HIDDEN ASSUMPTIONS

Extended discussion exercise:
how assumptions about minority
ethnic groups can lead to forms of
unintentional racism

'**Hidden assumptions' exercise written by John Twitchin of
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With supplementary exercises by Dr Katharina Lefringhausen

HIDDEN ASSUMPTIONS: extended Discussion Exercise for volunteers

AIMS

This exercise doesn't tell anyone *what to think* about racism: it raises issues *worth thinking about.* The 24 remarks below (pp 3 – 5) have been quoted to stimulate reflection about how assumptions can work *unwittingly* to racist effect. De-briefing notes (pp 5 -10) offer observations for facilitators to feed into group discussions of how 'commonsense' assumptions can underlie racist discourse unintentionally.

We all act the way we see things; and we treat people according to how we see them. This may be an obvious truism, but it raises a question for volunteers: How do we perceive, and respond to, the wealth of cultural and ethnic diversity that refugees bring to the UK? Of course, we respect such differences as we welcome people who are seeking asylum, and as we support refugees who are 'acculturating' to British society. However, some white volunteers remain inhibited or uncertain about how best to help build the resilience and confidence of refugees from Africa and the Middle East who encounter negative treatment (trauma, rebuffs, disadvantage) from being perceived as 'black' or as 'immigrants of Black and Asian Minority Ethnic background'. This exercise aims to prompt group discussion of some of the less obvious and unintended forms that racism can take.

Given the on-going evidence of disproportionately negative treatment of black people in a white dominant society, most of us are familiar with the concept of racism as 'prejudice plus power'. In a paper ('The Whites of their Eyes') Professor Stuart Hall looked at this phrase more closely: he distinguishes "*overt prejudice* from *inferential racism* – ie from statements which have racist premises and propositions inscribed within them as a set o*f unquestioned assumptions.* Such statements can be made without the racist predicates they are based on ever becoming visible: they form an insidious kind of racism that tends to disappear from view into the taken-for-granted, naturalised world of commonsense. It's only when we actively question such commonly held assumptions that we come to realise how subtly racist ideas and discourse operate without resting on conscious intentions. Thus, it's because such statements are invisible to those who speak them that much racist discourse is unwitting." This 'hidden assumptions' exercise provides a structure for reviewing how this happens – as a first step to anti-racist action.

It is a problem with assumptions of course that we don't know we have them: however, this group discussion exercise helps prise them into conscious awareness. This exercise exposes how 'racial attitudes' are displayed by the words we use. The 24 remarks refer to minority groups with family roots in Africa, Middle-East, S. Asia. They were noted as spoken among groups of frontline staff of public services who were discussing what the 'blackness' of black British people means to them as white British people.

A facilitator might set an agenda for discussion of that same question – and move on to invite the participants to share how they help black refugees to manage the stress/ trauma of encountering racism, not only in obvious prejudiced behaviour and/or offensive remarks, but also in 'social exclusion' – the disproportionate discrimination/disadvantage that black people experience in the working of institutions.

HANDOUT: <u>QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION</u>

In relation to each of the apparently 'commonsense' statements below, discuss:

A. Are you familiar with this kind of remark? (ie, have you heard words spoken to similar effect?)

B. Do you think the remark embodies underlying racist assumptions? (Note down all hidden assumptions you can detect: ie, What is the flawed thinking behind the remark?)

C. Does the remark serve to rationalise or justify, inaction in tackling symptoms of racist discrimination or other racist situation? (ie, is it seeking to excuse failure to take steps to tackle racism?)

D. How would you react to hearing such a comment? (eg, if spoken by a teacher, a public official, or a volunteer in a partner organisation)

E: What sort of response would you advise a volunteer or refugee to make to the remarks, and why?

24 Statements

1. All human beings are basically equal, so I treat everyone the same: I make no difference between people, whether black or white or wherever they come from.

2. I'm not colour prejudiced, so there's no need for me to know the facts of black disadvantage. In any case, those kinds of facts are statistically impossible to measure objectively.

