

# McCormack's Racial Equity Taskforce (M-RET) presents: Microaggressions and their impact

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# Agenda

Introduction to Microaggressions

Identifying the Problem

Reflection Exercise

Microaggressions on a Personal Level

Microaggressions on a Structural Level

Closing Thoughts

# Introduction

## MICROAGGRESSIONS

# Microaggressions defined

Microaggressions are defined as the everyday, subtle, intentional — and oftentimes unintentional — interactions or behaviors that communicate some sort of bias toward historically marginalized groups.

# Examples

"No, where are you really from?"

"So, like, what are you?"

A Black woman working in a hospital might be assumed to be a nurse, when in actuality she is a doctor.

# Identifying the Problem

PART 02

# Defining terms

01

## AFFINITY BIAS

a tendency to favor someone with whom we have affinity (ie., went to the same university, share much of the same social/professional network).

02

## ANTI-RACIST

someone who is supporting an antiracist policy through their actions or expressing antiracist ideas. This includes the expression or ideas that racial groups are equals and do not need developing, and supporting policies that reduce racial inequity.

03

## CO-LIBERATOR

one who believes that their liberation, their humanity is also dependent up on the destruction of racism and dismantling of white supremacy.

04

## DISCRIMINATION

unequal treatment of members of various groups based on race, gender, gender expression, gender identity, social class, sexual orientation, physical ability, disability status, religion, and other categories.

# Defining terms

05

## DISPARITY

difference in an outcome without an identified cause among groups of people.

06

## ETHNICITY

shared history, values, language, traditions that are sources of strength; these also can be “racialized”.

07

## INEQUITY

difference in an outcome that is avoidable, unfair, and unjust. Inequities are affected by social, economic, and environmental conditions.

08

## INSTITUTIONALIZED RACISM

policies and practices that perpetuate a cycle of racial inequity and are promoted (overtly, covertly, or subtly) by institutions (ie., schools, government, housing, or media).

# Defining terms

09

## INTERNALIZED

in a society where one group is politically, socially and economically dominant, members of stigmatized groups, who are bombarded with negative messages about their own abilities and intrinsic worth, may internalize those negative messages. It holds people back from achieving their fullest potential and reinforces the negative messages which, in turn, reinforces the oppressive systems.

10

## MICROAGGRESSION

the everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership.

11

## OPPRESSION

systematic subjugation of one social group by a more powerful social group for the social, economic, and political benefit of the more powerful social group.

12

## PREJUDICE

pre-judgment or unjustifiable, and usually negative, attitude of one type of individual or groups toward another group and its members. Such negative attitudes are typically based on unsupported generalizations (or stereotypes) that deny the right of individual members of certain groups to be recognized and treated as individuals with individual characteristics.



# Defining terms

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## RACE

race and races are social and political constructs, categories that society invents and manipulates when convenient. In reality our differences as human beings are dwarfed by what we have in common and have little or nothing to do with personality, intelligence, and morality.

14

## RACIALIZED

attributing 'race' (and its associated meanings) to a people or something – a status, or a practice, or an institution. Institutions that appear to be neutral can be racialized, shaped by previous racial practices and outcomes so that the institution perpetuates racial disparities, or makes them worse.

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## RACIAL JUSTICE

proactive reinforcement of policies, practices, attitudes, and actions, that produce equitable power, access, opportunities, treatment, impacts, and outcomes for all.

16

## RACISM

system of social structures that provides or denies access, safety, resources and power based on race categories and produces and reproduces race-based inequities.

# Defining terms

17

## SYSTEMS

an interlocking set of parts that together make a whole; an established way of doing something, such that things get done that way regularly and are assumed to be the 'normal' way things get done; runs by itself and does not require planning or initiative by a person or group.

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## UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

a prejudice one has but is unaware of. They are "mental shortcuts based on social norms and stereotypes." These biases cause us to make decisions in favor of one group and to the detriment of others. Unconscious biases are a fact of life. Everyone harbors them – and takes them into the workplace.



# Impact vs intent

## IMPACT

The striking of one thing against another; forceful contact; collision, for example, the impact of the colliding cars broke the windshield. The impact of the anti-Black violence sparked peaceful protests. Another way to define this word is: harm caused.

## INTENT

Something that is intended; intention; the act or fact of intending, as to do something; the state of a person's mind that directs their actions toward a specific object.



# We have an opportunity to really listen.

7 MINUTE AUDIO CLIP

- Listen actively without hoping to respond, even in your mind.
- What emotions or feelings are coming up for you?
- What will you do differently after hearing this audio clip?

