

# UNCONSCIOUS BIAS TRAINING



**ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTHCARE AND FAMILY  
SERVICES**

**THERESA EAGLESON, DIRECTOR**

**BUREAU OF TRAINING**

**FALL, 2020**

# UNCONSCIOUS BIAS PRE-TEST

1. True or false: Unconscious bias is a hidden preference or predisposition for or against something?
2. True or false: Unconscious biases exist in all of us and are necessary to keep us safe.
3. What causes unconscious bias?
  - A. Discrimination and prejudice
  - B. Absence of training
  - C. Bad influences
  - D. Autopilot processing
  - E. Absence of experience
4. The percentage of information processed unconsciously by the human brain through experienced-based rules is:
  - A. Less than 10%
  - B. Less than 50%
  - C. More than 75%
  - D. More than 90%
  - E. More than 99%
5. Recent research indicates that the most fundamental need that human beings have is:
  - A. Food, clothing, shelter
  - B. The need to belong
  - C. Safety
  - D. Esteem
  - E. Maximizing one's potential
6. What is meant by confirmation bias?
  - A. Looking for information that supports what you already believe to be true while rejecting evidence that supports a different conclusion.
  - B. Believing something because others choose to believe it.
  - C. Creating stereotypes based on groups people might belong to.
  - D. Being more receptive of people who resemble us in some way.

## UNCONSCIOUS BIAS PRE-TEST (CONTINUED)

7. True or false: Non-white people within diverse racial and ethnic groups can have unconscious biases?
8. A good way to get people to realize their unconscious biases is by approaching them in a spirit of \_\_\_\_\_ rather than \_\_\_\_\_. (inquiry/advocacy) or (advocacy/inquiry)
9. If we can be more \_\_\_\_\_ about some things that we are normally \_\_\_\_\_ about, we can mitigate unconscious bias. (reflexive/reflective) or (reflective/reflexive)
10. How can I combat confirmation bias?
  - A. Engage in healthy conversation and debate with people who have differing opinions and lived experiences from mine.
  - B. Fact check information sources that I take in.
  - C. Hang out with and listen to people that don't look like me.
  - D. All of the above.
11. True or false: Unconscious bias always stems from the way we perceive differences in others and how we behave accordingly?
12. True or false: Awarding a job to the candidate you most "clicked" with, perhaps because of a shared interest or they studied at the same college/university isn't unconscious bias, particularly if they're a different gender, ethnicity or sexuality to you.
13. Which of the following statements most accurately describes how gender biases are formed?
  - A. Biases are formed through socialization, for example the gender-specific toys you're given as a child.
  - B. Biases are formed through the labels assigned to individuals, for example discouraging only little girls from being "bossy."
  - C. Biases are formed through media exposure, for example gender portrayals in cartoons, soap operas, newspapers and movies.
  - D. Biases are formed through personal experiences of how those around us behave.
14. True or false: Economists have found that the best-looking one third of the population makes 12% more than least attractive individuals?
15. True or false: Caucasians cannot experience racism as racism describes a system of disadvantage based on race? Likewise, minorities can't be racists since they don't stand to benefit from such a system?



## TRAINING OBJECTIVES

- To promote awareness of implicit bias;
- Assess personal biases and subsequent barriers ;
- Develop an understanding of unconscious associations as they directly relate to diversity both in the workplace and in our daily lives ;
- Objectively evaluate demonstrations of our biases;
- Learn how Unconscious Bias affects our behavior;
- Recognize efforts to break free of personal biases.

# Unconscious Bias

## WHAT EXACTLY IS UNCONSCIOUS BIAS?

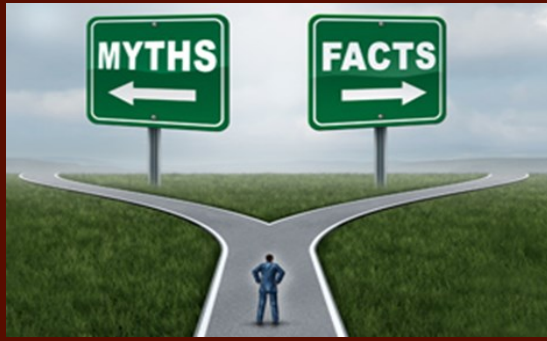
As we function in the world, we are bombarded with lots of information. In fact, it is estimated that the adult person is exposed to as many as 11 million pieces of information at any one time. We make decisions quickly and often automatically about what is safe, appropriate, helpful, and in our best interests. 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.

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.

Psychologist Joseph LeDoux has called our ability to sort information our unconscious “danger detector” because it helps us determine whether or not something or someone is safe before we can consciously make a determination. When the object, animal, or person is assessed to be dangerous, a “fight or flight” fear response occurs.

