

Contents

<i>Preface</i>	<i>ix</i>
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	<i>xi</i>
An Introduction to Microaggressions: Understanding Definitions and Impact	3
1. A Brief History of LGBTQ People and Civil Rights	17
2. A Review of Microaggression Literature	41
3. Sexual Orientation Microaggressions: Experiences of Queer, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Pansexual People	55
4. Gender Identity Microaggressions: Experiences of Transgender, Gender Nonconforming, and Nonbinary People	87
5. Intersectional Microaggressions: Experiences of LGBTQ People of Color	115
6. Intersectional Microaggressions: Experiences of LGBTQ People With Disabilities, LGBTQ People of Diverse Sizes, Older LGBTQ People, and LGBTQ Youth	143
7. Intersectional Microaggressions: Experiences of LGBTQ Religious and Nonreligious People, LGBTQ Immigrants, and LGBTQ Poor and Working-Class People	179

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viii • Contents

8. The Processes of Dealing With Microaggressions: Considerations for Targets and Allies	207
9. Conclusion: Recommendations for LGBTQ People, Allies, and Upstanders	235
Afterword: A Personal Message to LGBTQ People	257
<i>References</i>	261
<i>Index</i>	293
<i>About the Author</i>	329

AN INTRODUCTION TO MICROAGGRESSIONS

Understanding Definitions and Impact

Jonathan is a 42-year-old biracial man of Filipino and Haitian descent who interchangeably identifies as **queer** or **gay**. Recently, Jonathan started working a government job in a suburb in Michigan. Though he generally enjoys his new position, he finds himself frequently encountering situations at work that he describes as “cringeworthy.” For example, many of his coworkers use homophobic language in the workplace (e.g., saying, “That’s so gay” when describing something that they don’t like). Other times, people have teased him about not having a girlfriend, while other coworkers have expressed interest in setting him up with women they know. Although Jonathan is comfortable with his queer identity with his family and friends, he feels uneasy about sharing his identity with coworkers, due to their insensitive behaviors. So, he opts to simply ignore these comments, while passively looking for other job opportunities.

Stephanie is a 28-year-old South Asian American woman who is currently in a romantic relationship with a 27-year-old Black American woman named Debbie. Stephanie identifies as **bisexual** and has openly done so since she was 18 years old, and Debbie identifies as a **lesbian**. Over the past 10 years,

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Dismantling Everyday Discrimination: Microaggressions Toward LGBTQ People, Second Edition, by K. L. Nadal

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Stephanie has had relationships with people of different **genders**; however, for the past 4 years, she has dated only cisgender women. She had two other romantic relationships with women before Debbie, with whom she has been in a monogamous relationship for the past year.

Stephanie decides to bring Debbie to her 10-year high school reunion back home in California. Although some of Stephanie's current friends know she is bisexual, many of her classmates had not heard. At the reunion, Stephanie sees a former classmate, Tom, whom she greets; she then introduces Debbie to him as her girlfriend. Astonishingly, Tom replies with "What? Are you a lesbian?" Stephanie replies, "Well, no; I'm actually bisexual, but I don't think that really matters, does it?" Tom laughs and says, "Well, I guess not . . . So—I'm single, and you two are very beautiful women. What are you both doing later?" Stephanie and Debbie look at each other and roll their eyes; they leave politely, feeling belittled and upset.

Agnes is a 20-year-old Latina **transgender** woman who is visiting a metropolitan university in Atlanta for the first time. After attending a community college for the past 2 years, she is interested in transferring to one of the local 4-year universities to pursue a career in fashion design. Thus, she visited several campuses within a 50-mile radius that offer her major. Agnes makes an appointment to see the local admissions counselor, so that she can discuss requirements, financial aid, and other logistical information.

FIGURE 1. A Queer Black Couple Sharing a Tender Moment



Note. Photo courtesy of Rodnae Productions.

