



Navigating Contentious Conversations (Part 2): How to Make Connections and Address Behaviors through Difficult Discussions

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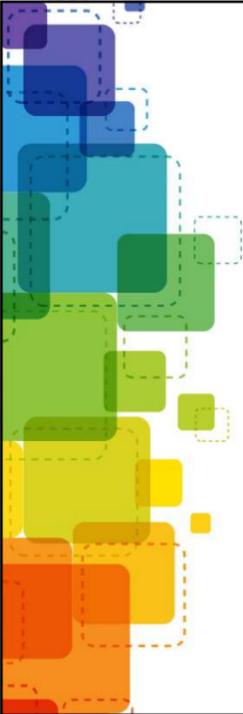


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Navigating Contentious Conversations (Part 2): How to Make Connections and Address Behaviors through Difficult Discussions

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About this Series

- 7-part educational series on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.
- Monthly live webinars September through Spring 2022.
- Featuring real-world scenarios, best practices, and actionable steps pharmacists and others can use in their practices to recognize and combat bias and disparities in care.
- Invite your team! Activities are accessible to all; ASHP membership is not required.

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What are our goals? *(the “what”)*

Have your
handout
ready!

By engaging in this webinar, participants should be able to:

- Describe how micro- and macro-assaults, insults, and invalidations can influence our relationships and performance
- Evaluate approaches to identify disruptive behaviors, enhance your courage, and support inclusive environments
- Apply strategies to productively acknowledge and address comments through difficult conversations

**What is most important to you?
What do YOU want to learn?**

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Which goal is MOST important to you?

- A** Goal 1: Describe how micro- and macro-assaults, insults, and invalidations can influence our relationships and performance
- B** Goal 2: Evaluate approaches to identify disruptive behaviors, enhance your courage, and support inclusive environments
- C** Goal 3: Apply strategies to productively acknowledge and address comments through difficult conversations
- D** I'm not sure
- E** All of the them

What is our purpose? *(the “so what”)*

- Inclusive conversations can foster **psychologically safe environments** and promote a greater **sense of belonging**
- Addressing inappropriate behaviors or comments can be **uncomfortable** and **often avoided**
- **Practicing optimal strategies** to engage in contentious conversations can increase the probability of behavioral change

What are the expectations? (the “say what?!”)

- Who is this session (not) for?
- What are our assumptions?
- What should you (not) expect from this session?
- What are (in)*appropriate* behaviors during this session?

Questions, concerns, or comments?

What is your perspective?

- What does “**transforming awareness to action**” mean to you?
- What makes **contentious conversations** so difficult?
- What are your **concerns** about how to conduct these conversations?
- Where are you hoping to **improve** or **grow**?

Which term(s) look unfamiliar? (Select all that apply)

- A** Microaggression
- B** Microinsult, microassault, microinvalidation
- C** Subtle acts of exclusion
- D** Attributional ambiguity
- E** Internalized oppression / marginalization

What is a microaggression?

Microaggressions are commonplace verbal or behavioral indignities, whether intentional or not, which can communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative impressions or beliefs

Microinsult: unintentionally discriminatory comment or action

Microassault: intentionally behave in discriminatory way while not intending to be offensive

Microinvalidation: comment undermines the experiences of a certain group of people

There can be ambiguity, confusion, and often they are not “micro”

What are subtle acts of exclusion?

Subtle acts of exclusion (SAE) are small things people say and do, perhaps unintentionally, that have the effect of excluding others based on their marginalized dimensions of identity

They often occur in unlikely places
– complimenting, questioning, comforting, and joking

SAEs indicate...

You are invisible
You are inadequate
You are not an individual
You do not belong
You are not normal
You are a curiosity
You are a threat
You are a burden

What are broad examples of SAE?

- **Making assumptions** about someone based on their identities
- Considering certain **people to be of more value** based on their identities
- Using **outdated** and **offensive terminology**
- **Underrepresentation of differences** in group settings and media
- **Unwillingness to correct yourself** after being made aware of an issue

