Comparing and Contrasting Micro Inequities and Microaggressions –
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Part One: Comparative Chart - Version 1.3 – Revised May 13, 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Microaggressions</th>
<th>Micro inequities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language/Tone</strong></td>
<td>Inflammatory (e.g. oppression, marginalized groups)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scope</strong></td>
<td>Original research focused on racial microaggressions. Book expands discussion to include gender and sexual orientation.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Source/Actors</strong></td>
<td>White, heterosexual male is primary perpetrator. Explicitly differentiates between privileged and marginalized groups (i.e. us vs. them). Dyad centric scenarios.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Type of interventions</strong></td>
<td>Provides broad guidelines about how to “combat racism and prejudice” (7 conditions – See Section i under Key Points, page 3 below). Lacks specificity.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Similarities</strong></td>
<td>Both terms describe actions and events that devalue, exclude, and undermine individuals. Both terms acknowledge psychological, affective and behavioral effects of negative micro interactions.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Part Two: Summary of book: *Microaggressions in Every Day Life*, by Derald Wing Sue, 2010

1) **Definitions:**
   a. “Microaggressions are brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to certain individuals because of their group membership.”

   b. Pierce’s definition: “subtle, stunning, often automatic and nonverbal exchanges which are ‘put downs.’” (Pierce, Carew, Pierce-Gonzalez and Willis 1978, p. 66)

   c. “In the world of business, the term ‘microinequities’ is used to describe the pattern of being overlooked, underrespected, and devalued because of one’s race or gender.” Source: Preface xvi
d. “Microaggressions are the brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial, gender, sexual-orientation, and religious slights and insults to the target person or group (Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2007).” Source: Preface xvii

e. Microaggressions are reflections of worldviews that are filled with ethnocentric values, biases, assumptions, and stereotypes that have been strongly culturally inculcated into our beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. Source: Page 41

2) Key Points:
   a. Microaggressions have a detrimental effect on targets and perpetrators. “Everyone has engaged in harmful conduct toward other socially devalued groups.” Source: Preface xvii
   b. Taxonomy: Micro assaults (conscious); micro insults and micro invalidations (unconscious). These reflect stereotypes and worldviews of inclusion-exclusion and superiority-inferiority.
      1. Micro insults:
         i. Ascription of intelligence.
         ii. Second-class citizen.
         iii. Pathologizing cultural values/communication styles.
         iv. Assumption of criminal status.
      2. Micro Invalidations
         i. Alien in Own Land.
         ii. Color-blindness.
         iii. Myth of Meritocracy.
         iv. Denial of Individual Racism.
   c. Psychological Dilemmas and Dynamics of Microaggressions
      1. Clash of realities (target vs. perpetrator).
      2. Lack of awareness by perpetrator of damage caused.
      3. Trivializing the effects of microaggressions.
      4. Catch-22 position for targets: Caught between confronting the perpetrator and doing nothing.
   d. Microaggressions Process Model
      1. Event experienced.
      2. Target’s perception of event (microaggression, yes or no?).
      4. Interpretation of event.
      5. Consequence for Target (cognitive, behavioral, emotional).
   e. Microaggressive perpetrators
      1. Experience of internal struggle.
         i. Realization of oppression and injustice.
         ii. Increasing recognition of their own role and complicity.
         iii. Pretending they are bias free.
         iv. Avoiding “marginalized” groups so they are not reminded about the isms.
         v. Feeling impotent about making a difference.
         vi. Realization that white, male and heterosexual privilege is an integral part of U.S. society.
         vii. Realizing no one is free from biases.
f. Types of Oppression
   1. Force, duress, coercion.
   2. Deprivation.

g. Perpetrator’s Fears (pages 122 – 128)
   1. Fear of appearing racist, sexist, heterosexist, etc.
   2. Fear of acknowledging one’s racism (or other isms).
   3. Fear of acknowledging white privilege.
   4. Fear of taking personal responsibility to end racism.

h. Psychological costs of microaggressions to perpetrator
   2. Affective: fear, anxiety, guilt, apprehension, low empathy.
   3. Behavioral: detachment or avoidance of diverse groups, self segregation; pretense when dealing with diversity related topics.

i. Conditions to “combat racial bias and prejudice”
   1. Having intimate contact with people who differ from us in race, culture, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation.
   2. Working together in a cooperative rather than a competitive environment.
   3. Sharing mutual goals (superordinate goals).
   4. Exchange and learning accurate information rather than stereotypes or misinformation.
   5. Sharing an equal status relationship.
   6. Having leadership and authority as supportive of group harmony and welfare.
   7. Feeling a sense of unity or spiritual interconnectedness with all humanity.

Part Three: Defining Micro Inequities
1) Definition: Micro Inequities
Micro inequities are “apparent small events, which are often ephemeral and hard to prove; events that often covert, often unintentional, frequently unrecognized by the perpetrator.” (Source: Rowe, 1990, 2008).

The effects of micro-inequities are endemic:
   a. Have a sabotaging, marginalizing effect that translates into low morale, underperformance and high turnover (Source: Rowe, 1990, 2008; Corporate Leavers 2007 Survey)
   b. It costs corporations $64 Billion dollars in voluntary turnover. (Source: Corporate Leavers 2007 Survey by Freada Kapor Klein).
   c. Have physiological effects—research confirms when faced with social rejection, the brain releases natural painkillers. (Source: Eisenberger, 2003, 2010.

2) Strategies to address micro inequities: Micro Affirmations and Active Bystander Techniques
   1. Micro affirmations: “apparently small acts, which are often ephemeral and hard to see... often unconscious but very effective, which occur whenever people wish to help others to succeed” (Source: Rowe, 1990, 2008)
      1. Simply by taking place; the two cannot take place simultaneously. *The practice of affirmations can block unconscious bias.*
      2. The positive effect of micro-affirmations *can* snowball and mitigate the effects created by micro-inequities.
      3. Micro-affirmations model behavior *for others,* with positive outcomes that others can see and easily replicate.
3. Active bystander: Naming, Deflecting, Discouraging, Engaging others, Interrupting, Rechanneling, Reporting, Remediating, and Stopping behavior. (Source: Rowe, 2014)

4. Other techniques to deal with micro inequities: (Source: Rowe, 2014)
   1. Drafting a letter to the person, and then thinking about whether to send it or use the information with a supervisor, etc.
   2. Generic addresses about the issue, within a workplace.