



30 by 30 Conference Resources



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1. Conference norms

This guide is intended to be a resource for staff, volunteers, facilitators, and attendees at the 2022 30 by 30 Conference. It serves as a commitment all conference-goers will have to each other. It is the conference's utmost priority to maintain a safe space where all feel welcomed, respected, accountable, and heard.

By attending the conference, it is expected all conference-goers will:

Conduct themselves in an ethical, professional, and lawful manner.

Treat each other with respect and consideration, valuing a diversity of views and opinions.

Be accountable for hurtful comments, regardless of intention.

Communicate openly with respect for others.

- a) Critique ideas and actions rather than personal traits of individuals.
- b) Use discussion as a way of building relationships and consensus, as opposed to being "right" or "wrong."

Be mindful of their surroundings and their fellow participants.

Lead with empathy, taking care to consider the impact of their words.

Not use derogatory or offensive language through either written participation (Chat, Q&A, etc.) or when speaking.

Practice mindfulness regarding the space they take up in conversations.

Strive to remain critical thinkers and seek out the knowledge and wisdom of the critical thinkers in the group.

Be empathetic that all attendees are at different points of their (un)learning journeys; but understanding others are resisting injustice while this (un)learning occurs.

Engineers Canada is committed to ensuring an inclusive and supportive environment for all, and intimidating, threatening, or harassing conduct will not be tolerated. Individuals violating these rules may be sanctioned and/or removed or banned from future events and involvement, at the discretion of Engineers Canada.

If you observe, become aware of, or would like to report a matter, please contact Vice-President Corporate Affairs and Strategic Partnerships, Jeanette Southwood jeanette.southwood@engineerscanada.ca. Reporting will remain confidential.

2. Reflecting on introductions

We often introduce ourselves with our titles and accomplishments but during our conference, we'd like to encourage you to share your story by way of a deeper introduction. Sharing stories can evoke a lot of emotion. As we try to continue growing our community of champions, we want to ensure that the network goes beyond the confines of the "professional realm." Hearing the stories of others is an honour, a trust, and oftentimes a sacred act. By explicitly blurring the personal with the professional, we

hope to create a safer space where professional hierarchies begin to level, deeper relationships are formed, and entire identities are fully realized.

In preparation we will ask you to reflect on the following questions (and if comfortable doing so) inform your introductions with your reflection:

- What is your name(s), the story behind how you got your name, or what your name means?
- What lands do you/your people come from? What lands were you born on? What lands do you live on now?
- Who are your people?
- Who do you do your work in service of?
- What is your passion?
- What are your accomplishments?
- Who is your team?

3. Microaggressions resource

This guide is intended to be a resource for staff, volunteers, facilitators, and attendees at the 2022 30 by 30 Conference. It serves as a resource and a responsibility all conference-goers will have to each other. It is the conference's utmost priority to maintain a safe space where all feel welcomed, respected, and heard. In the event microaggressions occur, we want to ensure we are properly equipped with tools and skills to address the injustice appropriately.

3.1 What is a microaggression?

“Microaggressions refer to the normalization of commonplace verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities (*whether intentional or unintentional*), that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative prejudicial slights and insults toward culturally marginalized groups.”ⁱ

While microaggressions can be perceived by the initiator as ‘harmless’ comments, they reinforce stereotypes, can be deeply insulting, and are a form of discrimination. Microaggressions highlight differences, undermine people from under-represented groups, and tend to stem from deep-rooted and unchecked biases. They are usually quite brief and commonplace, and it is difficult to challenge them sometimes.ⁱⁱ These “small” statements can threaten a safe space, and can make individuals feel as if they are unwelcomed and unprotected. Black, Indigenous, and people of colour, LGBTQ2S+ folks, women, disabled people, or anyone else who holds one or many marginalized identities then bear the emotional distress and labour of receiving these microaggressions. It is the responsibility of all of us to self-reflect and avoid these behaviours. At the 2022 conference, there is an expectation to correct these behaviours, should they surface.

3.2 What are some examples of microaggressions?

There are several ways microaggressions occur, for example:

Microinsults refer to subtle insensitive comments and/or behaviors (*often unconscious*) related to a person's identity.

- *Example: "Helping" a wheelchair user without asking if they would like assistance ; "You are so articulate" or "you don't sound Black"; assuming someone is heterosexual; scorning a coworker's choice in attire or the kind of food they eat.*

Microassaults refer to conscious and intentionally biased/discriminatory comments and/or behaviors related to a person's identity intertwined with systemic oppressions (ie. racism, homophobia, ableism)

- *Examples: Using racial slurs; denying accommodations for transgender persons.*

Microinvalidations refer to the subtle exclusion or dismissal of someone's feelings and/or experiences related to that person's identity.

