

***Taking ACTION: [Adapted from Souza, 2018](#)***

Oftentimes, when we witness or experience a microaggression, we don't have response strategies that we can activate right in that moment. Having language/phrases that we can see ourselves use, can be a critical step in our immediate responses to microaggression and an important action to take to support those who have been targeted by a microaggression.

Tasha Souza developed this communication framework as an interactive response. and we added a few additional phrases. Take a look at the examples, and explore what language /phrases might work for you when responding to microaggressions in your learning environment? Add additional phrases that you might use.

<b>What (ACTION)</b>	<b>How</b>	<b>Other ideas for phrasing this?</b>
Ask clarifying questions to assist with understanding intentions.	<i>I want to make sure that I understand what you were saying. Were you saying that...?</i>  <i>Can you clarify the point you're trying to make?</i>	
Curiosity not judgment.	<i>Can you tell me what you were hoping to communicate with that comment?</i>  <i>Can you please help me understand what you meant by that?</i>  <i>When you say x, what do you mean by that?</i>	
Tell what you observed as problematic in a factual manner.	<i>I noticed that . . .</i>  <i>My sense/observation is that...</i>	
Impact exploration: ask for, and/or state, the potential impact of such a statement or action on others.	<i>What do you think people think when they hear that type of comment?</i>  <i>Using that word impacts/hurts people in this room.</i>	



	<p><i>As you know, everything speaks. What message do you think such a comment sends?</i></p> <p><i>Are you aware that what you just said is derogatory?</i></p> <p><i>That word/phrase carries more weight than you might be aware of and is hurtful to others.</i></p>	
<p><b>Own your own thoughts and feelings around the impact.</b></p>	<p><i>When I hear your comment I think/feel...</i></p> <p><i>Many people might take that comment to mean...</i></p> <p><i>In my experience, that comment can perpetuate negative stereotypes and assumptions about... I would like to think that is not your intent.</i></p>	
<p><b>Next steps: Request appropriate action be taken.</b></p>	<p><i>Our class is a learning community, and such comments make it difficult for us to focus on learning because people feel offended. So I am going to ask you to refrain from stating your thoughts in that manner in the future. Can you do that please?</i></p> <p><i>I'd appreciate it if you'd consider using a different term because it is inconsistent with our course agreement regarding X...</i></p>	

**Additional phrases:**

- ❖ Can you connect this to our text/topic/question?
- ❖ This word/phrase has no place in this classroom.
- ❖ I don't know where you are going with this, but let me stop you here.
- ❖ Let me stop you here, this is not moving us forward in our conversation.

Souza, T. (2018). Responding to microaggressions in the classroom: taking ACTION. *Faculty Focus: Higher Ed Teaching Strategies from Magna Publications*.