3. Little comes of trying to consult with ethnic minority community representatives: it's obvious that they don't properly understand how our system works. In fact, I suspect that some of the 'black activist community representatives' actually don't want to understand – they prefer to remain entrenched in an 'outsider' posture of protest. Anyway, it's so difficult to consult ethnic minority communities: who represents them? Either they're split into too many factions, or they reject their own official representatives as 'Uncle Toms'.

4. We've had progress in my lifetime, but there's still something of a colour problem in this country. Our public services and voluntary agencies need to do more to help the blacks to help themselves.

5. The 'positive action' policy that many organisations have adopted to help black people get jobs is just reverse discrimination. It means lowering standards or giving preferential treatment, or both. And of course, competent black people don't want to be patronised in this way.

6. It's quite wrong to draw attention to skin colour differences among young children. Anyone can see that they play together person to person, not black and white.

7. If a refugee or a volunteer in a partner organisation makes an embarrassing or insensitive reference to black people, what can we do? We can't change racial attitudes – they're only human nature. And we can't risk criticising/alienating people in partner organisations - on whom we depend for funding.

8. There's no point getting too heavy and 'politically correct' about nationality jokes. After all, there have always been Taffy and Irish jokes, and most humour depends on stereotypes. The only issue about a joke is whether it's funny or not.

9. I'm all for diversity in schools and public services, but isn't there a risk of over-emphasising minority cultures, thereby leaving the English feeling their traditions are being ignored or undervalued?

10. I favour cultural diversity. But it's difficult to talk with colleagues or refugees about race and racism - it's so emotive and embarrassing. To me, asking questions to monitor someone's race feels too intrusive.

11. I find it hard to talk freely and frankly about racial harassment and people's experiences of racial discrimination when there are black people in the room.

12. People often say it's hard to know if black people want to be called 'black' or not.

13. It's frustrating when they can't speak English. But apart from that, it's easier to relate to refugees who come from the Ukraine and Eastern Europe: Arabic-speaking refugees from Africa and Middle-East are a problem - they are very different, you know.

14. It's clear that there's continuing black disadvantage in Britain. However, I favour black people's equal rights. In fact, I've made several suggestions for helping them achieve these at community level.

15. You can't expect me to be sympathetic to Islam and to Muslims. The way they treat women is completely unacceptable.

16. It remains true that black people get disproportionately negative treatment in jobs, the criminal system and public services. But all immigrant groups expect a rough time at first, and history shows that second-generation immigrants integrate well enough: any initial problems disappear with time. Equality policies only create backlash that doesn't help anyone.

17. Aren't we chasing an impossible dream in pursuing equality policies and anti-discrimination laws? Name me one successfully harmonious multi-racial society anywhere in the world.

18. "When in Rome, do as the Romans do." Everyone accepts this. Surely it means that when people seeking asylum bring their culture to this country, it's they who have to adapt, not us?

19. To me, we face two major social problems: black gang knife warfare, plus the racism that exists in and between the black and Asian communities. What can we do about that?

20. Racism is a class issue: white working-class youngsters face the same problems as black youngsters.

21. Attacks on Asian homes are not acceptable. But wouldn't the police be able to protect them better if they weren't all living together in ghetto-like communities of their own?

22. Efforts to tackle racist stereotypes are undermined by the presentation of black people on the media as 'victims' or as 'problems to society' because they are associated with protest riots. TV prioritises negative news events in Africa and war-torn Middle East, and (apart from footballers) offers few, if any, positive role-models to follow. That's where anti-racist action is needed – not with us but in the media.

23. I agree with our organisation's Equality and Diversity policy – though as far as I can see, it's only putting into long words and bureaucratic 'HR-speak' what I and my team have been doing for ages.

24. As a charity we're not legally required to have an Equality and Diversity policy. So any training we organise for volunteers doesn't need to include anti-racism. The fact is (a) we have no 'black/white'

problem here (b) our staff profile is ethnically mixed (c) we have an advisory focus group to reflect black and other minority perspectives, and (d) we have a Diversity Committee to monitor equal opportunities.

For effective use, this exercise requires at least I hr.

