

WORKING TOWARDS AN EQUITY CENTERED CAMPUS: ON ALLYSHIP

June 2020

PREPARED BY: CHARLENE LEWIS-SUTHERLAND

FOUNDATIONAL DOCUMENTS (PT 1)

McGill University Mission Statement and Principles

MISSION

The mission of McGill University is the advancement of learning and the creation and dissemination of knowledge, by offering the best possible education, by carrying out research and scholarly activities judged to be excellent by the highest international standards, and by providing service to society.

PRINCIPLES

In fulfilling its mission, McGill University embraces the principles of academic freedom, integrity, responsibility, equity, and inclusiveness.

FOUNDATIONAL DOCUMENTS (PT 2)

Taken from McGill's *Policy on Employment Equity (2007)*

McGill University is committed to:

- fulfilling its mission within an institutional environment that embraces diversity;
- respecting the equal dignity and worth of all who participate in the life, work and mission of the University;
- developing policies, programs, practices and traditions that facilitate the full participation and advancement of members of historically disadvantaged groups ... by eliminating direct, indirect and systemic discrimination;.

FOUNDATIONAL DOCUMENTS (PT 3)

Taken from McGill's Associate Provost's Page on Anti Racism
Teaching and Learning

- What sources do we draw on and engage with in our courses?
- Which scholars and authors are we reading for class?
- How can we facilitate the exchange of views, experiences, questions, and insights among all of us who share classroom spaces?
- How can course assignments, projects, and activities enhance learning about racism and other forms of social and systemic oppression?

<https://www.mcgill.ca/equity/resources/anti-black-racism-resources/anti-racism-work>

WHY FOUNDATIONAL DOCUMENTS?

Foundational documents highlight how equity work is in alignment with McGill's goals, principles, values and mission.

If you need a values clarification, you can go back to these documents.

WHO ARE ALLIES?

WHAT IS ALLYSHIP?

- An ally: someone who recognizes the unearned privilege they receive from society's patterns of injustice and **takes responsibility for changing these patterns.** (Bishop 2002)
- Allyship: when members of a social group that enjoys some privilege are **working to end oppression and understand their own privilege** (Aurora 2012)

ALLYSHIP IS A PRACTICE

- Move away from ally as identity and towards allyship as demonstrable practices
- Allyship is ongoing
- An understanding of how oppressions intersect will deepen allyship practice (ex. Ableism, racism and sexism compound)
- Ally actions should be the bare minimum expectations

ALLYSHIP IN ACTION

- **Be aware** of and vigilant of your own prejudices
- **Avoid making assumptions** about a person's behaviour and identity based on their appearance
- **Question stereotypes** and negative assumptions made by others
- **Speak up** when you hear demeaning jokes, offensive or stereotypical remarks, and/or discriminatory/harassing comments
- **Discourage** the use of disrespectful or derogatory language used to describe individuals and groups
- **Challenge practices, policies and procedures** that may create barriers for specific individuals and groups
- **Support colleagues**, peers, friends and family who experience discrimination and/or harassment
- **Actively speak out against discrimination** within your networks and circles
- **Join collective social justice movements** in your communities that work towards creating systemic change to dismantle oppression

(Adapted from: "Allyship and Inclusion at the Faculty of Medicine." Faculty of Medicine, October 7, 2019. [https://medicine.utoronto.ca/allyship-and-inclusion-faculty-medicine.](https://medicine.utoronto.ca/allyship-and-inclusion-faculty-medicine))

RACIAL MICROAGGRESSIONS MATTER

Why they matter

Rooted in implicit bias

Invalidate experiences and intellectual capabilities of people of colour

Negatively affect people's sense of belonging

Psychologically damaging

One Model:

