuming Shi

# Objectives

By the end of this presentation, you will:

1. Understand what microaggressions are and why they happen.
2. Understand the need to address microaggressions and the roles you can play when facing microaggressions as a bystander, source, or recipient.

# Introduction to Microaggressions

- Microaggressions: a form of discrimination, which come in the form of comments or behaviours that people intentionally or unintentionally make about a minority group's identity that come off insulting
  - Causes other person to feel uncomfortable, disrespected, confused, etc.
- Concept of microaggressions can be applied to any **marginalized group**
- Though it is called “micro,” microaggressions can have a macro impact

\*\*Discrimination: the behaviour towards a group that causes unfair treatment based on someone's background

(Cruz et al., 2019)  
(Velazquez et al., 2022)

(Banks, 2015)  
(Harrison & Tanner, 2018)  
(MacIntosh et al., 2022)  
(Sue et al., 2008)

# Three Types of Microaggressions

Term	Definition	Example
Microassault (Uncommon)	Consciously and intentionally hurting, discriminating, or oppressing an individual/group	A Chinese student told to “go back to your country” by another student.
Microinsult (Common)	Behaviour and comments unconsciously expressed that are rude/insensitive and demean a person’s identity	Program director repeatedly mispronouncing a Black student’s name despite being corrected multiple times by other faculty and staff
Microinvalidation (Common)	Comments unconsciously expressed that invalidate or diminish the experiences of other racial groups	[To a non-white person who lived in Canada all their life] “How did you get so good at English?”

# Questions

Have you been a target of **racial** microaggressions in the workplace?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe
- Do not know

*“Our research suggests that microinsults and microinvalidations are...harmful because of their invisibility, which puts people of color in a psychological bind: While people of color may feel insulted, they are often uncertain why, and perpetrators are unaware that anything has happened and are not aware they have been offensive.”*

*(Cooks-Campbell, 2022)*

# How could the phrase be interpreted?

<b>Microaggression</b>	<b>Message</b>
“[To someone who grew up in Canada] Where are you really from.”	
A store owner follows a customer of colour around the store.	
“I don’t see colour.”	
“I’m not racist. I have several Black friends”	



# How could the phrase be interpreted?

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“I don’t see colour.”	Denying a person’s experiences.
“I’m not racist. I have several Black friends”	The person cannot be racist because they have friends of colour.

# Why Does it Happen?

- Implicit bias: when an individual is unaware of their attitude and behaviour towards people's identity which include stereotypes, assumptions, and beliefs
- Why do we have implicit biases?
  - Our brains like to look for patterns and categorize learnings to ease processing load
  - Formed through personal experiences and influenced by learned connections between specific characteristics and social groups (e.g., race and ethnicity).
  - Therefore, everyone has some sort of implicit bias, but not everyone's implicit bias is the same as another person's
- How to measure implicit bias?
  - [Implicit Association Test](#) can be used to measure implicit bias in different demographics such as gender, sexuality, age, race, socioeconomic status, and etc.

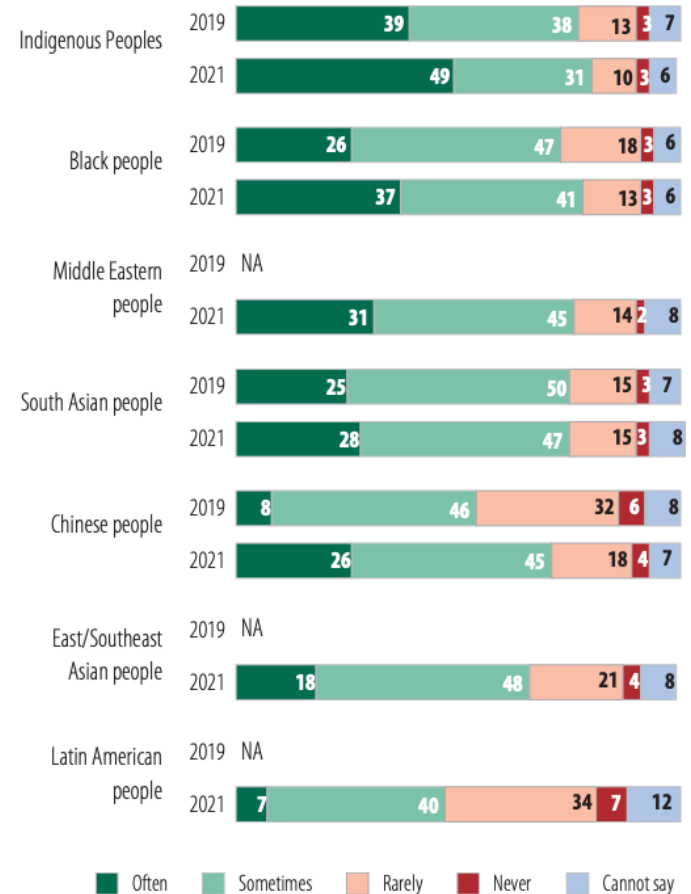
(FitzGerald & Hurst, 2017)  
(Williams et al., 2020)  
(Velazquez et al., 2022)