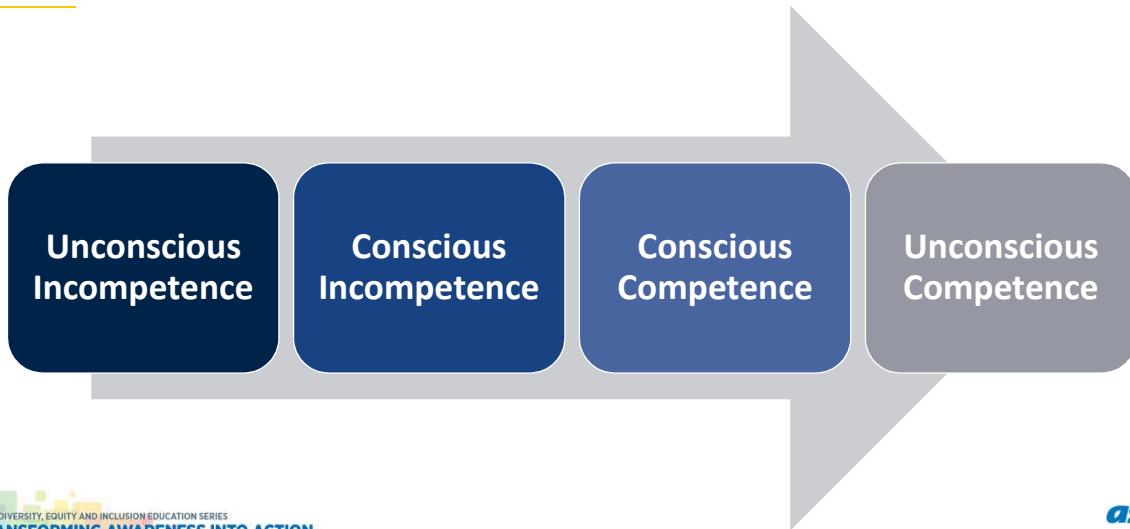
What is your experience with SAE? (Select all that apply)

- A** I have observed an SAE
- B** I have experienced / been the subject of an SAE
- C** I have initiated an SAE
- D** I have interrupted an SAE
- E** I am not sure

What is an example from your experience?

- What is a time where you said something that hurt another person or witnessed someone else say or do something offensive?
- What was the **intent**? Was it purposeful or accidental?
- What was the **impact**? How did you / they feel in the experience?
- How did you / they **respond**? What would you have changed?

What is the desired journey?



What makes it difficult?

- Unaware of **what qualifies** as a SAE, and it can change over time
- **Attributional ambiguity** and **internalized oppression** can confuse us
- Knowing **what, when, and how** to address or speak about the issue
- Fear of the **reaction** and/or **consequences** of speaking up
- Organizational culture may prohibit **accountability**

What if I am “called out” / the initiator?

It is December and you conclude a patient interaction asking, “What are your Christmas plans?”

They look uncomfortable and share they do not celebrate Christmas. They add that you should not assume patient beliefs as they leave.

- What was the SAE communicating?
- What was the intent and impact?
- How did you feel? How did they feel?
- How might you respond to the “call out” about your comment?
- What contextual factors may influence your response in this case?

What if I am “called out” / the initiator?

- Pause for **self-compassion** and check your openness
- **Acknowledge** the response with **gratitude**
- Shift from defensiveness to **curiosity, empathy, and understanding**
- Request a **time to discuss** if unable to commit to conversation
- **Follow up** with the individual with insights and close the loop

How to empathize with others?

Try using the **SWITCH IT** Technique

- How would you feel if...

Someone says, “thank you, ma’am” and you identify as male

Someone calls you “Mike” and you’ve said you go by “Michael”

Someone assumes you’re gay when you identify as straight

Someone says “Happy Hanukah” to you and you’re Christian

What are more religion SAE?

- Reinforcing religious stereotypes (e.g., being cheap or terrorists)
- Assuming religious beliefs (e.g., “Merry Christmas”, asking their church)
- Placing less value on non-Christian holidays (e.g., no time off)
- Not supporting non-Christian traditions (e.g., fasting, prayer space, hijabs)
- Integrating scripture / Biblical sayings (e.g., “blessed”, prayer, grace, etc.)

How do I know when to speak?

One of your work colleagues has a physical disability and uses a wheelchair. They were discussing their weekend plans, including kayaking and other outdoor activities. Another colleague states, “The way you have overcome your disability is so inspiring”.

- What was the SAE communicating?
- What was the intent and impact?
- How did you feel? How did they feel?
- How do you determine when or how you will speak about the comment?
- What contextual factors may influence your response in this case?

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What to consider BEFORE speaking?

- ☐ What is my **relationship** with the individual(s)?
- ☐ How much **time** can we dedicate to discussion?
- ☐ How much **privacy** is there in this space?
- ☐ What are my **intentions**? (compassion v. ego)
- ☐ What is my current **emotional state**?

Why
Am
I
Talking

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What are more ability & age SAE?

- Making jokes / minimizing health conditions (e.g., I'm so depressed)
- Diminishing effort expected (e.g., it's so easy, it's not that hard)
- Deferring to a caregiver or translator for communication
- Perpetuating generational labels (e.g., OK Boomer, Millennials)
- Using suboptimal terms (e.g., cute - older adults, inspirational - disability)

How do I “call people in”?

You are at a meeting for a new IPE leadership team you joined. The team is all male pharmacists except for one female pharmacist. At the beginning someone asks her to take notes. Then you notice others interrupting her while she speaks several times.

