



“I don’t know what to say!”

Strategies for Responding to and
Supporting Targets of
Racial Microaggressions

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Land Acknowledgment

Most Indigenous peoples were dispossessed of their lands through deceptive processes and colonialism. It is important to express gratitude and appreciation for those whose territory we reside and work on.

You can acknowledge the Indigenous people of the territory that you are on by using the database: <https://native-land.ca/>. Support native orgs in your area by pledging resources of time, in-kind, or financial donations.



Agenda

Defining terms




Brief overview of existing research



Strategies for responding to microaggressions



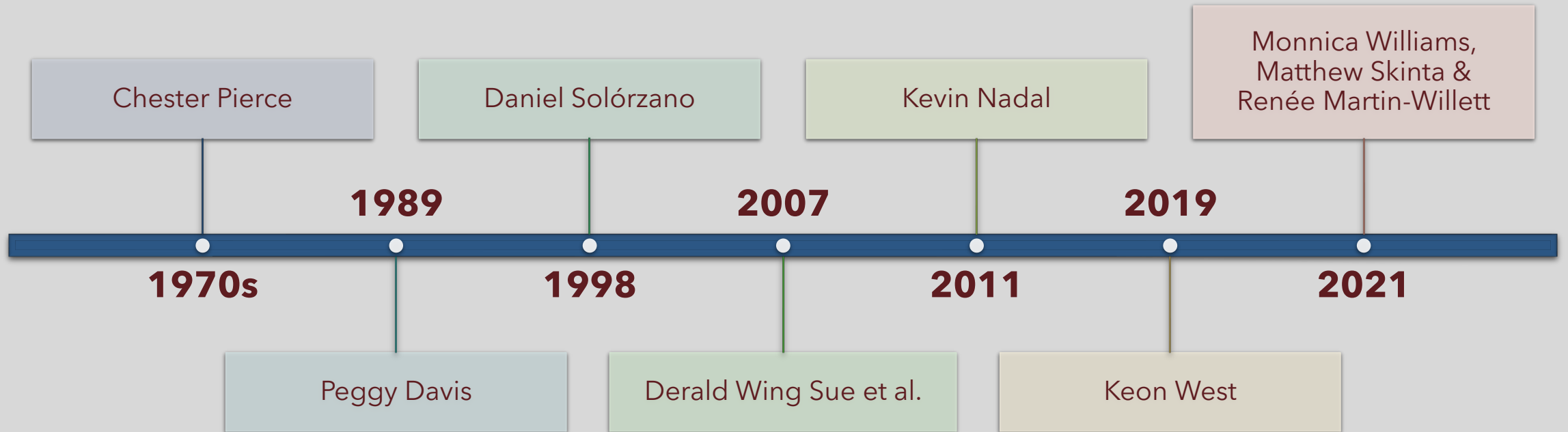
Scenarios and discussion about supporting those experiencing microaggressions



“Racial microaggressions are brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, **whether intentional or unintentional**, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults to the target person or group”

(Sue et al., 2007, p. 273).

