

## 8 STRATEGIES TO REDUCE/INTERRUPT BIAS

### STRATEGY # 1 – Increase Your Awareness

- **Take the Implicit Association Test (IAT)** at [www.withinourlifetime.net](http://www.withinourlifetime.net) OR [www.implicit.harvard.edu](http://www.implicit.harvard.edu).

**STRATEGY # 2 – Stereotype Replacement** – a) recognize when you're having a stereotypic thought (or when you observe stereotypic portrayals in society; b) identify the factors behind the thought/portrayal; c) replace the stereotype with a non-stereotypic response.

- *Recognize when stereotypes are activated: What are the feelings – physiological signs – that you have when you spend time with and/or around people with whom you have “chemistry;” people with whom you “click?” What are the feelings when you're with and/or around people who are the opposite?*

**STRATEGY # 3 – Counter-Stereotypic Imaging** – imagine in detail a person who counters the stereotype. Alternatively, consider using photos or images to counter existing stereotypes.

- *Who's a person in your work and/or personal life that represents the opposite of the stereotype? What's the person's name? What are three characteristics/qualities about the person that counter the stereotype about their group?*
- *What pictures, photos, symbols can you hang on the wall in the common space and/or program space to counter negative stereotypes about the communities you serve and/or other marginalized groups?*



**STRATEGY # 4 – Practice Individuation** – do regular, in-person, one-on-one meetings with people who: a) you are prone to be biased against and/or; b) who have a lived experience different than your own. The goal is to use individual characteristics (versus generalizations) to inform our judgment.

- *List 3 to 5 people who are (or you perceive to be) “different” from you with respect to race, ethnicity, culture, lived experience, etc. Conduct a 30 to 60 minute, in-person meeting with each person.*
- *Example -- AFSCME Strong campaign – training 5% of its members to engage another 80% “one conversation at a time.”*

**STRATEGY # 5 -- Practice Perspective Taking** – find creative – and respectful -- ways to experience what it’s like to walk in the shoes of a member of a stereotyped or marginalized group.

- *Example -- Staff of a city-wide organization that works with homeless families deciding to spend a night living on the “streets” to better understand what it’s like to be homeless;*
- *Example -- Former Newark Mayor Cory Booker living on food stamps for a week.*

**STRATEGY # 6 -- Do Inter-group Work** – Create and/or join a dialogue group; organize a “brown bag” series; ultimately, the goal is to create opportunities for diverse groups of people to engage in positive contact over an extended period of time.

- *Example -- National Park Service (NPS) Allies for Inclusion Program; training NPS staff to be dialogue facilitators; using 60-90 minute monthly "brown bags" as the strategy.*

**STRATEGY # 7 – IMPROVE DECISION-MAKING.** Improve **decision-making** by slowing down and 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?”*

**STRATEGY # 8 -- PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE**

- Shifting behavior and culture (individual and organization) requires sustained practice, repetition and feedback.

**Note – Several of the above strategies are adapted from “Breaking the Bias Habit: A Workshop to Promote Gender Equity” -- Women in Science and Engineering Leadership Institute at University of Wisconsin-Madison**