Biologically, we are hard-wired to prefer people who look and sound like us and who share our interests. This preference bypasses our normal, rational, and logical thinking. Brain imaging scans have demonstrated that when people are shown images of faces that differ from themselves, it activates an irrational prejudice in the brain’s alert system for danger. This happens in less than a tenth of a second. Our biases are likely to be activated every time we encounter a person different from our own group, even if consciously we reject stereotypes about that group.

**Unconscious or implicit bias** is the automatic, unintentional, and unconscious people preferences that arise because of our biology and socialization. Implicit bias and unconscious bias are often used interchangeably.



## MYTHS ABOUT UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

By Mark Smedley

### Myth #1:

**Not everyone has unconscious biases ... especially not me!**

To deny that any of us could make decisions free from unconscious processes running in the background of our minds is to deny the very nature of how our brains work. Cognitive neuroscientists estimate that as much as 95 percent of brain activity is beyond our conscious awareness, whereas only about 5 percent is generated in a conscious manner.

Our brains have evolved over the millennia to rapidly categorize information to make sense of the world. When our ancestors were living in more physically dangerous environments, it was to their advantage—and survival—to be able to quickly determine whether something was familiar (i.e., safe) or unfamiliar (i.e., potentially dangerous).

There are many modern-day advantages to these mental shortcuts. In a world where we are bombarded with millions of bits of data per day, how disadvantaged would we be if we weren't able to automatically filter out the irrelevant? If we relied only on conscious processes, that filtering would be just about all our brains would be able to do.

The problem arises when unconscious processes cause us to make decisions and behave in ways that run counter to logic and to our values.



Implicit Bias, also referred to as Unconscious Bias, is the platform upon which our unwitting discrimination rests. There are subtle differences between implicit bias and unconscious bias, but the following broad definition applies to both.

The positions we hold about others that are influenced by past experiences, forming filters that cause conclusions to be reached, about groups or ethnicities, by ways other than through active thought or reasoning.

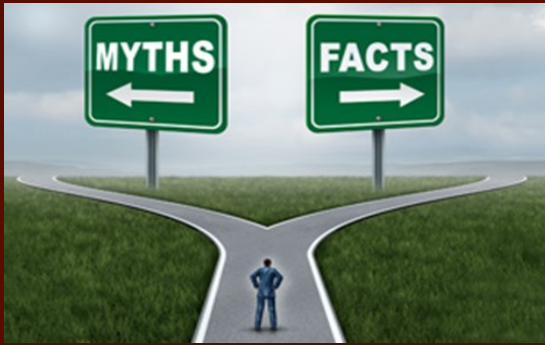
The paradox of both Implicit Bias and Unconscious Bias is that they are intangible states of mind.

Unconscious bias is one reason discrimination in recruitment, hiring, promotion, and other workplace practices continues to exist, even though discriminatory practices are prohibited by most companies and opposed by most people. Everyone has unconscious biases; it's only human. Not all unconscious biases are bad or wrong. They are the result of the automatic decision-making that social scientists believe is a holdover from the "fight or flight" reflex that helped early humans to survive.

Most decisions are made emotionally, instead of rationally, as most people would like to believe. Once made, people tend to collect or generate facts to support those decisions. These biases reflect patterns of belief that are so strong and deeply ingrained, it is difficult to understand their impact on decision-making. Ultimately, we believe our decisions are consistent with our conscious beliefs, when in fact, our unconscious is running the show.

Individuals are not the only ones who exhibit unconscious behavior; organizations do, too, which explains why efforts to create inclusive corporate cultures are frustratingly slow.





## MYTHS ABOUT UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

By Mark Smedley

### Myth #2:

**When our decisions are affected by unconscious bias, we have an intent to discriminate against a group we dislike.**

This is a manifestation of one truth about unconscious bias: we can fall victim to it even when it causes us to behave in direct opposition to our own values or self-interests. This myth is, in my opinion, the most harmful one about unconscious bias. If we equate unconscious bias to a desire to discriminate, any discussion of bias leads to feelings of guilt and shame. Those feelings do not lead to positive action or course correction; they lead to defensiveness and denial.

Let's positively reframe this one. When we recognize we've inadvertently fallen prey to unconscious bias in our decision-making, we should congratulate ourselves for having elevated the unconscious to the conscious—and then take the appropriate steps to correct ourselves and minimize the chances of making the same mistake in the future.

