



# **UNCONSCIOUS BIAS**

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**AND IT'S IMPACT IN OUR EVERYDAY LIVES**



# 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.**






**IF YOU HAVE A BRAIN,  
YOU HAVE BIAS**

**BIAS IS  
HARD  
WIRED  
IN OUR  
BRAINS**

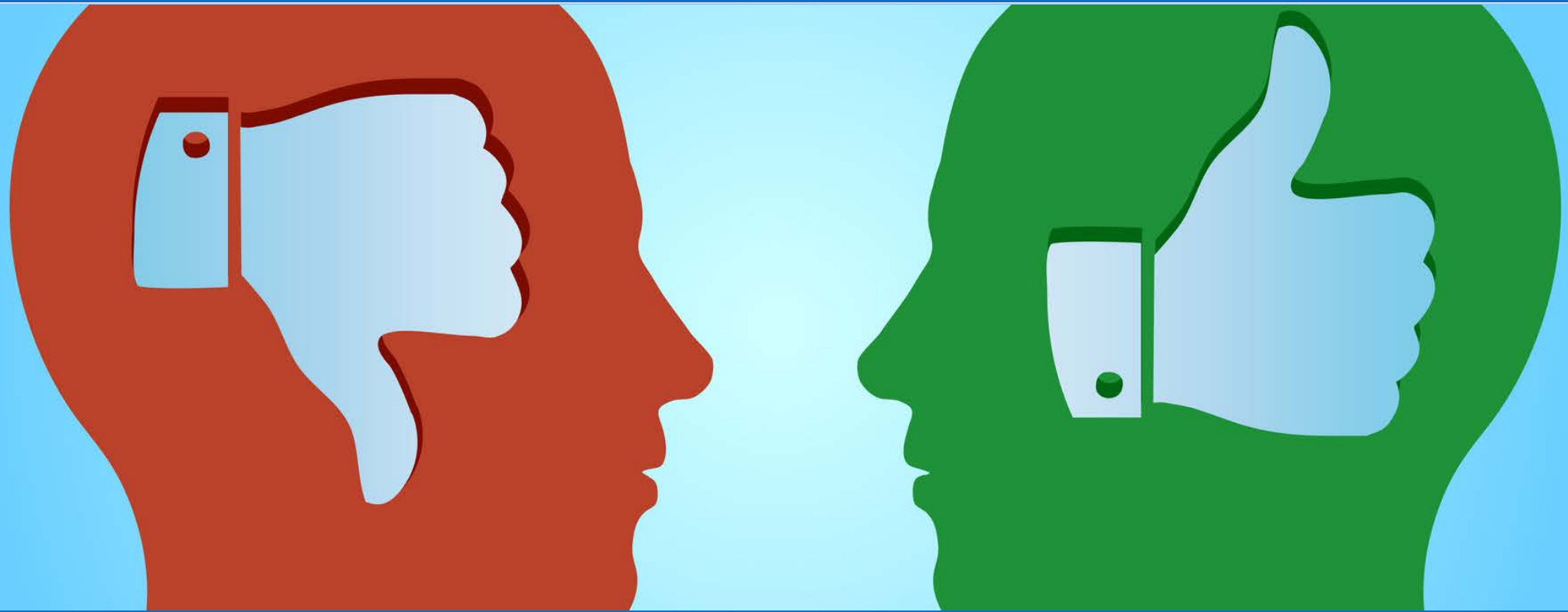




**WHILE BIAS  
MAY SEEM  
LIKE A  
CHARGED  
WORD**

**BIASES  
HAVE A  
PURPOSE  
AND SERVE  
YOU AT  
TIMES**





**A BIAS IS SIMPLY A PREFERENCE  
FOR OR AGAINST SOMETHING**





**BIAS ITSELF IS  
NEUTRAL...  
HOWEVER, WHAT  
WE DO WITH OUR  
BIASES CAN HAVE A  
NEGATIVE IMPACT  
ON OTHERS IF WE  
AREN'T CAREFUL**



**HERE ARE THREE  
QUESTIONS YOU CAN  
ASK YOURSELF WHEN  
YOU MEET SOMEONE  
FOR THE FIRST TIME  
TO CHECK YOUR BIAS  
AND SEE IF YOU'RE  
BEING INCLUSIVE.**





# THREE QUESTIONS



- 1. ARE THERE THINGS ABOUT THIS PERSON THAT PARTICULARLY INFLUENCE YOUR IMPRESSION?**
- 2. DOES THIS PERSON REMIND YOU OF SOMEBODY YOU KNOW?**
- 3. WHAT ASSESSMENTS HAVE YOU ALREADY MADE ABOUT THE PERSON?**