When Agnes first arrives on campus, she approaches the security guard at the front desk; he looks at her, snickers, and asks to see her identification. Without hesitation, she pulls out her driver's license and hands it to him. Because Agnes's photo on the ID is one of her before her **gender affirmation surgeries**, the man says to her, "This isn't you. This is a man!" Agnes replies with "That is me. I'm transgender." The security guard hesitates, looks her up and down, and says, "Wait, so do you have a penis?" Agnes, embarrassed, tries to politely answer his question by replying, "I really don't think that's any of your business." However, she refrains from yelling at him or getting visibly upset, since she knows he has the power to let her into the building. He grants her permission to enter—smiling condescendingly and creepily as she walks through the turnstile. Meanwhile, Agnes walks away feeling dehumanized, furious, and hurt.

WHAT ARE MICROAGGRESSIONS?

While all of the scenarios in the book are fictional, including the opening vignettes, they are inspired by the types of experiences reported by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (**LGBTQ**) people whom I have encountered over the past 20 years through my work as a professor, therapist, and community organizer. Each scenario represents the experience of **microaggressions**. Microaggressions are types of everyday discrimination that are typically subtle or even well-intentioned in some cases and are most often experienced by people of color, LGBTQ people, women, religious minorities, people with disabilities, and people of other marginalized groups. In contrast to outright assaults and hate crimes (or conscious prejudicial treatment motivated by fear or dislike of "the other" and intended to hurt people), microaggressions are typically more covert or innocuous in nature—sometimes intentional, sometimes unintentional—communicating hostile, insulting, or negative messages about people of oppressed groups. Research has found that microaggressions can occur in various settings (e.g., schools, workplaces, families) and have a detrimental impact on people who experience them, including mental health issues, difficulties in coming-out processes, or the development of trauma symptoms (Torino et al., 2019).

Although there are myriad ways that **racism**, **sexism**, **heterosexism**, **cissexism**, and **genderism** manifest differently, many authors in the fields of psychology and education began to describe a new trend in discrimination towards the end of the 20th century. Because of changes in public opinion and policy in the United States, it has become unacceptable and offensive for Americans to express blatantly discriminatory thoughts, statements, or

behaviors toward minority groups in public settings. People of dominant backgrounds (e.g., white Americans, men, heterosexuals) may believe that they are good people who believe in equality and may choose not to associate with those who are blatantly racist, sexist, or heterosexist. For example, because most white Americans associate the term “racism” with white supremacist groups, they may fail to recognize the biases and stereotypes that they hold about people of color (Dovidio et al., 2016). Similarly, many heterosexual cisgender people may consider themselves to be good and open-minded because they do not engage in hate crimes or blatant discrimination toward queer or **trans** people; however, they still “may be oblivious to the ways that they harass or insult LGBTQ individuals (or allow others to)” (Nadal, Rivera, & Corpus, 2010, p. 219). So, although political correctness may lead to fewer instances of blatant discrimination (e.g., hate crimes; racial, sexist, and homophobic slurs), it may also result in the lack of awareness of one’s unconscious biases and unintentional behaviors.

According to Sue et al. (2007), there are three types of microaggressions. The first type, **microassaults**, are defined as the use of explicit derogations either verbally or nonverbally, as demonstrated through name-calling, avoidant behavior, or discriminatory actions toward the intended victim (e.g., making a derogatory joke about Asian Americans or telling a Latinx person to “go back where you came from”). While such language can be interpreted as hostile and derogatory by the many people who hear it, people who engage in such behavior may rationalize their actions as being jokes or justified political opinions that are not reflective of any racial biases.

The second type of microaggression, **microinsults**, are often unconscious and are described as verbal or nonverbal communications that convey rudeness and insensitivity and demean a person’s heritage or identity. For instance, when a person with a disability is spoken to patronizingly, or when a woman is told she is not capable of something, a subtle message is sent that these individuals are inferior to the dominant group (i.e., able-bodied people or men). Although the perpetrator did not explicitly say derogatory words, the target may experience such comments as degrading, and although the perpetrator may not have intended any offense, they target may react negatively.

