



# Beyond Bias: An Introduction to Implicit Bias

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# OBJECTIVES:

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1. Increase awareness and understanding regarding the science of implicit bias;
2. Share examples of how implicit bias shows up in daily life, including the workplace;
3. Practice strategies for reducing and interrupting implicit bias.

# INTRODUCTION

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1. A nick name, funny name, abbreviated name or term of endearment that people called you when you were growing up.
2. Name of a person who shaped and molded you into the person you are now and/or the person you are becoming
3. Share a story about a time you laughed hard or smiled wide.

# WHAT IS IMPLICIT BIAS?

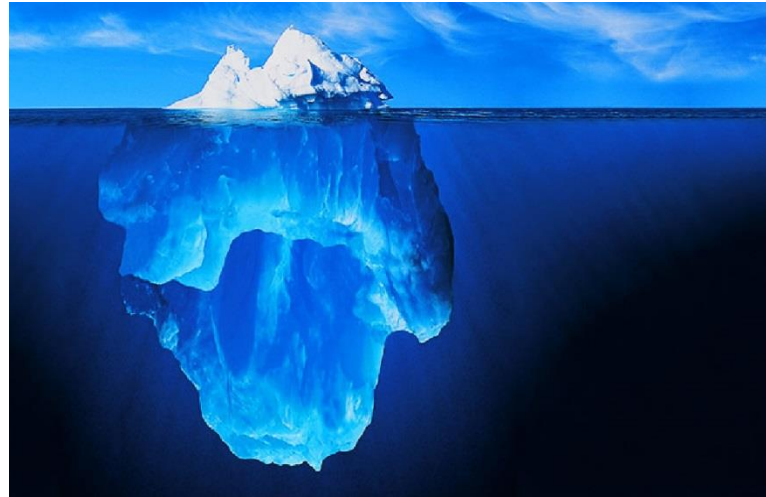
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A **Bias** is a preference for OR a prejudice (or aversion) against a person or group of people.

# WHAT IS IMPLICIT BIAS?

## Four Key Characteristics

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- 1.** Implicit biases operate at the **subconscious level**. We are **NOT** aware that we have them.

# WHAT IS IMPLICIT BIAS?

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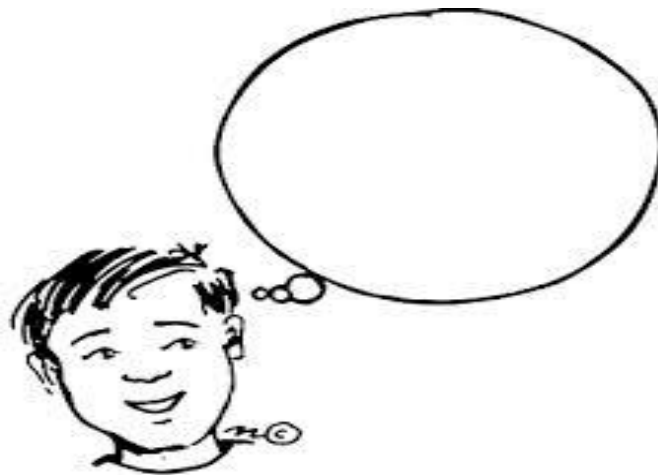
"...80 to 90 percent of what we do is unconscious ... Much of our urge to understand the unconscious arises from the spooking feeling that there is something within us governing our actions."

-- Eric Kandel, Neuropsychiatrist and Nobel Prize winner

# WHAT IS IMPLICIT BIAS?

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**2.** Implicit biases oftentimes run **contrary to our conscious beliefs and attitudes**. We can say that we believe in fairness and equity (and truly believe it). But then behave in ways that are biased and discriminatory.



# WHAT IS IMPLICIT BIAS?

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3. Implicit biases are triggered through the **rapid and automatic mental association** of people/groups/objects and our attitudes AND stereotypes about them.





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# GOVERNMENT

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# CORPORATE

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# SUBURBS







# THE HUMAN BRAIN & BIAS

## Why We Stereotype?

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“We take in 11,000,000 pieces of information a second, but can process only 40 of them consciously”

Timothy Wilson, University of Virginia

# THE HUMAN BRAIN & BIAS

## Why We Stereotype?

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"What happens to the other 10,999,960?"

