



MONMOUTH
UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL *of*
SOCIAL WORK

Addressing Microaggressions in a Group Using an Antiracist Intersectional Feminist Approach

Jamie Nappi, LCSW

Ern L Nau, PhD, LCSW

Our time together

- Introductions
- Historical causes of microaggressions
- Infusing anti-oppressive approaches that cultivate an environment of bearing witness
- Identifying microaggressions and how they negatively impact everyone's experience in a group
- Group skills to interrupt microaggressions during group.
- Practice



Positionality Statement

- I am
 - A White
 - Cisgender
 - Married
 - Women
 - Non Parent
 - Educated (PhD)

I teach

- From a(n)
- Intersectional Feminist Lens
- Antiracist Lens

Reflect Critically on your Positionality

Age and generational influences: Late-60's Gen X, Vietnam War, Iran hostage Crisis. Parents divorced

Developmental or Acquired Disabilities/Abilities: In long term recovery

Religion, Spiritual, Belief system: Raised Roman Catholic, Currently Zen Buddhist for many years

Ethnicity, Race, Nationality, First Language, Indigenous Heritage: Born in the US, Italian-American, some Irish English speaking only. Adoptive parent to Alex- Biracial Guatemalan, Step parent to Daniel Bi racial from first marriage

Sexual orientation: Member of LGBTQ community

Socioeconomic class: Middle class family of origin, worried that my children will always struggle financially.

Gender: She/her Non Binary

WHEEL OF POWER/PRIVILEGE



Adapted from ccrweb.ca

@sylviaaduckworth

Positionality Statement by Faculty

- Sets a tone and brave climate for students and faculty
- practice and relevance to group practice and building empathy and brave spaces for social work students
- Models anti-oppressive practice

Creating a Positionality Statement

- “I recognize that I am different from you based on [insert how intersectionally speaking] who I am.
- I acknowledge that I enter into this space with levels of power, privilege, and authority based on my identity and role, and position here [insert name of position]. I realize that you may or may not trust me, the system, or the process. My hope is that with time, I will demonstrate to you that I am someone who is here to support, collaborate and honor you on your path [insert what that is based on your scope of practice, competence, etc.] One of the ways that I am going to be in a relationship with you is by being critically self-aware of how I support you so as to not burden you, judge you, or punish you for what you share in the space. For what you share, and express is honored, affirmed and validated. Your truth is centered here. If at any time I miss something, or you find that I don't understand because of who I am— please know that I am fine with talking about it and I will not take it personally—for that is my work to do. I get to and I must continue to work on growth in this area. “ - Dr. Allen Lipscomb

How Positionality Statements Impact Classroom Culture

- The benefits of exploring our own positionality as educators and group workers and how to model awareness and humility and ways of not knowing in the classroom that will organically impact the classroom.
- Also, acknowledge our role as co-learners to balance power in class.

Historical Causes Of Microaggressions

Causes

- Theory and Models taught in the U.S. are centered on white, able-bodied, patriarchal, heteronormative cis-gendered, Western models and which causes the normalization of the dominant culture as superior.
- This contributes to micro-aggressions and unawareness of implicit bias

Decolonizing Pedagogy

- Address injuries of coloniality – such as making curriculum changes that are more reflective of lived experiences and scholars with more diverse intersectional identities
- Provide a participatory frame for exchanges of knowledge in classrooms comprised of intersectional identities, and the aim is to celebrate diversity.
- Exploring literature on coalitional politics and other epistemic coordinates
- Development of courses to encourage interest in anti-oppressive practice and awareness and action toward ending racism, sexism, transphobia, speciesism, ageism, ableism, xenophobia, homophobia, etc.

Infusing Anti-oppressive Approaches That Cultivate An Environment Of Bearing Witness

Other Approaches

- Discuss the impact of micro-aggressions and exploration of interventions through experiential learning and didactic teaching.
- Exploring indigenous ways of knowing and anti-oppressive approaches that will decolonize the classroom and result in fewer micro-aggressions. (talking circles)
- Use of creative exploring lived experience through intersectional identity in the form of music, art, song, photography, etc., to break down negative stereotypes of populations who have been marginalized.

Core Guidelines (announce all of these)

- Respect the talking piece
- Speak from your heart
- Listen with your heart (Bear Witness)
- Speak with respect
- Remain in the circle
- Honor privacy (Silence is welcome too)

Part 1: Check in prior to council/Talking Circle (choose one prompt for the group)

- What value would you like to offer for our class?
- What is something that you are thankful for?
- What is a goal you have for yourself?

*for the check in I request a brief answer

Part 2: Sample Prompts for talking circle Choose (one prompt for the group)

- Share a happy memory.
- What do you appreciate?
- Name a personal Healing Practice
- Name one of the gifts you bring to this community

Prompt I used

- Share a poem, piece of art or photograph or song that , for you, exemplifies the concern of human rights and social justice.
- Something that speaks to ones survival and or thriving thorough hardships and pain imposed by experiences of oppression .
- <https://youtu.be/LJ25-U3jNWM> I shared this.
- Note This class had only 12 people in it so feel to use the other prompts.

