

Understanding and Addressing Racial Microaggressions

Given the increasing diversity of clients seeking mental health care, there is a growing need to enhance the cultural sensitivity of therapeutic interventions with ethnorracial minority populations. One critical form of contemporary racism is the experience of microaggressions: brief, everyday exchanges, in the form of seemingly innocent and innocuous comments or behaviors that send denigrating messages to people of color. Microaggressions in mental health settings are a cause of poor therapeutic alliance and drop-out, representing a barrier to treatment. Repeated exposure to microaggressions can cause psychological unwellness and even trauma symptoms in victims. However, many clinicians are not aware of microaggressions, may commit them unknowingly against clients, and are unsure how to address them in treatment. Thus, increasing awareness of microaggressions is a critical target of clinical training and therapeutic intervention. Dr. Williams will also discuss how to recognize microaggressions, how to assess the impact of microaggressions in clients, and discuss how to address microaggressions when they occur in therapy or real-life.

Target Audience

Psychologists Social Workers Counselors
Therapists Psychiatrists Nurses
Course level: Intermediate

Learning Objectives

At the end of this seminar, participants will be able to:

1. Define microaggressions and explain how they are connected to racism
2. Identify the most common microaggressions experienced by people of color.
3. List the most common microaggressions committed by medical professionals and therapists against people of color.
4. Explain the mental health impact of microaggressions on people of color.
5. Assess the impact of microaggressions in their clients of color.

Seminar Schedule

Typically begins at 1:00 PM and ends at 4:15 PM Eastern time. There is one 15 minute break. However, check the webinar schedule.

Outline

Begin 1 PM ET

Understanding Racism

Types of Microaggressions

Microaggressions in Public Life and Therapy

The Mental Health Impact of Microaggressions

Break 2:30-2:45 PM ET

Measuring Microaggressions

Responding to Microaggressions

Allyship and Personal Growth

End 4:15 PM ET

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Continuing Education Credit

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The Presenter

Monnica Williams, Ph.D., is the Canada Research Chair for Mental Health Disparities at the University of Ottawa, where she conducts psychological research, mentors students, and teaches advanced courses in multicultural psychology and psychopathology. She completed her undergraduate work at MIT and UCLA, and received her doctoral degree from the University of Virginia. Dr. Williams was an Assistant Professor at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine in the Department of Psychiatry for over four years, where she worked with Dr. Edna Foa at the Center for the Treatment and Study of Anxiety before her move to the University of Louisville in 2011, where she served as the Director for the Center for Mental Health Disparities. She also worked at the University of Connecticut for 4 years, where she had joint appointments in the Department of Psychological Science and Psychiatry.

Dr. Williams has presented at many scientific conferences and is a much sought after speaker. She has published over 100 peer-reviewed articles and book chapters focused on anxiety disorders and cultural differences. She has been the principal investigator on several grant-funded research projects, and has served as a peer reviewer for over 20 different journals.

Dr. Williams is a licensed psychologist in the United States and Canada. She is the Clinical Director of the Behavioral Wellness Counseling Center, which has offices in Tolland, Connecticut. She treats adults with anxiety disorders and provides clinical instruction to trainees. In the community, she conducts trainings and lecture for medical residents, local organizations, and treatment providers. She was president-elect of the Delaware Valley Association of Black Psychologists, co-founded the International OCD Foundation's Diversity Advisory Board, and serves on the board of directors for the Chacruna Institute.

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This seminar has been reviewed and approved by Keith Hannan, Ph.D., Phil Rich, LICSW, Daphne Fatter, Ph.D., and Loreen Yearick, MSN, RN. This approval expires on March 1, 2025.

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