A Select Timeline of Racial Microaggressions Research





IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

Context, context, context

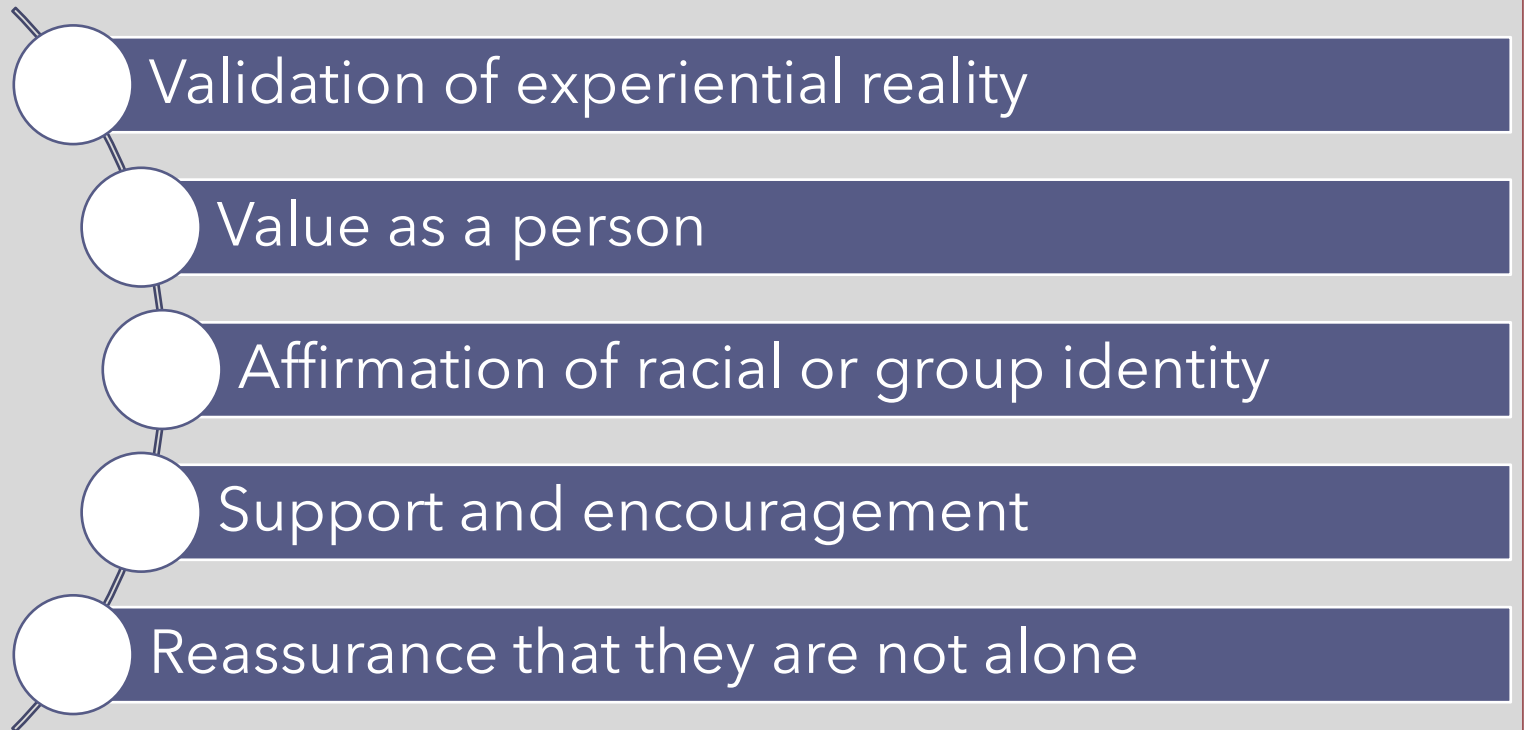


Responding to Racial Microaggressions

Strategies

Microinterventions

Everyday words or deeds -
intentional or unintentional -
that communicate to targets
of microaggressions



(Sue, Alsaïdi, Awad, Glaeser, Calle, & Mendez, 2019)

Strategic Goals of Microinterventions



- Make the invisible visible



- Disarm the microaggression

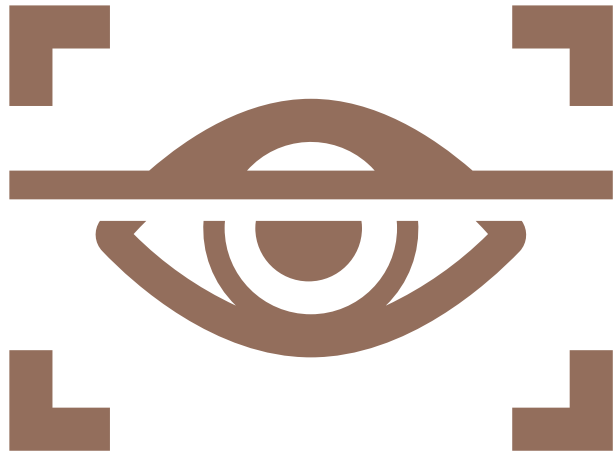


- Educate the offender



- Seek external intervention/support

(Sue, Alsaidi, Awad, Glaeser, Calle, & Mendez, 2019, p. 135)



Make the invisible visible

- Undermine the meta-communication
- Make the meta-communication explicit
- Challenge the stereotype
- Broaden the ascribed trait to a universal human behavior
- Ask for clarification

