Using Courage To Confront Bias

Beth Crist, Youth Services Consultant
Jean Heilig, Fiscal Officer
If you have a brain you’re biased

Dr. Heidi Grant
NeuroLeadership Institute
Where do these biases come from?

Direct Experiences
(with other people, events, situations)

Vicarious Experiences
(those relayed to us through other people, stories, books, movies, media and culture)
Bias

Explicit

Implicit

Macroaggressions

Microaggressions
### Examples

- You speak good English
- No..... where are you from?
- That’s crazy
- You look good for your age
- Can I touch your hair?
- That’s so gay
- You’d be pretty if you lost some weight
How Do You Respond?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C3LFB4mJ0DI
What microaggressions have you witnessed, experienced, or participated in?
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<th>Long-term effects</th>
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<td>Increase biological/physiological stress</td>
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<td>Weaken the immune system</td>
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<td>Increase anxiety, depression, and other mental disorders</td>
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<td>Decreased productivity</td>
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<td>Low confidence</td>
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<td>Feeling of helplessness</td>
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“Courage doesn’t always roar. Sometimes courage is the quiet voice at the end of the day that says I’ll try again tomorrow.”

Mary Anne Radmacher
Using Courage to Address Your Own Microaggressions

- Realize that you have biases, and that it’s ok
- Breath, acknowledge your feelings, and let the shame and guilt go
- Really listen to the person you offended
- Apologize and take responsibility for the microaggression
- Thank the person for trusting you and letting you know
- Don’t avoid certain people for fear of offending them
Using courage to address a microaggression against others

• Consider if you want to address the situation at all
• Assume goodwill
• Consider addressing the offender privately, and a bit later
• Focus on the impact rather than the intent
• Make it a teachable moment
• Try not to escalate the situation
• Be brief
• Ask probing questions
• Suggest alternate wording or actions for the future
• Write a script for yourself, or put your response in writing
Using courage to address a microaggression against others

- Talk about how the microaggression impacted you
- Consider taking an indirect approach
- Support other bystanders who spoke out
- Talk with and support those most directly impacted
- Seek to understand the experiences of marginalized groups without making them responsible for your learning
Using courage to address a microaggression directed against yourself

- Allow yourself to feel whatever emotions arise
- Practice self-care
- Speak up, or give yourself permission not to
- Explain that the conversation might get uncomfortable
- Model appropriate behavior
Discussion time

Have you witnessed a microaggression that was addressed well?

Have you witnessed a microaggression that was *not* addressed well?