# **IN YOUR OPINION**

**A truly fair-minded person will have no biases.**

**FALSE**

**Everyone has biases. A bias is a preference for one thing, person, or group over another. Our biases are typically preferences for things, people, and groups that are familiar and are like us. Bias becomes a concern when it becomes a prejudice against certain people or groups in ways that are unfair and lead to discrimination.**

**TRUE**

**FALSE**



# **IN YOUR OPINION**

**Unconscious biases exist in all of us and are necessary to keep us safe.**

**TRUE**

**Unconscious biases are often automatic responses designed to keep us safe from harm when dealing with potentially dangerous situations.**

**TRUE**

**FALSE**





# **WHAT EXACTLY IS UNCONSCIOUS BIAS?**





Conscious Brain

Unconscious Brain

Faster than conscious brain function  
Often overrides conscious brain function

**Think of an iceberg.**

**The most important part of the iceberg is the part you cannot see hidden deep under the water. Even though you cannot see the bottom of the iceberg, it is important to be aware that it exists.**

**Think of your unconscious bias as the bottom of the iceberg hidden below the water. We may not always know that they are there, but it is important to know that they do exist.**







# WHAT IS UNCONSCIOUS BIAS?



**Research shows that our brains jump to assumptions and conclusions without us even knowing it.**



# WHAT IS UNCONSCIOUS BIAS?

**Scientists estimate that we are exposed to as many as 11 million pieces of information at any one time, but our brains can only functionally deal with about 40.**





# **WHAT IS UNCONSCIOUS BIAS?**

- **Unconscious bias is not intentional for most part.**
- **It is a blind spot. We need to consciously examine how we think.**
- **We use unconscious bias to make sense of things around us by creating rules to process information to the advantage of some & the disadvantage of others.**



# WHAT IS UNCONSCIOUS BIAS?

**So how do we filter out the rest? We use categories as a form of intellectual short-hand. It can apply shortcuts to situations in which they don't work. Sometimes it applies rules to complex situations inappropriately.**





# WHAT IS UNCONSCIOUS BIAS?



**Unconscious bias applies to how we perceive other people. We are all biased and becoming aware of our biases will help us mitigate them in the workplace.**



# **UNCONSCIOUS BIAS**

**Unconscious biases are the result of our limited cognitive capacity; we implicitly and automatically both group and categorize people to avoid having to conduct completely new assessments for every new person.**



# UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

**Unconscious biases are our unintentional people preferences, formed by our socialization and experiences, including exposure to the media. We unconsciously assign positive and negative value to the categories we use.**

- **Automatic and rapid**
- **We do not have to believe a stereotype for it to affect us.**
- **Pervasive, and we ALL have them**
- **Resistant to change and creates 'special' categories**
- **Lead to 'micro-behaviors'**



# **TYPES OF UNCONSCIOUS BIAS**

**Skin color, gender, and age are generally what people think of when they consider biases, but individuals can harbor unconscious prejudice about a myriad of characteristics, including:**

- **Height and weight**
- **Introversion/Extroversion**
- **Marital and parental status**
- **Disability status**
- **Foreign accents**
- **Where someone attended college or grew up**
- **Volunteer activities**
- **Body piercings/manner of dress**



# **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 failing to 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**



# **IN YOUR OPINION**

**What are characteristics of unconscious biases?:**

- A. They are formed outside a person's own conscious awareness.**
- B. Assumptions and stereotypes a person has about a diverse group or groups of people.**
- C. Often times they do not align with the person's conscious values.**
- D. All of the above.**

**D. All of the above.**



# IN YOUR OPINION

**Unconscious bias always stems from the way we perceive differences in others and how we behave accordingly.**

**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 females fostering self bias are twice as likely as males to worry that pursuing a leadership role will make them seem "bossy."**