(Sue, Alsaidi, Awad, Glaeser, Calle, & Mendez, 2019, p. 135)



Disarm the microaggression

- Express disagreement
- State values and set limits
- Describe what is happening
- Use an exclamation
- Use non-verbal communication
- Interrupt and redirect

(Sue, Alsaidi, Awad, Glaeser, Calle, & Mendez, 2019, p. 135)

Educate the offender

- Point out the commonality
- Appeal to the offender's values and principles
- Differentiate between intent and impact
- Promote empathy
- Point out how they benefit

(Sue, Alsaïdi, Awad, Glaeser, Calle, & Mendez, 2019, p. 135)



Seek external support/intervention



- Alert authorities
- Report the act
- Seek therapy/counseling
- Seek support through spirituality/religion/community
- Set up a buddy system
- Attend support groups

(Sue, Alsaïdi, Awad, Glaeser, Calle, & Mendez, 2019, p. 135)

Open the Front Door (OTFD)



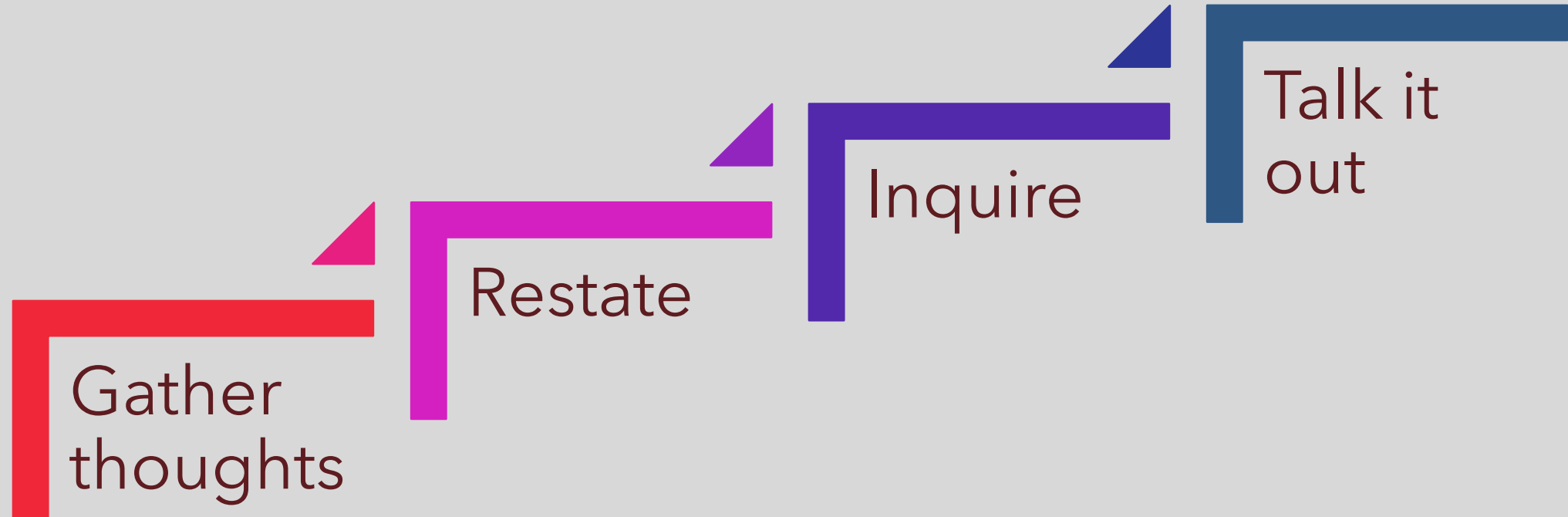
(Rockquemore, 2016)

