

# Micro-inequalities in higher education

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# Session aims

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- Define what we mean by micro-inequities
- Look at some examples of micro-inequities and how they manifest in the workplace
- Think about how we identify and challenge micro-inequities



# Macro v.s. micro inequalities

## UK universities face 'gagging order' criticism

By Rianna Croxford  
BBC News

17 April 2019



Media caption: Anahid Kassabian felt bullied out of her job after she was diagnosed with cancer

**UK universities are being accused of using "gagging orders" to stop bullying, discrimination and sexual misconduct allegations becoming public.**

Dozens of academics have told BBC News they were "harassed" out of their jobs and made to sign non-disclosure agreements after making complaints.

UK universities:

ic

data collection and



AY



# The Telegraph

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## BBC gaffe over award for disabled athlete

By Richard Eden

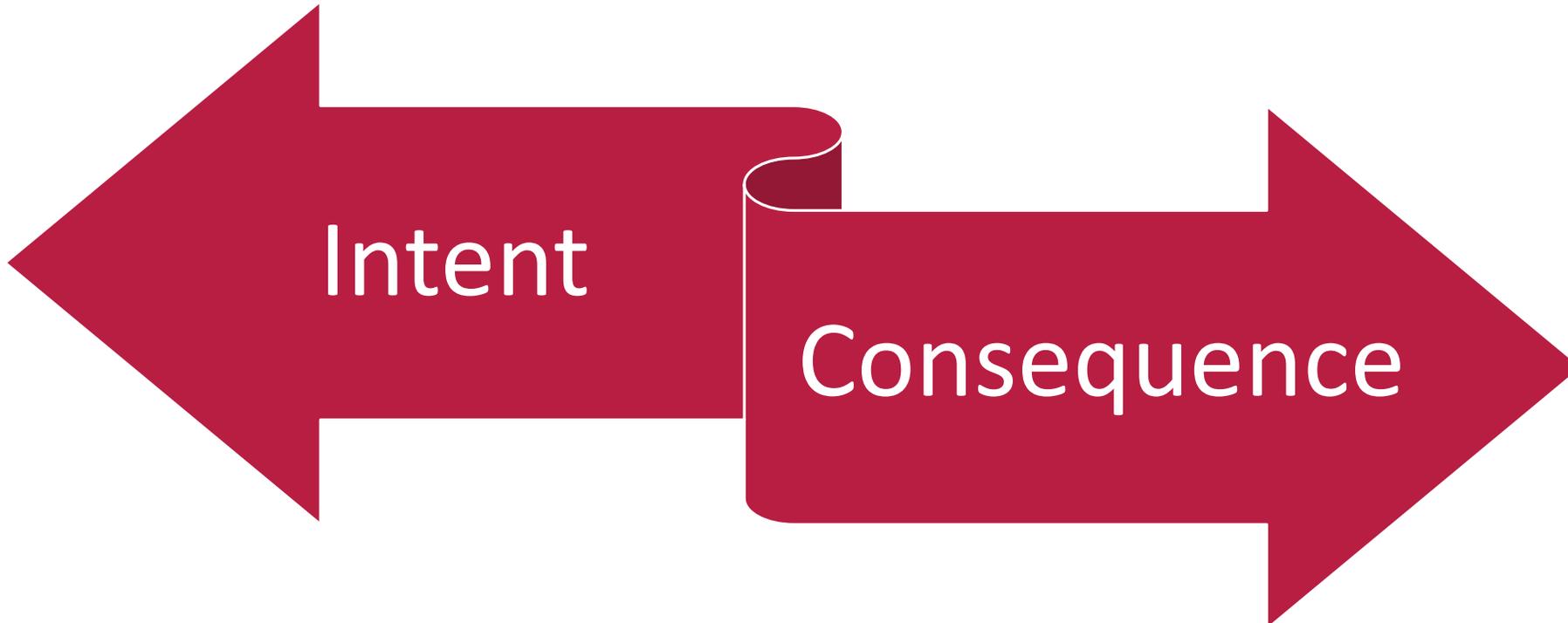
12:00AM GMT 11 Dec 2000

THE BBC apologised to the disabled athlete Tanni Grey-Thompson last night after she was forced to receive a prize at the Sports Personality of the Year awards in her audience seat because no ramp was provided to the podium.

The corporation was criticised by disabled rights' groups for not providing a ramp for the paralympian, who won third place in a viewers' telephone poll for the award, behind Denise Lewis and the winner, Steve Redgrave.