**TRUE**

**FALSE**



# KEY TAKEAWAYS

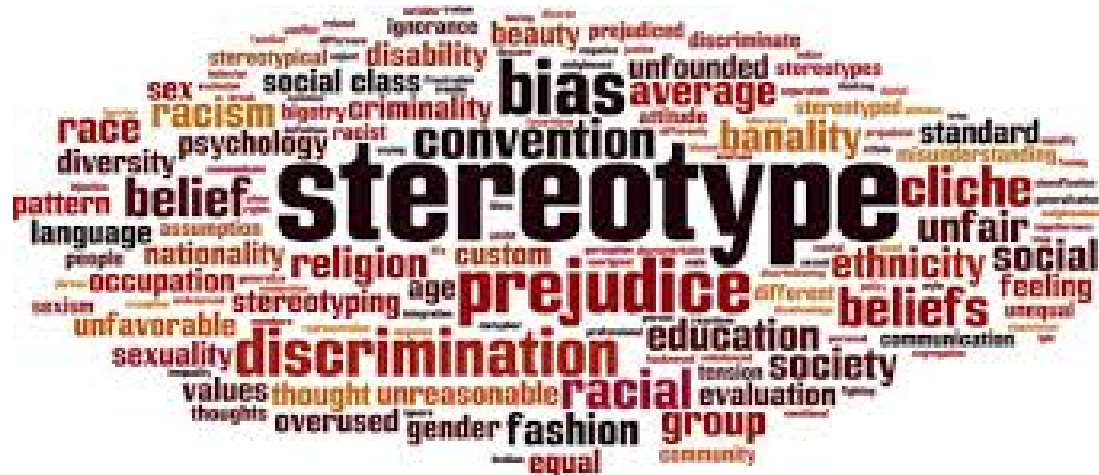
- **We all have biases.**
- **Biases are neutral and are simply a preference for or against something.**
- **Unconscious Bias is unintentional, generally a grouping and categorizing short-cut that our brains make to process information.**
- **Unconscious Biases encompass a myriad of characteristics which go much deeper than race, gender or age.**



# **HOW DOES UNCONSCIOUS BIAS DEVELOP?**



# HOW UNCONSCIOUS BIAS DEVELOPS



Unconscious bias results from stereotypes. Stereotypes might seem inconsequential, but they become problematic when we automatically associate individuals with certain stereotypes. Our brains are quick to make these associations, which can result in unconscious bias.



# HOW UNCONSCIOUS BIAS DEVELOPS

**Neuroscientists have uncovered brain regions involved in racial and gender stereotyping and have shown that such stereotypes begin to form early in childhood.**





# HOW UNCONSCIOUS BIAS DEVELOPS



**Recent work found that the brain responds more strongly to information about ethnic groups who are portrayed unfavorably, suggesting that the negative depiction of minorities in the media can fuel bias.**



# **HOW UNCONSCIOUS BIAS DEVELOPS**

- **Influenced by our background, cultural environment and personal experiences**
- **Biased media representations**
- **Social experiences**
- **Repeated exposure to stereotypical associations and prejudices which become automated in our long-term memory**



# UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

- **It is unfair and absurd to give employees lower performance evaluations solely because of they are overweight.**
- **Or to prescribe medical procedures to people more often because of their race.**
- **Or to treat people different ways because of their clothing.**
- **Or to call on boys more often than girls when they raise their hands in school.**

**And yet, all of these things continuously happen, and they are but a small sampling of the hundreds of ways we make decisions every day in favor of one group, and to the detriment of others, without even realizing we're doing it.**



# **IN YOUR OPINION**

**What causes unconscious bias?:**

**A. Discrimination and prejudice.**

**B. Bad Influences.**

**C. Absence of experience.**

**D. Absence of training.**

**E. Autopilot processing.**

**F. None of the above.**

**E. Autopilot processing.**



# IN YOUR OPINION

**The percentage of information processed unconsciously by the human brain through experienced-based rules is:**

- A. Less than 10%.**
- B. More than 75%.**
- C. More than 99%.**
- D. Less than 50%.**
- E. More than 90%**

**C. More than 99%.**



# **COMMON TYPES OF UNCONSCIOUS BIAS**



# COMMON TYPES OF UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

## Confirmation Bias

**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.**





# COMMON TYPES OF UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

## Similarity 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.**





# COMMON TYPES OF UNCONSCIOUS BIAS



## 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. When it comes to other people, we tend to think the opposite. If someone else has done something well we consider them lucky, and if they've done something badly we tend to think it's due to their personality or bad behavior.**



# 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.**





# COMMON TYPES OF UNCONSCIOUS BIAS



## Horns Effect

**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.**



# **IN YOUR OPINION**

**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.**

**D. All of the above.**



# KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Unconscious bias results from stereotypes.**
- **They are influenced by our background, cultural environment and personal experiences.**
- **Common types of Unconscious Bias affects our decision-making processes in a number of different ways including perceptions, attitude, judgement and behaviors.**
- **Unconscious Bias isn't just about differences.**



