How do I interrupt implicit bias in the workplace?
Discussion Guide

Discuss

Avery stated that the first step to interrupting implicit bias is to recognize that you have it. Can you recall a time when you said or did something, and then realized later that it was based in a stereotype? What did you do to change your thinking and behavior?

Think about the biases that you've observed either in yourself or others. How might this bias impact the work environment, including relationships among co-workers?

We can manage bias through our workplace processes. Consider how your unit handles decision making around hiring, project assignment, or performance evaluation. Do these processes follow consistent and mission-focused practices? Are there ways to improve upon these practices to minimize bias and maximize equity?

Avery points out that our decisions are often influenced by the conditions in which we make them—specifically conditions related to time and space. How would you evaluate the conditions in your workplace?

Practice

Avery reminds us to be attentive to bias codes—those seemingly innocuous statements that often mask discomfort or suspicion of certain groups. Practice using these "redirect" statements in response to some common bias codes.

When you hear this…	Say this instead…
Dr. Q was a great boss. We need to find someone *just like him*.	Yes, Dr. Q was awesome. But let's consider the current needs of the department and the unique strengths of some of our emerging leaders.
I have a *(insert feeling)* about this person.	What is it about this person that makes them stand out / that removes them from consideration?
I don't think she's a good fit with this program.	Can you say more about what you mean by fit?

They probably won't want to do this project because it involves evening work.	Perhaps. But we should at least offer them the chance and let them make the decision.

What are some other bias codes that you've heard? Can you think of a response that directs us away from bias and towards best practices?

Self-Reflect

Project Implicit—or the Implicit Association Test—is widely recognized as a way to measure positive or negative associations that are the foundation of bias. The Implicit Association Test (IAT) is designed to detect the strength of a person's automatic association between mental representations of objects (concepts) in memory. Although some controversy still exists regarding the IAT and what it measures, much research into its validity and psychometric properties has been conducted since its introduction into the literature.

This link takes you to a preliminary information page: https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/ .
If you agree with the disclaimer, you will then proceed to a page with multiple test options. Tests include ones dealing with race, gender, ethnicity, ability, age, or body shape. Because this is an active research site, the tests include demographic questions. You may opt to skip through these questions in order to get to the actual tests.

- What was your reaction to the test results? Did you have any resistance to the results? Often our resistance to the test results can occur as defensiveness, invalidating the test methodology, or looking for justification for our results.
- To what extent were you surprised by the results? If so, why?
- What experiences or exposures in your life may have contributed to those results?
- What could the impact of your results be on your work environments? On your talent management processes?

Learn More

Here are some "ideas worth spreading" about implicit bias:

Immaculate Perception: Jerry Kang at TEDxSandDiego 2013 (13 minutes) at
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9VGbwNI6Ssk&feature=youtu.be

How to overcome our biases? Walk boldly toward them: Verna Myers at TEDxBeaconStreet 2014 (17.41 minutes) at https://www.ted.com/talks/verna_myers_how_to_overcome_our_biases_walk_boldly_toward_them

For current research on implicit bias, visit the Kirwan Institute: http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/.