The last type of microaggressions, called **microinvalidations**, are also often unconscious and include communications that exclude, negate, or nullify the realities of individuals of oppressed groups. Examples include a white American professor telling a student of color that they complain about racism too much or a white male colleague telling a woman of color colleague that she is angry or hostile. Such messages, although seemingly innocuous, indirectly invalidate the racial or gendered realities that a person faces on a regular basis.

These same three microaggression categories have been applied to the lived experiences of LGBTQ people (Nadal, 2018; Nadal, Rivera, & Corpus, 2010). Perhaps the most common forms of microassaults are the homophobic and transphobic slurs and violent language that LGBTQ people hear on a regular basis. Overhearing words like “faggot,” “dyke,” or “tranny”—which are commonplace phrases heard by LGBTQ youth in their school systems (Kosciw et al., 2020)—can be damaging to LGBTQ people, regardless of whether the terms are used jokingly or are intentionally directed at LGBTQ people. Further, when comedians, actors, or other public figures use transphobic or heterosexist language in their jokes, scripts, or social media posts, they complicitly encourage violence towards trans and queer people. For instance, in 2021, comedian Dave Chappelle released a Netflix special in which he expressed an array of transphobic prejudices. In doing so—and refusing to apologize or acknowledge any harm—Chappelle demonstrated a lack of empathy for trans people (especially Black trans women and trans women of color) who are violently targeted or killed by hate crime homicides every year.

Microinsults, which are often unconscious and unintentional, can affect LGBTQ people in many ways. For example, a subtle glare of disgust or shock when an LGBTQ couple displays affection to each other conveys someone’s feelings of discomfort or disapproval toward LGBTQ people. Similarly, if a coworker or family member consistently **misgenders** someone (i.e., referring to a trans or **nonbinary** person with the wrong pronoun)—particularly when they had already been informed about a person’s gender identity or have been corrected multiple times—the perpetrator communicates a lack of understanding or acceptance of their trans colleague or family member.

Finally, an example of a microinvalidation (or a statement that excludes or nullifies people’s realities and lived experiences) would include a heterosexual person’s vehemently denying that they are homophobic after an LGBTQ person confronts them about an enacted bias. Similarly, comments like “It’s all in your head” or “You’re too sensitive” negate the ways that LGBTQ people (and other **minoritized** people) may perceive or interpret situations. Such microinvalidations have also been referred to as **gaslighting**, in that the person from the historically dominant group attempts to convince the person from the historically marginalized group that they psychologically inept and have a distorted sense of reality (Johnson et al., 2021).

Over the past 2 decades, hundreds of empirical studies have investigated the impacts of microaggressions on people of historically marginalized groups, namely, people of color, women, religious minorities, and people with disabilities (Nadal, 2018; Torino et al., 2019). Specific to microaggressions and

LGBTQ people, Nadal, Rivera, and Corpus (2010) proposed a theoretical taxonomy—hypothesizing about the various types of microaggressions LGBTQ people face. Empirical literature began to increase significantly shortly thereafter, with a few key qualitative and quantitative studies that highlighted the pervasiveness of microaggressions in the lives of LGBTQ people (e.g., Balsam et al., 2011; Nadal, Issa, et al., 2010, 2011; Nadal, Skolnik, & Wong, 2012; Nadal, Wong, et al., 2011; Platt & Lenzen, 2013; Shelton & Delgado-Romero, 2011; Wright & Wegner, 2012). Consistent to all these studies was the notion that LGBTQ people could easily identify microaggressions they had experienced and that such encounters had tremendous impacts in their everyday lives.

With this nascent literature, I published my text *That's So Gay! Microaggressions and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Community* (2013)—the original text of this current revision—hopeful that it would inspire an entire area of research. By 2015, there were dozens of empirical studies on heterosexist and transphobic microaggressions (Nadal et al., 2016), and a special issue on anti-LGBTQ microaggressions was published in the *Journal of Homosexuality* (Nadal, 2019a). Newer studies on LGBTQ microaggressions focus on more nuanced experiences and intersectional identities, including LGBTQ people of various religious backgrounds (Lomash et al., 2019), LGBTQ college students (Winberg et al., 2019), and LGBTQ youth (Munro et al., 2019). Further, multiple scales have been created to attempt to quantitatively measure microaggressive incidents and assess their relationships with multiple psychosocial outcomes (Fisher et al., 2019; Nadal, 2019b; Resnick & Galupo, 2019). A decade after the original taxonomy presented in 2010, research supports that anti-LGBTQ microaggressions are pervasive and can result in many negative outcomes and disparities for LGBTQ people—ranging from depression to substance use issues to body image issues.

