



## Taking ACTION:

### A Framework for Responding to Disruptions and Microaggressions

All instructors will need to address a course disruption at some point in their teaching career. When instructors do not have response strategies that can be activated in that moment, it can lead to undermine student confidence in you and may send the wrong message to those who have been targeted. The phrases below can be adapted so that you are prepared to use them.

Tasha Souza, Director of the [BUILD Program](#) at Boise State University, developed this interactive communication framework for instructors to use in the immediate moment. Most of the phrases below are Souza's, but Schreyer Institute faculty consultants have a additional phrases.

Read the examples and explore what language and phrases might work for you when responding to disruptions and microaggressions in your courses.

#### **ASK clarifying questions to assist with understanding intentions**

- I want to make sure that I understand what you were saying. Were you saying that...?
- Can you clarify the point you're trying to make?

#### **CURIOSITY not judgement**

- Can you tell me what you were hoping to communicate with that comment?
- Can you please help me understand what you meant by that?
- When you say x, what do you mean by that?

#### **TELL what you observed as problematic in a factual manner**

- I noticed that...
- My sense/observation is that...

#### **IMPACT exploration: ask for or state, the potential impact on others**

- What do you expect people to think when they hear that type of comment?
- Using that word impacts/hurts people in this room.
- As you know, all words send a message. What message do you think such a comment sends?
- Are you aware that what you just said is derogatory?
- That word/phrase carries more weight than you might be aware of and is hurtful to others.

#### **OWN your own thoughts and feelings around the impact**

- When I hear your comment, I think/feel...
- Many people might take that comment to mean...
- In my experience, that comment can perpetuate negative stereotypes and assumptions about... I would like to think that is not your intent.

## **NEXT steps: Request appropriate action be taken**

- 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'd appreciate it if you'd consider using a different term because it is inconsistent with our course agreement regarding X...

### 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.

### Adapted from:

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

<https://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/effective-classroom-management/responding-to-microaggressions-in-the-classroom/>

Pittman, C. (2021, May 14). 10 In the Moment Responses for Addressing Micro and Macroaggressions in the Classroom. *The Scholarly Teacher*. <https://www.scholarlyteacher.com/post/10-in-the-moment-responses-for-addressing-micro-and-macroaggressions-in-the-classroom>