### Myth #3:

**The only thing HR can do to reduce the impact of this problem is offer unconscious bias training.**

To mitigate the effects of unconscious bias on decisions about whom to hire and promote, organizations have collectively invested millions of dollars in unconscious bias training —

## EXAMPLES OF UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

- Resumes with ethnic sounding names pushed down in the selection for interviews.
- Women more frequently interrupted in business meetings.
- Some team members, who arrive late to a meeting, are welcomed and given a brief update on what transpired prior to their arrival. Other team members, based on a racial, gender, generational or other differences, receive only a fleeting glance from the leader, subtly conveying a message of admonishment with no welcome or update offered.

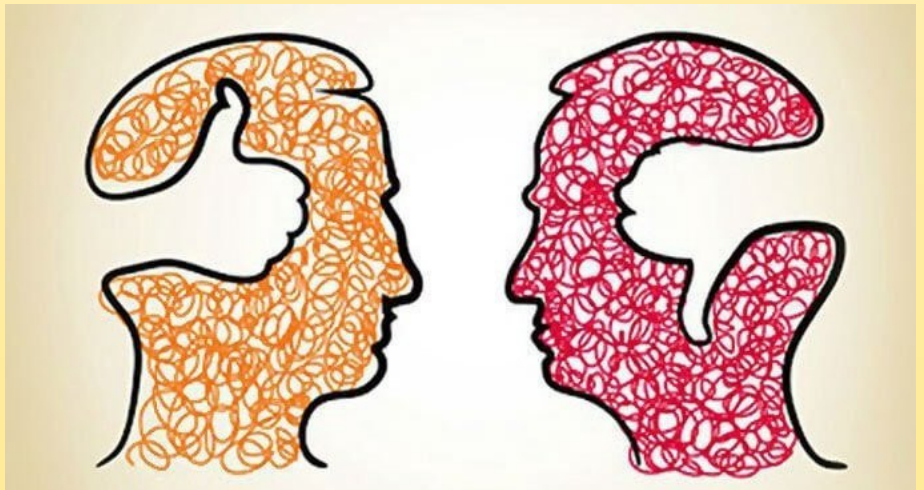
For example, in the case of the review of resumes, the Implicit Bias is the unconscious state of mind that minorities are less qualified. The Microinequity is choosing to push the resume to the side.

In the example of women being interrupted more frequently, the Unconscious Bias is that men have more important things to say and are more authoritative. The Microinequity is to actively disregard female colleagues' remarks and marginalize their contribution by speaking over them.

In the case of different treatment when a colleague arrives late to a meeting, the Unconscious Bias is that we hold opinions about people's value, power and influence, unwittingly. The Microinequity is the clear difference in behavior by being vocal and providing the information to one while withholding this same information from, and remaining silent with another.

In this particular example, there is an important distinguishing point. If the same negative treatment is consistently delivered to everyone, then it is not a Microinequity – It is simply consistently delivered bad behavior. It is only when delivered differently, to different groups or individuals, that the behavior becomes a Microinequity

Most critically, the only way Implicit Bias and Unconscious Biases can be managed is by identifying the Microinequities that reveal them.





## MYTHS ABOUT UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

By Mark Smedley

learning aimed at bringing the problem of this kind of bias to leaders' attention and offering strategies to help reduce biased decision-making.

This kind of training is an incredibly helpful first step. I would also argue that it is not enough. I liken unconscious bias training to going to the doctor and being diagnosed with high cholesterol. Your doctor will bring your problem to your attention and offer you suggestions for how you should address it (e.g., adjust your diet, exercise more, consider taking medication).

If that first visit to your physician was where your treatment began and ended, how likely would you be to successfully address the problem? Without ongoing monitoring, guidance, and accountability, might you easily revert to your old ways of behaving?

Because unconscious bias is, by definition, occurring outside of our consciousness, building awareness is not enough. Bias cannot be eliminated, but it can be managed.

How do top organizations do this? They introduce bias disrupters; that is, they implement systematic processes for making decisions about people that manage the extent to which bias can take hold.

What I find so encouraging about this research is these practices that reduce bias and

## MICROMESSAGING IN THE WORKPLACE

Micromessages are those small, subtle, universally understood messages that we send and receive through words, gestures, body language, tone of voice, and facial expressions whenever we interact with others. Three important things to know about micromessages: 1. They can be positive or negative; 2. They are often semi-conscious or unconscious; 3. They have a greater impact on the performance of underrepresented populations.

