



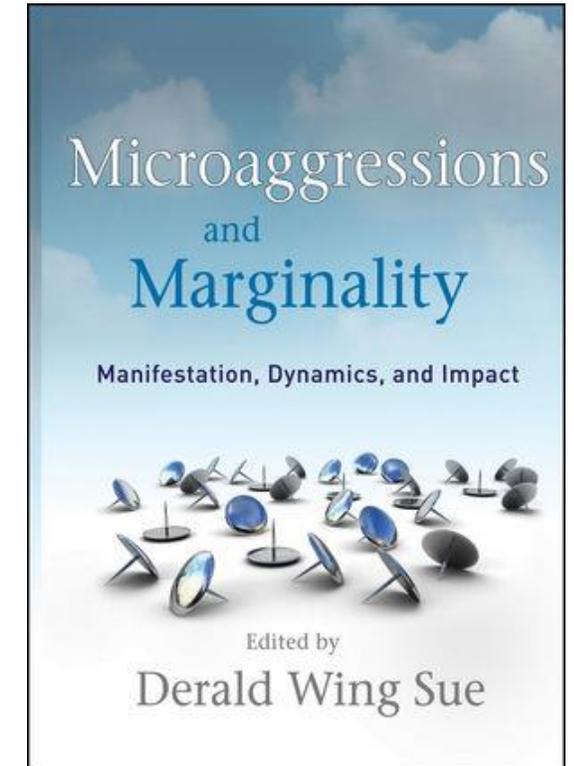
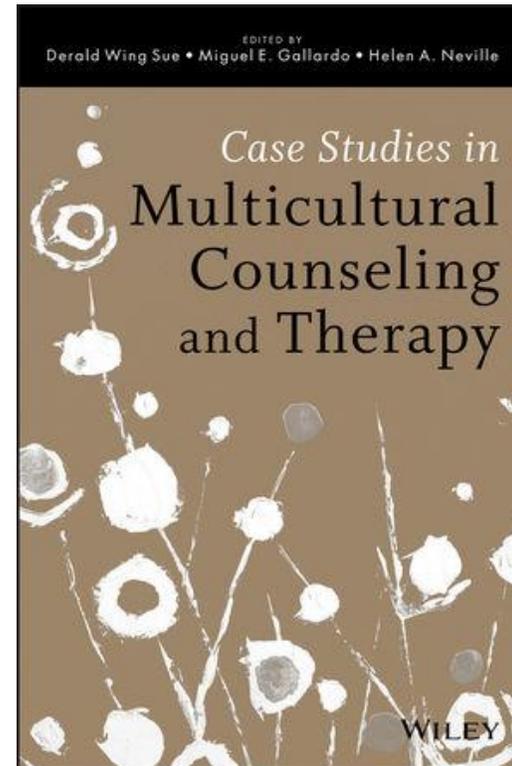
# MICROAGGRESSIONS AND UNINTENTIONAL BIAS LEADERSHIP SKILLS

JOSEPH F. WEST, SCD



## READINGS ON MICROAGGRESSIONS

Microaggressions may be unintentional or intentional commonplace actions or environmental indignities that communicate aggressive, derogatory, or negative slights, or hostilities.