OWTFD



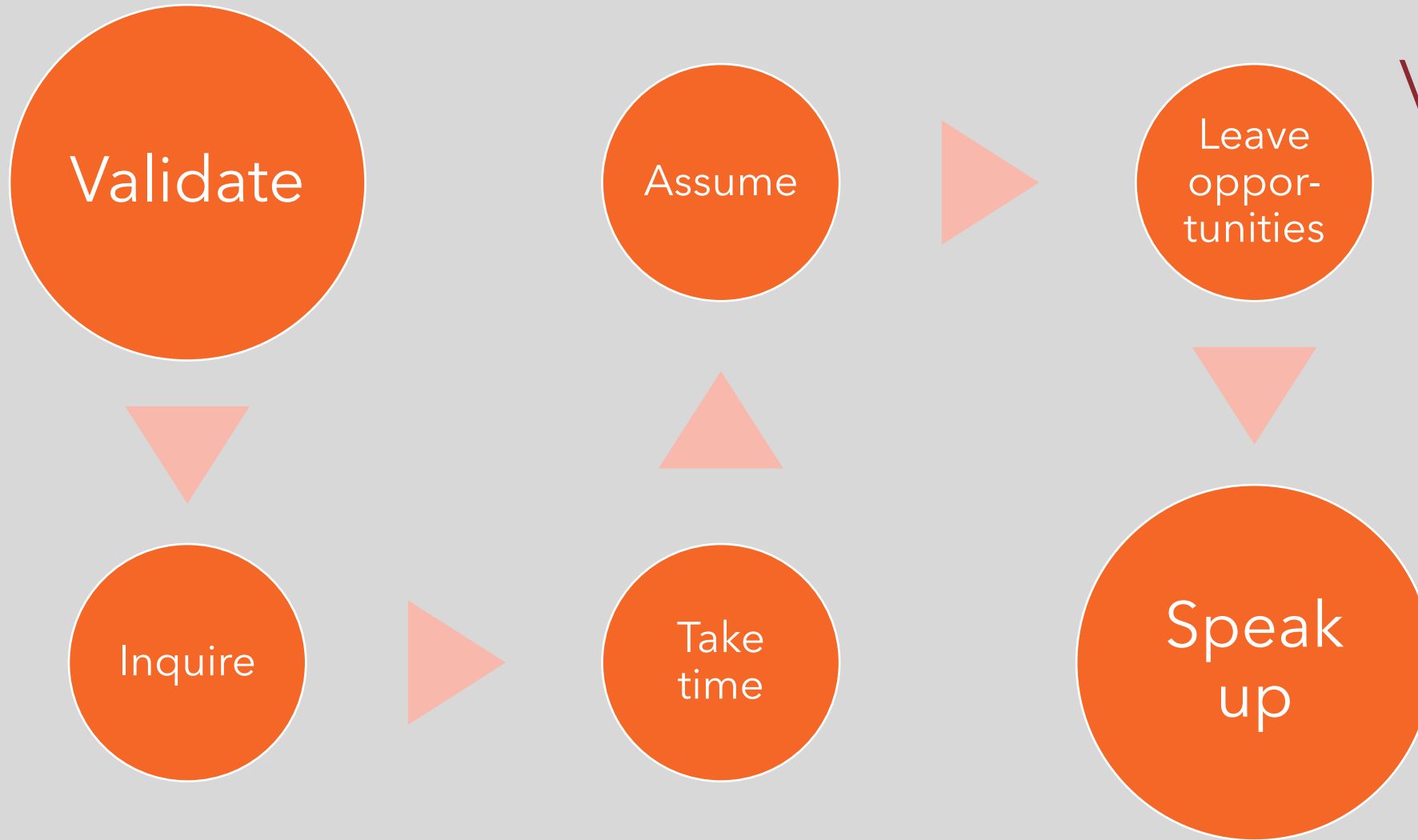
(Sotto-Santiago, Mac, Duncan, & Smith, 2020)

GRIT



(Warner, Njathi-Ori, & O'Brien, 2020)

VITALS



(Walker, Hodges, Perkins, Sim, & Harris, 2022)

Guiding Principles



For targets

First responsibility is to self
Take time to re-center
Identify what you want to see happen
Reclaim your voice (if you want to)



For perpetrators

Be open and receptive to feedback
Focus on impact, not intent
Seek restorative action

(Thurber & DiAngelo, 2018)



Supporting those Targeted by Microaggressions

Guiding Principles



Focus on what you'll lose by not speaking up



Determine your goal



Ground actions in care



(Thurber & DiAngelo, 2018)



SCENARIOS & DISCUSSION

Supervisor- Employee Relationship

Monica is one of the student employees you supervise. She's working at the desk when you overhear a patron asking personal questions—"Your accent is so exotic! Where are you from? What's it like there?"

