

# Microinequity



A subtle, sometimes subconscious, message that devalues, discourages, and ultimately impairs performance.

## Microinequity (cont'd)

# **Microinequities alone are typically not legally actionable:**

- Petty slights, minor annoyances, or a simple lack of good manners are not unlawful

# Microinequity (cont'd)

- Traditional complaint processes fail to address the microinequity because they don't fit neatly into an analytical framework.

# The Impact

Subtle disparities in:

collegiality

treatment

support

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\* More pernicious  
barriers to a truly  
inclusive culture than  
overt harassment or  
discrimination.

# Microinequities translate into statements like:



“I don’t feel welcome.”

“I don’t feel supported.”

“I don’t feel valued.”

“My contribution has been marginalized.”

“I feel invisible.”

# Examples of Common Microinequities

Dismissing the idea of one employee only to applaud the same idea when paraphrased by another employee.

A manager uses a light-hearted, playful greeting with some members of the team, but greets others in a formal, more distant manner.

## Examples of Common Microinequities (cont'd)

Repeatedly confusing the names of people who share the same ethnic background.

Co-workers who ridicule or tease an employee with an accent.

A faculty member or manager is fully engaged when responding to the contribution of a male student, but is critical and dismissive when females respond.

# What can we do to combat the microinequities in our midst?

Engage in critical self-analysis

Tactfully solicit feedback from others about the micro-messages we may be unaware of

Make a conscious effort to view our environment through the eyes of others

Work toward aligning our intent and goals with our micro-messages