To prepare a training session: Select six of the 24 statements, taking into account which issues might be most relevant for your particular group. Have a further 6 statements on stand-by to draw attention to, in case any groups run out of steam. Create and distribute a handout of the statements together with questions A – E.

If you can't decide which comments to select, you could start with the 6 comments discussed in the training course run by SIETAR Refugees Project: these were numbers 1, 2, 3, 12, 15, 18, with reserve back-up: numbers 6, 7, 8, 10, 15, 16.

STEP 1: Verbally introduce the exercise as described in the AIMS on p 2 above (include reading out the Stuart Hall quote). OR distribute copies of p 2 at the start of the session, giving participants two minutes to read the AIMS by way of introduction. Ask participants to tick the numbers of the six statements you have selected.

STEP 2: Ask participants in pairs (or in small groups of 3) to examine the six remarks (for 20 minutes, or 40 mins if time allows) – to see if they can agree answers to questions A, B, C.

STEP 3: After c. 20 minutes, ask for one person in each pair/small group to make a summary report-back to the whole group of their answer to Question B (ie, how many assumptions did they detect?) You then feed in any of the 'de-briefing observations' below that have been overlooked.

STEP 4: After c. 40 mins, ask participants to turn their attention to Questions D and E (ie, how best to respond to such remarks?). After 10 minutes ask for one person in each small group to make a summary report-back of their answers: note if there is whole-group consensus on how best to respond to racist comments.

STEP 6: Ask the participants each to take away the full handout list of 24 remarks, to review informally with colleagues and refugees as a follow-up activity later. Ask if they'd like a copy of the full De-briefing notes.

STEP 7: Evaluation/Feedback: Go 'round the room' for verbal comments on three questions:

- (a) What have they found most interesting or surprising in this exercise?
- (b) Has it revealed how assumptions can underlie talk about black minority groups?
- (c) Has it suggested potential anti-racist activities/ actions?

Ideally, finally give participants 5 mins to note down their responses to those questions (a),(b),(c) on a piece of paper, anonymously if preferred. Ask them to hand in their written responses, or to leave them behind on their table/chair. Collect up the notes and make a collated report that will provide a consultative overview report of the exercise, and provide suggestions for future follow-up activity.

Related materials for facilitators to use:

Exercises and Videos with training support notes available from cicd.jt@gmail
- A series of Group Exercises for exploring the nature of institutional racism

- 'Volunteers and refugees exchange life stories' – a video which shows a meeting at Oasis Cardiff in which black refugees celebrate the benefits of social exchange, but also draw attention to their experience of 'negativity' in ways they are treated in the UK. [This video acts as a powerful visual aid introduction to the 'Hidden Assumptions' discussion for volunteers.]

DE-BRIEFING OBSERVATIONS

1. If this first remark is seeking to express that all humans are equally *valuable*, and should be treated as such, that's fine. But why not say so? Treating people *equally* does not mean treating them *the same* – it means fully respecting the ways that they are different. As it stands, this remark fails to respect the 'blackness' of black British people – ignoring that their self-respect depends on establishing a positive image of their cultural and ethnic differences. In fact, people are not all the same – they are individuals with varying group identifications (girl/boy, working/middle class, black/white…). Messages informing children of these social identifications are beamed in from the 'hidden curriculum' of the adult society around them. The risk is that black refugees are measured against a common ideal and version of history which is white. It is because our 'white dominant' and 'Eurocentric' society has inherited since the time of slavery a cultural residue of disparaging and dehumanising association of blackness with inferiority and negative stereotypical images, that schools, public services (and refugee centres) need to prioritise in the perceptions of *both black and white* people that 'black is beautiful' & 'black lives matter'.

2. This comment fails to distinguish 'prejudice' as a personal *attitude*, and 'racism' as disproportionately discriminatory *action/treatment* (measured by effects and outcomes, rather than by motives). To assume that racism can be reduced to a matter of individual prejudice 'that I don't personally share', such that 'there's no need for me to be aware of the facts of discrimination', is in effect evading responsibility for taking action to help correct the on-going patterns of racial discrimination evidenced in official figures. To take no action is to be party to the status quo – ie, to collude in the working of institutional racism.