She won four gold medals at the Sydney Paralympic Games to become the most successful athlete in history. Barbara Lisicki, of the Disabled Direct Action Network, said it had been a "massive gaffe" by the BBC not to provide a ramp.





Intent

Consequence



Things are improving, but very, very slowly, and not systematically or consistently.

‘Disabled staff still experience inequality of opportunity, and in some circumstances unintended discrimination. There is no place for such a waste of human potential in our institutions’

Professor Michael Brown, vice-chancellor, Liverpool John Moores University and Sir Bert Massie CBE, governor, Liverpool John Moores University, ECU (2011), *Enabling equality: furthering equality for disabled staff in higher education*

- Disabled staff being disadvantaged by timetabling
- Poor room/building accessibility and information
- University language and practice reinforced a culture of disability being a ‘problem’ to be solved

D’Evelyn et al., *Universities need to develop more inclusive practices to attract and to value disabled staff and students*, Policy Report 32: May 2018, University of Bristol

# Micro inequalities

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Apparently small events which are often ephemeral and hard-to-prove, events which are covert, often unintentional, frequently unrecognised by the perpetrator, which occur wherever people are perceived to be 'different.' **M. Rowe**

A **microaggression** is a term used for brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioural, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative prejudicial slights and insults toward any group **Chester. M. Pierce**

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# ITV apologises for Sir Lenny Henry gaffe

4 December 2015



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# The Telegraph

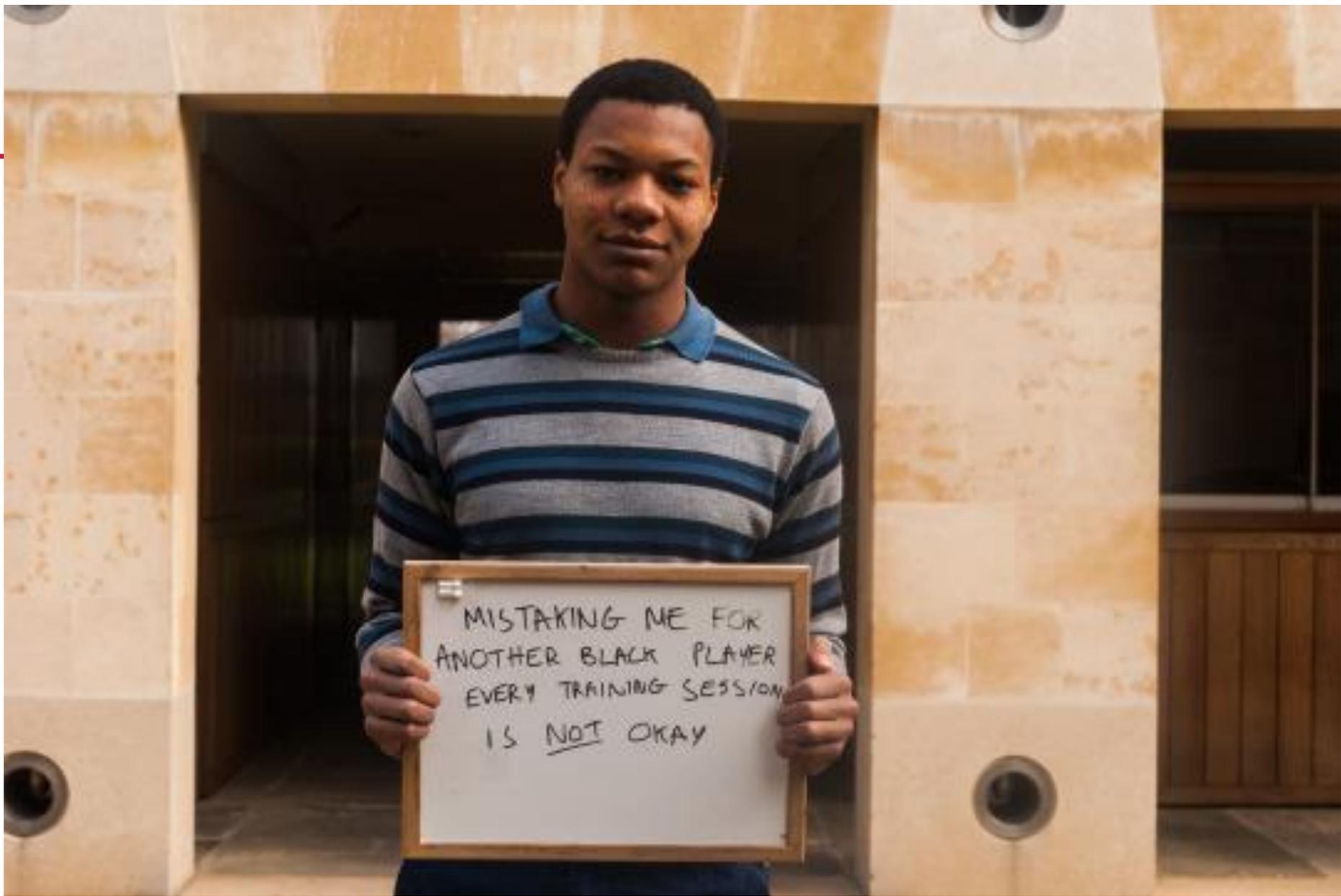
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## Referee Andre Marriner admits mistake after sending off Kieran Gibbs for Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain handball

