MICRO-MESSAGING: MORE THAN JUST WORDS

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Discuss the influence of cultural stereotypes

Recognize how biases (explicit and implicit) influence our behavior

Understand the micro-messages we send and the influences they have on others' behavior.
Cultural Stereotypes
Bias
Micromessages
Accumulation of (Dis)Advantage
Self-efficacy
Behavior

Culture shapes our beliefs
Culture forms our biases about people
Point of Interruption
Communicate our biases

Leads to success in career/school
Subtle messages add up
Belief in abilities

The Culture Wheel
National Alliance for Partnership in Equity

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When we meet someone for the first time, we tend to judge them:
- Appearance
- Linguistically
- Mannerisms
- How they approach us

We may ask for information about their age, where they live, where they work or what they do in their spare time.

We begin to build a “view” about them that can help guide our interaction with them.
As we evaluate people, we tend to do so by trying to “fit” them into a category based on our knowledge and experience.

Grouping into a category is “stereotyping”.

All individuals in the group have the same characteristics.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DWynJkN5HbQ
A father and his son were in a car accident. The father is killed and his son is seriously injured. The son is taken to the hospital where the surgeon says, “I cannot operate because the boy is my son.”
MALE NURSE

What my female friends think I do
Gaylord Focker, RN

What my parents think I should do
NURSE? WHY NOT DOCTOR?

What society thinks I do

What my guy friends think I do

What I think I do

What I actually do
BE MINDFUL ABOUT STEREOTYPES!
ONLY ONE OF THEM IS A CONVICTED FELON.
The messages we receive as we grow forms our bias.
We don’t see things as they are..........

We see things as we are.
See you tomorrow Daddy.
I'm off for my date.

Let me guess, another burn-out with a fast car and no brains?

No, he's pretty smart. And he drives a hummer.

I see. A rich kid with no work ethic. I don't want you seeing him after tonight.

He works for Hasbro and gave me something called a 'bootleg draft of 4th edition D&D.'

Marry him.
Two residents wade through chest-deep water after finding bread and soda from a local grocery store after Hurricane Katrina came through the area in New Orleans, Louisiana. (AFP/Getty Images/Chris Graythen)
“Imagine, if you will, you’re on a 12-mile foot march and a female soldier who weighs about 120 pounds crushes you on the foot march. ... It absolutely earns them some respect.”
Is Emily more employable than Lakisha?
Assume you have them.
Conduct research on yourself.
Make a list of groups different from you and your group.
Ask a trusted friend or associate.
Examine your worldview.
Project Implicit

“How can I address my biases if I don’t know that I have them?”
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Bias in Everyday Life

Interaction ➔ Engagement with CSI Stakeholders ➔ Impact

Small and seemingly insignificant behaviors may result in unfavorable experiences.

Interaction Is More Important Than Intent!
What are Micro-messages?

Small, subtle, often subconscious message we send and receive in our communication.

These messages can be either negative (micro-inequities) or positive (micro-affirmations).
Have You Experienced Micro-Messages?

**Micro-Inequities**
- Negative messages which cause people to feel devalued, slighted, discouraged, or excluded

**Micro-Affirmations**
- Positive messages which cause people to feel valued, included, or encouraged
It’s not what you SAY that counts!

Learn to READ and INFLUENCE people through non-verbal communication.
You are...
No act of kindness, however small, is ever wasted. - Aesop
90% of the friction of daily life is caused by the wrong tone of voice.

-Author Unknown
Think of a time when you felt welcomed, valued, and supported during a transition, challenging task or new environment. What was the context of the situation? What made you feel affirmed?
Micro-Affirmations Can...
Communicate

I see you.

I value you.

I appreciate your differences.

I am committed to understanding your needs.

I believe in your potential.

I want to support you.
Contribute to Cultivating a Safe Environment
Micro-Affirmations in Everyday Life

From your role or position within the College, what can you say and do to help the people around you feel:

• Seen
• Heard
• Valued
• Included
• Appreciated
• Supported
• Endorsed
“I’m glad you’re here.”

“I believe in your potential to succeed.”

“Here’s what I can do to support you./ How can I support you?”

“Have you considered this opportunity? You would be a great candidate.”

“Meeting with you/talking with you is important to me.”
Things to Do

• Make an intentional effort to consider who you are leaving out and why, and to reach out to the margins.

• Get to know people’s personal stories and their goals. Create a safe and welcoming environment for individuals to express their needs and concerns.

• Demonstrate real acts of acknowledgement, accommodation and advocacy.
Intention and Practice

• What can you do to increase your intention of providing micro-affirmations in your work with students? In other areas of your life?
• What can you do to practice this intention?
One thing...

One thing you will **start** doing/saying...
One thing you will **stop** doing/saying...
• Micro-affirmations are small acts that can have a big impact on an individual’s success.

• Micro-affirmations have the power to counteract the negative impact of micro-aggressions or inequities.

• Micro-affirmations involves more than simply being nice. They are used intentionally as part of a strengths-based approach to a talent development philosophy.
• Micro-affirmations can, and should be, practiced intentionally.

• Micro-affirmations can be especially powerful when given by a person with more social capital than the recipient.

• Micro-affirmations can be especially powerful when delivering constructive criticism, difficult news, or when the situation is challenging.

• Micro-affirmations can be transformational.
What We Hope You Will Do...

• Recognize the impact and value of micro-affirmations in your own life.
• Affirm yourself.
• Affirm others.
Thank You
For More Information...

• National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity (NAPE)  
  http://www.napequity.org/

• Project Implicit by Harvard  
  https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/demo/

• Candice Powell, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, “Micro-affirmations in Academic Advising: Small Acts, Big Impact”  
  https://dus.psu.edu/mentor/2013/10/839/