



Moving Beyond Implicit Bias in the Workplace: Supporting our goals with intentional decision making



Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace is a Dynamic Process:



We all have biases:

Scientists estimate that we are exposed to as many as 11 million pieces of information at any one time, but our brains can only functionally deal with about 40. We survive and function by developing a perceptual lens that filters out certain things and lets others in, depending upon certain perceptions, interpretations, preferences and, yes, biases that we have adapted throughout our life.

"The difference between being unwilling and unable is the difference between purposely hiding something from someone and unknowingly hiding something from yourself."

Learning Definitions:

The language of diversity is dynamic and important. We choose to use words that convey sensitivity and understanding not because we want to be "correct" but because how we use words affects people—their concept of themselves and members of their group and the ability to create and maintain authentic relationships across differences. Words we use affect how we think and perpetuate attitudes about groups, continuing a cycle of oppression (The Evolving Language of Diversity, Castania, 2003).

Unconscious (Implicit) Bias

- × The attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. These biases, which encompass both favorable and unfavorable assessments, are activated involuntarily and without an individual's awareness or intentional control. Residing deep in the subconscious, these biases are different from known biases that individuals may choose to conceal for the purposes of social and/or political correctness. (<http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/research/understanding-implicit-bias/>)

- ✘ The hundreds of ways we make decisions every day in favor of one group, and to the detriment of others, without even realizing we're doing it. (Diversity Best Practices, 2008)

Diversity

- ✘ The presence of individuals representing more than one national origin, color, religion, socioeconomic stratum, sexual orientation, etc
- ✘ Who is at the table or in your work group? Demographics may be described as surface-level diversity and differences in attitudes, perspectives, and beliefs are a deep-level diversity [Mannix & Neale, 2005].

Inclusion

- ✘ An organizational climate that supports all employees to be able to participate in, and contribute to, the progress and success of the organization.
- ✘ Who has what role within a workgroup? Inclusion reflects how and to what extent individuals shape work and workspace. It is possible to have diversity without inclusion; however it is not possible to have inclusion without diversity so organizations must have both.

Organizational Culture

- ✘ An enduring collection of basic assumptions and ways of interpreting things that an organization has invented, discovered, or developed in learning to cope with its internal and external influences. Often, despite our best conscious efforts, the "organizational unconscious" perpetuates the status quo and keeps old patterns, values, and behavioral norms firmly rooted.

Micro-aggressions

- ✘ Brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to certain individuals because of their group membership.

Micro-affirmations

- ✘ Apparently small acts, which are often ephemeral and hard-to-see, events that are public and private, often unconscious but very effective, which occur wherever people wish to help others to succeed; tiny acts of opening doors to opportunity, gestures of inclusion and caring, and graceful acts of listening. Micro-affirmations lie in the practice of generosity, in consistently giving credit to others – in providing comfort and support when others are in distress, when there has been a failure at the bench, or an idea that did not work out, or a public attack.

Elements of Unconscious Bias in the Workplace:

There are six common factors that affect employee experiences of bias in the workplace.

1. *Control* - an employees' perceived capacity to influence decisions that affect their work, gain access to resources necessary to do an effective job, and the ability to exercise professional autonomy
2. *Workload* - the extent to which job demands match employee limits
3. *Fairness* - the extent to which decisions at work are perceived as being fair and people are treated with respect
4. *Reward* - an employee's experience with feeling recognized and valued by service recipients, colleagues, managers, and external stakeholders
5. *Community* - the quality of social interaction at work (conflict, mutual support, closeness, teamwork). Community typically thrives where people share praise, comfort, happiness, humor, and assistance
6. *Values* - the extent to which the organization encompasses the ideals and motivations that originally attracted the employee to the job

Where are you?

How do you show appreciation to your colleagues for the work they are doing?

How do you express displeasure or frustration with things that happen at work?