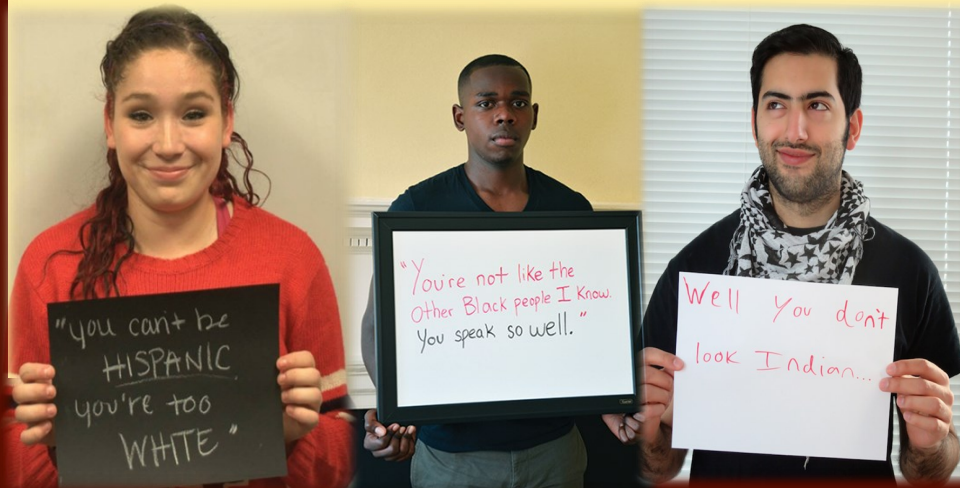
## MICROAGGRESSIONS

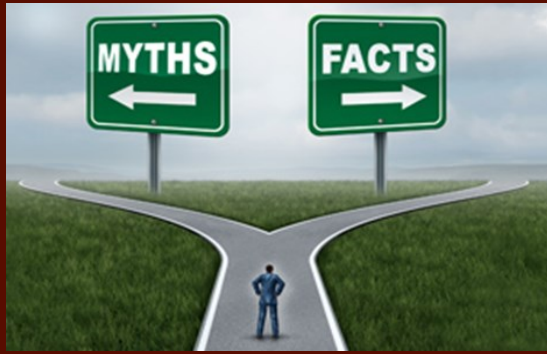


The everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their identity. They can be defined as brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative slights, invalidations, and insults to an individual or group because of their marginalized status in society. They have also been described as subtle insults delivered

through dismissive looks, gestures and tones (verbal, nonverbal, and/or visual) toward women, people of color, or LGBTQ persons often automatically or unconsciously.

Microaggressions are those comments and interactions at work that leave employees feeling uneasy, angry, or upset – sometimes in ways that aren't easily explained. Using a racial slur is an overt discriminatory act. Microaggressions can come from people who mean no harm. In isolation these acts may not quite rise to the level of legal discrimination, but that single interaction communicates that a person is "other" or an outsider. Add up the experience of daily, weekly, and monthly micro-aggressions, and you could have a legally hostile work environment. Telling a person of color that he/she is "so articulate," implies that all other people of color are not. Telling someone "You're not like those other [women, gays/lesbians, Blacks, Latinos], etc. implies that the person is an exception.





## MYTHS ABOUT UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

By Mark Smedley

promote diversity—high-quality development plans for everyone, fair and objective talent reviews, data-based hiring and promotion decisions—are components of any best-in-class talent function, irrespective of the intent to reduce unconscious bias.

Many of us in the HR field are passionate advocates for improving diversity within our organizations. The idea that by upping our efforts in the aforementioned areas we not only elevate our leadership practices—but also help improve diversity—can infuse our work with the extra passion, enthusiasm, and mission focus required to achieve great things for our organizations.

And that is no myth.

Mark Smedley is a Client Relationship Manager for DDI.

Posted: April 26, 2018

## MICROMESSAGING IN THE WORKPLACE (CONTINUED)

An assertive female manager is labeled as a "bitch," while her male counterpart is described as "a forceful leader." Hidden message: (Women should be passive and allow men to be the decision makers.). The following are a few of the seemingly countless examples of microaggressions that people engage in daily:

### "Where are you actually from?"

Asking someone about their ethnic heritage appears to just be a way to get to know someone. But for Latinos, Asians, and "people who fall in between the black-white racial binary in the United States," the question gets tiresome.

### "The way you've overcome your disability is so inspiring"

Too often do we forget that people with disabilities, too, have to deal with microaggressions on the regular. If you have a coworker who has a disability, avoid tropes like telling them their disability is "inspiring," or tip-toeing around it by referring to their disability to a "special need."

### "Is that your real hair?"

Receiving comments about one's natural hair is a frequent struggle for African-American women in particular. Black women's textured hair is often seen as "less professional" than smooth hair, according to the Perception Institute. For black women, the bias against natural hair results in higher levels of anxiety about their appearance. One in five black women feel socially pressured to straighten their hair for work, which is twice the rate for white women.