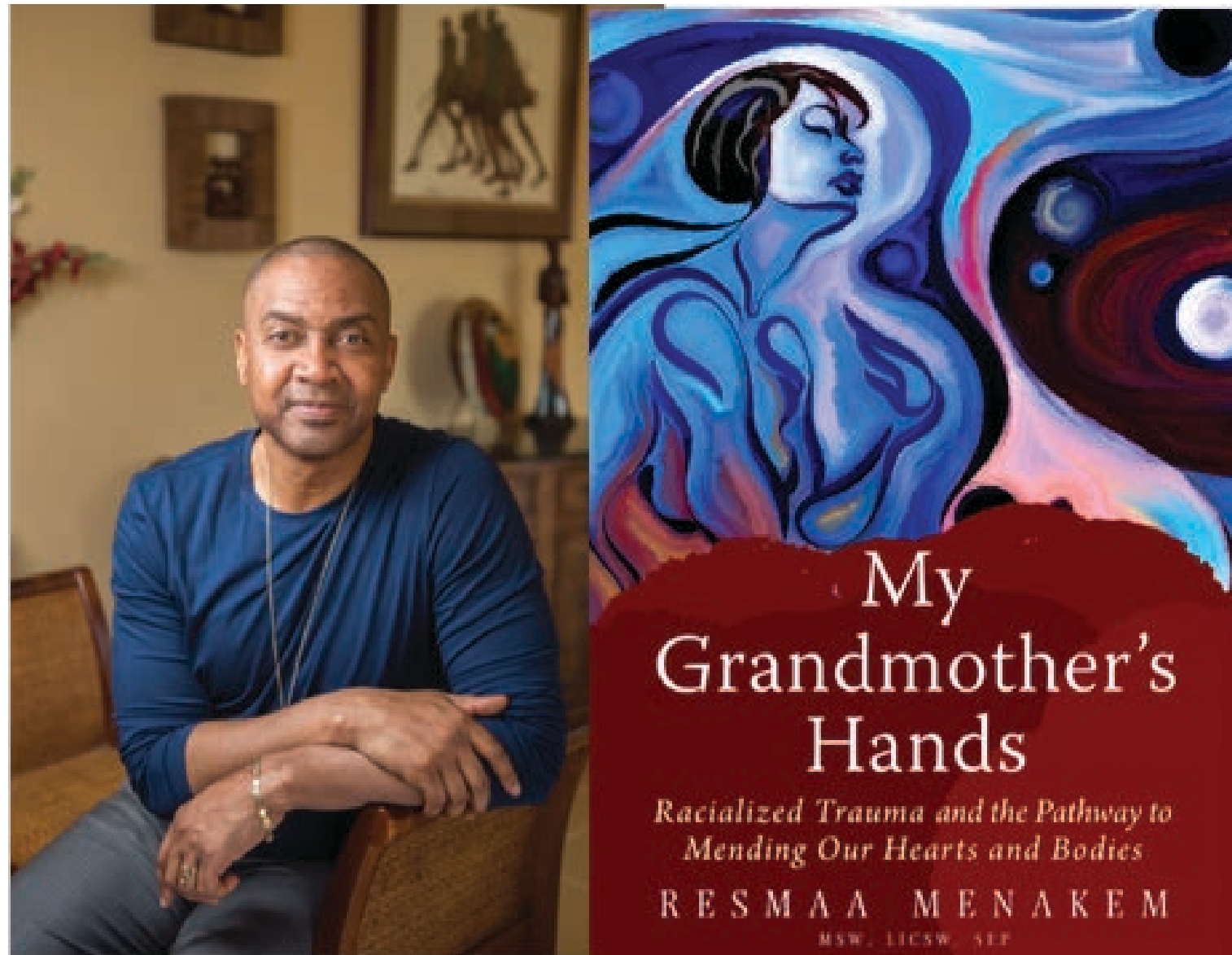


# Reflection

PART 03

# Resmaa Menakem, MSW, LICSW, SEP

Moving from race to culture to creation is important, transformative, and takes work. And a lot of reps. He helps people, communities, and organizations find strength in healing that is holistic and resilient. Together let's set a course for healing historical and racialized trauma carried in the body and the soul. He is a healer. He helps people rise through the suffering's edge. He is a cultural trauma navigator. He is an communal provocateur and coach. He considers it his job in this moment to make the invisible visible.



## Exercise

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Think back to an incident in which you felt you were the target of a microaggression.

Recall an incident in which you committed a microaggression against someone else, either deliberately or unconsciously.

Think back to an interaction in which you experienced a lack of regard from someone else.

Recall an interaction in which you expressed a lack of regard for another human being in their presence.

# Personal Level

PART 04

# How to Navigate Microaggressions

## APPROACHES

## PRODUCTIVE DISCOMFORT

## TOOLS

## PRACTICE

A multi-prong approach is best. Honest conversations. Appropriate apologies. Living amends. Practice.

Productive discomfort has the potential to serve you humility and penetrate your consciousness.