R.A.V.E.N. Framework

R. Redirect (ex. intervene, correct, pull aside)

A. Ask probing questions for clarity (ex. I think I heard you say...what do you mean by that?)

V. Values clarification (ex. At McGill/ at frosh we work hard to create space that...)

E. Emphasize your own thoughts and feelings (ex when I hear your comment, I think/ feel....In my experience...)

N. Next steps for further un/learning (ex. Perhaps you can read/ watch..)

(Wood, J. Luke, and Frank Harris III. "How to Respond to Racial Microaggressions When They Occur," May 6, 2020. <https://diverseeducation.com/article/176397/>)

Tool: Interrupting Microaggressions

MICROAGGRESSION EXAMPLE AND THEME	THIRD PARTY INTERVENTION EXAMPLE	COMMUNICATION APPROACH
<p>Alien in One's Own Land To a Latino American: "Where are you from?"</p> <p>Ascription of Intelligence To an Asian person, "You're all good in math, can you help me with this problem?"</p> <p>Color Blindness "I don't believe in race."</p>	<p>"I'm just curious. What makes you ask that?"</p> <p>"I heard you say that all Asians are good in math. What makes you believe that?"</p> <p>"So, what do you believe in? Can you elaborate?"</p>	<p>INQUIRE Ask the speaker to elaborate. This will give you more information about where s/he is coming from, and may also help the speaker to become aware of what s/he is saying. KEY PHRASES: "Say more about that." "Can you elaborate on your point?" "It sounds like you have a strong opinion about this. Tell me why." "What is it about this that concerns you the most?"</p>
<p>Myth of Meritocracy "Everyone can succeed in this society, if they work hard enough."</p> <p>Pathologizing Cultural Values/Communication Styles Asking a Black person: "Why do you have to be so loud/animated? Just calm down."</p>	<p>"So you feel that everyone can succeed in this society if they work hard enough. Can you give me some examples?"</p> <p>"It appears you were uncomfortable when ___ said that. I'm thinking that there are many styles to express ourselves. How we can honor all styles of expression—can we talk about that?"</p>	<p>PARAPHRASE/REFLECT Reflecting in one's own words the essence of what the speaker has said. Paraphrasing demonstrates understanding and reduces defensiveness of both you and the speaker. Restate briefly in your own words, rather than simply parroting the speaker. Reflect both content and feeling whenever possible. KEY PHRASES: "So, it sounds like you think..." "You're saying...You believe..."</p>
<p>Second-Class Citizen You notice that your female colleague is being frequently interrupted during a committee meeting.</p> <p>Pathologizing Cultural Values/Communication Styles To a woman of color: "I would have never guessed that you were a scientist."</p>	<p>Responder addressing the group: "____ brings up a good point. I didn't get a chance to hear all of it. Can ____ repeat it?"</p> <p>"I'm wondering what message this is sending her. Do you think you would have said this to a white male?"</p>	<p>REFRAME Create a different way to look at a situation. KEY PHRASES: "What would happen if..." "Could there be another way to look at this..." "Let's reframe this..." "How would you feel if this happened to your ____?"</p>
<p>Second-Class Citizen Saying "You people..."</p> <p>Use of Heterosexist Language Saying "That's so gay."</p>	<p>"I was so upset by that remark that I shut down and couldn't hear anything else."</p> <p>"When I hear that remark, I'm offended too, because I feel that it marginalizes an entire group of people that I work with."</p>	<p>USE IMPACT AND "I" STATEMENTS A clear, nonthreatening way to directly address these issues is to focus on oneself rather than on the person. It communicates the impact of a situation while avoiding blaming or accusing the other and reduces defensiveness. KEY PHRASES: "I felt ____ (feelings) when you said or did ____ (comment or behavior), and it ____ (describe the impact on you)."</p>
<p>Second-Class Citizen A woman who is talked over.</p> <p>Making a racist, sexist or homophobic joke.</p>	<p>She responds: "I would like to participate, but I need you to let me finish my thought."</p> <p>"I didn't think this was funny. I would like you to stop."</p>	<p>USE PREFERENCE STATEMENTS Clearly communicating one's preferences rather than stating them as demands or having others guess what is needed. KEY PHRASES: "What I'd like is..." "It would be helpful to me if..."</p>

