CONSCIOUSLY OVERCOMING UNCONSCIOUS BIAS IN THE WORKPLACE - PART 1

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Goals of the Workshop:

- Explore what social science research has taught us about human biases
- Understand how unconscious/implicit biases can affect perceptions and behaviors at work
- Discuss strategies for reducing individual bias at work and in our personal lives
Primary objective of the session is to raise consciousness about personal bias and how participants play a role in either perpetuating or dismantling biases at work.

It is the hope that the session will inspire reflection that will lead to action at some level for each participant, although it is not a guarantee given the amount of self-work that is necessary to achieve this end.

Transformation is a result of practice, after thought, after exposure to information, which this session will do. Your evolution is your work.
KEY DEFINITIONS

1. **Prejudice** - a negative learned attitude toward a group of people.

2. **Discrimination** - negative behaviors directed at a specific group of people.

3. **Stereotypes** - a general belief about a group of people.

4. **Isms** - prejudice or discrimination on the basis of a (specified) attribute (e.g., racism sexism).
Bias – the evaluation of one group and its members relative to another, usually in a way considered to be unfair, preconceived or unreasoned.
Implicit Bias – prejudices and stereotypes we hold outside of our conscious awareness.

Or

...attitudes and stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decision in an unconscious manner
Do you discriminate? On the basis on race, ethnicity, gender, age, social status, profession, English language abilities, weight, educational level, sexual orientation, etc.
Explicit Bias
- Self-aware of bias
- But not Willing
- Veiled to others
- Expressed directly/explicitly: “I like whites more than Latinos.”

Implicit bias
- Unaware of bias
- Not able
- Veiled to ourselves
- Person doesn’t perceive or endorse evaluation
- Expressed indirectly: E.g., Sitting further away from a Latino than a white individual.
What social science research suggests: 
Racism, sexism, and homophobia oftentimes come from people who are not racist, sexist or homophobic
THE UNCONSCIOUS
THE UNCONSCIOUS

Traditional thought assumed that discrimination was conscious and intentional — “people know better”
• Efforts have been aimed at finding the “bad people” and “fixing” them as if they make choices

But what if people make choices that discriminate without realizing it?

And further, what if it goes against their own conscious beliefs?

Now a vast body of research shows that unconscious bias underlies many of our patterns of behavior
Many of our brain functions, emotional responses, and cognitive processes fall outside of our conscious awareness.

Breathing Exercise
CONSCIOUS VS HIDDEN BRAIN

**Conscious Brain** – used for new situations – rational, careful, analytical, slow, deliberate, understands exceptions

Not efficient to use this every time – exposed to 11 million pieces of info – can only process ___ at one time
**CONSCIOUS VS UNCONSCIOUS BRAIN (CONT.)**

**Hidden Brain** – takes over after the rules have been learned – automatic, fast, instant adjustments

- Because our conscious brain can only effectively deal with about 40 pieces of information at any one time, our brains take mental short cuts to help us function.

- These short cuts entail sorting and categorizing information to determine what is helpful and unhelpful.

- These short cuts happen quickly and unconsciously. In fact, the unconscious mind processes 200,000 times more information than the conscious mind.

- It can apply shortcuts to situations in which they don’t work
- Sometimes applies rules to complex situations inappropriately
GAME OF WORD ASSOCIATION

Young/ ____________________

Night/ ____________________

Black/ ____________________
“If you can read this paragraph, it’s because our minds are very good at putting together pieces of information in a way that is easy for us to make sense of. Our minds do this automatically, without our conscious control.”
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Just because you may possess hidden biases, prejudices, or stereotypes does not mean that your practices are discriminatory. However, there is plenty of evidence that suggests that more subtle, covert types of discrimination do occur in our fields.
WHAT IS IMPLICIT BIAS
Implicit attitudes, of which implicit prejudice is a special case, are understood to reflect associations between social categories (e.g., Black/White, old/young) and evaluations (e.g., good/bad, smart/dumb).
HOW DOES IT WORK?