WHAT THIS BOOK COVERS, WHAT YOU WILL GET FROM IT, AND WHOM IT IS FOR

The purpose of this book is to highlight the microaggressions that LGBTQ people face on an everyday basis and to examine the impacts that such experiences have on mental health. Building off the first edition of *That's So Gay* (originally published in 2013), it felt necessary to address all that has happened within and toward LGBTQ communities in the past 10 years. When the book was first published, the concept of microaggressions was still fairly new—especially in the context of anti-LGBTQ discrimination. Overt heterosexism and transphobia were still quite common and pervasive—

particularly in the media, in school systems, and other institutions. Back then, demonstrating pro-LGBTQ stances often came with a cost; for example, if politicians or celebrities vocalized LGBTQ-affirming views, they were often deemed queer or trans themselves, were questioned on their own morality, and even lost popularity (and sometimes elections). Nowadays, the majority of the country is more in support of LGBTQ rights than against it—which generally might mean less heterosexism or transphobia but may also mean more nuanced microaggressions directed toward LGBTQ people. Thus, writing and revising this book also meant an opportunity to guide people in navigating and addressing microaggressions, which hopefully could be helpful in their everyday lives.

In this book, the topics covered in each chapter are similar to those in the first edition. However, each chapter has been revised significantly, with new research, more relevant examples, and even updated language to replace dated terminology from a decade prior. In Chapter 1, I review the historical currents of acceptance and rejection of LGBTQ people in society and trace the research literature on the psychological effects of discrimination on LGBTQ people and other historically marginalized groups. In Chapter 2, I comb through a finer level of race, gender, and LGBTQ research to reveal the taxonomy of microaggressions that I use as a lens to focus the research review and examples in subsequent chapters. In Chapters 3, 4, and 5, I provide an overview of the current theoretical and empirical literature involving microaggressions toward various LGBTQ people and subgroups. Chapter 3 is focused on microaggressions targeting queer, lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, and other nonheterosexual people, and Chapter 4 focuses on microaggressions targeting transgender, **gender nonconforming**, and nonbinary people. Chapters 5 through 7 explore how intersectional identities influence microaggressions faced by LGBTQ people of color, LGBTQ people with disabilities, LGBTQ older adults, LGBTQ people of diverse sizes, LGBTQ people of religious and nonreligious communities, and LGBTQ youth. Finally, in Chapters 8 and 9, I offer practical guidance on how to identify and deal with microaggressions as they occur, discussing implications for policy, clinical practice, and more.

Vignettes are presented throughout the text; they describe microaggressions that may be conscious (i.e., the perpetrator may be conscious of their actions but might not recognize any negative consequences), unconscious (i.e., the perpetrator may be completely oblivious to their statements or behaviors), intentional (i.e., the perpetrator may have been purposeful in hurting or offending another but may rationalize their actions or deny the behavior as problematic), and unintentional (i.e., the perpetrator did not mean to hurt or offend another person). Most examples of microaggressions involve heterosexist or transphobic biases but may also illustrate how other identities and

situational contexts may affect how such microaggressions are perceived or handled.

For people who have been targeted by microaggressions firsthand, I hope this book can be validating—demonstrating situations encountered in their own lives, while normalizing their reactions. For individuals who have committed microaggressions (consciously, intentionally, or not), it may be difficult to recognize that their behaviors may have had a negative effect on others. I hope this book can highlight how these actions may hurt others, so readers can become more aware of their own biases, challenge themselves to change behaviors that negatively affect others, and educate and confront others about microaggressions to prevent future traumas for LGBTQ people and other groups.

