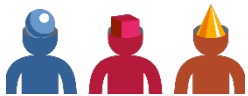


NIH IMPLICIT BIAS COURSE

ACTIONS TO MITIGATE BIAS AND CREATE INCLUSION

This document includes actions presented in both the Full Course and Refresher Course versions of the NIH Implicit Bias e-learning.

MODULE 1: FOUNDATIONS



Inclusive Behaviors to Welcome New Ideas and Perspectives

- **Be curious.** Before discounting another's idea, ask about their thought process.
- **Make sure people get credit** for their ideas.
- **Avoid interrupting.** (Women are interrupted more often than men.)
- **Learn and use the correct pronunciation** of colleagues' names.
- **Monitor your non-verbal behavior.** Do you roll your eyes, frown, or check your mobile device while others are speaking?

MODULE 2: MITIGATING BIAS



Overarching Ways to Mitigate Bias

- **Helping decision-makers be transparent** with their thought process is a great way to reveal hidden biases.
- **Broadening our images of success** and getting to know others who are unlike us can help loosen our implicit associations.
- **Putting the Platinum Rule into practice.** Find out what others prefer, and how they prefer to be treated.
- **Preparing for situations** where implicit associations may influence decisions, by preparing an If/Then practice.



Specific Steps to Mitigate Bias Across Workplace Contexts

Steps to Mitigate Affinity Bias in Hiring

- Slow down your thinking by explaining how you arrived at your decision to someone else.
- Hold yourself accountable for your initial reactions by asking questions like:
 - What brought me to this conclusion?
 - Which characteristic am I reacting to?
 - What if the opposite were true?

- Broaden your image of success. Consider that your team will benefit from someone who brings a different background to the team and consciously recruit someone who is unlike you.
- Request and incorporate others' feedback in decision-making. Ensure that the feedback is from a diverse group of individuals.
- Use an objective means of evaluating candidates such as that done through work sample tests, clear evaluation criteria, and skills and knowledge scoring.

Steps Panel Members Can Take

- Solicit the group's input one by one along with the reasons behind their decisions.
- Hold the panel lead or members accountable for their statements by asking questions like:
 - What brought you to this conclusion that a given characteristic (e.g., an accent) disqualified the candidate from moving to the next round of interviews?
 - What is the connection between a given characteristic (e.g., an accent) and their qualifications for the job?
 - When have you experienced this before?
- Encourage the panel lead to become more aware of personal biases.
- Designate a member of the group to serve as the "devil's advocate" to ensure that all opinions are brought to the surface and considered.

Steps Team Members Can Take to Address Stereotypes

- Intervene and inform colleagues how processes are managed when incorrect assumptions are made.
- Speak up and ask why assumptions were made.
- When biases are expressed, have a team discussion about how easy it is to rely on stereotypes to make judgments and how to help each other build awareness of bias.

Actions to Avoid Stereotyping Missteps

- Slow down your reactions and ask yourself if you are responding to a bias instead of the situation before you.
- Develop and use a habit breaking routine. If you see something that concerns you, ask questions before taking action.
- Seek to develop a meaningful relationship (friend, colleague, mentor) with someone from a different racial background.
- Become aware of racial biases and anti-black racist behavior through reading, listening to podcasts, taking a class, talking with others, etc.
- Speak up when you witness racist behavior in the workplace and share your perspective and resources.
- Work on inclusive behaviors and treating others as they want to be treated.

MODULE 3: CREATING A CULTURE OF INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE (also, see Refresher Course)



Key Concepts to Foster Inclusion

- Enhanced **employee engagement** is built upon a strong foundation of **psychological safety**.
- Certain organizational levers—**culture, reward and performance management, and job design**—can be exercised to support employees' needs and enhance their engagement in the workplace.



Creating Psychological Safety

See especially research by Amy C. Edmondson and colleagues, included in the course References document.

Set the Stage

Examples for Discussing Failures:

- Discuss with your staff how the team will manage failures by considering:
 - Failures that are avoidable—e.g., those related to routine processes—and consider strategies the team will use to prevent them.
 - Failures that are intelligent—e.g., those related to unsuccessful trials (including scientific, administrative, or management related)—and consider how some of these failures may be encouraged to enable creativity and innovation.
- Explain high stakes errors (e.g., patient safety errors) vs. low stakes errors so that employees can be cognizant of the difference.

Additional Examples to Set the Stage:

- Clarify the purpose of your team's work to facilitate a sense of purpose among all team members.
- Guide staff on what is at stake with a given effort so that they have context on the value of speaking up (whether to prevent catastrophic outcomes for high stakes efforts or to openly share insights learned from failure on low stakes efforts).
- Encourage staff to learn how initiatives, projects, or tasks are interdependent and for which information and idea sharing will be important.
- Explain to staff the uncertain nature of your team's work and promote their continual learning.

Invite Participation

- Engage in the practice of situational humility by acknowledging specific issues on which you are not an expert.
- Acknowledge your errors and shortcomings.
- Proactively inquire about issues to learn more.

- Ask useful questions – those to which you don't know the answer, for which the answer is open-ended rather than “yes/no,” and which elicit focused but thoughtful responses for the context.
- Create structures to enable input (e.g., information sharing teams).

Respond Productively

- Express appreciation by listening and thanking staff for speaking up or sharing information.
- Praise staff for their efforts regardless of outcomes.
- Destigmatize failure by announcing and celebrating an intelligent failure that enabled learning.
- Sanction clear violations of rules, when needed, to maintain consistent communication on the established culture.



Enhancing Employee Engagement

See especially research by Paul Lawrence, Nitin Nohria, and colleagues, included in the course References document.



Organizational Condition 1: Ineffective Communication and Collaboration *Potential Actions to Improve Culture*

- Encourage employees to share best practices. These practices can relate to effective communication styles, such as communicating only through an interpreter, as in the case example. Sharing best practices about work projects can facilitate information flow and create a stronger team and better quality output.
- Foster a peer-to-peer learning community where members of the team, no matter what their job description, share an update or present information pertinent to the full team.
- Foster opportunities for employees to work together to accomplish a common goal and develop friendships. For example, identify ways for staff who may tend to work only independently on tasks to bring their respective skills to a single, multifaceted effort. Or meet with the team and assign small groups to work on a project.
- Incentivize and reward quality collaborations and teamwork. Doing so can strengthen the connection among team members, leading to a more positive and productive work culture.



Organizational Condition 2: Unfair Management Practices *Potential Actions to Improve Reward and Performance Management*

- Increase the transparency of both individual (e.g., management process for evaluating success) and organizational actions (e.g., lab/office reassignment decisions).
- Establish clear, merit-based evaluation criteria, ensuring they reflect skills and work quality important for the team and organization to meet its objectives, rather than those based on subjective personal styles.
- Tie rewards to performance on the established criteria.

- Differentiate among levels of performers once merit-based aspects of performance are established.
- Monitor and pause to examine any personal biases that may shape how employees are rated every year; confer with other leaders to provide a reality check on your approach to rating employees and gain insights.
- Recognize that bias may occur without your awareness even with objective performance criteria.



Organizational Condition 3: Constrained Developmental Opportunities

Potential Actions to Improve Job Design

- Create clear channels for development and advancement.
- Develop inclusive practices for less formal developmental opportunities (e.g., idea and information exchanges over meals, happy hours, sporting events, extracurricular activities, or other social gatherings).
- Craft role responsibilities to enable staff to utilize their skills and find value in their contributions. Doing so requires leaders to develop an understanding of their staff's developmental goals.