



## Ask Me Anything: Microaggressions and Mental Health

By: **Shelby Racine, Events Management Officer**

On Wednesday, January 12, we held our interdepartmental Ask Me Anything event, [Microaggressions and Mental Health](#), in collaboration with the Department of National Defence and Health Canada.

Participants tuned in virtually from many departments to take part in a powerful and compelling conversation on diversity and inclusion efforts within the government. Among the passionate speakers were:

- Natalie Taite, Strategic Advisor, Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination Secretariat, Justice Canada
- Holly Ellingwood, Lead Departmental Strategist, Diversity and Inclusion Secretariat, Public Safety Canada
- Ikram Warsame, Human Rights Lawyer

### Ask Me Anything

A Courageous Conversation on  
Microaggressions and Mental Health

#### Panelists:



**Ikram Warsame**  
Human Rights  
Lawyer



**Natalie Taite**  
Anti-Racism and  
Anti-Discrimination Secretariat



**Holly Ellingwood**  
Diversity and Inclusion  
Secretariat, Public Safety Canada

The conversation was co-moderated by Danielle MacKinlay, Senior Advisor, Diversity and Inclusion, Canadian Coast Guard, and Samantha Moonsammy, Section Head, Lead Advisor for Diversity and Inclusion, Materiel Group, National Defence.

During the event, the speakers covered many different topics. Along with discussing their individual experiences, they spoke about the specific ways in which the government can better support their employees who have experienced microaggressions and mental health impacts as a result. Unfortunately, many of us also deal with microaggressions in our everyday lives.

During the event we learned ways to deal with the inevitable mistakes of others and ourselves. The panelists talked about acknowledging the feelings of the impacted person, apologizing for one's mistake and committing to doing better. Conversations like

this help us all to reflect on the power of our words, and the importance of ensuring our workplace environments provide a safe space for everyone.

Thank you to all of our speakers for sharing their sincere thoughts, feelings, and ideas with us, and for ultimately helping public servants keep an active-mindset when it comes to diversity and inclusion efforts. Thank you also to all who attended the event or watched the recording online for being open to learning. Together, we're creating space for these important conversations within the Government of Canada.

For those who didn't get a chance to tune in live, we invite you to watch the [event recording](#) and to share this event with members of your family, friends, and community.

### **DFO-CCG events: Diversity and Inclusion and Ask Me Anything series**

Have ideas for upcoming AMAs, want to share more of yourself with our organization, or share general feedback? Contact the [Internal Communications, Event Management and Publications Team](#)! We are committed to learning more and doing better and hope you join us on this challenge.

To get involved with the Ask Me Anything Community and access documentation from past events, join us on our new [Ask Me Anything site on GCcollab](#). Together, we're creating a safe space for these important conversations within the Government of Canada.