### What Microaggressions Look Like in the Workplace

- Using outdated terms for racial or ethnic groups, such as colored or Oriental
- Stating or implying that female employees or employees of color were only hired as a result of affirmative action;
- Using identity terms in a derogatory manner (e.g., "That's so gay!" or "They really gypped us on that deal.");
- Asking the only female member of a team get coffee or take notes;
- "Maninterrupting" (when men interrupt women much more than they interrupt another man);
- Mentioning the achievements of some people at a meeting but not others whose achievements are equally relevant;
- Confusing a person of a certain ethnicity with another person of the same ethnicity;
- Telling an outsider that he doesn't conform to the stereotypes associated with his group (e.g., "You don't seem gay.")
- Making comments such as "I'm not a racist. I have several black friends."





## COMMON TYPES OF UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

### Halo Effect

Halo is when we see one great thing about a person and we let the halo glow of that significant thing affect our opinions of everything else about that person. We are in awe of them due to one thing.

### Horns Effect or Negativity Bias

The Horns effect is the direct opposite of the Halo effect. The Horns effect is when we see one bad thing about a person and we let it cloud our opinions of their other attributes.

### Similarity Bias or In-group Bias

Naturally, we want to surround ourselves with people we feel are similar to us. And as a result, we tend to want to work more with people who are like us. In terms of recruitment that may mean that we are more open to hiring individuals we see parts of ourselves in.

### Confirmation Bias

This is one that recruiters have to be extremely careful about! When we make a judgement about another person, we subconsciously look for evidence to back up our own opinions of that person. We do this because we want to believe we're right and that we've made the right assessment of a person.

### Attribution Bias

When we do something well we tend to think it's down to our own merit and personality. When we do something badly we tend to believe that our failing is down to external factors like other people that adversely affected us and prevented us from doing our best.



## IMPACT ON WORK

When Unconscious Bias comes into play, our decisions may not be as robust and objective as we believe them to be. So irrational, bias based decisions and behavior are not good for business.

Unconscious bias has a substantial and far-reaching impact on work environment and culture, on daily interactions between colleagues around the office, and on client relationships.

It can seep into any situation where individuals have the power to influence outcomes through their behavior, decisions and subsequent actions. Unconscious Bias has potentially negative implications on recruitment processes, staff development, performance appraisals, workforce retention, leadership and customer service – and consequently for bottom-line business performance and organization reputation.

Unconscious bias might determine whether or not:

- The best candidate gets a job.
- The most suitable colleague is allocated responsibility for an important project.
- A performance review is an accurate assessment.
- Promotions are given on merit or favoritism.
- Clients feel that they have received a good service.
- Allegations of discrimination are upheld.

The consequences of ignoring the dangers of Unconscious Bias can have a dramatic effect, not just on the culture of the company but also on the reputation of an organization.

## ACTIONS THAT DEMONSTRATE UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

- Body language – over 95% of meaning taken away involves body language
- Eye movements – blinking, eye rolling
- Repeatedly mispronouncing someone's name or remember someone's name
- Interrupting a person/implying credit for someone's work
- Taking credit for work
- Not introducing someone
- Not saying hello to someone
- Distance between two people

## REASONS YOU CAN'T IGNORE UNCONSCIOUS BIAS IN THE WORKPLACE

1. Research has shown us that diversity within organizations promotes innovation and creativity.
2. Unconscious bias can affect a company's reputation.
3. Bias at work can affect an organization's diversity and inclusion initiatives in just about every way, but it shows up most often in recruiting, screening, performance reviews, coaching and development, and promotions.
4. Two million professionals and managers voluntarily leave their jobs solely due to unfairness, according to the Corporate Leavers Survey.



## HOW CAN WE CHANGE UNCONSCIOUS BIASES?

The question was—and is —if some of our biases are “unconscious,” what can we do about them in ourselves? Researchers began to observe managers who appeared successful in achieving diversity and inclusion. From this research hypotheses were developed about micro-affirmations as one antidote to micro-inequities. If we are consistently proactive about affirming the efforts and achievements of others, we might be less prone to micro-inequities.

1. Block unconscious bias. Practice affirming the achievements of others. If you consciously and persistently look for excellence in the work of others and are universally respectful, you may be able to block your own unconscious bias from emerging.
2. Ameliorate damage. Your micro-affirmations might make up for, or balance out, some of the damage caused by micro-inequities in the workplace.
3. Meet a core emotional concern. Appreciation and affirmation are morale boosters, so micro-affirmations should lead to a more motivated and productive workplace.
4. Evoke reciprocal affirmation. Micro-affirmations can be contagious. When we compliment someone, he or she often is then inclined to compliment someone else.
5. Create a role-modeling effect. People are especially sensitive to the behavior of their immediate supervisors. When supervisors adopt the practice of micro-affirmation, they are important role models for colleagues and employees.
6. Rectify our own unconscious bias. Behavior is shaped by attitudes and vice versa. When we practice micro-affirmations, we may actually change some of our own unconscious biases.

