

Addressing Mistreatment in the Moment

Have you just experienced a microaggression, hurtful comment or action?

Your safety and wellbeing come first. You know best whether you feel safe to confront the situation here and now, address it at a later time, bring the issue up with people you trust, or choose to do nothing. You can use the CARES framework for suggestions on how to speak up in the moment (see next page).

Microaggressions are every day, subtle, comments or behaviours that communicate bias towards certain groups or identities.

Have you just witnessed a microaggression, hurtful comment or action?

Witnesses have the potential to intervene and actively support a culture of inclusivity and safety. Challenge harmful comments or actions. Use the Witness: Acting as an Ally section for suggestions (see next page).



Responding in the moment can help to break the culture of silence around mistreatment. It reinforces that these comments, attitudes and behaviours are unacceptable.

If you have made a hurtful comment/action or other micro-aggression, it is important to take responsibility for the harm caused, try to repair the harm with the target, and commit to learning and doing better. The Unity Health CARES framework* provides suggestions for this (see next page).

| | Try to | Avoid |
|---------|---|---|
| Target | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Report a pattern of mistreatment to your manager or supervisor | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Blaming yourself - Feeling obligated to respond to the source in the moment |
| Witness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Take a moment to reflect on the situation - Reach out to the target to check in | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Doing nothing |
| Source | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Take a moment to reflect on the situation - Centre the target and not your own feelings - Speak with the target/ally about the situation and acknowledge your actions - Listen to their response with openness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Denying the claim/ being defensive - Invalidating the feelings brought to you by the target or witness - Making a quick statement without considering the impact of your statement/action |

For further information or questions, email ARESA@unityhealth.to

*adapted from the UofT Temerty Faculty of Medicine

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Unity Health CARES Framework*

These sample phrases are meant as a guide when responding in the moment. Each situation is unique and may require you to adapt them.

| | Target | Witness: Acting as an Ally | Source |
|---|--|---|---|
| C onsider how what one said was harmful | "Those comments are harmful." | "I felt really uncomfortable hearing you say that to _____. Those (comments/behaviours) are harmful because _____." | "I have taken some time to think about what I said/did, I acknowledge that I may have caused you harm by _____." |
| A ccountability for the harmful behaviour | "Could you say more about what you mean by that?" | "I think I heard you saying _____ (paraphrase their comments). Is that correct?" | "I take full responsibility for _____ and I am sorry for the harm I caused. I acknowledge that you may not accept my apology but I am going to educate myself so this does not happen again." |
| R ethink assumptions or stereotypes | "Actually, in my experience _____" | "That's a stereotype. Have you considered.....?" | "It was my assumption that _____. This is wrong/harmful because _____." |
| E mpathy: for those harmed <u>and</u> <u>also</u> for those who are learning | "When you said that it left me feeling _____". | "It sounds like you're really frustrated/nervous/angry. _____ (comment/behaviour) isn't an acceptable way to show that." | "If I was on the receiving end of this, I also would feel _____." |
| S upport by offering resources and how you can help | You're not alone. Your thoughts and feelings about the subject are valid. Seek support from your colleagues and/or leader if you feel safe to do so. Scan the QR for other tools available to you. | Support the person who was mistreated. Check in on them and ask them how you can help. Follow their lead on how they would like to address the situation. | Support the person you have mistreated, and others, by educating yourself on why your words or actions were inappropriate. Scan the QR code below for resources. |

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