

# Oppressive patterns can form around differences

We are continuously creating micro-level patterns as we interact, usually without realizing it. That includes oppressive power relations that can form around any kind of difference. These power relations show a generic structure:

- **Dominating** group: the favored group which holds status and privilege; there is cultural reinforcement for this as the preferred or ideal identity.
- **Subordinated** group: the disfavored group whose choices and opportunities are restricted; continuous reinforcement of negative themes of identity.
- **Bystanders**: witnesses to an interaction exhibiting a dominance/subordination dynamic. By observing and not participating, they tacitly accept and support that dynamic. By intervening to change the dynamic they become **upstanders**.

Awareness of and reflection on our interactions allow us to be more intentional about the patterns we are creating and propagating.

# Identity Reference Model

## Identity Reference

Statement by a dominating group member that relates to the identity of a subordinated group member



Recipient's Interpretation	Recipient's Response
Validating/supporting	Accepting
Hurtful	Disaffirming
Microaggression (hostile)	Going along
Relational fumble (well-intentioned)	Mindful correcting/relational repair



Adapted from Cha, Creary and Roberts (2020)  
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# Mindful correcting - relational repair

- PEARL

“I enjoy working with you, I want us to be able to work well together.”

- Intention-impact statement

“I don’t think this was your intent, but when you said \_\_\_\_\_, the impact it had on me was \_\_\_\_\_. An alternative that would work better for me would be \_\_\_\_\_.”