

The Subtle Acts of Exclusion (Microaggressions) Model

Jana, T. & Baran, M. (2020) *Subtle Acts of Exclusion: How to Understand, Identify, and Stop Microaggressions*.

The 7th principles and the 8th principle resolution of our UU faith must guide our interactions to: increase feelings of inclusion for people who are not part of the dominant identities, increase trust among each other, increase collaboration within UUCA, improve our ability to give feedback on any issue, and create a culture of transparency, interpersonal civility, and accountability. Therefore, we will adopt the following model when Subtle Acts of Exclusion (SAE's) occur.*

The following definitions will be used in this framework for communication: (p. 24)

The person or group that is excluded by the SAE is the **subject**.

The person who says or who nonverbally does the SAE is the **initiator**.

Anyone who overhears or sees the SAE will be called an **observer**.

Once an observer speaks up, they become an **ally**.

An observer who chooses not to speak up is a **bystander**.

Guidelines for Speaking up as the SAE subject or observer (p. 44)

Pause the Action

- We will interrupt the SAE by saying, "I want to pause for a moment"
- We will speak up when we hear an SAE

Assume good intent

- We assume good intentions on the part of the subject, the observer, and the initiator.
- We assume good intentions because we believe in our UU principles
- We assume good intentions because we are in relationship with each other.
- We assume good intentions because it is part of our spiritual growth
- We assume good intentions because we are committed to changing our world

Explain why the action was paused

- We are committed to the 8th principle to accountability dismantle racism in our institutions and especially ourselves
- We are committed to ensure all people feel included and fully welcome in our community
- We aspire to be a vibrant, welcoming, inclusive, caring and diverse congregation, guided by the purposes and principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association and our 8th Principle Resolution.

Have patience but expect progress

- We will be patient and see feedback as a gift and expect progress in return
- We will understand that growth can be uncomfortable and that the best learning can come when we are uncomfortable.
- We will remember that we are all learning and will make mistakes.

Guidelines for Responding as the SAE Initiator (p. 44)

Acknowledge the feedback with gratitude

- I will accept the feedback as a gift.
- I will learn to sit with my discomfort.

Replace defensiveness with curiosity and empathy

- I will take the feedback as an opportunity to grow both spiritually and personally.
- I will be aware of my orientation and move away from defensiveness to humility and growth.
- I will focus on the impact of my words and actions and not my intent.
- I will understand that we all make mistakes.

Follow through and follow up

- I will take responsibility for my own learning moving forward.
- I will seek clarity if I'm unclear about the SAE I committed and learn from it.

Direct Benefits of Adopting the SAE with the UUCA

- Increased feelings of inclusion for people who are not part of the dominant identities.*
- More trust among everyone.
- More collaboration across organizations.
- Improved ability to give feedback on other issues.
- A culture of transparency, interpersonal civility, and accountability.

*From the UUCA Bylaws: This congregation declares and affirms its responsibility to promote the full participation of persons in all of its activities and endeavors including membership, programming, hiring practices and the calling of religious professionals without regard to age or the social constructs of race, color, gender, gender identity/expression, neurodiversity, disability, affectional or sexual orientation, class, economic status, or national origin and without requiring any particular interpretation of religion or to any particular religious belief or creed.