## REASONS YOU CAN'T IGNORE UNCONSCIOUS BIAS IN THE WORKPLACE

Unconscious bias touches many aspects of diversity in the workforce. Left unchecked, it can damage employer reputations, reduce talent acquisition effectiveness, and poison company culture.

So how can we control our biases and positively impact diversity and inclusion at our organizations, creating an equitable workplace? The best tool in our toolbox is ourselves. We have the power to step back from a situation and reflect. The more aware we are of our biases and how important it is to look outside of your in-group, the more we can be conscious of our behaviors and become confident that we are not ruled by these biases.

Diversity and inclusion programs can also reduce the effects of unconscious bias. Combating unconscious bias requires commitment and action, but the results can yield a significant talent advantage for any company that commits to the vision.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Culture is not good or bad. It just “is.”
- What may be considered “just the way it is” is often culturally influenced.
- Our view of the world is shaped by values, perceptions, assumptions and expectations.
- The more people know about their culture, and the more they know about other cultures, the better the communication will be.
- The way one does or sees things, when coupled with the way others do and see things, can lead to new improved ways of doing and seeing things.
- Being different is “OK” and differences can be recognized, acknowledged and cherished.

## THREE STEPS TO AVOID UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

### 1. Understand that unconscious bias is normal

Unconscious biases are the implicit positive or negative preferences for things, individuals, or groups shaped through our individual experiences. These snap judgments can have huge implications for the way we work. Unconscious bias makes us believe we are making decisions about an individual’s capabilities, professionalism, or ability to contribute based on rational details, when in reality, these are based on our personal preferences. Until recently, there was a tendency to think that having biases made us bad people. However, neuroscience research has demonstrated that human beings are hardwired to prefer those who resemble us or show similar features. Therefore, companies need to start understanding unconscious bias in the workplace is normal. What makes biases “bad” is a lack of awareness regarding how they influence our decisions and impact others.

### 2. Identify your biases and their potential impact in the workplace

It is important for you to become aware of the biases that you may have and to understand the impact of unconscious bias in the workplace. Take the Implicit Association Test (IAT) to identify your own potential biases and decision-making patterns. After you identify your own implicit biases, consider how these may play out in the workplace. How does unconscious bias affect who you invite to meetings, who you speak with more easily, and whose opinions influence your decisions?

### 3. Broaden your viewpoint and educate others

- When identifying a negative bias that you may have, make a conscious effort to learn more about that idea, individual, or group to understand how and why it makes you uncomfortable.
- When making critical decisions, ensure you invite others who can broaden your viewpoint and may balance out any hidden biases you may have. Ask peers representing other viewpoints for feedback on potential preference patterns you may have and actively listen to their feedback.
- If you identify a colleague who may be making a decision with potential bias, engage them in a constructive conversation to identify any possible biases in their decision.
- When working with global colleagues, understand that your perceptions of bias may simply be the result of a lack of understanding cultural differences. Increase your awareness and understanding of the cultures you may be working with to better understand any potential biases you may have.



## 5 ACTIONS EMPLOYEES CAN TAKE IN THE WORKPLACE TO COUNTER UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

1. IDENTIFY YOUR OWN BIASES AND HOW THEY MAY IMPACT YOU AT WORK
2. ENCOURAGE COWORKERS TO HOLD EACH OTHER ACCOUNTABLE IN POSITIVE WAYS
3. BE INCLUSIVE  
Ask yourself, “Who didn’t I ask for advice, and why?”
4. BE VOCAL AND BE A DIVERSITY CHAMPION
5. BE EMPOWERING AS A MANAGER
  - Enact a policy of no interruptions.
  - Send materials in advance for people who process differently so they can better prepare their thoughts.
  - Take risks on others – particularly those that are different from you.

## 5 INITIATIVES FOR COMPANIES TO COUNTER UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

1. STRIVE FOR DIVERSITY IN YOUR WORKFORCE  
Plus, it will give you a competitive advantage!
2. ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION  
Do a diversity audit at all levels. Evaluate: how people are hired; how work is assigned; how people are promoted; how compensation is determined.
3. TRAINING  
Conduct bias awareness training.
4. SUPPORT NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS AND PROGRAMS THAT INCREASE DIVERSITY IN THE PIPELINE  
Encourage employees to volunteer. Create internships.
5. PROVIDE SPONSORS OR MENTORS FOR UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS

Eliminating unconscious bias in the workplace starts with understanding that predispositions are ubiquitous and only those with a negative impact need to be addressed. A wholesale plan for decreasing unconscious bias in the workplace is usually not necessary. However, by improving one’s awareness and understanding of unconscious bias, individuals can begin to change the way they think about and engage with diversity issues. Be sure to step back and ask “What biases might I have?,” “What impact does this have in the workplace?” and “What will I do about this?.” Increasing one’s awareness and engaging in productive dialogue is the first step in the journey of creating a global inclusive workplace.