3. '*They* don't understand how *our* system works'. Whose system? It's supposed to be a system for everyone, not something that only a white person could explain. Shouldn't this remark be more accurately expressed: "As a white-dominant society we've made a bad job of working out a non-discriminatory, fair and equal system – so how can we help achieve this?"

   The term 'ethnic minority community reps…' Since everyone in the population, including both black minority and white majority people, is 'ethnic', we should say 'minority ethnic', not 'ethnic minority' (which wrongly suggests white people are not 'ethnic').

   The comment re varying perspectives and factions among representatives of communities which experience racial disadvantage, appears to assume that consulting with black people can only happen if they arrange themselves in ways and terms convenient to white people. The white British majority comprises a huge range of ideological, social and interest groupings – why is it assumed that black communities should be any less so?

4. There's no such thing as a 'colour problem of black people': rather, there's a 'problem of white racism' as evidenced in the continuing disproportionate patterns of discrimination against black people (eg, as demonstrated in official surveys of police use of 'stop and search', or in the numbers of black/white people held on remand.) On-going surveys show a continuing need for anti-racist action to dismantle barriers to equal treatment/opportunities and to implement mutual black/white respect.

It is dehumanising in this remark to refer to 'blacks' – they are black *people*. [See the section on Terminolgy in the Talk it over' section of the booklet 'Communicating Interculturally'.]

The job of schools and other public services is not 'to help black people achieve equal opportunities' – it is rather to help white people (or best of all, black and white people in joint power-sharing action) to remove the barriers that continue to operate against the establishment of equal opportunities in practice.

5. 'Positive action' is not reverse discrimination or preferential treatment: it is taking steps to correct the negative evidence of continuing disproportionately unjust patterns of imbalance in work opportunities. Patently, in a status quo of negative discrimination, a corrective short-term period of positive action is required for equality to be established in the longer-term.

   Among issues to discuss around recruitment: Who decides what qualities and criteria are appropriate for a job? How do schools and employers decide what premium should be placed on having positive black role-models, and/or on the value of contributing a black perspective in diverse decision-making at work? If it's true that some black candidates are inexperienced or face specific difficulties, isn't this a reason for organising appropriate training support, to equip them to do the job well, rather than an excuse for not appointing them? [See the section 'Talk it over' on how volunteers can assist refugees to handle job interviews in the Booklet 'Communicating Interculturally'.]

6. This remark displays ignorance of how perceptions and attitudes are formed by social conditioning, for both black and white children, from an early age. Young children are not impervious to the social influences of the adult society around them. Their confidence and educability depend on developing high self-esteem and cultural pride. (These processes are demonstrated in a BBC documentary made for teachers, 'Children without prejudice' – video copy available.)

7. This remark is another further patent excuse for inaction on tackling racism. So-called 'racial attitudes' are not determined by 'human nature' – they are *learned* through social conditioning. They therefore can be *unlearned* – a process we can choose to pursue or not.

8. As people from Welsh or Irish background will confirm, such jokes can be hurtful. And humour is not neutral: by laughing at, or ignoring, racist jokes we reinforce stereotypical image-making, thereby supporting our own prejudices as well as legitimating those of others.

9. This anxiety can underpin discussion about whether the support to be given by a volunteer should adopt an 'assimilationist' in approach, as opposed to a bi-cultural /multicultural approach. In response to expressed fear of 'over-emphasis' being given to 'minority' or 'foreign' values and traditions, one might ask how much would be left in a school or a refugee centre if everything of 'English' cultural traditions was taken out?

10. + 11. Remarks which both serve as excuse for inaction on anti-racism.

Some white volunteers feel inhibited and self-conscious about talking frankly about the mechanisms of racism with a black person in the room. This reflects the so-called 'dis-ease' of white racism: ie, avoiding taking steps to examine one's own attitudes to skin colour differences, and evading taking on responsibility for effective action against the injustice of discrimination.

