

Women Conductor/Composer Discussion Panel

Association of Concert Bands 2023 Convention

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Let's start with some research...

Female and Feminine-presenting Band Directors' Experiences with Gender Microaggressions in the United States (Shouldice, 2023)

“Microaggressions are brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to certain individuals because of their group membership” (Sue & Spanierman, 2020, p. 36).

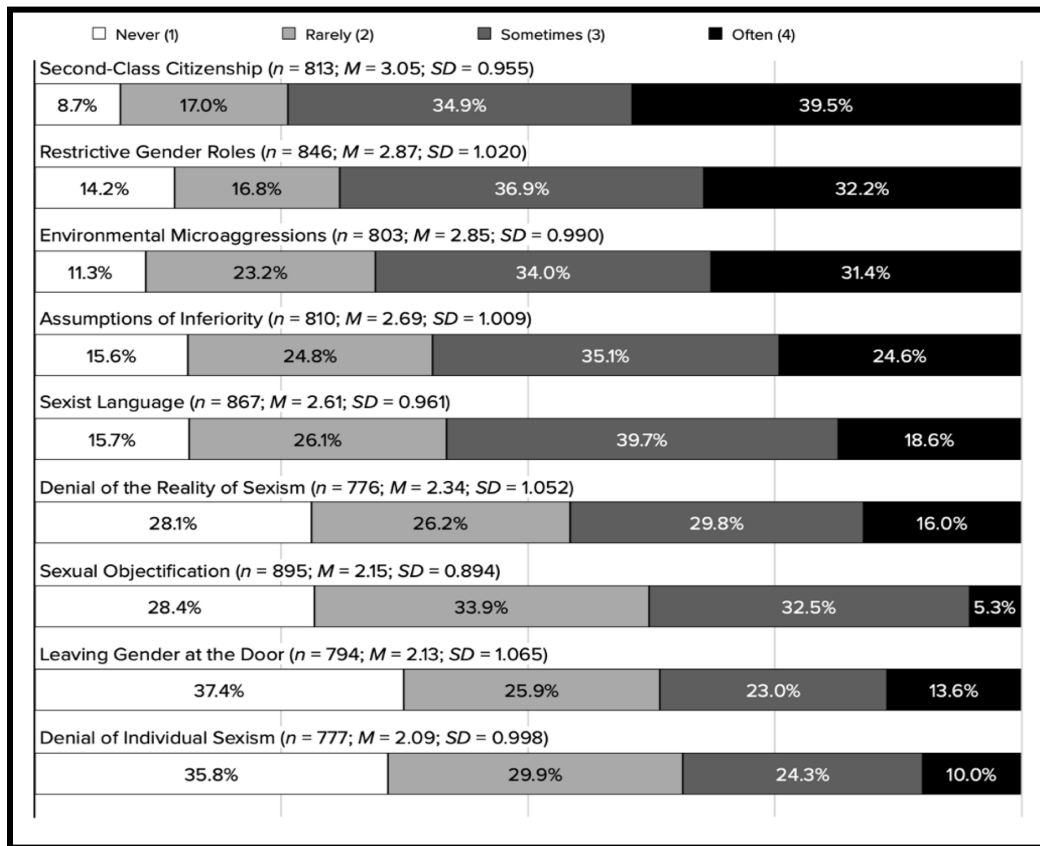
TAXONOMY OF GENDER MICROAGGRESSIONS

Sexual Objectification	Staring at a woman's chest, cat-calling, uninvited touching, commenting on looks (NOT work/skill)
Use of Sexist Language	Calling a female coworker “sweetie” or “honey”, insults (e.g., “bimbo,” “bitch”), sexist jokes
Restrictive Gender Roles	Assuming women are nurturing, emotional, etc., assuming women will get married/have kids
Second-class Citizenship	Not being listened to, being ignored, being overlooked for opportunities, “old boys club”
Assumptions of Inferiority	Assuming women are less competent, (e.g., “pretty good for a woman”), “man-splaining”
Environmental Microaggressions	Lack of female role models, lack of women in leadership, women earning less
Leaving Gender at the Door	Expecting women to keep feminine aspects out of the scenario (e.g., dress, mothering)
Denial of the Reality of Sexism	Telling a woman she's exaggerating and/or to just ignore it
Denial of Individual Sexism	Denying your own gender bias (e.g., “I just choose the best person for the job.”)