- We take “mental short-cuts” (i.e. stereotypes and mental categories)
- Short-cuts are meant to help us navigate daily life more efficiently
- Also meant to protect us from harm (i.e. flight, fight response)
- But mental short-cuts can lead to harm when applied to other human beings  
example: first impressions





# WHAT IS IMPLICIT BIAS?

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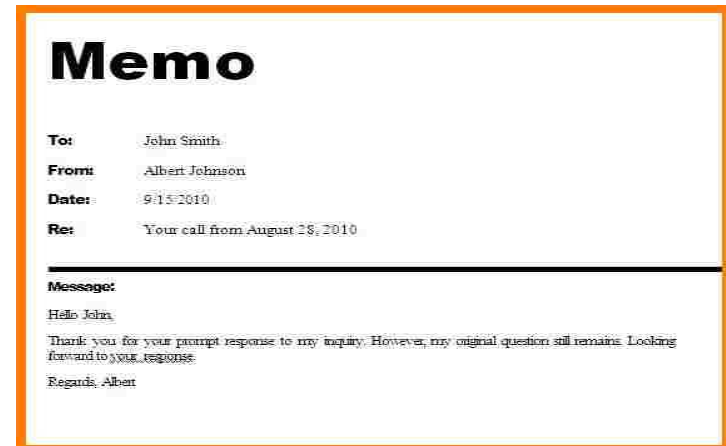
4. Operate at both **the individual and institutional** level including the areas of education, health care and criminal justice

# EXAMPLES OF IMPLICIT BIAS IN DAILY LIFE

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## Study # 1 — *Written in Black and White*

- Researchers developed a fictitious legal research memo
- Purposely inserted 22 errors
- Asked 60 law firm partners to review the memo; including 21 partners of color
- Study Results: Partners found more errors when the memo was perceived to be written by an African American firm associate



# EXAMPLES OF IMPLICIT BIAS IN DAILY LIFE

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## Study # 2 — *Getting a Job: Is There a Motherhood Penalty*

- Study Results:
  - Recommendation to be hired: 46.8% of mothers recommended to be hired versus 84% of non-mothers recommended.
  - Salary recommendation: \$11,000 less offered to mothers.
  - This penalty did NOT exist for fathers. And in some cases, fatherhood status was an advantage.



# EXAMPLES OF IMPLICIT BIAS IN DAILY LIFE

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## Study # 3 — *Looking Death worthy*

### *Study Results:*

- Black men with stereotypically black facial features are more likely to be sentenced to death than black men less stereotypically black
- Defendants with stereotypically Black facial features (i.e., dark skin, large/full lips, etc.) served up to 8 months longer in prison for felonies than defendants who possessed the least stereotypical features.



# YOUR BRAIN ON BIAS

## The “Stroop Effect”

| #1    | #2    | #3    |
|-------|-------|-------|
| SLB   | CFLTK | CFLTK |
| SPRND | HLMG  | CFLTK |
| SLB   | SPRND | SLB   |
| SPRND | HLMG  | CFLTK |

# YOUR BRAIN ON BIAS

## The “Stroop Effect”

| #1     | #2     | #3     |
|--------|--------|--------|
| GREEN  | BLUE   | GREEN  |
| RED    | YELLOW | YELLOW |
| PURPLE | BLUE   | RED    |
| GREEN  | RED    | PURPLE |

# YOUR BRAIN ON BIAS

## The “Stroop Effect”

| #1    | #2     | #3     |
|-------|--------|--------|
| RED   | GREEN  | YELLOW |
| BLUE  | GREEN  | BROWN  |
| RED   | YELLOW | BLUE   |
| BROWN | BROWN  | BLUE   |

# THE INVISIBLE GORILLA

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# STRATEGIES FOR REDUCING or INTERRUPTING IMPLICIT BIAS

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- 1. Improved Decision-Making**
- 2. Individuating**
- 3. Perspective Taking**

# IMPROVED DECISION-MAKING

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Slowing down; being more deliberative; removing discretion and ambiguity from decision-making:

*Example: Courts Catalyzing Change “bench card” or checklist for judges. See excerpt below:*

- *What assumptions have I made about the cultural identity, genders, and background of this family?*
- *What evidence has supported every conclusion I have drawn, and how have I challenged unsupported assumptions?”*

# INDIVIDUATING

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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.

- *Church-based organizing networks requiring organizers to conduct 20-35 in person meetings each week*

# PERSPECTIVE TAKING

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

*Examples:*

- *Federal Judge Mark Bennet spending time in solitary confinement;*
- *Former Newark Mayor Cory Booker living on food stamps for a week*

# PRACTICING THE STRATEGIES

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## Landlord/Tenant Role Play

# PRACTICE THE STRATEGIES

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## Checklist Exercise

# WHY THIS WORK IS IMPORTANT?

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- If we get the diagnosis wrong, we get the prescription wrong.
- A significant amount of the racialized harm being experienced and transmitted stems from implicit forms of bias, in addition to explicit forms.



# WHY THIS WORK IS IMPORTANT?

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An implicit bias approach reduces/eliminates the guilt and shame associated with having bias and how we talk about it;





# WHY THIS WORK IS IMPORTANT?

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The work of de-biasing is pro-active versus reactive. It is prevention care versus emergency room treatment.