Andre Marriner says he was at fault after showing Arsenal left back Kieran Gibbs red card for offence committed by Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain



Chelsea v Arsenal: Referee Andre Marriner sends off Kieran Gibbs for a handball committed by



MISTAKING ME FOR  
ANOTHER BLACK PLAYER  
EVERY TRAINING SESSION  
IS NOT OKAY

‘There is only one other black academic in my area and I sometimes get mistaken for her even though we look nothing alike.’

White and Black Caribbean, female, Russell Group university (interview)  
ECU: 2015 *Academic flight: how to encourage black and minority ethnic academics to stay in UK higher education*



# Fixing sexist Daily Mail Headlines

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- <https://uk.video.search.yahoo.com/search/video?fr=mcafee&p=changing+sexist+daily+mail+headlines#id=1&vid=ae73214ff18c3ef9c5cb2a8e21e65d6f&action=click>

# Academic and Professional services staff...



The image shows a screenshot of a Facebook post from a page named "University Admin Problems". The page's profile picture is a close-up of a person's mouth. The post, dated 18 February, contains a text-based joke about university administrators. Below the text is a black and white photograph of a person in a bunny suit sitting at a desk in a laboratory, with a gas cylinder and other equipment visible.

**University Admin Problems**  
@uniadminproblems

Home  
Posts  
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**University Admin Problems**  
18 February · 🌐

If anyone had a 30 minute convo outside THEIR office at full volume they'd soon have something to say - and yet it seems to perfectly acceptable for two academics to loudly catch up on their entire life to date in the middle of the school office, like nobody around might be frantically trying to input the late marks they have just deigned to return.

**The Isolator**  
By HUGO GERNSBACK  
MEMBER AMERICAN PHYSICAL SOCIETY



# Examples of micro-inequalities

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- Have a chat with the people around you about:
  - Examples of micro-inequalities that you've experienced or witnessed
  - What the impact could be in the workplace



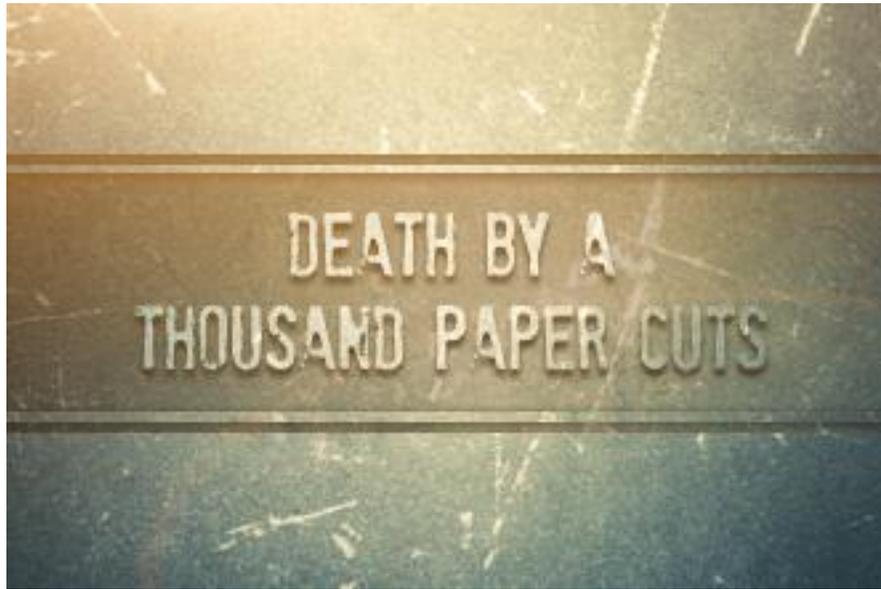
# Examples micro-inequalities

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- Being overlooked in a meeting
- Being perceived as a stereotype
- Having your ideas accredited to someone else
- Receiving different body language cues/ different tone of voice
- Not being invited to lunch
- Someone getting your name wrong....consistently

# Micro to macro impact

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What can we do about  
it?