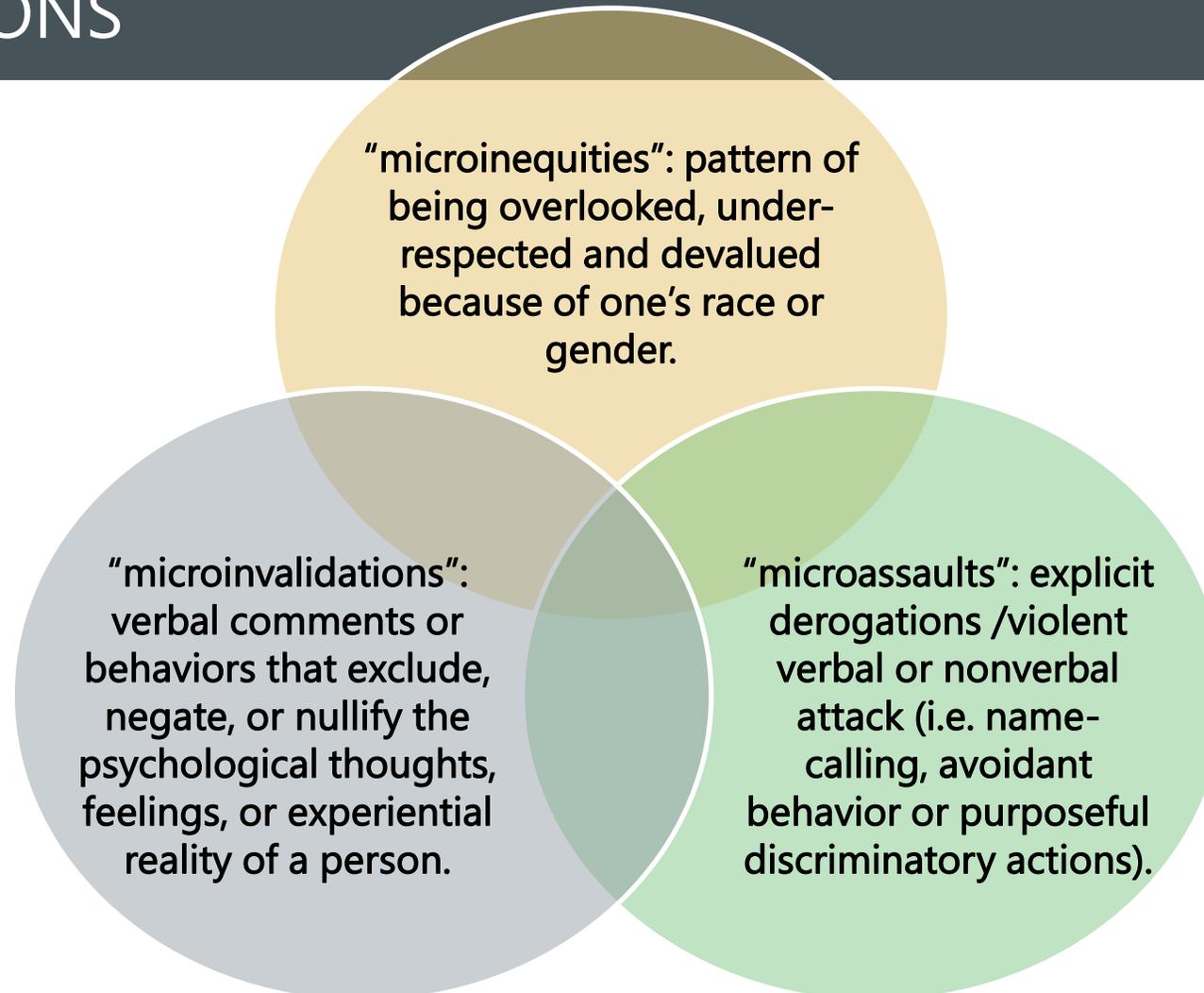


# MICROAGRESSIONS

What may be an aggression to one person, may not be an aggression to another – response is determined by individual histories with overt acts of discrimination or hostility; discernment or context.



# MICROAGRESSIONS



## MICROAGGRESSIONS – THE HARM

- Mental health
- Create a hostile and invalidating campus climate or work environment
- Perpetuate stereotype threat
- Create physical health problems
- Lower productivity – stymies input and creativity
- Devaluation cues and “put downs”
- Weakens the organization and institution
- More vulnerable to turn over and instability

## DEFINITION OF CULTURE

- Culture refers to the cumulative deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes and religion by a group of people *generally without thinking about them.*



- 
- Cultural diversity in the workplace provides strength. It also challenges individuals to respond to their diverse work environment effectively.
  - “Valuing” individual and group cultural differences is critical to achieving the organizational goals.
  - Cultural competence is the effective use of social and interpersonal knowledge and skills that demonstrates understanding and appreciation of individual and group differences and similarities.



- 
- Know your own cultural background.
  - Recognize your own stereotypes and biases.
  - Gain knowledge of cultural history and heritage.
  - Be aware of other's perceptions.
  - Recognize effects of -ism on the others.



## Cultural Destructiveness

Refusal to acknowledge the presence or importance of cultural differences; Differences are punished and suppressed; Endorse the myth of universality.

