

EXOTIFICATION*

Seeing someone as exotic or unusual — and with that, romanticize different stereotypes that are connected to who you think the person is.

It is important to understand that being objectified or ascribed opinions based on stereotypes connected to your appearance is psychologically exhausting and an excluding practice.

TIPS TO NOT EXOTIFY OTHER PEOPLE:

- Do not ask personal or private questions based on your assumptions about the person's culture, gender identity, disability or based on their appearance.
- Don't give people compliments based on physical attributes. Just like how no one with breasts ever likes to hear "nice breasts" from a total stranger, people who often experience exoticification don't like to hear comments on their bodies, disabilities, skin tone, hair or style--even if your intentions are good.
- Think about who you are and what privileges this leads to in relation to people who are often subjected to exoticification, i.e., ethnic minorities, people who are racialized as non-white, people with disabilities, trans people or other LGBTQ+ people.
- Even if you want to know more about a person because they look exciting or different -- Google instead, do not ask questions that are a violation of someone's integrity.
- Think about the last time someone had prejudices, preconceived notions, or thought that they knew something about you -- how did it make you feel? Be aware and do not subject other people to similar treatment.
- If someone points out that you have exoticified them, do not become defensive. Listen, accept the criticism, and apologize. Do not excuse the situation and do not try to convince the person that you didn't mean any harm. Being defensive and in denial only makes it more difficult to save the relationship or move on

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