*Hinton Laboratory*

Microaggression Meter Contract

Date: [Date]

Dear: [Student Name]

Congratulations on joining the *Hinton Laboratory*. As a member of our laboratory community, we strive to foster an inclusive and respectful environment where all individuals can thrive professionally and personally. To further promote diversity, equity, and inclusion, we have implemented a "Microaggression Meter" to ensure that our actions and words align with our core values. This contract outlines the purpose, consequences, and implementation of the Microaggression Meter.

1. Purpose of the Microaggression Meter:

The Microaggression Meter is designed to raise awareness of microaggressions and foster an environment of mutual respect and understanding among all laboratory members. Microaggressions, though often unintended, can still have a significant impact on individuals, and it is essential to recognize and address them constructively[[1]](#footnote-1),[[2]](#footnote-2). Thus, this meter serves as a quantitative mechanism through which individuals are continuously monitored and offered feedback to improve as kinder and more equitable individuals that promote those around them.

2. How the Microaggression Meter Works:

The Microaggression Meter is a system that measures instances of microaggressions through a point-based model. Each laboratory member starts with 7 points, or 5 points if it is their first year in the laboratory. These points will be used to record instances of microaggressions. The meter will be publicly viewable and filled in the laboratory to promote transparency and accountability. Small. This is an equitable meter that is the same for everyone, including myself. Each individual builds up points on the microaggression meter, which can be measured through the microaggression triangle model[[3]](#footnote-3), then considered in the context of the unique circumstances of the individual. The microaggression triangle model helps quantify the severity of the microaggression; for example, a back-handed compliment, a compliment with good intentions but supports a negative stereotype may be less severe than telling a racist joke or disregarding one’s identity. Specifically, unintentional microaggressions can be resolved and only count for half a point. Alternatively, these unintentional microaggressions can simply be moved past which will count as an entire point. Intentional micro-aggressions count for two points, or potentially more (based on the specific situation, as determined by the PI). It should be noted that I formulate separate scales for microaggressions around people of color and those who are not. I also use my time with the individuals to have more insight regarding if a microaggression is occurring or if it is more of a misunderstanding. In example, some individuals may be more sensitive to microaggressions, which is considered in this scale. As such, this scale allows up to 7 instances of microaggressions to be considered grounds for dismissal, with the provision that evidence is required to support the claims, but I consider dismissal a last resort.

While the points are relevant for microaggressions, macroaggressions are viewed separately and immediate action will be taken. This scale is not an excuse to carry out microaggressions, but rather an accountability measure, as it will routinely be updated and the scores of individuals will be publically posted. It should be noted that this meter is not meant to be a scary factor to penalize individuals, but exist for mutual improvement.

3. Reporting Microaggressions:

If you experience or witness a microaggression within the laboratory, you have multiple options for reporting it:

a. Speak directly to the individual involved, fostering open dialogue and understanding.

b. Share your concerns privately with Dr. Hinton or Dr. Marshall through email or in-person.

c. Use the anonymous reporting box placed in the laboratory to share your experience confidentially.

d. Utilize the online reporting survey, accessible through [specified platform], to report incidents.

4. Evaluation and Resolution:

Dr. Hinton will regularly evaluate the incidents reported in the Microaggression Meter. Each report will be considered within the context of the unique circumstances of the individuals involved, and sensitivity levels will be taken into account.

a. Unintentional microaggressions will be resolved with constructive feedback and count for half a point.

b. Intentional microaggressions will result in two points.

c. Macroaggressions (egregious acts) demand immediate action, and evidence will be required to support the claims.

While anonymous reporting (see Section 3) is considered, I also frequently perform a “temperature check” in the laboratory alongside my other senior staff.

Upon noticing a trend (e.g., individuals score more than 3 points on the microaggression score within a year), I may opt to bring it up with the individual in question. Additionally, I offer them a period of correction and continual monitoring paired with advice for improvement. Some people are more sensitive to microaggressions than others and the potential mental health toll of those microaggressions should be considered. Therefore, in these discussions, I bring up that it may simply be due to a matter of increased sensitivity that they need to become more aware of.

5. Consequences:

Upon reaching 7 points (or 5 points for first-year laboratory members) on the Microaggression Meter, the following actions will be taken:

1. Dr. Hinton will hold a private discussion with you to address the concerns raised and provide an opportunity for self-reflection and growth.
2. You will be offered a period of correction and continual monitoring, along with guidance on improvement. The goal should be to foster a level of understanding of why these occurrences happen and how these biases can be corrected.
3. If still not improving, you will be required to take an active role in improving laboratory environments. You will be encouraged to implement educational programs, promote open discussions, and create a supportive and inclusive environment that encourages individuals to reflect on their own thoughts and feelings and how to reduce microaggressions.
4. If microaggressions continue, dismissal from the laboratory may be considered as a last resort if there is a pattern of repeated incidents and failure to show improvement.

6. Support and Growth:

The Microaggression Meter is not meant to shame individuals but to create a supportive environment for growth and learning. We all make mistakes, including [Your Name], who also participates in the Microaggression Meter as part of their commitment to continuous improvement.

By signing this contract, you acknowledge that you have read, understood, and agree to comply with the guidelines set forth in the Microaggression Meter. Your commitment to fostering an inclusive and respectful laboratory culture is greatly appreciated.

Dr. Hinton

Principal Investigator, The Hinton Laboratory

I, [Student Name], have read and understood the guidelines of the Microaggression Meter and pledge to contribute to a respectful and inclusive laboratory environment.

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| Signature |  |  |  | Date: |  |  |

1. Marshall, A., Pack, A. D., Owusu, S. A., Hultman, R., Drake, D., Rutaganira, F. U., ... & Hinton Jr, A. O. (2021). Responding and navigating racialized microaggressions in STEM. Pathogens and disease, 79(5), ftab027 and Nadal, K. L., Davidoff, K. C., Davis, L. S., Wong, Y., Marshall, D., & McKenzie, V. (2015). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. A qualitative approach to intersectional microaggressions: Understanding influences of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and religion. Qualitative psychology, 2(2), 147. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Ackerman-Barger, K., & Jacobs, N. N. (2020). The microaggressions triangle model: a humanistic approach to navigating microaggressions in health professions schools. Academic Medicine, 95(12S), S28-S32 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)