# **NAVIGATING OUR PERSONAL BIASES**



# IN YOUR OPINION

**Being color-blind or gender-blind is the best approach to obtaining equality in the workplace.**

**FALSE**

**What we really need to focus on and what can actually benefit organizations in myriad ways is learning to see, value, and make space for the differences between us. When we say we're blind to race and gender, what we're really saying is that we're blind to something else: that we can never truly be blind and wouldn't want to be, anyway.**

**TRUE**

**FALSE**





# **COLOR-BLINDNESS**

**A colorblind approach allows us to deny uncomfortable cultural differences. At its face value, colorblindness seems like a good thing, judging people by the content of their character rather than the color of their skin. Many Americans view colorblindness as helpful to people of color by asserting that race does not matter. Colorblindness is not the answer.**



# COLOR-BLINDNESS

**Most underrepresented minorities will explain that race does matter, as it affects opportunities, perceptions, income, and so much more. When race-related problems arise, colorblindness tends to individualize conflicts and shortcomings, rather than examining the larger picture with cultural differences, stereotypes, and values placed into context.**





# UNCONSCIOUS GENDER BIAS



**While blatant sexism in our workplaces might be more toned down now, the fact remains that the language we tend to use is still very gender specific. And the gender that is most often highlighted in language is male-based. Think about it. Something as simple as “Hey you guys!” shows that “the man” is the anchor of our language, and “woman” is not.**



# **UNCONSCIOUS GENDER BIAS**

**So the question is how do we work to be aware of the language and beliefs that allow sexism to perpetuate, albeit sometimes unconsciously? The answer lies with mindfulness—of working to prevent ourselves from walking into stereotypes and breaking free from the pre-programming that each of us are wired with as humans.**

- **“Don’t be such a drama queen!”**
- **“Would you man up?”**
- **“Hey! Why don’t you smile?”**
- **“Calm down.” In response to when a woman expresses her opinion.**
- **“Stop acting like a girl.”**
- **Assuming women in the group will take notes**



# **IN YOUR OPINION**

**Which of the following statements do you think most accurately describes how gender biases are formed?**

- A. Through socialization, for example the gender-specific toys you're given as a child.**
- B. Through the labels assigned to individuals, for example discouraging only little girls from being "bossy".**
- C. Through media exposure, for example gender portrayals in cartoons, soap operas, newspapers and movies.**
- D. Through personal experiences of how those around us behave.**
- E. All of the above**

**E. All of the above.**



# UNCONSCIOUS DISABILITY BIAS

**How does unconscious bias kick in, when you interact with an employee, applicant or client who is disabled? What is the first thing you think when you look at that person? The unconscious thinking we don't recognize in ourselves can have a negative impact on productivity caused by employee dissatisfaction and missed hiring opportunities.**



**The disabled, who are the largest minority group in the country, have a 79% rate of unemployment and underemployment.**



# **UNCONSCIOUS DISABILITY BIAS**

## **Questions to Ask Yourself**

- 1. When you think of a person with a disability, do you focus on the things the person can do or cannot do? Where do you get the information on which you base your views? Did you ask or observe the person with a disability?**
- 2. When you meet a person with a disability, do you see the person's disability before you see the person?**
- 3. When you think of a person with a disability, do you have sympathy or feel pity for the person?**
- 4. Do you think about people with disabilities as a group or as individuals? If as a group, what characteristics do you think people with disabilities share?**
- 5. Do you use terms (e.g., "normal" or "able-bodied") to differentiate between people without disabilities and people with disabilities?**



# IN YOUR OPINION

**Contrary to the assumption that implicit attitudes don't change, according to a 2019 Harvard University study, which of the following statements is true (over the last decade)?**

- A. Sexuality bias (including sexual orientation) has decreased by 33%.**
- B. Racial bias has decreased by about 17%.**
- C. As of 2010 body weight bias had increased by 40%.**
- D. Age and disability bias has remained unchanged.**
- E. All of the above.**

**E. All of the above.**



**WAS IT  
SOMETHING  
I SAID?**



# **IN YOUR OPINION**

**Which of the following statements are free of Unconscious Bias?**

- A. Is there a man I can speak with about this?**
- B. Seriously, where are you really from?**
- C. I'm not racist, I have many black friends!"**
- D. I'm just going to call you Mr. B because I can't pronounce your name.**
- E. All of the above**
- F. None of the above.**