By relying on the same cognitive processes that make us efficient learners and ensure our survival when facing threats

We learn through patterned repetition. When two concepts become associated with one another in memory – we create automatic scripts in our brains such that the presentation of one of those concepts facilitates the recall or recognition of the other

These automatic scripts mean that the association and related recall operates super-efficiently without our awareness or intent.

Sources: Phelps, O’Connor, Cunningham, Funayama, Gatenby, Gore, & Banaji, 2000; see also Stanley, Phelps, & Banaji, 2008
WHAT LEADS TO IMPLICIT BIAS?

• Let’s say that we learn and internalize society’s biases and prejudices.

• Implicit bias may form as a result of exposure to stereotypes – “good” and “bad” ones.

• We develop perceptual lenses that help us filter out some information and filter in other information depending upon the situation in which we find ourselves.
  • Our perceptual lenses help us to see some things and miss others; they filter the evidence we collect, generally supporting points of view we already hold.

• Mental categories and personal experiences become “hard-wired” into cognitive functioning.
WHAT ACTIVATES OUR BIASES?

Some conditions that may trigger unconscious bias include:

- Visible identity (e.g., age, gender, race)
- Pressure to make quick decisions
- Mental overload or fatigue
- Multi-tasking
- Perceived lack of accountability
- Lack of good information
- Fatigue or stress
TASK: GENERAL STEREOTYPES

Working in groups, identify the stereotypes associated with the following groups:

- Blacks
- Hispanics
- Women
- LGBTQ
- Working Class
TASK: GENERAL STEREOTYPES (CONT.)

1. How do the stereotypes recorded by the group make you feel?
2. What do you notice about the stereotypes listed?
3. Where have you seen these stereotypes portrayed?
4. How do you think a stereotype might cause someone to act unfairly toward another person?
5. What are the implications of these stereotypes?
SUMMARY OF IMPLICIT BIAS (CONT.)

1. Operates at the **subconscious level**. We are NOT aware that we have them. It derives much of it’s power from the fact that people are unaware of it.

2. Run **contrary to our stated beliefs and attitudes**. We can say that we believe in equity (and truly believe it). But then behave in ways that are biased and discriminatory.

3. Triggered **automatically** through the **rapid association** of people/groups/objects and our attitudes AND stereotypes about them.

4. Unconscious bias may lead a person to act in a way that is at odds with their intentions.

5. Operate at both **the individual and institutional** level
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS @ IAT

Discuss your experience with the IAT:

1. What were your thoughts about or reactions to the IAT? (before, during, and/or after taking the IAT)

2. Were you surprised by your results? Why/Why Not?

3. Do you think the results revealed something about you (if so what?) or do you doubt their legitimacy?
   • If you doubt the results, please example why?

4. What are you going to do with this information about yourself?

5. Do you believe that unconscious/implicit associations may be affecting how you perceive or interact with others?

6. How has what you learned about implicit bias affected your thoughts around this concept?
UNCONSCIOUS BIASES THAT DIRECTLY IMPACT THE WORKPLACE
HOW DOES BIAS AFFECT OUR ACTIONS?

Biases affects us and our decision-making processes in a number of different ways:

- **Our Perception** – how we see people and perceive reality.
- **Our Attitude** – how we react towards certain people.
- **Our Behaviors** – how receptive/friendly we are towards certain people.
- **Our Attention** – which aspects of a person we pay most attention to.
- **Our Listening Skills** – how much we actively listen to what certain people say.
- **Our Micro-affirmations** – how much or how little we comfort certain people in certain situations.
TYPES OF UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

A few of the known unconscious biases that directly impact the workplace include:

- **Affinity bias**: The tendency to warm up to people like ourselves.

- **Halo effect**: The tendency to think everything about a person is good because you like that person.

- **Perception bias**: The tendency to form stereotypes and assumptions about certain groups that make it impossible to make an objective judgement about members of those groups.

- **Confirmation bias**: The tendency for people to seek information that confirms pre-existing beliefs or assumptions.