Readers of all backgrounds can benefit from this book. First, it can serve as a resource for researchers who are interested in further understanding how microaggressions may influence LGBTQ people's everyday lives. Through the literature review, researchers can gain a sense of what empirical work has already been done, so that they can brainstorm future research questions to initiate or build upon. Furthermore, practitioners in the helping professions—such as psychotherapists, psychiatrists, social workers—can use the book to attain an understanding of how microaggressions negatively affect their clients' or patients' lives—potentially assisting them in building stronger therapeutic relationships and conceptualizing treatment plans that may be effective for them. Educators, trainers, and professors may use this book to educate their students, trainees, and colleagues about heterosexism, genderism, and microaggressions; meanwhile, managers, consultants, and company presidents may find this book to be a helpful source for understanding the types of dynamics that may affect their work environments.

The book can also be extremely useful to laypeople of all professional and educational backgrounds. I bold key terms and include a glossary in every chapter as a way of educating readers about the varied terminology currently used about, among, or by LGBTQ people. Perhaps people who have a friend or family member who has just “come out of the closet” can find this text beneficial in gaining some basic knowledge about LGBTQ experiences while learning about the various elements that either strengthen or hurt a relationship. Moreover, in addition to the vignettes, I include anecdotal examples from the media, qualitative research, and nonfiction narratives. In doing so, I hope that people will see how microaggressions may manifest in every element of life and affect the spectrum of LGBTQ-identified people.

I include discussion questions throughout each chapter as a way for readers to gain some insight into their own beliefs, opinions, or biases. Because personal attitudes, values, and worldviews may have an impact on the ways that people interact with others, it is important to critically reflect about our impact on others. It may be helpful for readers to examine these discussion questions on their own first, before discussing them with peers. For example, perhaps readers can journal about some of their responses to these questions independently before engaging in discussions with classmates or colleagues. Educators and instructors may use these discussion questions as a way of eliciting thought-provoking insights from their students and allow honest dialogues to occur. As with any discussion, facilitators must assess participants' sense of personal safety and willingness to share in a public setting. For instance, emotionally provocative questions can be reserved for groups with established trust and rapport. Finally, because being an effective clinician means developing and maintaining self-awareness of how one's biases and worldviews may affect work with clients, psychologists and other mental health practitioners may use these questions to assist in exploring countertransferential issues and other emotional processes that may impede their efforts to be culturally effective.

FIGURE 2. An Interracial Gay Couple Laughing and Lounging at Home



Note. Photo courtesy of Ketut Subiyanto.

Reflecting on the Opening Vignettes

Think back to the vignettes about Jonathan, Stephanie and Debbie, and Agnes. Why did they feel hurt? In the first vignette, Jonathan is distressed about his coworkers' subtle heterosexism, especially their heterosexist language. When people say: "That's so gay," they may not necessarily be thinking about gay people, but may have just become accustomed to equating "gay" with "bad" or "weird." And when his coworkers assume that Jonathan is heterosexual, they may not be conscious or intentional in conveying their views of heterosexuality as the norm. However, their actions indirectly communicate their biases. While Jonathan appears to have a strong support network outside of work, he may not want to bother them about work problems, which may result in internalized feelings. If Jonathan does choose to confront his coworkers, he may worry about putting his job at risk or creating a tense and hostile work environment that would worsen the current situation. His situation is exemplary of the many difficult decisions LGBTQ people make when they face workplace microaggressions.

The vignette of Stephanie and Debbie demonstrates the kinds of microaggressions that can occur in an instant. When Stephanie introduces Debbie to her former classmate, Tom, two microaggressions occur sequentially. First, he assumes that she is a lesbian and does so in a way that makes Stephanie feel like she must justify her bisexual identity. Second, Tom objectifies both women and demonstrates his misogynistic views by presuming that they would want to engage in a "three-way" with him. In these types of quick microaggressions, both Stephanie and Debbie must decide immediately how to react. They can choose to angrily vocalize their disgust to Tom, or they can choose to smile or ignore the interaction. In this case, the couple chose to be polite and nonconfrontational (albeit rolling their eyes in disapproval). Perhaps they believed that this passive-aggressive behavior would be enough for him to take the hint that they were not pleased with his comment, or perhaps they just wanted the interaction to be over so that they could continue to have a pleasant evening.