# There is an increase in discrimination across most racial groups.

Self-reported responses from 3,698 participants identified that the majority of communities sometimes or often experience discrimination.

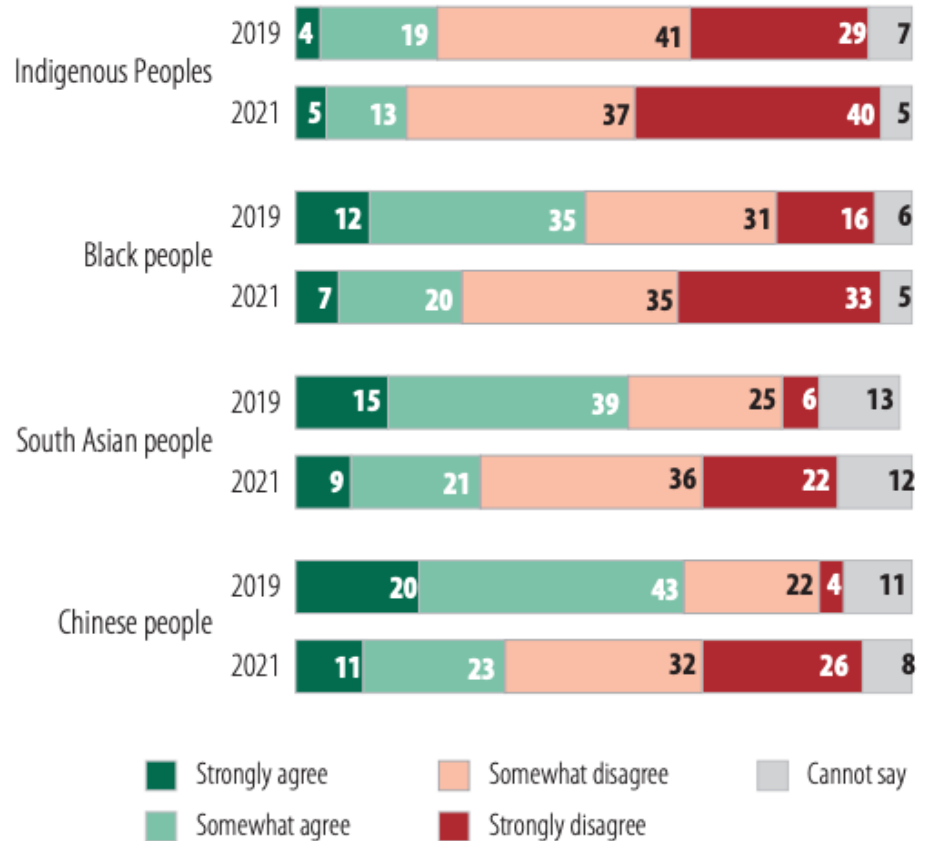
## Perceived frequency of discrimination against specific racial groups

2019 - 2021 By racial group assessed



# Discrimination against [group] is no longer a problem in Canada

2019 - 2021 By racial group assessed



Discrimination was more of a problem in 2021 than in 2019 across all groups listed.

