

Cultural Awareness Exercise:

1. What “groups” do you belong to? List all demographic, ethnic, religious, gender, sexual orientation, and professional memberships to which you identify.
2. Draw a Ven Diagram with these identities in the center. The size of the circles will determine how big that membership is a part of your identity.
3. Shade in the circles that provide you with privilege or power
4. Draw stripes in circles in serve as a basis for disempowerment/discrimination.

Examples of Microaggressions in Therapy\*

<u>Microaggression</u>	<u>Definition</u>	<u>Example</u>
Colorblindness	Denying Differences	“I don’t see you as black”
Overidentification	Assuming Similarity	“As a gay person, I know what its like to be discriminated
Denial of Personal Racism	Professing to be immune to racism	“I’m not racist because some of my best friends are minorities”
Minimize Racial-Cultural issues	Minimize or dismiss importance of racial-cultural issues in person’s life	“I’m not sure we need to focus on race/culture to understand your depression”
Assigning Uniqueness or special status on basis of race or ethnicity	Assuming a positive attribute is atypical for person’s race	“You’re not like other Asians” “You are very articulate for an immigrant”
Dysfunctional helping or patronizing	Offering help that is unneeded on the basis of person’s ethnicity	“I don’t usually do this, but I can waive your copay if you can’t afford it”
Stereotypic assumptions	Assuming a behavior is characteristic of one’s race/ethnicity	“I know Black people are very religious”

Accused Hypersensitivity	Assuming client is hypersensitive during discussion about race/culture	“Don’t be too sensitive about the racial stuff. I didn’t mean to offend you”
Culturally Insensitive Tx Recommendations	Displaying cultural ignorance in treatment planning	“You should cut off relationships with your family of origin if they are stressful.”
Acceptance of less than optimal behaviors	Accepting or normalizing dysfunctional behaviors	“It might be ok for some people to cope by drinking alcohol because its culturally normative”
Meritocracy Myth	Ignoring the responsibility of individual perpetrators and sociocultural systems that oppress	“If Black people would just work harder, they could be successful like other people”

\*Note: Adapted from “Racial Microaggressions Against African-American Clients in Cross-Racial Counseling Relationships,” by M. G. Constantine, 2007, Journal of Counseling Psychology, 54, p.

Repairing Ruptures :

Step 1: Check in with your self

How were you feeling when the cultural rupture happened? What thoughts and feelings did you have? What issues did it bring up in you?

Step 2: What was the client’s perspective? Put yourself in your client’s shoes. What is in your client’s best interest? What is the client needing to heal?

Step 3: Clarify your motivations. Why do you want to address the rupture with the client? Is it to prove a point? To prove you are right? Will that serve your client well?

Step 4: Consult!! Document. Check in with a colleague or a supervisor on this issue. Take time to consider the issue. Do not react impulsively or in a hurried manner.

Step 5. Acknowledge the rupture with client. Take responsibility and use "I" statements. "I think I said something that was hurtful or invalidating of your experience."

Step 6. Invite your client to share their perspective and feelings. Promote a safe, nonjudgmental space for your client to explore the incident.

Step 7: Apologize: critical to repair. Honestly owning your cultural ignorance and taking responsibility for the hurt created.