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# MICRO AFFIRMATIONS – DOING ‘WARMTH’

Micro-affirmations are subtle or apparently small acknowledgements of a person's value and accomplishments. They may take the shape of public recognition of the person, "opening a door," referring positively to the work of a person, commending someone on the spot, or making a happy introduction.



# Allyship

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- Understand your privilege and do your homework
- Speak up, not over.
- Accept that mistakes will happen; apologise when they do.
- Think of 'ally' as a verb not a noun; take action.

“If it doesn't feel uncomfortable, you're probably not doing it right”

based on the works of Franchesca Ramsey and Katie Finnegan-Clarke



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## Andy Murray corrects journalist's 'casual sexism'

Andy Murray has corrected a journalist after he said Sam Querrey, who knocked the British player out of Wimbledon earlier, was "the first US player to reach a major semi-final since 2009".

The newly-deposed Wimbledon champion reminded the reporter he was only talking about male players, as there had, of course, been considerably more success for the US on the female side of the sport.

Since 2009, Serena Williams has won 12 Grand Slam tournaments.

On social media, Murray was praised for refusing to allow "casual sexism", and his mother, Judy, **tweeted proudly**: "That's my boy."

10 11 2017

**Stacey Dooley** @StaceyDooley · Feb 27  
 David, is the issue with me being white? (Genuine question) ...because if that's the case, you could always go over there and try raise awareness? Comic relief have raised over 1 billion pounds since they started.  
 I saw projects that were saving lives with the money. Kids lives.

**David Lammy** @DavidLammy · Feb 27  
 Many black Brits feel deeply uncomfortable with Comic Relief's poverty porn. It's my job to represent their views however uncomfortable. They want their children to have rounded views about Africa and these types of campaign woefully fail to do that

**David Lammy** @DavidLammy  
 The world does not need any more white s just perpetuates tired and unhelpful stereo from across the continent of Africa and ha mirror.co.uk/tv/tv-news/sta...  
 Show this thread

**cinnamon apple** @konylishious · Feb 28  
 stacey babe it's not about u. it's about being british. it's about comic relief, a product of **white** guilt caused by years of colonialism, promoting this **white saviour** complex by 'saving' people in africa who wouldn't even be starving if we hadn't absolutely wrecked their country

**David Lammy** @DavidLammy · Feb 27  
 The history of colonialism in Africa means posts continue a very long established tr black child with little or no agency or par because it makes people give money.

**Stacey Dooley** @StaceyDooley  
 David, is the issue with me being white? (Genuine question) ...because if that's the case, you could always go over there and try raise awareness? Comic relief have raised over 1 billion pounds since they started.  
 I saw projects that were saving lives with the money. Kids lives. ...



**porn has to stop | Afua Hirsch**  
 bring in cash but they remove ia Hirsch

**Dawn Neesom** @DawnNeesom  
 @StaceyDooley so right to defend herself against @DavidLammy point scoring. Worked in Rwanda during genocide. Cuddled cryin orphanage. NOT white saviour just a woman comforting a little kid. why does everything have to be about race. 🙄@comirelief ...

84 1.3K 5.1K  
 885 654 2.9K  
 David Lammy Retweeted  
**Victoria Derbyshire** @VictoriaLIVE · Feb 28

1.2K 731 3.4K



the most surreal feeling I've ever experienced.

[View More on Instagram](#)



963 likes

**officialskunkanansie**

Sorry Stormzy but we beat you to it in 1999! 20 years ago! And while we're on topic, I was the first black Woman too! [@beyonce](#) Wishing you an awesome nite tho, Kill it! You're amazing and we're all very proud 😊 [@musicweekinsta](#) [@stormzy](#) [@bbcnews](#) [@bbc6music](#) [@glastofest](#) ps. Real question is why it took 20 years!

[view all 84 comments](#)

Add a comment...



artist to headline glasto she done it with her band in 1999 no disrespect intended and MASSIVE salute to you – my apologies !’

He also tagged Skin in the tweet.



(Picture: Twitter)

Skunk Anansie performed on the Pyramid Stage (the same Stormzy performed on on Friday) at Glastonbury in 1999 and the British rock band took to Instagram to refute the rapper’s original claim.





FUSION

**Micro Aggressions**

# Any questions?

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