- **Group think**: This bias occurs when people try too hard to fit into a particular group by mimicking others or holding back thoughts and opinions. This causes them to lose part of their identities and causes organizations to lose out on creativity and innovation (Price, n.d.).
WORKPLACE DECISION IMPACTED BY BIASES

How we conduct the initial orientation interview
Listening to people’s ideas and suggestions
Treating customers
Choose board members

Hiring Decision
Recruiting efforts
Interviews
Mentoring Decisions
Job Assignments
Training Opportunities
Promotional Decision
Performance Reviews
Pay Increases
BIAS IN THE WORKPLACE (RESEARCH BASED)

• While less than 15% of American men are over six feet tall, almost 60% of corporate CEOs are over six feet tall.

• Resumes with “typically white” sounding names tend to receive more callbacks than those with “typically black” sounding names when the qualifications presented in the resumes are exactly the same.

• Resumes with female names were rated less hirable than those with male names when the qualifications presented in the resumes were exactly the same.

• During interviews, applicants who are culturally similar to interviewers are described as having a better “fit” than those who are dissimilar.

• Individuals from historically underrepresented groups are less likely to be given honest feedback about their performance.

• People waiting for interviews are rated lower because they were sitting next to someone perceived as overweight in the waiting room.

• People perceived as being overweight receive lower performance ratings than those not perceived that way.

• People with accent are less likely to be believed when they share the same information as people without an accent.

• Managers tend to report more affinity for employees culturally similar to themselves. This limits the opportunity for culturally dissimilar staff members to receive effective coaching and mentoring.

Gallup Poll survey reported that over 71 percent of the workforce has experienced some form of disrespectful behavior targeted to them because of their gender (32%), race (28%), age (20%), sexual orientation (14%), and religion (6%). This disrespectful behavior had the following impact:

• 28% of the individuals lost work time avoiding the instigator,
• 53% lost time worrying about the incident/future interactions,
• 37% believe their commitment at work declined,
• 22% decreased their effort at work,
• 10% decreased the amount of time that they spent at work,
• 12% changed jobs.
SCIENTIFICALLY-GROUNDED INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

REDUCING/INTERRUPTING IMPLICIT BIAS
Pick One: Research shows that people don’t follow strategies because there is too many. Just select one that resonates with you as a starting point.
EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES

Evidence-Based Strategies to Identify and Address Implicit Stereotypes:

1. Awareness about Implicit Bias (Dovidio et al. 2000;
2. Exposure to counter-stereotypic individuals/group (Dasgupta and Greenwald, 2001)
3. Exposure to stereotyped group members (Kang & Banaji, 2006)
4. Decrease stereotype inducing stimuli (Kang & Banaji, 2006)
5. Perspective taking (Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000)
6. Motivation to change (internal vs. external) (Payne, 2005)
7. Individuating (Stewart & Payne, 2008)
8. Constant vigilance of your biases and fears (Stewart & Payne, 2008)
EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES (CONT.)

Awareness about prevalence of implicit bias (Payne, 2005; Stewart & Payne, 2008)

• Although awareness of implicit bias in and of itself is not sufficient to ensure that effective de-biasing efforts take place (Kim, 2003), it is a crucial starting point that may prompt individuals to seek out and implement the types of strategies listed throughout this presentation.

• The Implicit Association Test (IAT)
EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES (CONT.)

Exposure to counter-stereotypic individuals/group (Dasgupta and Greenwald, 2001)

- Increased exposure to stigmatized group members that contradict the social stereotype—can help individuals negate stereotypes, affirm counter-stereotypes, and “unlearn” the associations that underlie implicit bias. “Exposure” can include imagining counter-stereotypes (Blair, Ma, & Lenton, 2001).

  - **Personal/Positive relationships**: Combining the conditions that make contact effective
  - **Being typical as well as inconsistent**: An antidote for contrast effects
  - **Widespread inconsistency**: An antidote for subtyping
  - **Repeated inconsistency**: An antidote for “explaining away”
EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES (CONT.)

Exposure to stereotyped group members (Dasgupta and Greenwald, 2001)

- Seek out greater contact with stigmatized groups and communities in a positive context (Dasgupta & Asgari, 2004; Dasgupta & Rivera, 2008).