## Cultural Incapacity

The individual or organization chooses to ignore cultural differences; No attention is devoted to supporting cultural differences; ignore or dismiss concerns of microaggression or insult.

## Cultural Blindness

Individuals and organizations believe that cultural differences are of little importance; People are viewed through a western cultural mainstream lens; Messages are communicated to students that their culture is of little consequence to the learning experience.

## Cultural Pre-Competence

The individual or organization recognizes and responds to cultural differences; There is an open acknowledgement of the need for cultural competence; Educators may seek out new information regarding diversity by attending training sessions or interacting with those individuals who have insider cultural information.

## Cultural Competence

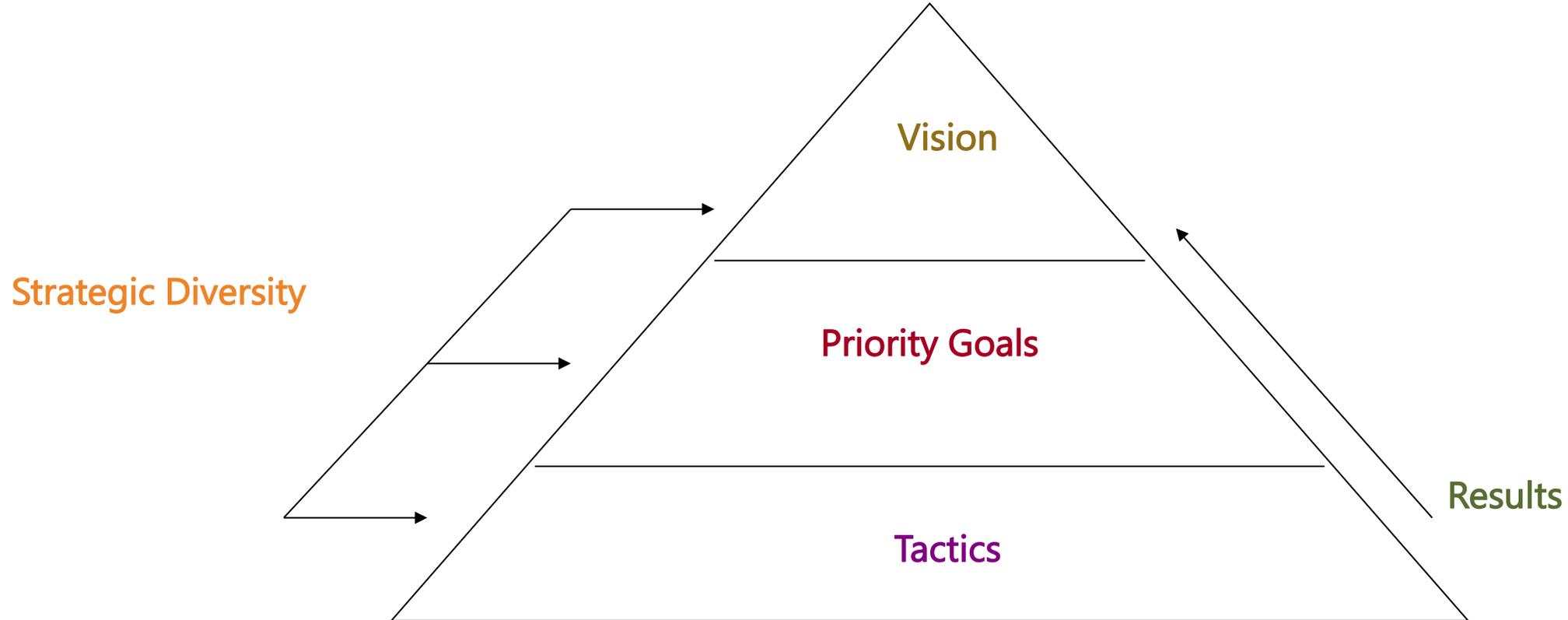
The individual and organization value and appreciate cultural differences; Exploration of issues related to equity, cultural history, knowledge, and social justice; cultural experiences are valued and integrated into the learning process.

# WHAT IS DIVERSITY

- Diversity is “the ways in which we differ as individuals or organizations and the commonalities and similarities that justify and motivate diverse people and entities to work collaboratively together, in order to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes.”