PART 3: Check out (Pick one prompt for the group)

In ending council – again brief answers encouraged

- Appreciate someone in the circle.
- Where do you see yourself moving forward?
- What can you take away that is useful to you?
- How will these insights help you in the near future?

Identifying Microaggressions And How
They Negatively Impact Everyone's
Experience In A Group Skills To Interrupt
Microaggressions During Group.

- Facilitators have opportunities to intervene and model supportive behaviors.
- One of the core tenets of group work is to create safe/brave spaces that encourage radical genuineness for all group members.
- This can not occur when people experience microaggressions.
- Bachelor-level, Masters Level, and Doctoral-level students value having a culturally enriched and emotionally safe, non-defensive learning space, and this session will also help instructors model intervening while teaching. (Mirick and Davis, 2022).
- Their experience in the classroom will influence how they respond to their clients in the future.

Group Skills To Interrupt Microaggressions During Group.

- When setting rules, be explicit that racism, sexism, homophobia will not be tolerated.
- Listening and Remembering are two of our key skills.
- Supporting members when they speak up.
- Directly attending to the microaggression in the group.
- Speaking to the person outside of the group.

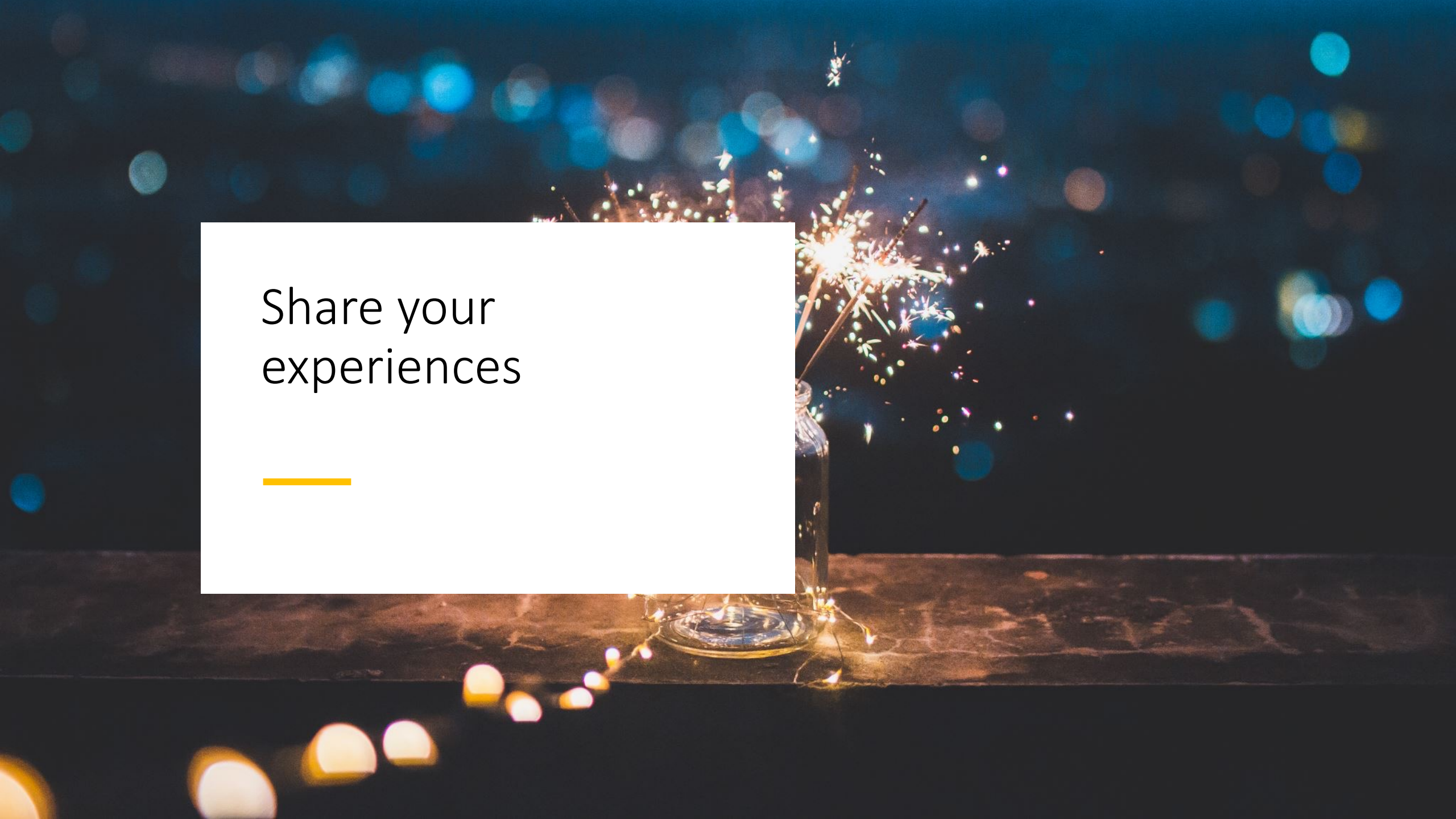
In pairs practice your positionality statement and discuss how this creates opportunities throughout the group to disrupt microaggressions.