# **MICROAGGRESSIONS**

**Microaggressions are “subtle, stunning, often automatic verbal and non-verbal exchanges which are ‘put downs’.**

**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.**

- **Using identity terms in a derogatory manner (e.g., “That’s so gay!” or “They really gypped us on that deal.”)**
- **Telling an African American employee that her name is “weird,” or “unpronounceable.”**
- **Remarking that an Indian-American worker’s traditional Indian lunch is “disgusting” or “strange.”**
- **Using outdated terms for racial or ethnic groups, such as colored or Oriental.**



# MICROAGGRESSIONS



**Men are nearly three times as likely to interrupt a woman than another man. The New York Times called men interrupting women "a universal phenomenon." And the kicker is when a man parrots the same idea as the woman he interrupted, receiving all the credit for it.**



# 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.**





# MICROAGGRESSIONS



**Micro-aggressions 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. Micro-aggressions can come from people who mean no harm.**



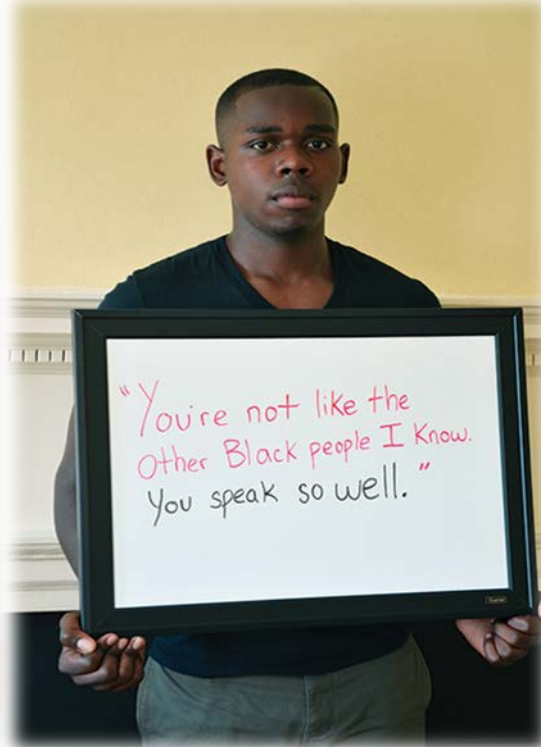
# MICROAGGRESSIONS

**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.**





# MICROAGGRESSIONS



**“You’re not like those other (women, gays/lesbians, Blacks, Latinos), etc.  
(This implies that the person is an exception).”**



# MICROAGGRESSIONS



**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.)**



# **OTHER MICROMESSAGING**



# **MICROINEQUITIES**

## **What are microinequities?**

**Micro-inequities are subtle, disrespectful actions that reflect our biases. They can be difficult to recognize for both the person acting them out and the target.**

- **Excluding certain people from social interaction.**
- **Repeatedly mispronouncing a person's name.**
- **Rolling your eyes, sighing loudly or raising your voice even though the other person has no difficulties hearing you.**
- **Confusing a person of a certain ethnicity with another person of the same ethnicity.**
- **Checking emails or texting during a face-to-face conversation.**



# MICROINSULTS

## What are microinsults?

**Verbal and nonverbal communications that subtly convey rudeness and insensitivity and demean a person's heritage or identity.**

- **An employee asks a colleague of color how she got her job or was admitted in college/university, graduate/professional school, etc. implying she may have landed it through an affirmative action or quota system and therefore unqualified for the position.**
- **Assuming a professional person of color is the hired help, such as a custodian, secretary, bellhop etc.**
- **"I never would have guessed that you were gay."**



# **MICROASSAULTS**

## **What are microassaults?**

**Conscious and intentional actions or slurs such as:**

- **Using disability-related, racial, sexist, homophobic epithets**
- **Displaying swastikas, confederate flags, etc.**
- **Shopkeeper vigilance/shopper profiling**
- **Stop and frisk policies**



# **MICROINVALIDATIONS**

## **What are microinvalidations?**

**Communications that subtly exclude, negate or nullify the thoughts, feelings or experiential reality of a person of a marginalized group.**

- **You're playing the "race" card.**
- **You're being too sensitive.**
- **#Black Lives Matter – What about OTHER lives? All lives matter.**
- **What's the big deal? They're only words.**



# **MEASURING YOUR BIAS**



# **IMPLICIT ASSOCIATION TEST**

**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>**



# **IMPLICIT ASSOCIATION TEST**

- **Web based self assessment tool**
- **We share common biases that favor society's in-groups**
- **Our implicit biases are a better predictor of our behavior than our self-reported explicit biases**



