

Understanding Racism, Microaggressions, and Macroaggressions

Union of Saints

A Human-Centered Educational Guide

Purpose of This Document

This document exists to:

- Clarify what racism is and how it operates
- Distinguish between **microaggressions** and **macroaggressions**
- Describe how racism affects different groups without ranking suffering
- Explain why **good people are often harmed despite doing nothing wrong**
- Recenter the conversation on **human dignity and shared humanity**

This is an educational framework, not a political argument.

1. What Racism Is

Racism is a system of beliefs, behaviors, and structures that assign value, threat, or inferiority to people based on perceived group identity rather than individual character.

Racism functions at multiple levels and often overlaps across them.

2. Levels of Racism

A. Individual Racism

Personal beliefs or actions that express bias or hostility toward a group.

Examples

- Slurs or insults
- Stereotyping
- Open exclusion or harassment

Individual racism is often learned, inherited, or socially reinforced rather than independently formed.

B. Interpersonal Racism

Racism expressed in everyday interactions between people.

Examples

- Talking down to someone
- Assuming intelligence, danger, or morality based on appearance
- Treating someone as a representative of a group instead of an individual

Interpersonal racism may occur even when people believe they are being neutral or polite.

C. Structural or Systemic Racism

Patterns embedded in institutions, laws, or policies that produce unequal outcomes.

Examples

- Housing segregation
- Unequal access to education or employment
- Disproportionate policing or enforcement

Systemic racism can exist **without personal hatred** and still cause real harm.

D. Cultural Racism

The normalization of one culture as “default” while others are marginalized.

Examples

- Media stereotypes
- Language shaming
- Erasure or ridicule of traditions

Cultural racism shapes perception long before direct interaction occurs.

3. Microaggressions and Macroaggressions

A. Microaggressions

Subtle actions or statements that convey bias, often unintentionally.

Examples

- “You’re so articulate.”
- “Where are you really from?”
- Assuming immigration status, criminality, or incompetence

Microaggressions are defined by **impact**, not intent.

B. Macroaggressions

Large-scale or overt acts of harm or exclusion.

Examples

- Hate crimes
- Mass discrimination
- Forced displacement
- Widespread targeting or surveillance

Macroaggressions shape the environment in which microaggressions become normalized.

4. How Racism Commonly Manifests Across Groups

(Descriptive, not comparative)

Racism Against Black People

Often includes criminalization, hyper-surveillance, dehumanization, and the continuation of historical trauma through modern systems.

Racism Against Hispanic / Latino People

Often includes assumptions of foreignness, language-based discrimination, immigration stereotyping, and labor exploitation narratives.

Racism Against Asian People

Often includes “perpetual foreigner” framing, scapegoating during crises, cultural flattening, and model-minority stereotyping.

Racism Against Indigenous People

Often includes erasure, land dispossession, denial of sovereignty, and cultural exploitation.

Racism Against White People

Can include stereotyping, hostility, or group-based blame.

Often includes assigning racist terms, dehumanization, calling white people, “colonizer,” harmful narratives and excusing violence against whites.

5. Why Racists Do Not Discriminate

This is a critical truth:

Racists do not discriminate based on goodness, character, or innocence.

Racism operates on:

- Category, not conscience
- Appearance, not action
- Identity, not intent

Because of this:

- Children are harmed
- Bystanders are targeted
- Kind, ethical people suffer
- Those who oppose racism are still affected

Racism moves in **waves**, not with precision.

6. Why Good People Get Caught in Waves of Racism

Good people are harmed because:

- Racism is collective, not personal

- Fear and instability amplify group blame
- Identity is used as a shortcut for power, fear, or resentment

Moral goodness does not grant immunity from prejudice.

This reality explains why entire communities can suffer even when individuals have done nothing wrong.

7. Educational Grounding Principles

- Naming racism does not create racism
- Studying patterns is not assigning guilt
- Acknowledging harm is not denying anyone else's pain
- Compassion does not require competition

Education is a tool for clarity, not division.

Summary: A Human Truth

- **Racists do not discriminate** — they do not evaluate character, kindness, or intent
- **Good people are often harmed simply for existing within a group**
- **Racism is a failure of perception, not proof of worth**

And most importantly:

Humanity has no color.

It is not defined by race, ethnicity, or appearance.

It is defined by the **human spirit** — by conscience, empathy, courage, and care for one another.

That truth is what education exists to protect.