12. Since black people know whether they want to be called 'black' or not, then who are the 'people' at the beginning of the sentence? They can be only white people. In using the word 'people' like this, referencing only white people – or if we are inadvertently taken by others to mean only white people – then what is the hidden curriculum message to black people, whether children or adults, and also to other white people? To speak on the

assumption that white people are people, while black people are 'black people' is patently in effect to imply that black people don't count as 'proper people'.

You might find it helpful to repeat this statement several times to assist trainees take on board the main point here. Many white people have uncertainty around appropriate use of the term 'black' and are more likely to focus on that aspect of the statement. They may observe that remark 12 is presupposing who sees themselves as 'black', or that the obvious thing is to *ask* if 'black' is acceptable to a person. Acknowledge these as fair points (along with the observations re terminology agenda, including 'black', in the section 'Talk it over' in the booklet 'Communicating Interculturally'). But ensure that these observations don't obscure thinking through the implied hidden assumption about the term 'people' (for some, this may need to be spelt out).

13. Any statement beginning with 'They…' is all-too-likely to be signalling an up-coming dehumanised stereotype. This remark negatively and dismissively draws attention to what some refugees *can't* do, rather than what languages they *can* speak. After all, many refugee families are on their way to becoming bi- or tri-lingual – a process that can be expressed positively ('At our school/centre we are especially proud of our potential bi-lingual or multi-lingual children.') While of course cultural differences may present challenges/difficulties on occasion, generally s[peaking they need to be seen and referred to not as a 'problem' but as an enrichment for a multicultural society. A school or refugee centre does not have a 'problem of cultural differences' because children or refugees come from certain parts of the world: rather it has a 'staff/teacher problem' because of staff inability to adapt their approaches to take account of such differences. To demonstrate respect for people from different cultures means responding to people as they *are*, not as a British person might *want them to be* (ie, on assimilationist assumptions to suit our own convenience). [Incidentally, do we need to check whether someone who makes this remark is masking assumptions about preferred acceptability of language, or of religion, or of skin/eye colour?]

14. This statement suggests the speaker is detached from taking any action themselves. Well-intentioned suggestions of ways to help refugee communities achieve effective equal rights requires decision-making carried out on a truly joint, equal power-sharing basis – ie, which takes care to avoid tokenist or marginalised approaches to consultation, or unwittingly racist paternalism (ie wanting to assist a minority group without first finding out what they feel they need or would benefit from, in their own terms).

15. This remark is patently to respond to Islam as a religion (and to judge it negatively) by thinking only about how Muslim men behave – apparently ignoring the role, culture and agency of Muslim women. It omits to recognise the different forms of Islam in different countries, and completely overlooks the many forms of women's movement in the Islamic world. Comparative cultural studies can become a disguise for racism if reduced to 'awarding points' to some cultures rather than others – or if 'unacceptable', 'ugly' or 'negative' practices in so-called 'developing world' countries are not accompanied by appreciation of their positive practices and values, and by pointing up the 'negative' practices of religious and secular movements in the UK as well. (There are heavily male-dominated and patriarchal traditions within both Judaism and Christianity.) To explore issues of the roles of women, and for a list of books of Islamic 'feminism' which give insight into the role of women in Islam, see the video and briefing 'Attitudes to Islam' in the section headed 'Talk it Over' in the accompanying Booklet 'Communicating Interculturally' (for copies, cicd.jt@gmail.com).

16. Leaving aside whether it has ever been right for immigrating groups to 'get a rough time at first', the children of black people born in the UK are different from other groups of migrants in that their blackness of skin remains an identifying signal of their heritage, however much they may seek to 'integrate' or 'assimilate' themselves to win acceptance.

This remark number 16 refers to children of refugees by using the term 'second generation immigrants'. This is misleading at best, and inevitably implies a rebuff to their full acceptance. If born and raised in the UK, they are not 'immigrants' at all: so they should rather be described as 'first generation Black Britons'. (The section on Terminology in the booklet 'Communicating Interculturally' offers more examples of dated terms to avoid in adopting best practice.)