- **Strategic Diversity** - *Diversity recognized, valued and most importantly strategically managed within and without an organization can drive business results.*





## Strategic Diversity

- Vision - Leadership sees the shared work environment, openly values diversity & contribution of others to success
- Priority Goals – Establish & prioritize goals for success in diversity (i.e. eliminate microragressions)
- Tactics – Developing & working through approaches to change; to address hostility, insults or exclusion (intentional and unintentional)
- Results – Change is visible (environment, people)

# PEDERSEN'S DEVELOPMENTAL MODEL

- **Awareness** – consciousness of one's own attitudes and biases
- **Knowledge** – accumulation of factual information about different cultural groups
- **Skills** – integration of awareness competencies to positively impact culturally distinct groups
- **Attitude** – belief that differences are valuable and change is necessary and positive.

Each domain builds successively on the previous one such that mastery of an earlier domain is necessary before proceeding to subsequent domains.

---

# KNOWLEDGE

- Understands own cultural heritage and acknowledges how it affects values and assumptions.
- Understands other worldviews and perspectives.
- Understands how social change occurs.
- Is familiar with the nature of institutional oppression and power.
- Understands that there are unjust institutional barriers that exist for diverse groups.
- Demonstrates a realization and understanding of internalized oppression and its impact on identity and self-esteem.
- Understands how class, gender, race, etc. affect individuals and their experiences.
- Understands the ways that cultural differences affect verbal and nonverbal communication and the notion of personal space.

---

# SKILLS

- Identify and openly discuss cultural differences and issues.
- Gain respect of individuals who are culturally different themselves.
- Challenge oppressive systems and serve as an ally to those being oppressed.
- Use cultural knowledge and sensitivity to defend the rights and values of individuals and groups.
- Accurately assess one's own multicultural skills, comfort level, growth, and development.
- Use verbal and non-verbal (body language) responses to communicate with diverse individuals and/or groups.
- Resolve conflicts in culturally appropriate manner.
- Use multiple viewpoints in problem-solving.
- Employ critical thinking skills.

---

# ATTITUDE/AWARENESS

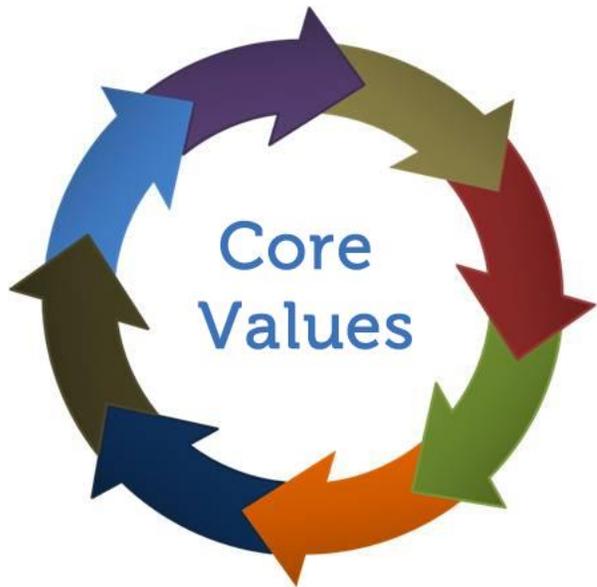
- Believes that differences are valuable and that learning about others who are culturally different is necessary and rewarding
- Is open to change, and believes that change is necessary and positive.
- Willing to self-examine and, when necessary, challenge and change their own values, worldview, assumptions and biases.
- Is personally committed to justice, social change and combating oppression.
- Accepts other worldviews and perspectives and are willing to acknowledge that, as individuals, they do not have all the answers.
- Believes that cultural differences do not have to interfere with effective communication or meaningful relationships.

---

# OVERCOMING MICROAGGRESSION

- Valuing diversity (i.e. attitudes, policies, structures)
- The capacity for cultural self-assessment
- Consciousness of the “dynamics” inherent when cultures interact
- Institutionalization of cultural knowledge
- Developing adaptations to service delivery reflecting and understanding between and within cultures.





Leadership Skills & Awareness

Individual Attitudes

Organizational Values & Policies

Change

# OVERCOMING MICROAGGRESSIONS



Personal  
Motivations

Expectations  
of Leadership

Expectations  
of Others

Underlying  
Values of  
Organization

Challenges  
Ahead