

# COLLABORATIVE Practice Tips

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A monthly bulletin from the CP Cal Practice Excellence Committee

The Practice Excellence Committee is pleased to offer tips to help you increase your Collaborative cases and achieve *practice excellence*.

Please send us your comments and questions! Email us at [info@cpcal.com](mailto:info@cpcal.com)

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## HOW TO INTERRUPT THE IMPULSE TO COMMIT MICROAGGRESSION?

### Part III

Derived in part from notes from presentation by Lindsey Davis, PhD on 10/10/22

Hosted by Virtual Divorce California.

Catching ourselves is key when trying to change any behavior including committing microaggressions. Raising our awareness helps us prevent making

them ourselves and contributes to societal change.

**Here are 10 Tips to help raise awareness and create change:**

1. ACCEPT that you are a fish that has been swimming in these cultural waters and microaggressions will occur even when you do not want them to.
2. TAKE OWNERSHIP – Acknowledge responsibility so that you can make conscious choices about your own statements going forward.
3. INTROSPECTION – Explore your own biases? Where did your biases originate? Which groups, cultures and/or identities are unfamiliar to you? Which groups, cultures and/or identities cause a strong emotional response for you?
4. SELF-EDUCATION – Make the effort to understand microaggressions and why they are offensive. There are many academic resources: learn about cultural practices, raise you own awareness and stop perpetuating stereotypes. Rather than asking someone from a marginalized group to educate you, ask an expert or do some research.
5. SOLICIT EXTERNAL FEEDBACK - Ask permission to discuss sensitive issues with anyone who might be part of a marginalized group. Honor their interest or disinterest in having that discussion.
6. SELF-MONITOR to COUNTER IMPLICIT BIASES that ARISE WHEN YOU ARE ON AUTOPILOT – An implicit bias is a form of bias that occurs automatically and unintentionally, that nevertheless affects judgments, decisions, and behaviors. This can occur like a reflex when we are distracted or moving too fast and not paying attention to our thoughts and/or our words. Slow down, pay attention, and think before you speak or act.
7. PREPARE – If you have made a mistake, use consultants BEFORE going back to speak with your friend, colleague, client. It is not a good idea to try to repair a microaggression without information on the topic.
8. NOTE AND/OR READ OTHERS' RESPONSES – Be aware that if you are in a position of influence, privilege, and/or control, it is easy to steamroll over others. Note where there might be a pattern that suggests a systemic problem. Consider how your attitude and/or behavior might perpetuate that systemic problem versus being a conduit for change.
9. SOLICIT AND ACCEPT EXTERNAL FEEDBACK– Be proactive. Invite others to notice and give you feedback and thank them when they do. For example, how easily do we throw out labels, such as calling someone “crazy” or addressing a group by saying “you guys”. Labels generally can be problematic and harmful to someone who is in a marginalized group. Let people around you know what you are working on, let go of defensiveness,

and ongoing feedback can help to redirect offensive habits.

**10. WITNESSING AND/OR EXPERIENCING MICROAGGRESSIONS –** Microaggression tends to be public-facing behavior and it is tempting to ignore. However, not responding or addressing microaggression **is a choice** that maintains the status quo.

- Understand that some people may experience more ongoing pain in the course of their daily lives just by virtue of being part of a certain group.
- Avoidance of these issues actually increases anxiety and maintains anxiety about that issue.
- Leaning in to engage in conversation about the experience, impact and/or repair of microaggression decreases anxiety over time. While it might require tolerating some discomfort, it does get easier with awareness and practice.

**INTERVENTION generally involves two steps: SUPPORT and CHALLENGE:**

When you hear someone commit a micro aggression, remember that no action is still a choice and it perpetuates discriminatory messages. Two steps to consider when choosing to intervene:

- Support whoever needs support.
- Challenge the microaggression.

**How does one challenge a microaggression?**

**1. Make the “invisible” visible** – Just asking for clarification may be enough. Using a genuinely curious approach can raise awareness to the speaker.

**2. Disarm the Microaggression** – Create protocols for safety norms; clarify expectations; bring up reminders when the microaggression is repeated; redirect e.g., “a more appropriate term is....”

**3. Educate the Offender** – When a microaggression occurs, ask the speaker if they understand why their comment or action is hurtful or insulting? Explain how people might be impacted by the comment or action and offer facts to support your perspective. Be aware that some people, when stuck in a certain position, will not be convinced by facts.

**4. Seek External Reinforcement and/or Support** – Seek validation and/or support when needed or when your client is in need from sources including therapy, church, community, and/or support groups.

**5. Consider Reporting to Higher Authority** – There are expected principles

regarding respect and beneficence. Repeated offenses in some organizations and/or professions can be a violation of an ethics code. To continue perpetuating microaggression is to continue to knowingly do harm. Our aim is to do no harm and we cannot do this without self-education and self-monitoring.

### **From the PEC:**

#### Advantages of Going to CPCal Celebration from a Marketing Perspective

##### 1. Meet pros from all over the state.

Collaborative is not following regional boundaries any more! When you go, pay attention to which speakers resonated with you, focus on sitting with people you've never met at the meals, collect cards and follow up after the conference with a virtual "lunch." Be helpful! Ask what people need and work hard to get it for them if you can. Your goal is to add to your potential teammates in a constructive way and to be the first person others think of when they do want to make a regional referral.

##### 2. Learn to "talk the talk" of Collaborative

You don't have to re-invent the wheel when it comes to how to talk to the public and potential clients about the advantages of Collaborative. Listen carefully in every workshop for the tidbits of wisdom about how to overcome objections, dispel misconceptions, and present Collaborative to clients in positive and persuasive ways.

##### 3. Build your skills

Your best way to get more cases is to show up and do a fantastic job on every case you get. Those of us who have been in the field for awhile are familiar with some of the incredible advice of people like Sharon Ellison and Jacinta Gallant. It's part of our common language and all are working on developing those "easy to listen to but hard to put into practice" nuggets. If you haven't even heard them speak at all, you're missing out on an element of being in the Collaborative Community.

Yep. Expensive. Time-consuming. AND the very best thing you'll do for your Collaborative career this year.

See you there!

Beth



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