



## What is a MICROAGGRESSION?

- 1.) A **microaggression** is a subtle behavior – verbal or non-verbal, conscious or unconscious – directed at a member of a marginalized group that is derogatory, hostile, or harmful. The effect of a “micro” aggression is not minor.
- 2.) The everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, insults intentional or unintentional that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons or groups based solely upon aspects of their identities.

[Chester Pierce](#), a psychiatrist at Harvard, first introduced the term microaggression in the 1970s.

## How are microaggressions categorized?

**Microassault:** The microaggression that is most similar to what is traditionally thought of as “overt discrimination.” Microassaults can be verbal, nonverbal, or environmental:

- Verbal microassaults include name-calling and the use of epithets.
- Nonverbal microassaults include behavioral discrimination.
- Environmental microassaults include offensive signs, posters, or other visual displays.

**Microinsult** : A comment or action that communicates insensitivity to or disregard for a person's identity or heritage.

**Microinvalidation:** A comment or action that ignores or dismisses the thoughts, feelings, or experiences of a member of an underrepresented community.

**Sources:**

[Dictionary.com Microaggression definition](#)

PBS/WITF - Types of Microaggressions - [3 videos, worksheet, and vocabulary](#)

Mosquito Bites <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hDd3bzA7450>

CNN article: [How to respond to microaggressions for Anti-racist allies](#)

SFProject.org: [Ouch and Educate Tool](#)

SFProject.org: [POP Model](#) compare to [LWV DEI Lens](#) Tool

Where is each tool most useful?

**Reflect on responses to these questions:**

1. Describe a microaggression you have either experienced or witnessed.  
What was the effect and how would you describe the harm?
2. How do microaggressions cause people to feel unwelcome?
3. What could have been done instead? How did you respond and could you have responded differently?
4. How can we eliminate microaggressions in our League Community?
5. What policies can foster a welcoming environment; a **microaggression free zone**?