17. Even if we can't name even one, this should not excuse inaction towards a more just multiracial and multicultural society in the UK. Indeed, all the more reason for persistence/determination.

18. An obvious riposte: What a cultural impoverishment for the Romans! No wonder their Empire fell apart! They were too narrow-mindedly imperialist to be able to respond and adapt to cultural differences – with the exception of Greek medicine, Olympics and theatrical comedy/tragedy, the Romans thought they had nothing to learn from other cultures. They referred to themselves as 'citizens', while others were 'barbarians' for whom it was a privilege to aspire to Roman citizenship through total assimilation.
In discussion one might ask: Actually, how much have Britons abroad 'done as the Romans do'? Englishmen have had a strong reputation since colonial times of dressing and behaving in traditional English 'Home Counties' style, even when 'going out in the mid-day sun' in India and Africa. This clichéd remark 18 is hypocritical in expecting others to do what the British in the colonial period did not do, or found it difficult to do. And as for the final phrase of the remark, No, we are not 'them' and 'us' – we are all part of a multicultural and multiracial 'us' in Britain.

19. To the extent that racism is accurately spoken of as 'prejudice plus power', then can there be racism (as opposed to personal prejudice) between black minorities in the UK (given that they generally lack the power to oppress)? If there is prejudice, that is for those communities to sort out: white people have no business to criticise it until they have dismantled the symptoms of prejudice among themselves and effectively corrected the continuing evidence of racist discrimination against black people. In other words, even if the comments in Statement 19 were true, that is not a reason to walk away from taking responsibility to tackle the facts of racial discrimination by the 'white dominant' majority community.

20. This remark demonstrates ignorance of the additional disadvantage experienced by black youngsters, on top of disadvantages they may share with their white peers (as working class or as women seeking promotion opportunities, etc). Some research into patterns of local job take-ups could confirm this.

Attempts to reduce racism ideologically to 'classism' again serves to deny the realities of white racist discrimination within the UK's current mixed economy/capitalist formation. No economic explanation alone can account for the differing types of racism developed in different societies – whether capitalist or left wing. (Racism preceded capitalism, as we know from the history of Greece and Rome; and sadly, racist behaviour/treatment have persisted in Communist societies.)

21. This is a classic case of racist 'blaming the victim', ie, implying that anti-black attacks occur because Black people and Asian people are living where they do. (Their living arrangements have more to do with discrimination in housing allocation and the relative impoverishment they have experienced as a symptom of white racist exclusion).

22. Regrettably true. But is this again to evade taking responsibility? The TV and other news media are only there because we let them be. Do we bother to protest enough? Are we taking steps to get the media to reflect the UK as a multi-cultured and multi-racial society with due anti-stereotypical sensitivity? How

effectively do we role-model the process of sharing black/white power in decision-making across our own organisation?

23. This remark may be masking agreement with an anti-racist policy/posture only in principle – ie, without commitment to action to make it effective in practice. Any organisation's whole-staff policy is likely to be effective to the extent that front-line staff, jointly with their 'clients', are personally involved in the research and decision-making that goes to the creation of the policy.

24. It is an evasion of responsibility to claim that intercultural training doesn't need to include anti-racist objectives. Many public service organisations have formal HR strategies/procedures in place to promote EO/Diversity – written policies backed up with monitoring arrangements; consultative focus groups; action plans, etc. But however well-intentioned and well-written, such paper policies do not by themselves provide the *practical intercultural knowledge and skills* and *behavioural changes* needed to translate anti-racist policies into effective intercultural day-to-day practice.

At work, for example, just *having* a diverse workforce, though vital, is not enough. To avoid risk of unwitting discrimination, and to draw positive benefits from diversity, an organisation in public service needs to equip its managers and staff with the intercultural awareness, knowledge and skills to manage diversity *competently*. (In case after case before the Employment Tribunals, it is obvious that informal complaints of racial discrimination have escalated into formal procedure because local managers and team leaders did not know how to identify risks of unfair treatment, and lacked the intercultural skills for resolving these informally at an early stage.)