(Cruz et al., 2019)  
(Ehie et al., 2021)  
(Feaster et al., 2021)  
(James-Bayly, 2022)  
(MacIntosh et al., 2022)  
(Pascoe & Smart, 2009)  
(Velazquez et al., 2022)  
(Williams et al., 2020)

# Impacts of Microaggressions

<b>Physical Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hypertension</li><li>• Cardiovascular Disease</li><li>• HPA Dysfunction</li><li>• Higher BMI</li><li>• Coronary Heart Disease</li></ul>
<b>Mental Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Depression, Anxiety, PTSD</li><li>• Impaired Psychological Wellbeing</li><li>• Decreased Self-Esteem</li></ul>
<b>Workplace</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Decreased job satisfaction, burnout</li><li>• More likely to make errors</li><li>• Decreased productivity, problem-solving skills</li><li>• Creates hostile work environment</li></ul>



# Impacting Mental Health

- The repeated experience of microaggressions for those receiving can become distressing
  - Examples: Constantly feeling disrespected by colleagues, questioning what the other person meant by a certain comment, questioning own competency and feeling invisible, isolated, excluded, lonely, self-doubt, inferior
- Loss of belonging, feeling less welcome
- Can lead to toxic work environment

(Cruz et al., 2019)  
(Feaster et al., 2021)  
(MacIntosh et al., 2022)

# Impacting Work Environment

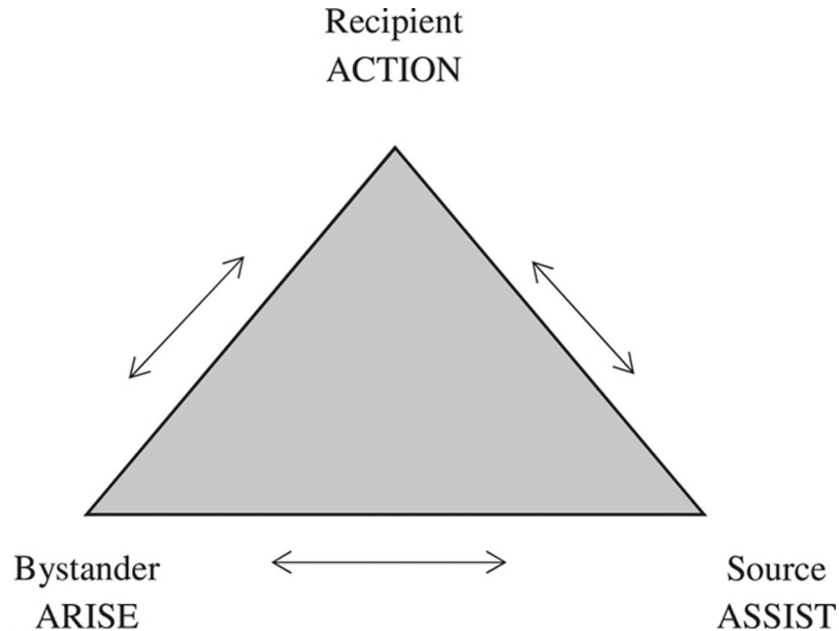
- Reduced productivity
  - Constantly looking over shoulder, distracted
- Impeded advancement in career
  - Due to lack of belonging, do not speak up or participate during meetings

# What Can You Do?

## Recognizing your internal biases

- Think before you speak
  - What could be impact of what I say? How could the other person perceive my words/behaviours?
    - Are you making assumptions about them?
    - What is the purpose of the comment/behaviour?
  - Is the comment/question necessary?
  - Is there a better way to rephrase the question?
- Do your own research
  - This training session is only the beginning of your journey to be more aware of your actions towards others