***See Shouldice (2022) for examples from prior research on experiences of female band directors and suggestions.*

Purpose of the Survey: To explore female and feminine-presenting band directors' experiences with gender microaggressions in their work. Specific research questions included:

- How frequently do respondents experience each of the 9 types?
- What are the most commonly described experiences within each type?



1. Second-Class Citizenship (495 total comments)
 - Being ignored or not respected (171)
 - Having a male assistant, parent, or student assumed to be the director instead of them or being mistaken for someone else (e.g., assistant director, color guard instructor, parent) (157)
 - Having their ideas not valued or being interrupted, talked over, or not taken seriously (131)
 - Existence of the “good old boys club” (109)
2. Restrictive Gender Roles (509 total comments)
 - Being asked or having assumptions made about pregnancy, child-rearing, or marriage (204)
 - Assumptions about their teaching role or the kind of teaching role a woman should hold (151)
 - Being perceived as bitchy, too aggressive/loud, or bossy (141)
 - Being assigned domestic tasks (e.g., copying, hospitality) (111)
3. Environmental Microaggressions (381 total comments)
 - Lack of women/female role models in the profession (206)
 - Lack of female judges/adjudicators (76)
 - Lack of women in leadership (71)
 - Lack of women portrayed as band directors in media representation (44)
 - Lack of women recognized as guest conductors, honor band directors, clinicians, or award winners (33)

***For detailed slides with participant QUOTES for all nine types, click [here](#).*

Questions for Discussion:

- Have any of our panelists experienced these (or other) microaggressions? What was that experience like?
- How did others respond to the situation?
 - What actions/reactions have you found helpful?
 - What actions/reactions have you found harmful or ineffective?
- What actions might we take to address the issue of Environmental Microaggressions for female and non-binary conductors/composers?
 - How might we recruit more female and non-binary persons into the profession?
 - How might we help them persist in the profession?
 - How might we facilitate an increase in female/non-binary representation among leadership roles, media representation, clinicians, adjudicators, etc.?
- How might we combat/prevent Second-Class Citizenship and/or Restrictive Gender Roles?

What Can YOU Do?

To prevent gender microaggressions... (Sue, 2010)

- Individual Intervention:
 - Become aware of your own biases and stereotypes!
 - Model breaking traditional role constraints.
 - Become an ally, activist, and/or member of groups that focus on eliminating oppression toward women and non-binary persons.
- Organizational Intervention:
 - Have a policy/vision statement reaffirming nondiscrimination policies in hiring, promotion, and retention of female and non-binary employees.
 - Foster a positive climate for women and non-binary persons and do not tolerate hostility.
 - Provide education and training on gender microaggressions and discrimination.
 - Transform the “old boys’ network” to include women and non-binary persons (e.g., PROVIDE MORE OPPORTUNITIES).
- Societal/Cultural Intervention:
 - Pass policy/legislation to promote equal access and opportunity for women and non-binary persons.
 - Re-envision education to create a culture that values the contributions of all genders.

If you witness/experience a microaggression, try a “Microintervention!” (Sue & Spanierman, 2020)

- Make the “Invisible” Visible.
 - Name the oppression.
 - Challenge the stereotype.
 - Ask for clarification of a statement or action.
 - Make the metacommunication explicit by restating/rephrasing the statement.
 - Undermine the metacommunication.

- Disarm the Microaggression.
 - Interrupt the communication and redirect it.
 - State values and set limits
 - Express disagreement.
 - Use an exclamatory short expression (e.g., “Yikes!”).

- Educate Offenders.
 - Help microaggressors differentiate between good intent and harmful impact.
 - Contradict the stereotype with opposing evidence by personalizing it.
 - Promote empathy.

- Seek External Intervention/Support When Needed.
 - Alert leadership and/or report the incident.
 - Establish a buddy system and/or establish or join a support group.

References/Resources:

- Baker, V., & Biggers, C. (2018). Research-to-resource: Programming ensemble literature composed by women. *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education*, 36(3), 51-54.
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- Jagow, S. M. (1998). Women orchestral conductors in America: The struggle for acceptance—An historical view from the nineteenth century to the present. *College Music Symposium*, 38, 126-145.
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- Sue, D. W. (2010). *Microaggressions in everyday life* (1st ed.). Wiley.
- Sue, D. W., & Spanierman, L. B. (2020). *Microaggressions in everyday life* (2nd ed.). Wiley.