

## REGARDING MICROVIOLENCE

### About The Work We Do Daily:

Although we support people with complex clinical presentations, most of our work is not primarily clinical in nature. Most of the individuals we support have challenging behaviors in reaction to:

- **How** we perceive / respond to their clinical issue(s) and requests
- **What** we do in the name of helping them

Most of the challenging behaviors we see and hear every day are:

- In response to the microviolence the individuals we support experience in their everyday lives
- Strategies someone is using to try to get their needs met
- Feedback to us directly related to what we do in the name of helping the person

### Microviolence Definition:

What someone is experiencing when they are subjected to brief, subtle and commonplace everyday words, actions, or therapeutic interventions, often expressed and done in the name of helping by well-intentioned people, which also result in the unintended invalidation and oppression of the individual's identity, feelings, needs, preferences or experiential reality.

### Characteristics:

This is a very elusive and insidious form of violence, it is often masked, hidden or disguised in our assumptions, language, expectations as well as practices and it often remains invisible because of a cultural conditioning process. These exchanges are so pervasive and automatic in everyday conversations and interactions that they are often dismissed and glossed over as being innocent and innocuous.

### Concretely In Everyday Life:

When trying to help, **we** are often **unintentionally** creating conditions where people most basic human needs are not met and as a result, many of the individuals we support have the experience of being:

Oppressed...	Humiliated...	Dominated...
Invalidated...	Coerced...	Exploited...
Dismissed...	Intimidated...	Punished...
Dehumanized...	Forced...	Broken...
Embarrassed...	Threatened...	Defeated...
Shamed...	Terrorized...	Isolated...

### Microviolence Is Likely To Occur:

- When someone is in a relationship where the helper *holds the power to define* what is real and what is not
- When in a relationship, someone is *subjected to* the helper's interpretation of reality and *subjected to* the helper's rules
- When in the moment, the impact of such interactions are *outside the level of conscious awareness* of the helper
- When helpers have no real opportunities for *respectful feedback, self-examination, self-reflection and meaningful mentoring*

### Keep The Following In Mind:

- Countless examples of microviolence are delivered everyday without any awareness by well-intended helpers
- Microviolence is an outcome that can be created by anyone, in any role where one has the power to define reality
- The power to impose reality upon someone represents the ultimate form oppression