- **What was the SAE communicating?**
- **What was the intent and impact?**
- **How did you feel? How did they feel?**
- **What contextual factors may influence your response in this case?**
- **How might you “call someone in” to discuss the observations?**

How do I “call people in”?

- Request to **pause** the moment (e.g., “ouch”, “one moment”, “hold on”)
- Assume and **explicate good intent** (e.g., “I know you didn’t mean...”)
- Explain the **behavior** and the **impact on you** (e.g., “I feel...”)
- **Ask** if a good time to discuss (e.g., “Can we think about this together?”)
- Be **patient**, **listen** for understanding, and **expect progress**

How can I approach (most) conversations?

- Encourage **others to speak first** (especially if you’re in a power)
- Listen more than you talk (try, “**tell me more**”)
- Provide **acknowledgment, support, and/or affirmations**
- **Mirror terms** used by others (do not assume – ask what to use)
- Ask **clarifying questions** that are *necessary* with *genuine* interest

What are more gender & sexuality SAE?

- Assuming gender or orientation (e.g., husband/wife, ma'am/sir)
- Refusing to use appropriate pronouns (e.g., grammar concerns with they)
- Assuming role inferiority (e.g., look too young, female nurse v. doctor)
- Reinforcing gender norms (e.g., women w/ children are not committed)
- Using outdated terms (e.g., bossy – women, “that’s so gay”)

How do I approach a negative reaction?

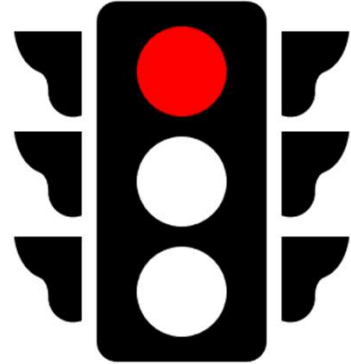
After a presentation delivered by a person of color, someone discusses how “articulate” they were. You share that the term is often considered a SAE for people of color.

They respond, “Are you calling me a racist? I don’t even see color--how rude of you!”

- **What was the SAE communicating?**
- **What was the intent and impact?**
- **How did you feel? How did they feel?**
- **What contextual factors may influence your response in this case?**
- **How might you respond to their reaction about your comment?**

How do I approach defensiveness?

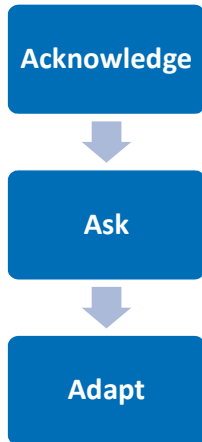
- Remain **calm** and use **neutral tone / language**
- Move to a **private area**, if possible
- **Clarify** your intentions and **reframe** discussion
- Set **boundaries** and focus on **thoughts**
- Allow **silence, time**, and personal **space**



What are more race & ethnicity SAE?

- Assuming race, ethnicity, nationality, or language ability
- Questioning a person's origin (e.g., where are you really from)
- Mistreating someone's name (e.g., not trying to get it right or laughing)
- Diminishing someone's identity (e.g., I don't see you as Black)
- Cultural appropriation of language, behaviors, or experiences

How to respond to EXPLICIT acts?



Acknowledge

Clearly communicate awareness, convey sincere interest, & involve the learner in seeking a solution

Ask

Gather information through humble inquiry, pay attention to non/verbal responses

Adapt

Agree on a plan for moving forward & commit to ongoing dialogue

How do I prepare for SAE?

- **Expect** SAE to happen—because they will
- Create and communicate a **shared norm** of behavioral expectations
- **Practice** speaking up, especially if you are a leader
- Establish and model a system of **accountability**
- Provide **training** and **support** to facilitate these conversations

How prepared do you feel?

- A** Not at all – I still need a lot of support
- B** A little – I have some more things to learn
- C** Somewhat – I know where to start
- D** Mostly – I have a great plan
- E** Completely – I have got this!

What are expected challenges?

- Knowing when to show up, speak out, and step back is a **balance**
- We can **feel uncomfortable** calling others into conversations
- Others may be **defensive or offended** when behavior is addressed
- **Organizational culture** requires a shift to sustain change
- Optimal **practices can change** and be context-specific

