



Exploring Race and Culture from a Trauma-Informed Lens Training Tool Kit

Segment 2: Implicit Bias

YouTube link: https://youtu.be/5YngNTE_WKQ

Video length: 30:50

Panel participants on video

- Harold Gates – Consultant, Share Collaborative – Facilitator
- Dr. Lindsay Bernhagen, Director – Center for Inclusive Teaching and Learning / Diversity Officer for Academic Affairs / Athletics Diversity & Inclusion Designee / Associate Lecturer – School of Education and Department of Sociology & Social Work – University of Wisconsin Stevens Point
- Jamaal Smith, Community Injury and Violence Prevention Manager – Milwaukee Office of Violence Prevention.

After watching the Exploring Race and Culture from a Trauma-Informed Lens – Implicit Bias video, discuss the following questions with the group you viewed the training with. If you viewed the training individually, consider these questions.

Discussion questions

1. Implicit bias is demonstrated in more ways than race. Lindsay shared how she explored anti-fat biases with her students. What are other areas where we hold implicit biases?
2. Considering Lindsay's story of her riding the bus and unconsciously choosing to sit next to someone who looked like her (a white woman), what is a time when you have done something similar?
3. Challenging our implicit biases is hard work. Harold suggested mindfulness as a way to help us move ahead in this work. How can that help you? Or what other ways will help you manage the anxiety that can accompany this work?
4. What is a baby step you can take to challenge your implicit bias? What is one way you can make a change right now?
5. Think of your workplace or a workplace you are aware of. Can you think of examples of how biases are at play? How is that impacting the people affected?

Resources

- Harvard University Implicit Association Test
<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>
- "When Whiteness Starts Seeing Itself" – *The Nation*
The fact that white people are suddenly having to recognize themselves as having a race has only added to growing resentment over the country's demographic changes.
<https://www.thenation.com/article/society/white-people-demographics->

[backlash/?custno=&zip=&utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Weekly%2028.01.2022&utm_term=weekly](https://www.backlash/?custno=&zip=&utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Weekly%2028.01.2022&utm_term=weekly)

- “Mindfulness as a Support for Healing Conversations and Actions Toward Social Justice and Equity”. Presentation at: National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health, December 15, 2021. Speaker: Rhonda V. Magee, J.D., Professor of Law – University of San Francisco School of Law, Teacher and Practitioner of Mindfulness, Scholar of Contemplative Education – San Francisco. Length: 1:09.
<https://www.nccih.nih.gov/news/events/distinguished-lecture-series/mindfulness-as-a-support-for-healing-conversations-and-actions-toward-social-justice-and-equity>
- The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at The Ohio State University
<https://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/>
- “How Diversity Makes Us Smarter,” Katherine Phillips, *Scientific American*
Being around people who are different from us makes us more creative, more diligent and harder-working.
<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-diversity-makes-us-smarter/>
- Greenwald A., and Banaji, M. (2013). *Blindspot: Hidden Biases of Good People*. Random House.
- Milwaukee Office of Violence Prevention Blueprint for Peace – PDF in toolkit.

Notes from video

Q: Define implicit bias/what does it look like?

Definition of implicit bias:

According to Stanford University professor of psychology and MacArthur Fellow Jennifer Eberhardt, implicit bias, which she defines as “the beliefs and the feelings we have about social groups that can influence our decision making and our actions, even when we're not aware of it.” May 29, 2019

Lindsay

- Implicit bias is like muscle memory or reflex – our auto pilot while we are thinking of other things, like climbing stairs, we aren’t aware of it, we are making assumptions, unconscious bias.
- A lot of the patterns we have are based on messed up things. That’s where implicit bias becomes a problem.

Jamaal

- Bias comes in by the way people have been conditioned – includes environmental factors, generational ideologies, it is how people process different things.
- Bias is a preference.
- Everyone has bias, the question is how does your bias become something problematic, that affects other people? Can become a progression of prejudice.
- Historically certain populations have been labeled, like Blacks being labeled as savages. That gets perpetuated. It started as someone’s idea, their bias, and continues today.

Harold

- Implicit bias gets pushed into a larger context of how systems work – policies, redlining, loans, getting good health care.
- Intersectionality – different dimensions of diversity, multiple layers. Oppression happens on multiple levels.
- When we recognize this, what will we do about it?

Q: How am I being biased, what can I do about my bias?

Jamaal

- The first part is recognizing you have a bias. The moment you recognize this you are ready to explore other ways and areas. Recognize that some of the beliefs you hold are detrimental to other people. First step to rehabilitation is recognizing you have a problem.
- Self-evaluation is the hardest evaluation to do. We can see easily what others are doing wrong.
- People have to make the decision that they are going to self-reflect, do some introspection. Need to be committed to change – it isn't easy to let go of biases that you have carried all your life.
- This is important because if you continue to be biased you are limiting yourself to the full experience humanity has to offer – you stay on a tunnel vision of ideologies and won't see the vast beauty of complexities that come with diversity.
- Look at how we are developing the culture in our workplace. Biases come out. Look at how that impacts people. We need to understand how biases present themselves in different settings.

Lindsay

- There are implicit bias tests available that people can take and assess their own bias (see toolkit resources).
- The way we've received information on other groups of people is through the news, TV, entertainment, and our brains aren't use to challenging those things.
- It's not your fault, but it is your responsibility. You didn't put those ideas in your head but it is your responsibility to do something about it. You may not be responsible for the first thought in your head, but you are responsible for every thought after that, what you say and how you behave.
- Research shows that implicit bias is more likely to kick in when we are tired or stressed so being mindful or slowing down is important.
- Challenge yourself to tell a different story verses the one that pops into your head. Implicit bias fills in the story of the other person without us even realizing it. Slow down, stop the stereotype filling in the story on the other person. Take the opportunity to add more stories to your pool. You will miss out when you don't do this.

Harold

- Mindfulness is the way to manage the anxiety that comes with doing the right thing. How do we have self-compassion while we are doing this work, how to balance it. We can't stop it if we have guilt and shame. Then nothing happens.
- Is there a solution? Research shows that mindfulness practices help us focus, give us greater control over our emotions, and increase our capacity to think clearly and act with purpose. Might mindfulness assist police and other public servants in minimizing the mistaken judgments that lead to such harms? Rhonda Magee, May 14, 2015

- Mindfulness also involves acceptance, meaning that we pay attention to our thoughts and feelings without judging them—without believing, for instance, that there’s a “right” or “wrong” way to think or feel in a given moment. When we practice mindfulness, our thoughts tune into what we’re sensing in the present moment rather than rehashing the past or imagining the future. Jon Kabat-Zinn
- The more privilege you have the easier it is to give up. It is easy to think that you can just go back to your community, stay comfortable where you are, and not do anything.
- Take baby steps.
- You don’ have the option to do nothing anymore.
- It is hard work, if it was easy, we would be doing it.

Q: Challenge to viewers

Lindsay

- Viewers aren’t helpless, challenge, disrupt bias.
- Our choice is to do this work imperfectly or not at all – choose to do this work imperfectly. We are going to mess up. This work will keep changing, and making mistakes is part of the journey.

Jamaal

- We need to be comfortable being uncomfortable.
- Everything will be a challenge to what you have lived with for years. These biases are something you have learned for years, and now we are challenging you to unlearn.
- When you challenge someone else’s belief they can become defensive, uncomfortable. A lot of the conditioning we got is not right and prevents us from experiencing humanity.

Harold

- Mindfulness is one way we can help ourselves move ahead in this work. Start where you are at, not where someone else is.