Creating a Positionality Statement

- “I recognize that I am different from you based on [insert how intersectionally speaking] who I am.
- I acknowledge that I enter into this space with levels of power, privilege, and authority based on my identity and role, and position here [insert name of position]. I realize that you may or may not trust me, the system, or the process. My hope is that with time, I will demonstrate to you that I am someone who is here to support, collaborate and honor you on your path [insert what that is based on your scope of practice, competence, etc.] One of the ways that I am going to be in a relationship with you is by being critically self-aware of how I support you so as to not burden you, judge you, or punish you for what you share in the space. For what you share, and express is honored, affirmed and validated. Your truth is centered here. If at any time I miss something, or you find that I don't understand because of who I am— please know that I am fine with talking about it and I will not take it personally—for that is my work to do. I get to and I must continue to work on growth in this area. “ - Dr. Allen Lipscomb

Role Play

- In a support group one member shares a story about being shocked that her surgeon is black woman, and describes asking her several times where the doctor was because she thought she was a nurse.



Share your
experiences

Questions

References

- Atehortúa, J. V. (2020). A decolonial pedagogy for teaching intersectionality. *Nordic Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 4(1). <https://doi.org/10.7577/njcie.3555>
- Bent-Goodley, T., Snell, C. L., & Carlton-LaNey, I. (2017). Black perspectives and social work practice. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 27(1/2), 27-35. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10911359.2016.1252604>
- Chauhan, T. (2022, August 26). *Transnational Feminism: An Intersectional, Collaborative, Reflexive Approach To Feminism*. <https://feminisminindia.com/2022/08/26/transnational-feminism-an-intersectional-collabo>
- Cress, C. M., Stokamer, S. T., Van Cleave, T. J., & Kaufman, J. P. (2022). *Faculty service-learning guidebook: Enacting "equity-centered" teaching, partnerships, and scholarship*. Stylus Publishing LLC. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003444831>
- Dyson, Y. D., Del Mar Fariña, M., Gurrola, M. A., & Cross-Denny, B. (2020). Reconciliation as a Framework for Supporting Racial, Ethnic, and Cultural Diversity in Social Work Education. *Social Work and Christianity*, 47(1), 83-95.

References

- Firmin, R. L., Mao, S., Bellamy, C. D., & Davidson, L. (2019). Peer support specialists' experiences of microaggressions. *Psychological Services, 16*(3), 456-462. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ser0000297>
- Hamza R'boul (2022) Intercultural philosophy and internationalisation of higher education: epistemologies of the South, geopolitics of knowledge and epistemological polylogue, *Journal of Further and Higher Education, 46*:8, 1149-1160, DOI: [10.1080/0309877X.2022.2055451](https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2022.2055451)
- Lefforge, N. L., Mclaughlin, S., Goates-Jones, M., & Mejia, C. (2020). A training model for addressing microaggressions in group psychotherapy. *International Journal of Group Psychotherapy, 70*(1), 1-28.
- Miles, J. R., Anders, C., Kivlighan III, D. M., & Belcher Platt, A. A. (2021). Cultural ruptures: Addressing microaggressions in group therapy. *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice, 25*(1), 74.
- Mirick, R. G., & Davis, A. (2022). Teaching note-witnessing microaggressions: BSW students' responses to vignettes. *Journal of Social Work Education, 58*(4), 794-801. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10437797.2021.1969301>

References

- Sue, D. W., Capodilupo, C. M., Torino, G. C., Bucceri, J. M., Holder, A., Nadal, K. L., & Esquilin, M. (2007). Racial microaggressions in everyday life: implications for clinical practice. *American psychologist*, 62(4), 271.
- Tanaka, M. T. D. (2016). *Learning and teaching together: Weaving indigenous ways of knowing into education*. University of British Columbia Press.
- Velásquez Atehortúa, J. (2020). A decolonial pedagogy for teaching intersectionality. *Nordic Journal of Comparative and International Education (NJCIE)*, 4(1), 156–171. <https://doi.org/10.7577/njcie.3555>
- Williams, M. T. (2021). Microaggressions are a form of aggression. *Behavior Therapy*, 52(3), 709-719. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.beth.2020.09.001>

Contact information

Erin Nau- enau@Monmouth.edu

Jamie Nappi- jnappi@Monmouth.edu