

# “Us” in the training world of “Them”

Infusing our voice in  
workplace mental health training

Donna Hardaker  
dhardaker@mhac.org



[mhwellnessworks.org](http://mhwellnessworks.org)



WELLNESS • RECOVERY • RESILIENCE



# Wellness Works

- statewide project funded by California's Mental Health Services Act (Proposition 63), administered by the California Mental Health Services Authority
- program evaluation demonstrated significant stigma reduction with all course offerings and among participants across all workplace roles

# Wellness Works curriculum

- multiple award-winning training that balances attitudinal shifts with practical tools
- our strategies are evidence-based, designed to be easy to apply immediately
- simple and powerful intervention model using a functional, performance-based approach



- Power, privilege, tokenism
- Language matters
- Using the lens of microaggressions
- Hope and outrage

Power is the ability to define someone else's reality and to have that person respond to your definition as if it were their own.

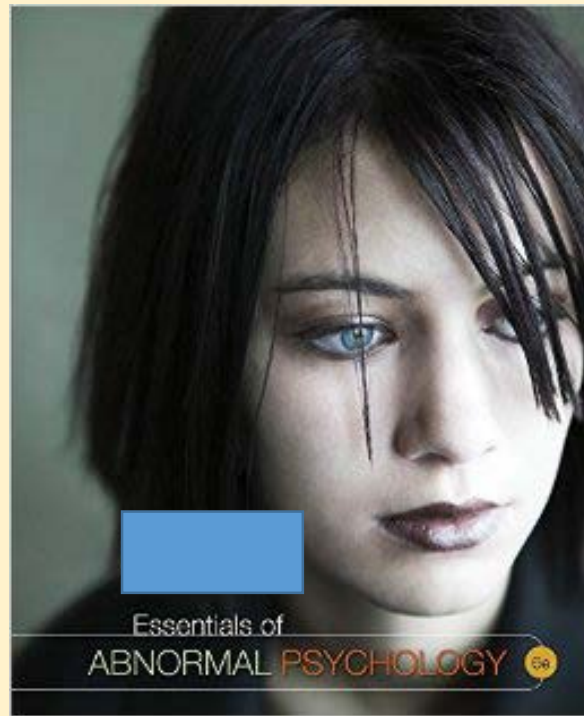
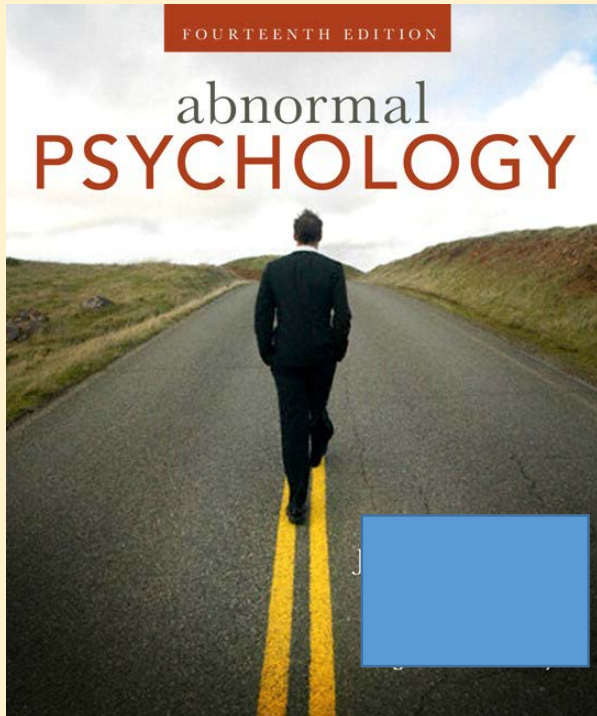
--Dr. Wade Nobles

# Privilege and tokenism





# Language matters



# What we say informs what we think

## What are we saying with these word choices?

- Abnormal psychology
- Disability
- Completed suicide
- Stigma of mental illness
- Silence of mental illness
- Stigma of mental health

# Exploring different language

- Social prejudice
- Oppression
- Dominant culture
- Microaggressions

# Microaggressions

- denigrating messages towards a certain group, inherent in words and actions, usually below level of awareness
- well-intentioned, mean no offense, unaware that may be causing harm

“Many have described mental health stigma as much more life-limiting and disabling than the illness itself.”

“Many employees choose to go untreated rather than being labelled as unreliable, unproductive and lazy.”

“Depressed people commonly have a negative view of themselves, the world and the future.”

“What do you think stigma feels like to those that are living with mental health problems?”

“1 in 5 Canadians are suffering from mental illness right now.”

“Are you strong enough to keep your temper?” (a learning section heading)

“The behaviors of employees with undiagnosed or untreated mental health problems such as anxiety and depression can and do result in significant financial losses for a company.”

HOPE - - - - - OUTRAGE

Where do you stand?

What do you see from where you stand?

What then must we do?





Donna Hardaker

Director, Wellness Works

Mental Health America of California

[dhardaker@mhac.org](mailto:dhardaker@mhac.org)