### RETRAINING THE UNCONSCIOUS MIND

- Develop and nurture “constructive uncertainty”
- Develop the capacity to use a “flashlight” on ourselves to help identify a bias; this in turn will help you appropriately act on it ☐ Understand and redirect beliefs, don’t try to suppress them
- Explore awkwardness or discomfort by asking ourselves, “What is triggering me in any particular situation?”
- Create opportunities for positive exposure Create and nurture an organizational culture in which we inquire not only into the decisions, but how we make them
- Create constant processes for getting feedback (Especially Data!)
- Reduce your level of guilt, which will only shut you down; instead take responsibility
- Keep cultural factors in mind.

### MEASURE YOUR OWN BIAS

The most effective tool available for testing one’s own unconscious bias is the Implicit Association Test (IAT), created and maintained by Project Implicit, a consortium made up of researchers from Harvard University, the University of Virginia, and the University of Washington.

**To take the IAT, without charge, go to:**  
**<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit>**

The IAT measures the ease with which people associate words or pictures representing either of two contrasting groups – such as white people and black people or men and women – with positive or negative meanings. Our implicit biases are a better predictor of our behavior than our self-reported explicit biases

## AVOID SCHEMAS AND DISCRIMINATION

- **Explicit Discrimination:** conscious actions directed against members of a group.
- **Schemas:** Non-conscious expectations or stereotypes associated with members of a group that guide perceptions and behaviors.
- Action based on schemas is pervasive and inevitable. But schemas can be distorting and result in poor judgment.

### SCHEMAS ARE WIDELY SHARED

- **Research shows that we all – regardless of gender or race – perceive and treat people based on schemas associated with their race/gender/social group.**
- **Both men and women hold them about gender**
- **Both whites and people of color hold them about race**
- **People are typically not aware of them, but with effort can become aware of them and change them.**

### SCHEMAS PLAY A SIGNIFICANT ROLE WHEN THERE IS:

- **Ambiguity (including lack of information)**
- **Stress from competing tasks**
- **Time pressure**
- **Under-representation of the group in question (when the group does not reach critical mass)**

## HOW TO COMBAT UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

as an Individual

### QUESTION YOUR ASSUMPTIONS

Start to ask yourself: Why am I thinking this way? Would I be drawing the same conclusions if this scenario involved someone of a different profile (e.g., a man instead of a woman, a person with no children instead of a mother)?

### ANALYZE

Ask yourself if the forms of biases and covering (strategies people use to downplay a stigmatized identity) you are experiencing or enacting are consistent with your personal and organizational values. If they are not, identify opportunities to change.

### TAKE A RISK

Put yourself outside your comfort zone. Find people such as your manager, mentors, and sponsors who will help you work through those risks to make them worthwhile.

### DISRUPT THE DEFAULT

Challenge elements of the status quo that may perpetuate bias. For example, create connections across differences by finding a mentor or sponsor from a different demographic group than you.

### SPEAK OUT

Discuss issues in ways that are comfortable to you (e.g., private conversations with a mentor, anonymous feedback on employee surveys, discussion points). Share your experiences with others to find common ground and start a dialogue that will generate solutions.

### HOLD YOURSELF AND OTHERS ACCOUNTABLE

Hold yourself accountable for self-reflection, learning, and continually analyzing your behaviors and experiences. At the same time, interrupt when you see others engaging in biased behaviors by politely calling out their misstep and suggesting constructive alternative ways of thinking.