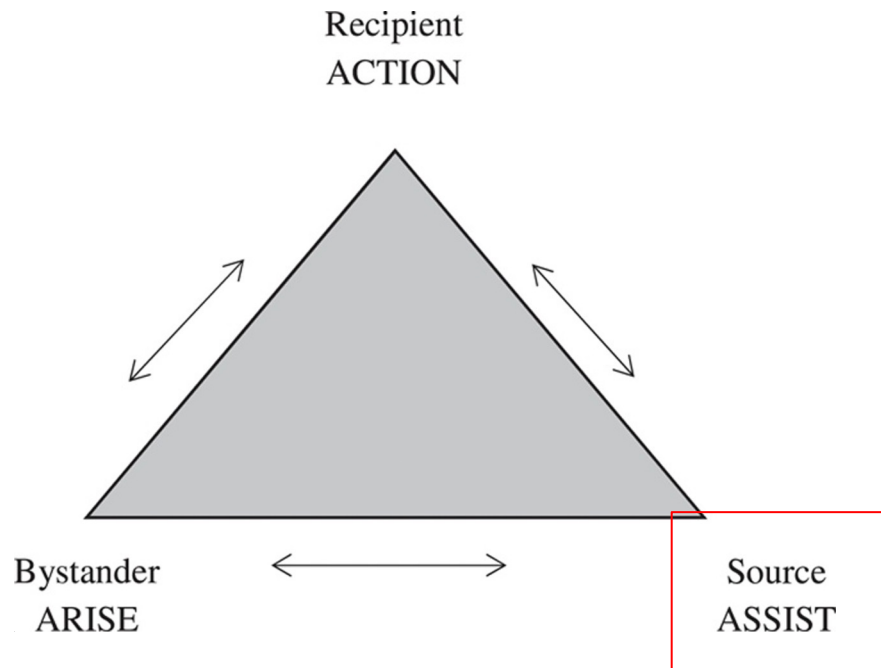
# The Microaggressions Triangle



The microaggressions triangle provides a three perspective framework that presents a non-threatening way to engage in difficult conversations and enables all individuals to address the issue and spark dialogue and self-reflection.

(MacIntosh et al., 2022)

# As the Source



**Acknowledge your bias.**

**Seek feedback.**

**Say you are sorry.**

**Impact, not intent.**

**Say Thank you.**

(MacIntosh et al., 2022)

## Consider the following scenario:

You are talking to your colleague, Miranda, who is a Black woman. Your idea of Black people is framed from the stereotypical and negative portrayals from the news you have read and the movies you have seen.

Miranda is great at her work and one of the most helpful individuals on your team, and you decide to tell her "you are one of the good ones." After that comment, you see that she is confused and unsure of what to say.

What do you do next?

## Scenario: As the Source

- Acknowledge your bias: consider the bias that may have played a role and comment accordingly

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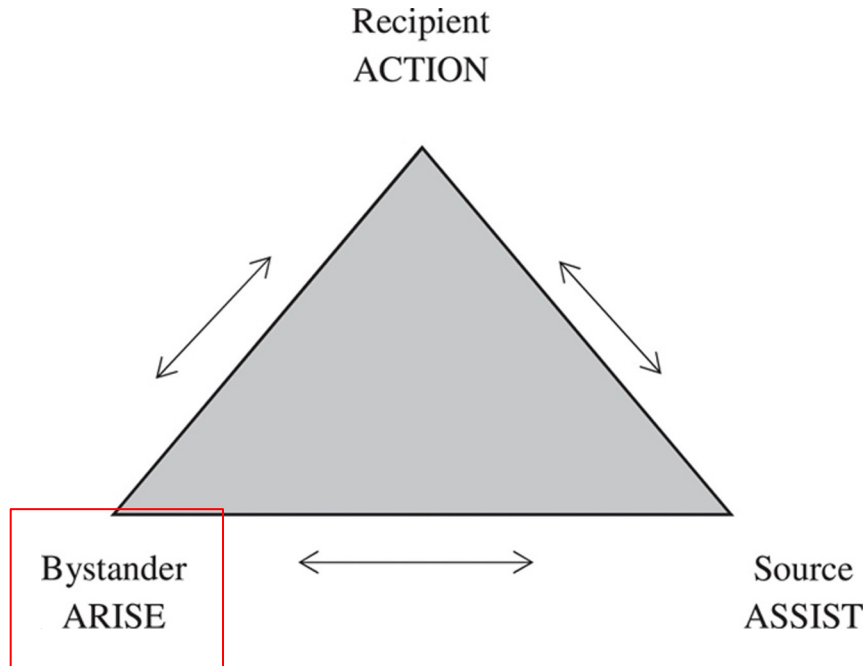
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- Say sorry: apologize for for wrongdoing
- Impact, not intent: “Although it was not my intention to harm you, I see how my comment affected you and I am sorry.”
- Say thank you: “Thank you for the feedback. I appreciate you taking the time to help me grow.”