- *Examples: Repeatedly asking someone where they are from; saying that you are "color-blind" or "racism is not an issue;" "there are too many labels nowadays, it's getting out of hand;" "all lives matter;" assuming that a person cannot be a valuable contributor to a meeting if they don't speak a certain way creates a barrier for those with speech impediments.*

3.3 Personal reflections to avoid microaggressions

1. It is impossible for every person to know the intricacies of every single prejudice and injustice. For example, many people will not be aware of the complex connections between transatlantic chattel slavery, IQ tests, eugenics, and modern manifestations of anti-Black racism. Telling a Black person they are "so articulate" may seem like a compliment without the knowledge required to fully understand the impact of that comment when it is contextualized in centuries of racism. While educating ourselves on the histories of others, we can instead focus on using the content of an individual's character and their measurable achievements to describe them.

THIS

"She is an incredible writer and an award-winning public speaker"

NOT THAT

"She is so articulate"

2. Take a moment to reflect on comments or judgements you have made of others. This will help you identify your own microaggressions and practice more inclusive attitudes and communication. Be willing to identify your own biases; are they related to the way someone speaks, their race or cultural background, socio-economic status, attire, or their family status?

3. Be mindful of how and when you are asking questions about someone's identity. Developing empathy and cultural intelligence means being sensitive to other people's boundaries and avoiding making assumptions around other people's desire or comfort discussing details around their identity or experiences. Explaining a part of yourself can be emotionally, mentally, and intellectually exhausting. For any tradition, identity, or experience, there are resources made available by those with lived experience who have consented to being an educational source and are compensated for this expertise. Being curious about others and showing a strong desire to learn more about the people you work with, is important, but we don't want this burden to fall on the shoulders of those we do not know about.

For example, making an assumption that a transgender individual is going to be interested or comfortable to discuss trans inclusion at a general level or on a personal level is not appropriate.

4. Learn to address your own defensiveness and emotions of fear, guilt, argumentation, and even anger when faced with different perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences. Using the example of "I'm colourblind" microaggression, be thoughtful about the impact this statement has on Black, Indigenous, and people of colour. Color blindness relies on the concept that race-based differences do not matter, and ignores the realities of systemic racism. It also leaves people without the language to discuss race and examine their own bias. Ultimately, saying "I'm colourblind" can be received as "I do not acknowledge your whole self and lived experiences."
5. In the event the microaggression is a genuine mistake, avoid making the scenario about yourself and your error. The person who experienced the microaggression may feel the need to comfort you, which is additional emotional labour. Apologize, correct yourself, and remember to avoid making the same mistake.

THIS

"He will be leading, sorry, they will be leading the presentation today."

NOT THAT

"He told me...Oh I'm so sorry it's just that all these new pronouns are new to me and it's very difficult to understand ... it's confusing but I meant they...."

3.4 Methods of disrupting microaggressions

1. Step up and call attention to the problematic behaviour. Question norms that alienate and discriminate against others, even if those things have always been done in your workplace. Be willing to correct others and role model more inclusive behaviours. It's difficult to interrupt or disrupt the flow of conversation, but this must happen for behaviour to be changed.
 - a) ***"I am uncomfortable with the gestures you are making because it is an offensive depiction of someone with a disability."***
 - b) ***"I am concerned about what you said and/or how you are behaving."***
 - c) ***"Just so you know, Theo's pronouns are they/them."***

- d) **In the event that direct confrontation may not be appropriate, ask the person to explain the comment to you. Having someone explain their communication will encourage self-reflection, and can be the first step in disrupting the normalization of microaggressions.**
2. Given the diversity of unique backgrounds and experiences at play in a workplace, it is important that you do not “why away” when different perspectives are offered. Make an effort to observe the impact of rhetoric and events on others and respectfully ask people to tell you more about their views and experiences. Ask for explanations only when the person you are speaking to has consented to educate you on the topic.
- a) ***“I understand that we have different perspectives on the topic, but I do not quite understand how you came to your opinion. Can you explain your view a bit more?”***
- b) ***“I don’t feel knowledgeable enough to contribute meaningfully to this conversation, I will take this opportunity to research and educate myself on the topic.”***
3. Place an emphasis on building cultural competency, emotional intelligence, and empathy. Consider who is not involved or engaged in activities and projects, and explore ways to make everyone able to participate equally.
- a) ***“I do not think Wendy has had a chance to contribute to the discussion. Wendy, we would appreciate your comments.”***
4. Although microaggressions are often perceived as harmless, the cumulative impact of microaggressions can be severely traumatic and painful for folks who continually experience them. It is important to develop your inclusive competencies to avoid making microaggressions and build your understanding of effective micro interventions. You can also express to others your feelings of discomfort with future discriminatory behaviours:
- a) ***“Please don’t use sexist language like that.”***
- b) ***“Please don’t make racist comments.”***

ⁱ University of Colorado Denver, 2020. ‘Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion 101.’ Office of Equity at the University of Colorado Denver and University of Colorado <https://www1.ucdenver.edu/offices/equity/education-training/self-guided-learning/diversity-equity-and-inclusion-101#ft-how-do-i-address-microaggressions-2>

ⁱⁱ Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity, 2020. ‘Homophobic and transphobic microaggressions: how to spot them and how to stop them!’ <https://ccgsd-cdgs.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Microaggressions-3.pdf>