

TALKING TO KIDS ABOUT MICROAGGRESSIONS



What to Say

"Microaggressions are subtle, often unintentional comments or behaviors that reinforce stereotypes or make people feel excluded."

"They reflect larger patterns of bias in society."

Deepen Understanding - Discuss examples like:

Backhanded compliments ("You're so articulate.")

Stereotyping ("You must be good at math.")

Tokenizing or excluding

Misgendering or dismissing identity

Explore:

"Why might someone say this?"

"What message does it send?"

Key Concepts - Intent vs. impact: Impact matters more

Bias (implicit and explicit)

Cumulative effect: repeated small harms add up

Power and identity

What Teens Can Do - Responding in the moment:

"What do you mean by that?"

"That comment doesn't sit right with me."

"Let's not make assumptions."

Supporting others - Amplify voices:

"I think they were making a good point earlier."

Check in privately

Self-reflection:

"Where did I learn this?"

"How can I do better next time?"

Tips for Adults

Create space for open dialogue, not lectures

Be willing to say, "I'm still learning too"

Encourage critical thinking, not just rule-following

Address harm clearly, without shaming the person