# As the Bystander



**Awareness.**

**Respond with empathy & without judgment.**

**Inquiry.**

**Statements that start with 'I'.**

**Educate and engage.**

(MacIntosh et al., 2022)

## Consider the following scenario:

You are at a meeting with a new hire, Ahmed, and your boss, Liam.

You have had the chance to talk to Ahmed earlier and discovered that he was adopted from Egypt when he was a year old. He was raised by a loving family in Canada.

Your boss, Liam, starts the meeting by asking Ahmed “Where are you from?” Ahmed responds, “In a small town in northern Alberta.” Liam asks again, “Where are you *really* from?”

What do you do next?

# Scenario: As the Bystander

- Awareness:



# Scenario: As the Bystander

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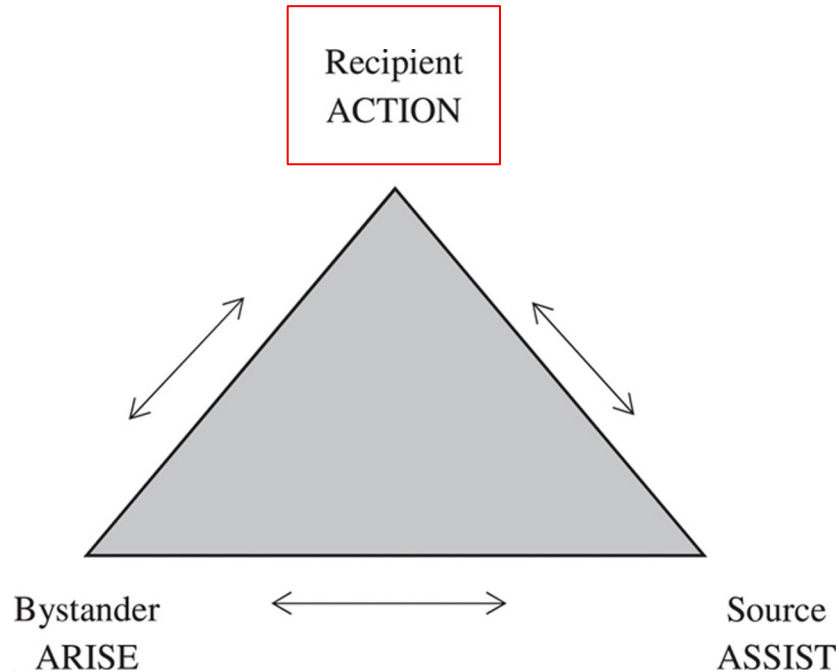
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- Inquiry: “Can you explain your comment further?”
- Statements with “I”: “I felt a bit uncomfortable when I heard that comment because it seemed to imply that Ahmed is not Canadian enough.”
- Educate and engage: “I know you didn’t intend to harm anyone, but as your colleague, I want to let you know that what you said could be interpreted that way. That comment may also cause some distress and shame for Ahmed, especially if he does not know much about his roots.”



# As a Recipient



**Ask a clarifying question.**

**Come from curiosity, not judgment.**

**Tell what you observed in a factual manner.**

**Impact exploration.**

**Own your thoughts and feelings about the subject.**

**Next steps.**

(MacIntosh et al., 2022)  
(Ackerman-Barger & Jacobs, 2020)

# Consider the following scenario

You are having dinner with old friends from high school. You are the only racial minority in the group.

You all share what you have done for the past few years. After you give your update, your childhood friend, Ethan, says “I would never have guessed that you would become the manager of a company.” He did not say that to anyone else in the group, despite Devon’s achievements of failing classes in high school to working in a cancer research lab in Harvard.

How do you respond?

# Scenario: As the Recipient

- Ask clarifying question:

## Scenario: As the Recipient

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- Ask clarifying question: “Could you please explain what you meant by that?”
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- Tell in a factual manner: “I noticed that you only said that comment to me.”



# Scenario: As the Recipient

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- Own your thoughts and feelings: “I must admit that the comment you made was hurtful and undermines my abilities.”
- Next steps: “Hey, let’s grab coffee later this week!”

# Question

Is there anything you will do differently after hearing this session?

Thank You!