- Cultural understanding and sensitivity cannot occur without lived experience. Make efforts to attending events, meetings, and activities of hosted by the groups you patrol. In other words, spend time in the communities you police (without your uniform, badge, gun, etc.). If the only time community members see you is when you are responding to a call, that’s a problem.

- Personal/Positive relationships:
**EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES (CONT.)**

**Decrease stereotype inducing stimuli** (Kang & Banaji, 2006; Devine, 1989; Rudman & Lee, 2002; Anderson, Benjamin, & Bartholow, 1998)

- Certain environmental cues can automatically trigger stereotype activation and implicit bias (e.g., radio, social media, T.V. stations, news outlets, publications, movies, music), or any other verbal or visual communications may inadvertently activate implicit biases because they convey stereotypic information (Kang & Banaji, 2006).

- Identifying these communications (that promote negative stereotypes) and removing them or replacing them with non-stereotypic or counter-stereotypic information can help decrease the amount of daily exposure police officers have with the types of social stereotypes that underlie implicit bias.
EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES (CONT.)

Perspective taking (Galinksy & Moskowitz, 2000)

- Walking in the shoes – taking on the firsthand perspective -- of others (or the perceived other).

- For example: What’s at least one activity that law enforcement/public safety officers can engage in to better understand the day-to-day realities of what it’s like to live in the communities they serve?
  - Judge in solitary confinement
  - Politician lives on government funded food assistance for a month
  - Etc.
EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES (CONT.)

**Individuating** (Stewart & Payne, 2008)

- Using the **power of regular, one-on-one conversations** to see people for their individual qualities and attributes versus seeing them as part of a stereotypic group.

- **For example:** List 3 to 5 people (in your work or personal circles) who don't look like you (race/ethnicity), think like you (worldview) and haven't lived like you (lived experience) -- who you would be willing to do an in-person, one-on-one meeting with as a way of practicing individuation.

- Remember, individuation is about learning to see people for their individual qualities versus as a stereotypic group.
**EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES (CONT.)**

**Motivation to change** (internal vs. external) (Payne, 2005)

- Know where you are in terms of your motivation to change or manage your biases. Research shows that implicit preferences are quite malleable so it is possible to manage and change them if you want to.

- **Internal motivation** seems to be the best predictor of change. External motivation, at best, might increase *knowledge*, and *intentions*, but not *behavior*.
  - Personal Barriers (self-imposed)
  - External Barriers
**EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES (CONT.)**

**Constant vigilance of your biases and fears** (Stewart & Payne, 2008)

- Routinely check thought processes and decisions for possible bias (e.g., adopt a thoughtful, deliberative, and self-aware process for inspecting how one’s decisions were made).

- Be constantly vigilant to manifestations of bias in both yourself and the people around you. Work to remain alert to the existence of the unwanted implicit preference to make sure that it doesn’t influence your overt behavior.

  - **Reflect:** Think through how those biases might have been formed and if there is any sound logic or reason to them.
  - **Confront:** Consider why you might be holding onto a bias.
  - **Discuss:** Talk about your experiences with bias and with overcoming biases. Encourage others to talk about their experiences.
CLOSING ACTIVITY

Write your full name and email address on one side of the index card,

On the other side, write down one thing you will do in the next four weeks to respond to microaggression at your job/place of employment.

I will collect these cards and email them to everyone (individually) three weeks from today.
Take-Away Points
SELECTED REFERENCES


SELECTIVE REFERENCES


Heilman ME, Haynes MC. No credit where credit is due: attributional rationalization of women’s success in male-female teams. J Appl Psychol. 2005 Sep;90(5):905-16.


RESOURCES

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9VGbwNl6Ssk
- https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html
- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sYQVDik69Nw
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9VGbwNl6Ssk
- http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/presentation-implicit-bias-education/
- http://www.slideserve.com/rendor/implicit-bias
- http://slideplayer.com/slide/4055963/
THANK YOU!

Please direct questions/comments to:
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