4 SMART WAYS
To Disarm Racial Microaggressions
THE NEW STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

- Make the “Invisible” Visible
- Disarm the Microaggression/Macroaggression
- Educate the Offender
- Seek External Intervention

Microintervention can contribute to MACRO change. IT STARTS WITH YOU!

1. African American male enters an elevator occupied by a White heterosexual couple. The woman appears anxious, moves to the other side of her partner, and clutches her purse tightly.
   
   **Meta-communication:** Black men are dangerous, potentially criminals, or up to no good.

   - Bring the micro-macroaggression to the forefront of the person’s awareness.
   - When allies or bystanders intervene, reassures targets they are not “crazy” and that their experiences are valid.
   - Indicate to the perpetrator that they have behaved or said something offensive to you or others.
   - Force the perpetrator to consider the impact and meaning of what was said/done or, in the case of the bystander, what was not said/done.

   - **“Relax, I’m not dangerous.”**
   - **“Don’t worry, John is a good person.”**
   - **“You assume I am dangerous because of the way I look.”**
   - **“I might be Black, but that does not make me dangerous.”**
   - **“Robberies and crimes are committed by people of all races and backgrounds.”**
   - **“Do you realize what you just did when I walked in?”**

2. Student in a chemistry class makes the following comment about an Arab American student: “Maybe she should not be learning about making bombs and stuff.”
   
   **Meta-communication:** All Arab Americans are potential terrorists.

   - “I know you didn’t mean this but that comment you made was demeaning to Maryam because not all Arab Americans are a threat to national security.”
   - “I know you really care about representing everyone on campus and being a good student government leader but saying in this way really undermines your intentions to be inclusive.”
   - “That is a negative stereotype of Arab Americans. Did you know Maryam also aspires to be a doctor just like you? You should ask her; you actually have a lot in common.”

   - Ask to speak to a manager or someone who is in authority.
   - Report the incident in person or use anonymous online portals such as the Southern Poverty Law Center or use a hashtag on social media to make your experience go viral.

   Engage in a one-on-one dialogue with the perpetrator to indicate how and why what they have said is offensive to you or others.

   Facilitate a possibly more enlightening conversation and exploration of the perpetrator’s biases.

   Encourage the perpetrator to explore the origins of their beliefs and attitudes toward targets.

   Partake in regular self-care to maintain psychological and physical wellness.

   Check in with self and others to ensure optimal levels of functioning.

“Be the change you wish to see in the world.” - Mahatma Gandhi