Tool: Interrupting Microaggressions

MICROAGGRESSION EXAMPLE AND THEME	THIRD PARTY INTERVENTION EXAMPLE	COMMUNICATION APPROACH
<p>Color Blindness "When I look at you, I don't see color."</p> <p>Myth of Meritocracy "Of course he'll get tenure, even though he hasn't published much—he's Black!"</p>	<p>"So you don't see color. Tell me more about your perspective. I'd also like to invite others to weigh in."</p> <p>"So you believe that ____ will get tenure just because of his race. Let's open this up to see what others think."</p>	<p>RE-DIRECT Shift the focus to a different person or topic. (Particularly helpful when someone is asked to speak for his/her entire race, cultural group, etc.) KEY PHRASES: "Let's shift the conversation..." "Let's open up this question to others..."</p>
<p>Myth of Meritocracy In a committee meeting: "Gender plays no part in who we hire."</p> <p>"Of course she'll get tenure, even though she hasn't published much—she's Native American!"</p> <p>Second-Class Citizen In class, an instructor tends to call on male students more frequently than female ones.</p>	<p>"How might we examine our implicit bias to ensure that gender plays no part in this and we have a fair process? What do we need to be aware of?"</p> <p>"How does what you just said honor our colleague?"</p> <p>"What impact do you think this has on the class dynamics? What would you need to approach this situation differently next time?"</p>	<p>USE STRATEGIC QUESTIONS It is the skill of asking questions that will make a difference. A strategic question creates motion and options, avoids "why" and "yes or no" answers, is empowering to the receiver, and allows for difficult questions to be considered. Because of these qualities, a strategic question can lead to transformation. Useful in problem-solving, difficult situations, and change efforts. KEY PHRASES: "What would allow you..." "What could you do differently..." "What would happen if you considered the impact on..."</p>
<p>Traditional Gender Role Prejudicing and Stereotyping In the lab, an adviser asks a female student if she is planning to have children while in postdoctoral training.</p>	<p>To the adviser: "I wanted to go back to a question you asked ____ yesterday about her plans for a family. I'm wondering what made you ask that question and what message it might have sent to her."</p> <p>To the student: "I heard what your advisor said to you yesterday. I thought it was inappropriate and I just wanted to check in with you."</p>	<p>REVISIT Even if the moment of a microaggression has passed, go back and address it. Research indicates that an unaddressed microaggression can leave just as much of a negative impact as the microaggression itself. KEY PHRASES: "I want to go back to something that was brought up in our conversation/meeting/class" "Let's rewind ____ minutes..."</p>
<p>CONSIDERATIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The communication approaches are most effective when used in combination with one another, e.g., using impact and preference statements, using inquiry and paraphrasing together, etc. Separate the person from the action or behavior. Instead of saying "you're racist", try saying "that could be perceived as a racist remark." Being called a racist puts someone on the defensive and can be considered "fighting words." Avoid starting questions with "Why"—it puts people on the defensive. Instead try "how" "what made you" When addressing a microaggression, try to avoid using the pronoun "you" too often—it can leave people feeling defensive and blamed. Use "I" statements describing the impact on you instead or refer to the action indirectly, e.g., "when ____ was said..." or "when ____ happened..." How you say it is as critical as what you say, e.g., tone of voice, body language, etc. The message has to be conveyed with respect for the other person, even if one is having a strong negative reaction to what's been said. So it is helpful to think about your intention when interrupting a microaggression—e.g., do you want that person to understand the impact of his/her action, or stop his/her behavior, or make the person feel guilty, etc. Your intention and the manner in which you execute your intention make a difference. Sometimes humor can defuse a tense situation. 		

