UNCONSCIOUS BIAS: MAKING THE UNCONSCIOUS CONSCIOUS

Learning Objectives
At the end of this presentation you will be able to:
• Define diversity and inclusion as recognized by UTHSCSA SoM
• Define unconscious bias
• Recognize ways unconscious bias may be at work in everyday life, in relationships, and in the healthcare setting
• Locate tools to help you recognize your own unconscious bias
• Reflect on ways you can mitigate your own unconscious bias

DEFINING DIVERSITY

Extrinsic Characteristics
Culture
Family Status
Life Experience
Veteran Status
Education Attainment
Geographic Location
Socioeconomic Status

Intrinsic Characteristics
Age
Race
Gender
Ethnicity
Lifestyle/Sexual Orientation
Mental/Physical Abilities & Characteristics
**AAMC GDI Definitions**

**Diversity:** A core value embodying inclusiveness, mutual respect, and multiple perspectives, and serves as catalyst for change resulting in health equity.

In this context, we are mindful of all aspects of human differences such as socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, language, nationality, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, geography, disability, and age.

Retrieved from: [https://www.aamc.org/members/gdi/about/](https://www.aamc.org/members/gdi/about/)

**Inclusion:** A core element for successfully achieving diversity. Inclusion is achieved by creating a nurturing climate and culture through professional development, education, policy, and practice.

The objective is to create a climate that fosters belonging, respect, and value for all, and encourages engagement and connection throughout the school and community.

Retrieved from: [https://www.aamc.org/members/gdi/about/](https://www.aamc.org/members/gdi/about/)

**Health equity:** Everyone has the opportunity to attain their full health potential; no one is disadvantaged from achieving this potential because of social position or other socially determined circumstance.

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**THE IMPORTANCE OF IDENTITY**

**How do you identify?**

What is visible to others (the leaves, branches, and trunk of the tree)?

What is invisible, but forms the foundation of who you are (the roots of the tree)?

**Activity**

Who Am I?

- List three visible pieces of your identity
- List three invisible pieces of your identity
- Share your lists with someone near you
  - Similarities?
  - Differences?
Unconscious Bias

- What is it?
  - A prejudice we have or an assumption we make about another person based on common cultural stereotypes, rather than on thoughtful judgement
- Who has it?
  - Everyone!
- Why?
  - Because we humans have a natural tendency to make associations to help us organize our social worlds

If you are human, you are biased.

- Howard J. Ross

Practical Consequences

- Leads to dissatisfaction and lack of productivity in the workplace
- Impacts hiring and evaluation practices
- Impacts our relationships with coworkers and with our patients
- Affects communication and feedback
- Affects leadership selection

Four Types of Unconscious Bias

- Affinity bias
- In group vs. out group
- Stereotype
- Confirmation

Affinity Bias

The tendency to warm up to people like ourselves
In-group vs. Out-group

The “Us vs. Them” mentality.

Reflect and Share

1. What are some Us vs. Them dichotomies in your life?
2. Any type of bias may be because the person with whom you are interacting reminds you of someone you know – What might be the outcome of such a scenario?
3. Bias may also happen when an individual triggers something from your background – Can you identify your triggers?

Micro-messages

Micro-inequities
- Hard to prove
- Often unconscious
- Cause recipient (and empathetic bystanders) to feel...
  - Devalued
  - Slighted
  - Discouraged
  - Excluded

Micro-affirmations
- Intentional
- Conscious practice of common courtesy
- Cause people to feel...
  - Valued
  - Included
  - Encouraged

Subtle & Powerful

Pair and Share

• Turn to someone sitting near you, and take a moment to list two or three micro-inequities and micro-affirmations
• Be prepared to share your thoughts!
L.I.V.E. Micro-affirmations

Listening
• Make eye contact
• Pay attention to what others have to say
• Don’t interrupt

Including
• Invite others to participate
• Invite others to socialize
• Keep everyone in the loop

Valuing
• Give credit where it’s due
• Encourage strengths
• Acknowledge accomplishments

Engaging
• Say hello and goodbye
• Give equal time to everyone
• Ask for input

Ok, so I have biases. What do I do about it?
• Uncover your biases
• Reflect on how your biases affect your daily interactions
• Reflect on why you have these biases
• Seek out and engage with people you consider on the “THEM” side of Us vs. Them
• Get feedback from a trusted friend, mentor, or family member

Uncovering Your Biases: Project Implicit

• Uses a common measure of unconscious bias called the Implicit Association Test, or the IAT
  – IAT requires test-takers to rapidly match images of individuals of different demographics to pictures or words of varying pleasantness
  – The quick associations that the test-takers must make reveal their unconscious biases

IAT Screenshots

Native-White American

This IAT requires the ability to recognize White and Native American faces in either classic or modern dress, and the names of places that are either American or Foreign

My Results

Your data suggest a slight association of Native Am. with Foreign and White Am. with American compared to White Am. with Foreign and Native Am. with Amrican.

The interpretation is described as ‘automatic association between White Am. and American’ if you responded faster when White Am. images and Americans were classified with the same key than when White Am. images and Foreign were classified with the same key. Depending on the magnitude of your result, your automatic association may be described as ‘light’, ‘moderate’, ‘strong’ or ‘little to no preference’. Alternatively, you may have received feedback that there were too many errors to determine a result.

Developing self-awareness

Aspire to know yourself
Be open to change
Own your bad habits
Connect your mind and body

Identify your blind spots
Observe yourself

My Result:

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Reflect

• What biases might I have?
  – Do I have automatic feelings or judgments about anyone I know?
  – Does this person remind me of someone I know?
  – What is this person triggering in my background?
• What micro-inequities might I have perpetrated?
• What micro-inequities have been used against me?
• Do I incorporate micro-affirmations in my interactions?

Resources

• Project Implicit
  https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/