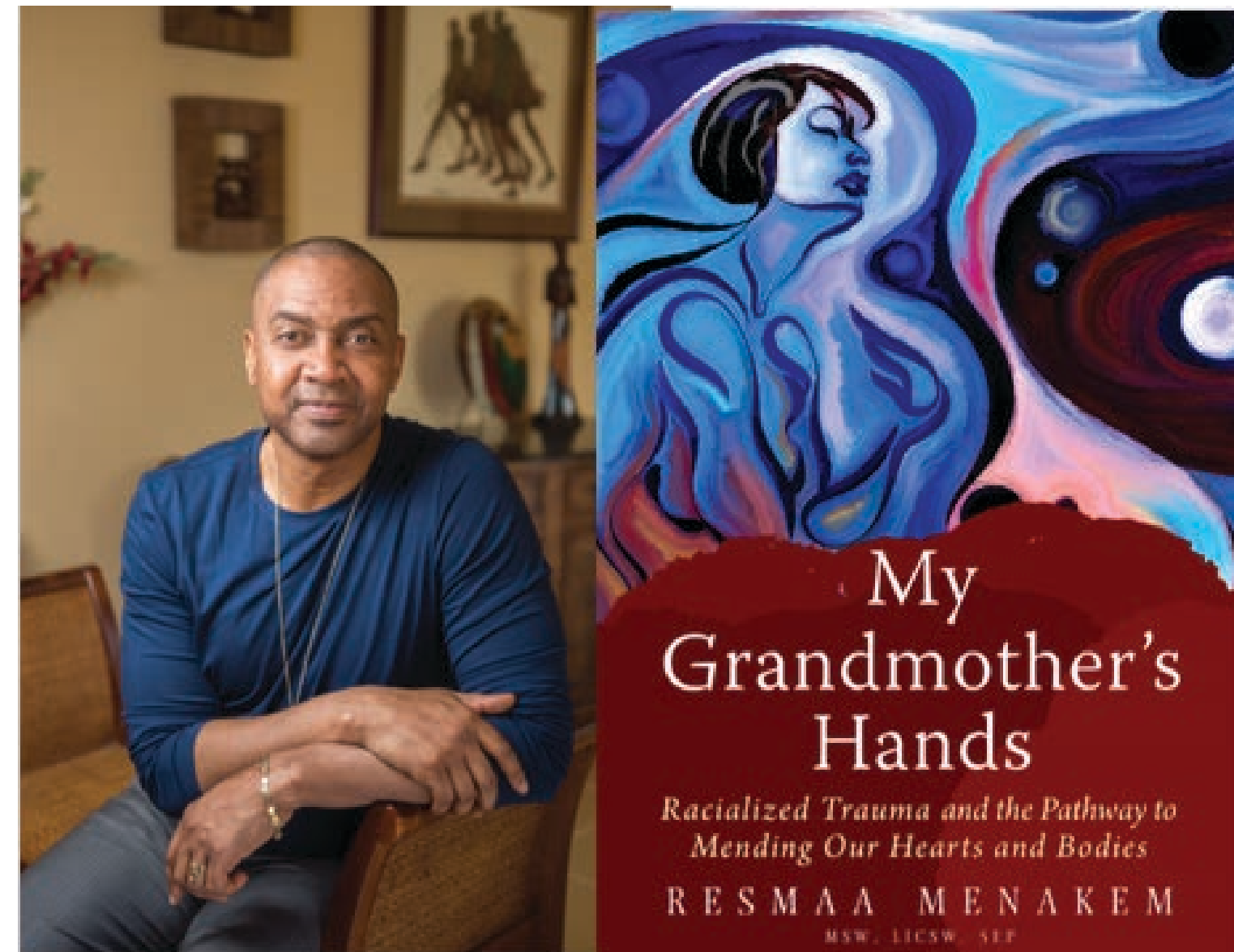
Hearing lived experiences from marginalized people/groups. Seeking those perspectives above the prevailing narrative. Trainings, workshops, and practice.

How would you navigate if you've committed a microaggression against someone else? If someone committed one against you?



# Resmaa Menakem, MSW, LICSW, SEP

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## Excerpt

My Grandmother's Hands, Chapter 6,  
Violating the Black Body, from page 87–  
89.

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# Structural Level

PART 05

We have discussed how systems, structures, and patterns in society create comfortable environments for microaggressions to breed.

- What can we do to improve the environment at McCormack Graduate School (MGS) and UMass Boston overall to discourage microaggressions from happening?
- Should we hold another meeting topic?

# Closing Thoughts

PART 06



# What's next?

Stay tuned for additional programming – webinars, workshops, and trainings – in the new year as we grapple with some challenging topics alongside you.



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Thank You!

DECEMBER 2020