Related Options for trainers/facilitators from cicd.jt@gmail

(a) Group exercises for exploring the nature of institutional racism (and taking steps to tackle it).
(b) 'Volunteers and refugees exchange life stories': in this video from Oasis Cardiff refugees are appreciative of the benefits of social exchange. Nevertheless, they also draw attention to their experience of 'negativity' in how they are treated in the UK. This video powerfully sets up an agenda of discussion among volunteers.

Further exercises by Dr Katharina Lefringhausen (2022)

(written by Dr Katharina Lefringhausen, 2022)

Approaching people with Anti-RAAS attitudes

Approach fellow nationals who are anti-refugees/people who seek asylum in the UK and have a discussion by a) asking them about their experiences/life story that has led to their ideological beliefs on this matter and b) share what events/experiences in your life led you to belief in a different ideology.

Goal 1: Not to change their minds with facts or tell them that they are "wrong" (won't work: fragility/privilege/institutionalized racism), but to show that their attitudes are not shared by all (anti-refugee/immigrant supporters overestimate how many fellow nationals support their views as they move in echo chambers)

Goal 2: Just sharing one's path to a specific ideology humanizes each other which enables dialogue, and dialogue allows more exchange of different viewpoints than no dialogue.

Cultural appropriation

(written by Dr Katharina Lefringhausen, 2022)

Not sure whether you commit a form of cultural appropriation (or cultural exploitation) and if so what to do about it? Then question yourself the following (in red indicates a potential of engaging in cultural appropriation). Please note that these are only guiding questions and not a scientifically accurate instrument to detect appropriation 100%.

- **Whose practice/cultural product are you using?** a) cultural group with equal power like White UK nationals in this society, b) cultural group with less power in this society than you (e.g., colonized cultural groups)
- **Does your use of this cultural product benefit your community/yourself or the community of origin of the product?** a) yourself/your cultural group, b) the community of origin
- **Are you aware/do you understand the associated sociocultural and historical context of this cultural product?** a) Yes b) I don't know c) No → have discussions with members of this cultural group, read books, watch documentaries or listen to podcasts on this subject matter to better understand the meaning of this cultural product to its cultural group of origin (e.g., do members of the original culture get discriminated for the use of this product/practice but White UK nationals don't)
- **Do you support the community of origin of this product to gain an equal status in the UK society?** a) Yes b) I don't know c) No → have discussions with members of this cultural group, read books, watch documentaries or listen to podcasts on this subject matter to support this group's status in the UK (e.g., donation, visibility)

What can refugees do when they experience (micro)aggressions?

If you think what just happened in that awful moment was bias, respond with an "I" statement. Eg, I don't think you meant that the way it sounded or I don't think you're gonna take me seriously when you call me honey, or whatever it is, and use that 'I' statement whether the what was said was directed at you, or whether you're the upstander, or whether you just observed it.

Now, if you think what happened was prejudice. Very often, we like to imagine everything is about unconscious bias, ie, like the person didn't really mean it. But sometimes people really do mean what they say - they have a very conscious, prejudiced belief. So how do you deal with that? Try starting with the word "it". Eg, so it is ridiculous not to hire the most qualified candidate because of their hair. So you can appeal to common sense with your statement, or you can appeal to the law, it is illegal not to hire women, or you can say it is an HR violation. So an "it" statement is your sort of line in the sand between one person's freedom to believe whatever they want, and another person's freedom not to have that belief imposed upon them, and easy to say hard to do."

Now, at other times, it's bullying that is presenting itself. An 'I' statement sort of invites someone in to understand things from your perspective, while a 'you' statement is how you respond to bullying – it pushes them away, because you don't want to invite someone who's meaning you hurt that I'm going to define bullying as being mean, right?... It may not be clear whether it's bias, prejudice, or bullying, but if your gut tells you it's bias, say the word 'I' and then notice what comes out of your mouth next. And if you think it is bullying, say the word 'you' and if you know if something like you can't talk to me like that feels like it might escalate the situation. You can use a "you" question - what's going on for you here because very often, someone who engages in bullying is not you know, you don't want to hang a label around their neck, but something's going on for them that they're behaving that way in that moment."