# SOURCE MATERIAL

- **Becoming Conscious About Unconscious Bias** by Brenda J. Allen, Ph.D. , Whitworth University Staff Workshop
- **Unconscious Bias** by Sandra Reyes, Esquire
- **Unconscious Bias in the Workplace** by Toni Neely
- **Beyond Bias: An Introduction to Implicit Bias** by Dushaw Hockett, Executive Director, Safe Places for the Advancement of Community & Equity
- **Microaggressions: The Complicated Story of our Daily Interactions** by Lisa Miles, M. Ed, Associate Director, Office of Common Ground, The University of Richmond's Diversity Initiative
- **Catalyst.org: Workplaces That Work for Women**
- **Exploring Unconscious/Implicit Bias in Academic Medicine**
- **Blind Spot, HIDDEN BIASES OF GOOD PEOPLE** by Mahzarin R. Banaji and Anthony G. Greenwald
- **Everyday Bias: Identifying and Navigating Unconscious Judgments in Our Daily Lives** by Howard J. Ross. Bowman and Littlefield
- **EXAMINING OUR UNCONSCIOUS BIAS AND PERCEPTUAL LENS** by Britt Gamble, Associate Director for Multicultural Affairs, Cornell University School of Industrial & Labor Relations
- **9 Types of Unconscious Bias and the Shocking Ways They Affect Your Recruiting Efforts** by Siofra Pratt
- **Proven Strategies for Addressing Unconscious Bias in the Workplace** by Howard Ross, Founder & Chief Learning Officer, Cook Ross, Inc.
- **Overcoming Unconscious Bias** by [www.aura-astronomy.org/about/diversity.asp](http://www.aura-astronomy.org/about/diversity.asp)
- **Unconscious Bias Network Exchange, Advancing Women in Business**
- **From Microinequities to Microaffirmations** by David Hunt, J.D., President & CEO Critical Measures
- **Unconscious Bias: An Introduction To How Our Biases Affect Our Lives And Work** by David Marshall, Founder and Managing Director, Marshall E-Learning Consultancy
- **The Hidden Brain** by Shankar Vedantam
- **Blink** by Malcolm Gladwell
- **The Unconscious Bias Masterclass** by Mags Bradbury, Associate Director Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, Central Manchester University Hospitals
- **Building Positive, Inclusive Relationships at Work** by Dave Fitz-Gerald and Janet Edmundson
- **The Impact of Implicit Bias in the Workplace** by Julia Méndez, SHRM-CP, PHR, CDP, CAAP, CELS People Fluent
- **Unconscious Biases** by the UMPC Center For Engagement and Inclusion
- **Killing Me Softly-Implicit Bias/Cognition And Microaggressions** by LaVonna B. Lewis, PhD, MPH, Teaching Professor of Public Policy and Director, Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives

# UNCONSCIOUS BIAS PRE-TEST ANSWER KEY

1. True - That statement is the definition of bias, though in common usage bias has a negative connotation because of its association with terms like “prejudice” and “discrimination.”
2. True - Unconscious biases are often automatic responses designed to keep us safe from harm when dealing with potentially dangerous situations.
3. D. Autopilot processing - Unconscious biases are the result of programmed guidelines and rules that the brain learns based on experience and uses for decisions that may not need—or allow for—deliberate consideration.
4. E. More than 99%. The brain gets 11 million bits of information every minute and can deal with 40. The remaining 99.999996% of information is processed unconsciously.
5. B. The need to belong - Originally, the thinking was that food, clothing, and shelter were the most fundamental human needs. But recent research indicates that the need to belong is programmed into us as infants when we begin to realize our dependency on our parents for our physiological needs.
6. A. Looking for information that supports what you already believe to be true while rejecting evidence that supports a different conclusion.
7. True. Non-white people within diverse racial and ethnic groups can have unconscious biases?
8. Inquiry/Advocacy - By being inquisitive and curious about why people think a certain way instead of being an advocate of a different way, one can help them realize their own unconscious biases.
9. Reflective/Reflexive - Unconscious bias is about being more aware and conscious of autopilot decisions that our brains make.
10. D. All of the above.
11. False. Unconscious bias isn't just about differences. 'Own group bias' can see male executives perceive other males as less trustworthy or hardworking than females. And young girls fostering 'self bias' are twice as likely as boys to worry that pursuing a leadership role will make them seem “bossy”.
12. False. 'Affinity ('like me') bias' is the factor at play when a juicy role goes to the graduate of a same college or with whom you have an avid interest in a shared hobby. 'Hiring in your own image' can have a long-lasting effect: in the long-term it can mean that you're likely to build a stronger relationship with that particular individual, which can ultimately lead to that person receiving more stretch assignments, better support of their abilities or increased visibility across the organization.
13. Actually all of the above. Gender biases can be formed at a very early age through a whole variety of factors.
14. True. Beauty pays. Over a lifetime, beauty bias can amount to an earnings gap of \$250,000.
15. True. Racism is not the exclusive property of Caucasian people. Racism is individual, not just institutional. Belittling, totalizing comments about a people based on their skin color is a facile, unhelpfully tribal and a meaninglessly antagonistic practice.





ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF  
Healthcare and  
Family Services

**ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTHCARE AND FAMILY SERVICES**

201 South Grand Avenue East  
Springfield, Illinois 62763  
Or  
401 South Clinton  
Chicago, Illinois 60607  
[www.illinois.gov/hfs](http://www.illinois.gov/hfs)

**TO TEST YOUR OWN UNCONSCIOUS BIAS  
TAKE THE IMPLICIT ASSOCIATION TEST (IAT)**

**[WWW.IMPLICIT.HARVARD.EDU/IMPLICIT](http://WWW.IMPLICIT.HARVARD.EDU/IMPLICIT)**