Becoming Conscious about Unconscious Bias

Whitworth University
Staff Workshop

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October 1, 2014
Workshop Goals

• Define unconscious bias.

• Discuss implications.

• Describe ways to address UB.

• Develop action plans.
Bias Research

Video: The Impact of Implicit Bias
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fL9__gD88xk
Unconscious Bias

• Form of rapid cognition

• Well documented, pervasive

• Replicates the social hierarchy

• Confirms stereotypes

• Influences our behavior
Unconscious Bias

• Affects organizational culture

• Often incompatible with conscious values

• Significant to diversity efforts

• Can be managed and reduced
Even the most well-intentioned person unwittingly allows unconscious thoughts and feelings to influence apparently objective decisions.

How to better manage and avoid UB?
Implicit Association Tests

https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/education.html
http://www.plosone.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0004215
Communicating Bias
Micro-inequities

cumulative, repeated behaviors that devalue, discourage, and impair performance in the workplace
Micro-inequities

• Interruptions
• Translations
• Misidentifications
• Exclusion
• Marginalization
Micro-inequities Examples

• consistently mispronouncing a person's name
• interrupting a person mid-sentence
• taking more questions from men than women
• confusing a person of a certain ethnicity with another person of the same ethnicity
• mentioning achievements of some people at a meeting but not others whose achievements are equally relevant
• making jokes aimed at certain minority groups

http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-superhuman-mind/201304/micro-inequities-40-years-later
"You speak really good English for an immigrant."

"Why haven't you found a husband yet?"
"Are you a man or a woman?"

"You Natives don't have to work, doesn't the government give you everything for free?"
“YOU were born in Canada?”

“You have a mental disability? You seem perfectly normal to me.”
Micro-affirmations

positive, validating messages and behaviors which indicate that you value and respect another person
Recommendations

• Remember that we all have biases
• Commit to reducing your UB
• Monitor yourself
• Remind self and others of values
• Establish guidelines for interaction
• Develop objective criteria for decisions
Recommendations

• Focus on fairness and respect
• Engage in dialogue
• Agree to air concerns about potential bias
• Speak up against disrespect
• Learn more about micro-inequities
• Engage in micro-affirmations
Action Plan
Resources

The Impact of Implicit Bias – Ohio State University
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fL9gD88xk

Proven Strategies for Addressing Unconscious Bias in the Workplace


Micro-inequities: 40 Years Later
http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-superhuman-mind/201304/micro-inequities-40-years-later

University of Wisconsin's Reviewing Applicants: Research on Bias and Assumptions brochure
http://wiseli.engr.wisc.edu/docs/BiasBrochure_2ndEd.pdf