

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