

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion in Teaching Physics

November 2021 Bulletin: Microaffirmations

What are microaffirmations?

small, casual actions that make your students feel more comfortable and supported

These exchanges are subtle and can prevent feelings of isolation, invisibility, and unbelonging

How can you make a place for microaffirmations?

- **Make your students feel welcome** by greeting individuals by name and respecting their pronouns
- **Express empathy** by acknowledging difficulties and accommodating reasonable requests
- **Show appreciation for courage and hard work** by recognizing and addressing students' creativity, growth, and initiative
- **Include all students in discussions** by using gender-neutral language and valuing participation

How do these affect your students?

- Positive engagement with individual students welcomes contributions and can increase both involvement and achievement
- Students with underrepresented identities in physics may feel more valued and included in the classroom
- Intentional kindness discourages acts of insensitivity that target minority students

"Microaffirmations can increase the integration and persistence of students in science, and [...] particularly support persons excluded because of their ethnicity or race."

- David Asai, 2020

There are many ways to learn more

- Read about the [effects of microaffirmations](#) on the persistence of underrepresented students in STEM
- Recognize how [microaggressions](#), which microaffirmations can combat, look in classrooms
- See [more examples](#) of microinteractions and impacts

Links and archive: go.unc.edu/uncpa-dei-bulletin