



It's Just a Joke

Microaggressions in K-8 Improvisation & Theater Games

American Alliance for Theatre & Education

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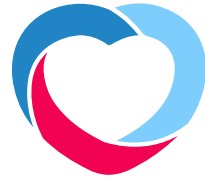
Microaggressions



Microaggressions are “everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership.”

- Derald Wing Sue, Ph.D

The goal is to offer inclusive and safe environments for all of our students, faculty members and audiences.



We need to address overt bigotry as well as more seemingly subtle, yet equally as harmful, moments like microaggressions and jokes.

Today's Breakdown:

- ▷ Define microaggressions and cite examples that have occurred in our classes.
- ▷ Identify the different types of microaggressions that take place in our K-8 Improv/Theater Game classes (gender, race, etc).
- ▷ Will work to understand what qualifies as a microaggression vs an appropriate, creative choice.
- ▷ Break into Groups: Use microaggression examples and practice, practice, practice together, to find the most effective and developmentally suitable responses for the different age groups.
- ▷ Reconvene to share best responses discovered during breakout groups.
- ▷ Create a list of classroom guidelines that can help our students from the outset.
- ▷ Take time to reflect on ideas that we liked and feel we could use in the future.

Types of Microaggressions Include:

- ▷ Gender
- ▷ Race
- ▷ Culture
- ▷ Class
- ▷ Body Types
- ▷ Physical and Neurological Ability
- ▷ Sexual Orientation
- ▷ Age
- ▷ Religion

Challenges:

- Often caught off-guard.
- Theater games/improv games almost seem to encourage it.
- Don't want to make the student who said it feel embarrassed and called out if it was truly unintentional.
- How to identify: what makes one choice offensive and the other creative or appropriately funny? (Ie, one accent vs. another)

Share Examples:

- Let's share examples of moments we've experienced in our classes as well as moments that maybe fell into the gray area.

Practice:

- ▷ Dr. Howard Stevenson talks about the importance of PRACTICING our replies, so that we can be prepared and ready when these in-the-moment situations arise.

Some Examples of Replies:

(Adjust according to age group and the intention of the student.)

- EX: I know your intention was not meant to be offensive, but what you said/did can hurt someone or a group of people.
- EX: Two women can get married. Or don't worry about gender in this scene... just propose to her!
- EX: Gay isn't an insult. Try another word.
- EX: "Midgets" are real people. Let's not make fun of them or anyone simply because of the way they are born. (Then take some time to discuss/unpack this further)
- EX: That name/accent/character type you are selecting can be offensive or harmful to someone. (Then take time to discuss why... it can be harmful...it's a reductive stereotype, or it's been used in the past to belittle a group of people, etc)

Brainstorm & Practice

- ▷ Break out into groups (depends on number of attendees) based on K-3, 4-5, 7-8
- ▷ Be supportive, of course. We are trying to figure out an effective way to address these things. We will make errors as we try.
- ▷ Avoid using any actual slurs.
- ▷ After 10 minutes, come back and share those ideas.
- ▷ Heather will be taking notes and we'll send out the suggested ideas to everyone. Add email in chat feature.
- ▷ Create a list of classroom guidelines that can help our students from the outset.
- ▷ Take time to reflect on ideas that we liked and feel we could use in the future.