# **IMPLICIT ASSOCIATION TEST**

## **IMPLICIT ASSOCIATION TEST FINDINGS**

- **Implicit biases are pervasive.**
- **People are often unaware of their implicit biases.**
- **Implicit biases (vs explicit) are predictive of behavior.**
- **People differ in levels of implicit bias.**



**The inevitable question is:  
“Now what? I know I’m biased  
and so is everyone else. What  
am I supposed to do about it?”**



# **CHANGING BEHAVIOR**



# **WAYS TO COMBAT HIDDEN BIAS**

**Recognize that as  
human beings,  
our brains  
make mistakes  
without us even  
knowing it.**





# **WAYS TO COMBAT HIDDEN BIAS**



**Become aware of individual perceptions, stereotypes, and their impact on decision making.**



# **WAYS TO COMBAT HIDDEN BIAS**

**Engage in courageous conversations to increase knowledge and address negative perceptions, stereotypes, and attitudes.**





# KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **A colorblind approach allows us to deny uncomfortable cultural differences.**
- **Subtle verbal or non-verbal exchanges which are 'put downs' even if unintentional are considered Microaggressions.**
- **The most effective tool available for testing one's own unconscious bias is the Implicit Association Test (IAT).**
- **Awareness of individual perceptions, and stereotypes is a way to combat hidden bias.**



# **TAKING STEPS TO ELIMINATE UNCONSCIOUS BIASES**



# **ELIMINATING OUR BIASES**

**Unconscious biases don't have to be permanent.**

**While it may be impossible to completely eradicate these biases, we can take steps to reduce the chances as many of our decisions are influenced by them. Follow these steps to limit the unconscious biases (including at work).**



# **ELIMINATING OUR BIASES**

## **1. Learn what unconscious biases are.**

**The first step of limiting the impact unconscious biases have on your organization is making sure everyone is aware that they exist. Awareness training is the first step to unraveling unconscious bias because it allows employees to recognize that everyone possesses them and to identify their own.**



# **ELIMINATING OUR BIASES**

## **2. Assess which biases are most likely to affect you.**

**Take tests—like Harvard's Implicit Association Test (IAT) — to figure out which of your individual perceptions are most likely to be governed by unconscious biases. Armed with that information, you can take proactive steps to address them on a personal basis.**



# **ELIMINATING OUR BIASES**

## **3. Figure out where biases are most likely to affect your organization.**

**Biases tend to affect who gets hired, who gets promoted, who gets raises and who gets what kind of work, among other things. By knowing where bias is most likely to creep in, you can take steps to ensure that biases are considered when important decisions are made in those areas.**



# **ELIMINATING OUR BIASES**

## **4. Let data inform your decisions.**

**If your organization's upper management echelons are only staffed by white men, unconscious biases are determining which employees are promoted. Make it a priority to diversify your management team so that more voices and backgrounds are represented.**



# **ELIMINATING OUR BIASES**

## **5. Bring diversity into your hiring decisions.**

**If your goal is to hire a diverse staff, make sure that there's diversity among the group of people tasked with hiring new employees. Otherwise, you may continue hiring the same kinds of homogenous workers—despite your best intentions.**



# **ELIMINATING OUR BIASES**

## **6. Hold employees accountable.**

**Actions speak louder than words. While you shouldn't necessarily punish someone for making a decision influenced by unconscious biases, you should keep track of whether such decisions are being made. If a manager gives 10 performance reviews, five to men and five to women, and four out of the highest five are women, it should at the very least call for an inquiry into whether there might be a pro-female bias in the process.**



# **ELIMINATING OUR BIASES**

## **7. Set diversity goals.**

**From more innovation to more talented employees to higher retention rates, there are a number of reasons why companies should focus on creating diverse workplaces. Set goals to make sure that your diversity program is more than just lip service and you actually make progress toward building a diverse team.**



# REMEMBER

- **We all have biases.**
- **Biases are neutral and are simply a preference for or against something.**
- **Unconscious Bias is unintentional, generally a grouping and categorizing short-cut that our brains make to process information.**
- **Unconscious Biases encompass a myriad of characteristics which go much deeper than race, gender or age.**



# **SUMMARY**

**“Extraordinary people are not extraordinary because they are invulnerable to unconscious biases. They are extraordinary because they choose to do something about it.”**

**Shankar Vedantam**  
**“The Hidden Brain”**



**THANK YOU!!!**