

A large red square with a white border, centered on a white background. Inside the square, the words "NAME" and "MICROAGGRESSIONS" are written in white, bold, uppercase letters.

**NAME**  
**MICROAGGRESSIONS**

**Names can be deeply personal and meaningful parts of our identities. What we are called matters; what we call others matters. Being named correctly can affirm us and make us feel part of a community. Being named incorrectly can make us feel unseen, alienated, and never truly accepted.**

**Maret is an imperfect community that makes mistakes around naming people, both students and faculty. We must also humbly accept when we are wrong, figure out the correction, and be consciously correct as much as possible moving forward.**

# A faculty member or another student just called you the wrong name or mispronounced your name --what do you do?

1. Know that you have a right to be called what you want to be called and do not have to settle for what others are “comfortable” calling you. AND you have the right (not the obligation) to correct people when they call you the wrong name.
2. Out loud, you can say to the person who misnamed you:
  - a. “Actually, I’m \_\_\_\_.”
  - b. “That’s not me. My name is \_\_\_\_.”
  - c. “I think you’re confusing me with \_\_\_\_ . I’m \_\_\_\_.”
  - d. “It’s pronounced \_\_\_\_.”
  - e. “The way you say it is \_\_\_\_.”
3. Correct the person whenever they call you the wrong name. Again, your right, not your obligation.

# What are faculty doing to CALL people the right names?

- Reviewing similar steps to address misnaming and mispronunciation when those moments occur.
- Working on tools or ways to remember people's (both faculty and student) names
- Using tools like the images in Veracross or in the faculty directory to learn people's names; creating pronunciation guides for themselves

# You've just called another student the wrong name--what do you do?

1. If you realize your mistake, you can say aloud, "That is not your name. I apologize. You are [their correct name]."
2. If you don't realize your mistake and the person corrects you, don't get defensive. You can say, "That's my fault. I will get that right."
3. Practice knowing their correct name. Check with a friend to see if you are naming someone correctly or pronouncing their name accurately.
4. Name the person correctly going forward.

# Things NOT to Say When You Are Corrected :

- “I’m just bad with names.”
- “Oh, you look so much like [other person in the community] that I mixed you two up!”
- “Wow, I’ve never heard that name before. That’s so exotic!”
- “People mix up my name, too, so I totally get it.”
- “It’s because your hair/outfit is different today!”
- Making any sort of light-hearted joke about their name
- Others?



# YES; this is a big deal.

- People of color across race and ethnicity in white dominant culture environments--like Maret--get misnamed often. While misnaming can happen to anyone, the emotional toll is different when it happens to a person of color, especially when it happens multiple times.
- The burden of calling people by the correct name and pronouncing names correctly does not fall on the person with the name; it falls on those in community around them.
- We SHOULD be mindful of people in our community who cannot alter their speech due to an accent, a speech difference, a hearing difference, or a learning difference.



**IMPACT matters more than intention.**

# More info on the impact of misnaming...

- [“What Listeners Told Us About the Importance of Getting Names Right”](#) from NPR (written by Clare Lombardo and Noor Wazwaz)
- [“Getting Names Right”](#) from Teaching While White (written by Dr. Ali Michael)
- [“Why People of Colour Are Misidentified So Often”](#) from BBC Equality Matters