

MICROAGGRESSIONS LESSON PLAN

Whole class PHSE session on microaggressions around: gender, sexuality, race, disability and class.

This lesson plan has been created with valuable input and contributions from students at Seaford Head Community School and the University of Brighton.

This lesson plan includes:

- **Short animation – Mosquito** – What microaggressions are and their potential impact
- **Questions and discussion** – Understanding microaggressions, their impact and how to respond to them
- **Quiz (Kahoot quiz)** – Consolidating learning

Section 1 – Film

Resource: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nQ9I7y4UuxY>

Show Mosquito Microaggressions film (1minute 58 seconds)

Section 2 – Group Work

Resources: Microaggressions discussion sheet

Pupils discuss in groups:

- **Who can receive a microaggression?**

Section 3 – Group Work

Resources: Microaggressions discussion sheet

Pupils discuss in groups:

- **How do microaggressions make people feel?**

Section 4 – Group Work

Resources: Microaggressions discussion sheet

Pupils discuss in groups:

- **Are all microaggressions verbal?**
- **Discuss other types of microaggression**

Section 5 – Group Work

Resources: Microaggressions discussion sheet

Pupils discuss in groups:

In what circumstances could the following be described as microaggressions?

- Where are you from? (*race*)
- All lives Matter (*race*)
- Why don't you just get out of bed and get some fresh air? (*mental health*)
- What she's trying to say is... (*disability or gender*)
- Don't you want a family? (*sexuality or gender*)
- I wouldn't have thought you would live here! (*class or race*)
- You're just being too sensitive!
(*gender or mental health*)

Section 6 – Whole Class

Resources: Responding to Microaggressions sheet

We can always take action when we see or hear a microaggression.

The way in which we choose to respond to a microaggression will differ according to the circumstances we are in. In fact, the different ways we can respond to microaggressions will vary depending on what has happened, where you are, who you are with and whether or not you feel safe.

We can respond to any microaggression using **SWAN**

Teacher to present and give examples of **SWAN**

• SAFETY – This is the most important thing to consider first.

Are you safe?

Do you need to move away from the situation to be safe?

Do you need to remain quiet to keep yourself/others safe?

• WAIT – Take ACTION at a later stage

If it is not safe to respond immediately, then WAIT

If it could cause distress, upset, embarrassment for the victim of the microaggression, then WAIT

ACT later

Acknowledge – check in with the victim to let them know you saw/heard the microaggression and you didn't think it was ok.

Check out any support or further action that would be helpful to the victim – ask the victim if they need more support and discuss if further action would be appropriate

Tell – if the victim would like you to TELL someone in a position of authority what has happened, or you judge that someone senior should know, then speak to a teacher, Head of Year or appropriate adult and let them know what you saw or heard.

• ACTION – Do something now

Take immediate action to show that you don't agree with the microaggression.

This could include;

- Making a statement that you don't agree with what has been said or done – "I don't think that because" or "I don't agree with that, I think....."
- Making a statement to say that what was said or done could be perceived to be offensive or hurtful – "You may not realise, but what you just said / did could be considered hurtful/offensive"
- Questioning the perpetrator, "What do you mean by that?" "Could you explain your comment to me, I don't understand what you are saying?"

• NEUTRALISE – divert the attention away

Create a distraction to neutralise the situation.

This could include:

- Changing the subject – start talking about something different
- Physically moving away from the situation
- Create an opportunity for the victim to move away from the situation – e.g. ask them to help you get something from another room

Remember: Safety comes FIRST

Groups to discuss the benefits and pitfalls of responding to microaggressions in different ways.

Section 7 – Class quiz

Resources: Quiz sheet

Schools can either sign in to Kahoot and create the quiz using the questions on the Quiz Sheet, or distribute paper copy Quiz Sheets to students

Check understanding with quiz at end of session

Teacher to administer the quiz. There may be different opinions as to which are the right answers. The point of the quiz is to generate discussion.

Quiz questions

1. Who can commit micro aggressions?

- a) Friends
- b) Teachers
- c) Strangers
- d) Anyone

2. What is a micro-aggression?

- a) An act or saying that makes you feel different
- b) A joke
- c) Banter
- d) An innocent remark

3. What's the underlying message of a micro aggression?

- a) You are less capable
- b) You are different
- c) You do not belong
- d) All of the above

4. Are microaggressions intentional?

- a) Always
- b) Sometimes

5. What would you do if you were told you had carried out a microaggression?

- a) Find out why my behaviour / actions were hurtful and apologise
- b) Ask why, but stand my ground if I didn't agree
- c) Nothing
- d) Apologise

6. How could you respond to a microaggression?

- a) Tell people off when they do them
- b) Post the situation on social media so people know what's happened
- c) Tell a teacher

7. What is the best way to respond to a microaggression?

- a) Wait and do something later
- b) Act now and speak to the person
- c) Neutralise the situation by diverting attention
- d) Depends on the situation