

#### Microaggressions by Melissa Patnella

##### What is a microaggression?

Microaggression as a definition is: a term used for brief and commonplace verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative prejudicial sights and insults towards any group.

Although this definition seems quite harsh, microaggressions are simply that – “micro.” These statements or actions are often very subtle and are typically not intended to be offensive or hurtful. However, being unaware is not an excuse for demonstrating a behavior that can be harmful to others.

##### What types of microaggressions are there?

Microaggressions are comments that target not just race, but also gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, socioeconomic class, citizenship status, disability, and religious/cultural beliefs. Microaggressions can be also be verbal, environmental, or behavioral. Examples of **verbal** microaggressions would be asking to call a person a simple nickname because their ethnic name is ‘too difficult’ to pronounce, or saying to a non-white person “when I see you, I don’t see color.” Examples of an **environmental** microaggression would be not providing accessible facilities or buildings, or not establishing protocol for sharing gender pronouns. Examples of **behavioral** microaggressions are assuming an older coworker is unable to use or learn technology, or giving only personality-based feedback (“you should smile more”) to a female employee during a performance review.

##### What do I do or say when I witness a microaggression?

Now that we have discussed what microaggressions are, we also need to touch on how to handle microaggressions. As a patient serving company, there may be times that if a patient performs a microaggression, saying nothing will be an appropriate response as to not upset the patient. However, when it comes to coworker-coworker or coworker-management microaggressions, it is very important to address these situations due to their harmful nature.

Here are some tips:

- It can be uncomfortable to tell someone that something they said or did was hurtful to you. A private environment may be best for this conversation.
- Remember that microaggressions are not typically intended to be harmful. When addressing this, try not to be accusatory. Ask their reasoning behind what they said/did.
- After you have heard their side, explain why it is hurtful from your point of view or explain why you may believe it is a statement that is hurtful to others if it does not pertain to you. Throughout expressing yourself, continue to make them aware that you know they did not mean to intentionally hurt you/others.
- If you are uncomfortable having this conversation yourself, please seek guidance from either your direct supervisor or HR. It is a learning experience for all of us and you do not have to lead the conversation if you are not comfortable doing so.
- Any environmental microaggressions noticed by an employee can be reported to their direct supervisor or HR.

## Honoring Martin Luther King Jr.

Martin Luther King Jr. (January 15, 1929 – April 4, 1968) was an American Baptist minister and activist who became the most visible spokesman and leader in the American civil rights movement from 1955 until his assassination in 1968. King advanced civil rights through nonviolence and civil disobedience, inspired by his Christian beliefs and the nonviolent activism of Mahatma Gandhi. MLK Jr. participated in and led marches for blacks' right to vote, desegregation, labor rights, and other basic civil rights.



Martin Luther King Jr. day is a federal holiday in the United States marking the birthday of MLK Jr. It is observed on the third Monday of January each year. The campaign for a federal holiday in King's honor began soon after his assassination in 1968.

*“Everybody can be great...because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love.”*

- Martin Luther King Jr.

## Donations to InterFaith Works

The Martin Luther King Jr. holiday is an official day of service and celebrates the civil rights leader's life and legacy. Making time to volunteer for MLK Day of Service is a great way to engage with our community while honoring the legacy of Dr. King.

SOS will be collecting new items for InterFaith Works Center for New Americans. Interfaith Works affirms the dignity of each person and every faith tradition, builds racial and religious equity, and creates bridges of understanding among us. The organization provides resettlement and post-resettlement services to help refugee families in Syracuse reestablish their lives and overcome the barriers to successful integration in their new communities. With the community's generosity, we are able to ensure that all arrivals have a bed to sleep on, furniture in their living room and dining room, and everything in their kitchen to enjoy a meal with family and friends.

SOS will be collecting items from the list below starting Tuesday, January 18 through Tuesday, February 8. Items can be dropped off at Site 18 – SOS Administrative building in boxes located in the kitchen.

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|---------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| <b>PERSONAL CARE KIT</b>  | <input type="checkbox"/> Shampoo (2)      | <input type="checkbox"/> Toothbrushes (4-6)   | <input type="checkbox"/> Lotion                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Toilet Paper (6 rolls)    |
|                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Conditioner (2)  | <input type="checkbox"/> Toothpaste (2)       | <input type="checkbox"/> Band-Aids                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Feminine Hygiene Pads     |
|                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Bars of Soap (3) | <input type="checkbox"/> Razors/Shaving Cream | <input type="checkbox"/> Deodorant (2 men, 2 women) |  |
| <b>HOUSE CLEANING KIT</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> Mop & Bucket     | <input type="checkbox"/> Toilet Brush         | <input type="checkbox"/> Lightbulbs                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Toilet Cleaner            |
|                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Broom & Dustpan  | <input type="checkbox"/> Dryer Sheets         | <input type="checkbox"/> Dish Soap                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Trash Bags (13 gallon)    |
|                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Pack of Sponges  | <input type="checkbox"/> Laundry Detergent    | <input type="checkbox"/> Tissues                    | <input type="checkbox"/> All-Purpose Cleaner Spray |

If you would like to collect items at your site please email [communications@sosbones.com](mailto:communications@sosbones.com).

### Click the links at the bottom of the email to watch the videos



*Addressing micro aggressions and biases in the workplace*



*Responding to Microaggressions*



*Eliminating Microaggressions: The Next Level of Inclusion*

## Purpose Statement

SOS as a medical practice and a contributor to the local community is committed in its support of diversity, equity, and inclusion. SOS seeks to build patient and team-member relationships among individuals of all ages, races, ethnicities, genders, and sexual identities that fully represents many cultures, backgrounds and viewpoints and thereby cultivate a culture of tolerance where all feel welcome.

## DEI Committee Members

Brandi Brown | Yolanda Brown | Melissa Butler | Helena Capone | Nicole Chidsey | Shelly Devries  
Dr. Naven Duggal | Samantha Farok | Melissa Griffin | Cheryl Holdrege | Mike Humphrey  
Diana Jones | Melissa Patnella | Victoria Rolls | Robert Taylor | Dr. Daniel Wnorowski

*Please reach out to anyone in the DEI committee to share your thoughts and ideas.*