

SUBTLE DISCRIMINATION: WHAT JUST HAPPENED?

SLOW DOWN • NOTICE IMPACT • CHOOSE YOUR RESPONSE

Some discriminatory experiences are obvious. Others are ambiguous, repeated, or easy for other people to dismiss.

DESCRIBE, DO NOT GASLIGHT YOURSELF

- Write what was said or done as accurately as possible.
- What happened before and after? Who was present?
- You do not have to prove intent before noticing impact.

NOTICE THE IMPACT

- Did you feel dismissed, stereotyped, singled out, unsafe, embarrassed, angry, confused, or exhausted?
- Repeated small experiences can contribute to chronic vigilance and stress.

CONSIDER CONTEXT

- Is this part of a pattern?
- Would the comment or behavior likely have occurred if a different identity were involved?
- What other explanations are possible, and which fit the evidence best?

CHOOSE YOUR RESPONSE

- Ask for clarification: 'What did you mean by that?'
- Name impact: 'That comment landed as a stereotype.'
- Set a boundary, disengage, document, seek support, or decide the interaction is not worth more energy.

AFTERWARD

- Talk with someone who understands the cultural context.
- Use grounding, rest, movement, spirituality, art, humor, or community if those help.
- Do not make yourself responsible for educating every person who harms or exhausts you.

IF IT AFFECTS ACCESS OR SAFETY

- Preserve dates, messages, witnesses, policies, or other records when discrimination affects work, school, housing, healthcare, services, or safety.
- Consider advocacy or formal channels when appropriate.

You can remain curious about ambiguity without dismissing your own experience or giving every interaction unlimited energy.