In the third vignette, Agnes's driver's license does not match her current gender presentation, resulting in the security guard giving her trouble and asking an invasive question. He is rude throughout the interaction, laughing and smiling at her in a condescending and disparaging way. As do Stephanie and Debbie, Agnes chooses to remain as calm as possible, primarily because she knows that she needs to cooperate with him to arrive at her appointment on time. However, perhaps she begins to wonder whether this is the type of institution that she would want to attend; perhaps other people on campus would be disrespectful toward her and would discriminate toward transgender people in general.

In all three vignettes, the perpetrators of the microaggressions may have no idea that they committed a microaggression. Jonathan's coworkers who make heterosexist and **heteronormative** comments may not recognize that their actions and statements convey their belief that heterosexuality is the norm, whereas LGBTQ people and experiences are abnormal. If they were to be confronted regarding their behavior, they might simply say that they ask everyone about their relationships and that phrases such as "That's so gay" are harmless because they aren't meant to disparage gay people. Stephanie's old classmate, Tom, may not recognize his comment was offensive and declare, "I was just joking." Perhaps Tom genuinely thought he was being funny and did not really expect that the two women would take him up on his offer. Tom might also assert that his comment was complimentary because his intention was to flatter two women who he thought were attractive. It is also conceivable that Tom could react with hostility and tell the two women that they were overreacting or needed to stop being "angry lesbians"—both which are common retaliations for lesbian, bisexual, or queer women who confront their perpetrators.

Similarly, the security guard in Agnes's case may simply be unaware of the way he treated her. He might also say that he was "just joking," or that he was simply following standard university procedures because her driver's license photo did not correspond to her physical appearance. On the other hand, perhaps he is aware of his transphobic attitudes and biases and mistreated Agnes intentionally. If this were the case, then perhaps the microaggression was blatant, conscious, and deliberate. However, because Agnes does not know the security guard's exact intention, she simply walks away with a spectrum of feelings—not knowing whether she handled the situation correctly or whether she should take further action. Perhaps if the guard had simply refused to let her into the building and explicitly told her it was because of her gender presentation, she would be better able to label his comments as overt discrimination. If that were the case, she might then report it to someone from the university or seek other appropriate measures. Instead, she leaves feeling confused and agitated, among other emotions.

Furthermore, the vignette of Agnes reflects a common experience for transgender people, particularly for those who have more difficulty in **passing** (i.e., the ability to be regarded as a member of the sex or gender with which one identifies). Many trans or nonbinary people who do not undergo hormonal treatments or gender-affirmation medical procedures may maintain physical appearances that match their sex assigned at birth (hence not matching the gender they feel internally and psychologically). Even when some trans or nonbinary people do undergo hormone or medical treatments, they might still not

fully “pass” sometimes referred to as living in **stealth**, (and experience discrimination accordingly). On the contrary, some trans people who transition and now “pass” may still encounter microaggressions because people may not know of their trans identity. For instance, if someone who identifies as a transgender man (i.e., assigned female at birth), underwent surgery and is taking hormones, he may be treated as any cisgender (i.e., nontransgender) man would; as a result, perhaps people may make transphobic or heterosexist remarks to him or around him. So, although not directed at him, these could still be considered microaggressions.

Across all three scenarios, the perpetrators of the microaggressions (Jonathan’s coworkers, Tom, and the security guard) are not inherently bad people. Rather, they are people who have been socialized to develop heterosexist and cissexist biases. In fact, I believe they can potentially learn to become more LGBTQ-affirming people, if they were given opportunities to learn and reflect. So, whether readers of this text find themselves as targets or well-intentioned people who hurt others without knowing, it is my hope that the research-based data in this book will help everyone feel validated and understood. I also sincerely hope that all readers might learn new LGBTQ affirming tools that can help identify practical steps to furthering equities for all people.

GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

bisexual A sexual orientation that is based on having sexual attractions toward more than one gender and the identity that is developed based on these attractions.

cisgender A term used to describe someone who identifies with their sex assigned at birth; someone who is not transgender. The term **cis** is commonly used as a shortened form of cisgender.

cissexism The negative attitudes, biases, and beliefs perpetuated across systems and held about transgender or nonbinary people, as well as the discrimination that occurs as a result.

gaslighting The process of manipulating others to question their own realities and perceptions—often relating to dynamics involving power, privilege, and historically marginalized identities.

gay A sexual orientation that is based on having sexual attractions toward one’s own gender and the identity that is developed based on these attractions. The term is often reserved for gay men; however, many women also identify as gay.

gender A socially constructed category that is used to classify people, based on their sex assigned at birth, adherence to masculinity or femininity, or other personality traits, behaviors, expressions, or identities.

genderism The ideology that reinforces the negative evaluation of gender nonconformity or the incongruence between sex and gender.

gender nonconforming The trait or identity of not adhering to gender role expectations.

heteronormative Assuming heterosexuality as the norm; assuming that individuals would engage in traditional heterosexual lifestyles, behaviors, and relationships.

heterosexism The negative attitudes, biases, and beliefs perpetuated across systems held about queer, gay, lesbian, and bisexual people, as well as the discrimination that occurs as a result.

lesbian A woman whose sexual orientation is based on sexual attractions toward her own gender and the identity that develops because of these attractions.

LGBTQ An acronym used as an umbrella term to describe people who do identify with diverse sexual orientation and gender identities—typically referring to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer or questioning people, but also inclusive of other identities such as asexual, nonbinary, genderqueer, pansexual, demisexual, and others. Sometimes a plus sign is used (LGBTQ+) to be more inclusive of other identities.

microaggressions Verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative slights and insults toward members of oppressed groups.

microassaults The use of explicit derogations, either verbally or nonverbally, such as name-calling, avoidant behavior, or discriminatory actions toward the intended victim.

microinsults Verbal or nonverbal communications that convey rudeness and insensitivity and demean a person's heritage or identity.

microinvalidations Communications that are often unconscious and exclude, negate, or nullify the realities of individuals of oppressed groups.

minoritized A term used to describe people of historically oppressed groups. While “minority” was once a commonly used term, it does not accurately describe groups that are not numerical minorities; further, many oppose

the term because it can convey a lower status. Thus, “minoritized” is used to signify that certain people are treated as subordinate groups, due to oppression.

misgender To refer to someone—especially someone who is of trans or nonbinary experience—with pronouns that they do not use to identify themselves.

nonbinary (or non-binary) A term used to describe someone who does not subscribe to gender binaries (i.e., they do not identify exclusively as women or men). Nonbinary can also be used as an umbrella term for other gender identities that do not conform to gender binaries (e.g., genderqueer, agender, bigender, gender fluid, *māhū*, two-spirited, or gender nonconforming).

passing The ability to be perceived as a member of a historically privileged group; for trans people, it is the ability to be seen as the gender that someone identifies with or as agender in which they may avoid violence or discrimination.

queer An umbrella term used to identify individuals who are not heterosexual. While initially an antigay epithet, the word has been reclaimed as an empowering identity.

racism The negative attitudes, biases, and beliefs perpetuated across systems and held by people about nonwhite people (e.g., Black, Indigenous, Asian, or Pacific Islander people), as well as the discrimination that occurs as a result.

sexism The negative attitudes, biases, and beliefs perpetuated across systems and held about women or femme-identified people, as well as the discrimination that occurs as a result.

stealth The experience of transgender people not being perceived as transgender; the experience of a transgender person being perceived and treated as a cisgender person of their gender identity.

trans A shortened version of the word “transgender,” often used as an umbrella term for people of transgender experience (e.g., nonbinary people, genderqueer people).

transgender An umbrella term that can be used to refer to anyone for whom the sex they were assigned at birth is an incomplete or incorrect description of themselves.