What can you do in this situation to interrupt this exchange? How can you support Monica?

Co-worker or Peer Relationship



In your department meetings, you've noticed that your colleague Jim frequently interrupts or talks over another colleague, Ji Won.



What could you do in this situation?

Employee-Supervisor Relationship

Your department is getting a new supervisor, Shawn. In talking with your colleague, Sarah, about Shawn's upcoming arrival, she says, "Well, of course they had to hire him since he's a person of color. I don't think he'll last long here, though."

How can you respond in this situation to let Sarah know that her comments are inappropriate?



QUESTIONS

& Additional Discussion

Recommended Readings

LIS Readings

Chou, R. L., Pho, A., & Roh, C. (2018). *Pushing the margins: Women of color and intersectionality in LIS*. Library Juice Press.

Ettarh, F. (2018). Vocational awe and librarianship: The lies we tell ourselves. *In the Library with the Lead Pipe*.
<http://www.inthelibrarywiththeleadpipe.org/2018/vocational-awe/>

Kendrick, K. D. (2017). The Low Morale Experience of Academic Librarians: A Phenomenological Study. *Journal of Library Administration*, 57(8), 846-878. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01930826.2017.1368325>

Readings Outside LIS

DiAngelo, R. (2011). White fragility. *International Journal of Critical Pedagogy*, 3(3), 54-70.

Edwards, K. E. (2006). Aspiring social justice ally identity development: A conceptual model. *NASPA journal*, 43(4), 39-60.

Helms, J. E. (1992). *A Race is a Nice Thing to Have: A Guide to Being a White Person or Understanding the White Persons in Your Life*. Microtraining Associates, Inc.

Mills, C. W. (1997). *The Racial Contract*. Cornell University Press.



Thank you for your time!

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Nadal, K. L. (2011). The Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale (REMS): Construction, reliability, and validity. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 58(4), 470-480.

Pierce, C. M. (1970). Offensive mechanisms. In F. b. Barbour (Ed.), *The Black Seventies* (pp. 265-282). Porter Sargent.

Rockquemore, K. A. 2016. "Allies and Microaggressions." *Inside Higher Ed.* (blog), April 13, 2016, <https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2016/04/13/how-be-ally-someone-experiencing-microaggressions-essay>

Solórzano, D. (1998). Critical race theory, race and gender microaggressions, and the experience of Chicana and Chicano scholars. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 11(1), 121-136.

Sotto-Santiago, S., Mac, J., Duncan, F., & Smith, J. (2020). "I Didn't Know What to Say": Responding to Racism, Discrimination, and Microaggressions With the OWTfD Approach. *MedEdPORTAL*, 16, 10971. https://doi.org/10.15766/mep_2374-8265.10971

Sue, D. W., Alsaidi, S., Awad, M. N., Glaeser, E., Calle, C. Z., & Mendez, N. (2019). Disarming racial microaggressions: Microintervention strategies for targets, White allies, and bystanders. *American Psychologist*, 74(1), 128-142. <https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000296>

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<https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066x.62.4.271>

Thurber, A., & DiAngelo, R. (2018). Microaggressions: Intervening in three acts. *Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work: Innovation in Theory, Research & Practice*, *27*(1), 17-27.

Walker, V. P., Hodges, L., Perkins, M., Sim, M., & Harris, C. (2022). Taking the VITALS to Interrupt Microaggressions. *MedEdPORTAL*, *18*, 11202. https://doi.org/10.15766/mep_2374-8265.11202

Warner, N. S., Njathi-Ori, C. W., & O'Brien, E. K. (2020). The GRIT (Gather, Restate, Inquire, Talk It Out) Framework for Addressing Microaggressions. *JAMA Surg*, *155*(2), 178-179. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamasurg.2019.4427>

West, K. (2019). Testing Hypersensitive Responses: Ethnic Minorities Are Not More Sensitive to Microaggressions, They Just Experience Them More Frequently. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *45*(11), 1619-1632.

Williams, M. T., Skinta, M. D., & Martin-Willett, R. (2021). After Pierce and Sue: A Revised Racial Microaggressions Taxonomy. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, *16*(5), 991-1007.