

FLIP *the* script

RACE & ETHNICITY

Even with the best intentions, we can say or do things that are offensive and hurtful. Getting past these missteps means recognizing that our words matter. This means taking action by using words that create inclusive environments where people feel both that they are valued and that they belong.¹

IMPACT

Ignoring differences can stifle trust, authentic communication, and your ability to connect with someone who is different from you in some way.

"WE DON'T SEE COLOR— ONLY PEOPLE."

RESEARCH SAYS

It is not racist to see a person's race or ethnicity—it is in fact a natural tendency. Avoiding conversations about race to maintain neutrality will not create an ideal work environment for *all* employees.²

WHAT TO DO INSTEAD

Ask your colleagues who have a different racial, ethnic, or cultural background than yours if they feel your workplace honors their identity and experiences.

IMPACT

Implies that you had lower expectations, possibly because of the person's race or ethnicity.

"YOU ARE SO ARTICULATE."

RESEARCH SAYS

This reinforces the stereotype that people of color and ethnic minorities are less competent than their white counterparts, and that those who are successful are an "exception to the rule."³

WHAT TO DO INSTEAD

Provide concrete examples of why and how you felt the individual excelled. For example, *"Your presentation was very motivating, and it aligned with our business goals very well."*

IMPACT

Insinuates that racial or ethnic minorities are "outsiders" who can't speak English and don't really belong where they live or work.

"SHE SPEAKS ENGLISH WELL."

RESEARCH SAYS

People of all races and ethnicities can speak English well.⁴

WHAT TO DO INSTEAD

Unless the person has previously struggled with the English language and has made vast improvements, it is better to congratulate your peer on the content of their work.

IMPACT

Shutting down authentic conversations disempowers and shames people by diminishing their experiences, feelings, and sense of worth.

RESEARCH SAYS

Minimizing another person's experiences can raise tensions, lead to defensiveness, and reinforce exclusion.⁵

"YOU ARE OVERLY SENSITIVE."

WHAT TO DO INSTEAD

Step into another person's shoes and learn more about their experiences. For example, "I recognize that this is important to you; I'd like to understand more..."

IMPACT

Questioning the qualifications of other colleagues can make them feel that they must always "prove" themselves worthy to be in their role.

RESEARCH SAYS

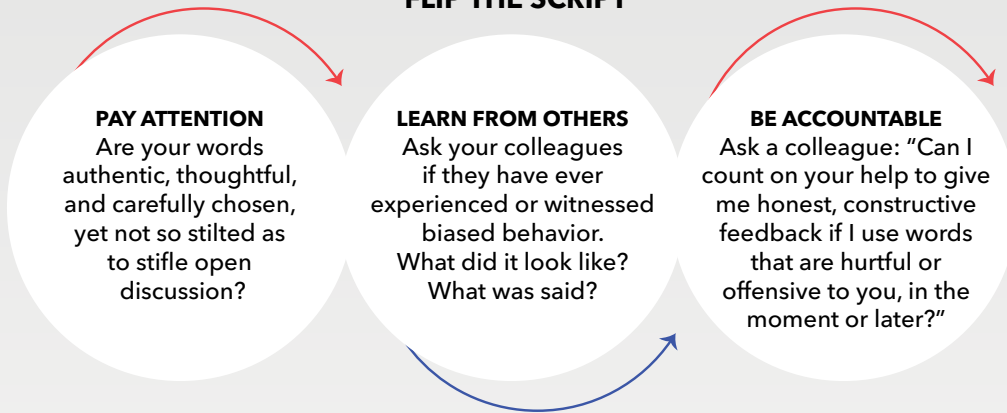
Some people assume that people of color have benefitted from special treatment through affirmative action or quota systems and are therefore not qualified.⁶

"SO, HOW DID YOU GET THIS NEW POSITION?"

WHAT TO DO INSTEAD

Congratulate your colleague on the new position. Ask questions such as, "What energizes you about your new role? How can I support your transition? How can we team up to advance our company's mission?"

FLIP THE SCRIPT



SOURCES

1. Catalyst, *Engaging in Conversations About Gender, Race, and Ethnicity in the Workplace* (Catalyst, 2016).
2. Derald Wing Sue, Christina M. Capodilupo, Gina C. Torino, Jennifer M. Bucceri, Aisha M. B. Holder, Kevin L. Nadal, and Marta Esquilin, "Racial Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Implications for Clinical Practice," *American Psychologist* (May-June 2007): p. 271-286; Michael I. Norton and Evan P. Apfelbaum, "The Costs of Racial 'Color Blindness,'" *Harvard Business Review*, vol. 91, no. 7/8 (July-August, 2013): p. 22; Catalyst, *Engaging in Conversations About Gender, Race, and Ethnicity in the Workplace* (Catalyst, 2016).
3. Derald Wing Sue, "Microaggressions: More Than Just Race," *Psychology Today*, November 2010.
4. Derald Wing Sue, Jennifer Bucceri, Annie I. Lin, Kevin L. Nadal, and Gina C. Torino, "Racial Microaggressions and the Asian American Experience," *Culture Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, vol. 13 no. 1 (2007): p. 72-81; Shirin Hakimzadeh and D'Vera Cohn, *English Usage Among Hispanics in the United States* (Pew Research Center, 2007); Benjamin Herscovitch, "English is the Language of the Asian Century," *Australian Broadcasting Corporation*, September 12, 2012.
5. Catalyst, *Engaging in Conversations About Gender, Race, and Ethnicity in the Workplace* (Catalyst, 2016); Jean Kantambu Latting and V. Jean Ramsey, *Reframing Change: How to Deal with Workplace Dynamics, Influence Others, and Bring People Together to Initiate Positive Change* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2009).
6. Derald Wing Sue, Christina M. Capodilupo, Gina C. Torino, Jennifer M. Bucceri, Aisha M. B. Holder, Kevin L. Nadal, and Marta Esquilin, "Racial Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Implications for Clinical Practice," *American Psychologist* (May-June 2007): p. 271-286.
7. Catalyst, *Engaging in Conversations About Gender, Race, and Ethnicity in the Workplace* (Catalyst, 2016).



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updated: 7 May 2018
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