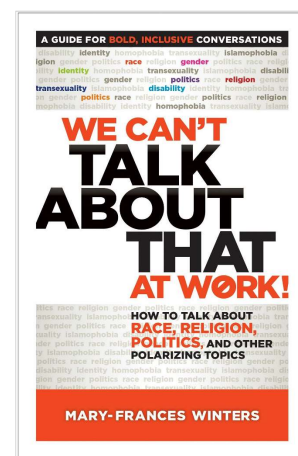
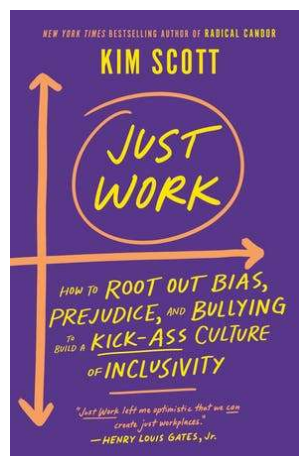
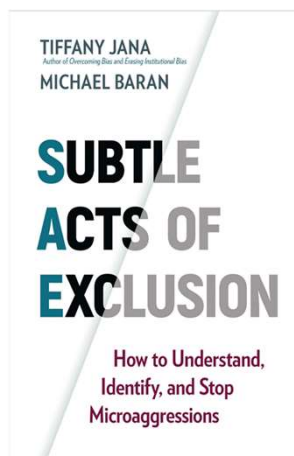
What are my next steps? (the “now what”)

- What is one thing I can enact in my practice right now?
- What is one thing I can enact in the future?
- What is my motivation to change? Why does it matter?
- When will I check in with myself on my progress?
- How will I know if I am successful? How can I measure this change?
- What additional support will I need? Who can hold me accountable?

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Where can I learn more?



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What are the key takeaways?

- When you perform a subtle act of exclusion, **be open, grateful, and listen** to those who express their concerns
- When you witness a subtle act of exclusion, **call others into the conversation** by focusing on the behavior and impact
- Promote an inclusive culture through **intentional acts of inclusion and setting expectations** among teams and the organization

CONTENTIOUS CONVERSATIONS – PART TWO

Goals

What do you hope to learn during this session? Please rank the goals from 1 (*most important to me*) to 3 (*least important to me*).

I hope / expect this session will help me to...

- _____ 1. Describe how micro- and macro-assaults, insults, and invalidations can influence relationships and performance.
- _____ 2. Evaluate approaches to identify disruptive behaviors, enhance your courage, support inclusive environments.
- _____ 3. Apply strategies to productively acknowledge and address comments through difficult conversations.

What question(s) would you like addressed during this session?

What is your reason for attending?

Reflection

What does it mean?	What makes it difficult?	What are your concerns?	Where are you hoping to grow?

Prior Knowledge

Below is a list of key terms and concepts that may be of use in this session. Place an "X" next to words you DO NOT know.

Microaggression

Microinsult

Microassault

Microinvalidation

Subtle acts of exclusion

Attributional ambiguity

Internalized oppression / marginalization

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Case Scenarios

Consider the following situations—reflect on how you may approach each and the influencing factors.

SCENARIO	REFLECTION & NOTES	
<p>It is December and you conclude a patient interaction asking, “What are your Christmas plans?” They look uncomfortable and share they do not celebrate Christmas. They add that you should not assume patient beliefs as they leave.</p>	<p><i>What was the SAE communicating?</i> <i>What was the intent & impact?</i> <i>How did you/they feel?</i> <i>How might you respond to the “call out”?</i> <i>What contextual factors may influence your response?</i></p>	
<p>One of your work colleagues has a physical disability and uses a wheelchair. They were discussing their weekend plans, including kayaking and other outdoor activities. Another colleague states, “The way you have overcome your disability is so inspiring”.</p>	<p><i>What was the SAE communicating?</i> <i>What was the intent & impact?</i> <i>How did you/they feel?</i> <i>How do you determine when or how to speak?</i> <i>What contextual factors may influence your response?</i></p>	
<p>You are at a meeting for a new IPE leadership team you joined. The team is all male pharmacists except for one female pharmacist. At the beginning someone asks her to take notes. Then you notice others interrupting her while she speaks several times.</p>	<p><i>What was the SAE communicating?</i> <i>What was the intent & impact?</i> <i>How did you/they feel?</i> <i>What contextual factors may influence your response?</i> <i>How might you call someone in?</i></p>	
<p>After a presentation delivered by a person of color, someone discusses how “articulate” they were. You share that the term is often considered a SAE for people of color. They respond, “Are you calling me a racist? I don’t even see color-- how rude of you!”</p>	<p><i>What was the SAE communicating?</i> <i>What was the intent & impact?</i> <i>How did you/they feel?</i> <i>What contextual factors may influence your response?</i> <i>How might you respond to their reaction?</i></p>	

Creating a Plan

What is ONE thing
you can enact
right now?

How will you know if
you are
successful?

What is ONE thing
you want to enact
in the future?

How can you
measure this
change?

What is your
motivation to
change? Why?

What additional
support will you
need?

When will you check in
with yourself on
your progress?

Who can hold you
accountable?

Additional Notes

Resources

Brown J. *How to be an inclusive leader* (2019)

Fuller P, Murphy M, Chow A. *The leader's guide to unconscious bias* (2020)

Jana T, Baran M. *Subtle acts of exclusion* (2020)

Scott K. *Just work* (2021)

Winters MF. *We can't talk about that at work* (2017)

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