Adapted from Kenney, G. (2014). *Interrupting Microaggressions*. College of the Holy Cross, Diversity Leadership & Education. Accessed on-line, October 2014. Kraybill, R. (2008). "Cooperation Skills," in Amster, M. and Amstutz, L., (Eds.), *Conflict Transformation and Restorative Justice Manual*, 5th Edition, pp. 116-117. LeBaron, M. (2008). "The Open Question," in Amster, M. and Amstutz, L., (Eds.), *Conflict Transformation and Restorative Justice Manual*, 5th Edition, pp. 123-124. Peavey, F. (2003). "Strategic Questions as a Tool for Rebellion," in Brady, M., (Ed.), *The Wisdom of Listening*, Boston: Wisdom Publ., pp. 168-189.

Adapted from Kenney, G. (2014). *Interrupting Microaggressions*. College of the Holy Cross, Diversity Leadership & Education. Accessed on-line, October 2014. Kraybill, R. (2008). "Cooperation Skills," in Amster, M. and Amstutz, L., (Eds.), *Conflict Transformation and Restorative Justice Manual*, 5th Edition, pp. 116-117. LeBaron, M. (2008). "The Open Question," in Amster, M. and Amstutz, L., (Eds.), *Conflict Transformation and Restorative Justice Manual*, 5th Edition, pp. 123-124. Peavey, F. (2003). "Strategic Questions as a Tool for Rebellion," in Brady, M., (Ed.), *The Wisdom of Listening*, Boston: Wisdom Publ., pp. 168-189.

REFERENCES

- ❑ Aurora, Valerie. “Ally Skills Workshop,” June 11, 2020. <https://frameshiftconsulting.com/ally-skills-workshop/>.
- ❑ “Allyship and Inclusion at the Faculty of Medicine.” Faculty of Medicine, October 7, 2019. <https://medicine.utoronto.ca/allyship-and-inclusion-faculty-medicine>.
- ❑ Patel, Leigh. 2016. Decolonizing Educational Research : From Ownership to Answerability. Series in Critical Narrative. New York: Routledge.
- ❑ “UCSC Academic Affairs.” UCSC Academic Affairs: Interrupting Microaggressions. Accessed July 2020. <https://academicaffairs.ucsc.edu/events/documents/Microaggressions InterruptHO 2014 11 182v5.pdf>.
- ❑ Wood, J. Luke, and Frank Harris III. “How to Respond to Racial Microaggressions When They Occur,” May 6, 2020. <https://diverseeducation.com/article/176397/>.

RESOURCES

- ❑ Diverse Issues in Higher Ed - On Allyship:
<https://diverseeducation.com/article/138623/>
- ❑ Ally or Accomplice Instagram Post:
<https://www.instagram.com/p/CBJySvfhwDH/?igshid=f181fz6w2a2t>
- ❑ Indigenous Action: Accomplices Not Allies
<http://www.indigenousaction.org/accomplices-not-allies-abolishing-the-ally-industrial-complex/>
- ❑ Medium on Allyship: <https://medium.com/awaken-blog/allyship-vs-accomplice-the-what-why-and-how-f3da767d48cc>
- ❑ Responding to Racial Bias and Microaggressions in Online Environments:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9cEWQJ32nqU>
- ❑ Pedagogy and Micro-Resistance: A Strategy for the College Classroom:
<https://flourishingacademic.wordpress.com/2015/11/09/pedagogy-and-micro-resistance-a-strategy-for-the-college-classroom/>

RESOURCES

- ❑ Engaging Race in the Classroom:
<https://flourishingacademic.wordpress.com/2015/03/09/engaging-race-in-the-classroom-part-3-exploring-race-and-pedagogy-at-our-predominantly-white-university/>
- ❑ Microaggressions in medical training: Understanding, and addressing the problem: <https://scopeblog.stanford.edu/2018/05/22/185969/>
- ❑ Equity minded student services in the online environment:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qGoldJP4XI8>
- ❑ Student Affairs and Its Diversity Problem:
<https://www.universityaffairs.ca/features/feature-article/does-student-affairs-have-a-diversity-problem/>
- ❑ McGill's Anti-Racism Resource List: <https://mcgill.ca/equity/resources/anti-black-racism-resources/anti-racism>