Implicit bias

It shapes how we engage others and make decisions in the workplace

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Objectives

- To understand how bias is formed in our unconscious.
- To examine how bias, microaggressions, and stereotypes result in subtle forms of prejudice and undermine efforts to create an inclusive workplace.
- To discuss strategies and approaches to effectively address bias, microaggressions and stereotypes.
TED Talk: Immaculate perception

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9VGbwNI6Ssk

- Jerry Kang, UCLA's first chancellor for equality, diversity and inclusion
Implicit bias

Attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner.

Biases are **activated involuntarily** and without an individual’s awareness or intentional control.
Key characteristics

- Are pervasive and robust
- Tend to favor our own in-group
- Have real-world effects on behavior
- Are related to explicit biases, but are distinct mental constructs
- Are malleable—they can be unlearned and replaced with new associations
- Do not necessarily align with our declared beliefs
Examples of bias in the workplace

- Which employee is asked to travel for business?
- Affinity bias (favor people we have a connection to) - This candidate sounds great.
- Hiring a male candidate, paying him more, and rating him more competent than a female candidate with the exact same resume.
What can you do to address bias?

- Get feedback.
- Develop the capacity for self-reflection.
- Explore awkwardness and discomfort.
- Expose yourself to positive examples from various backgrounds.
- Improve conditions of decision making.
- Slow down!
What are microaggressions?

The everyday **verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slight**, **snubs, or insults** that, **whether intentional or unintentional, communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages** to **target persons based solely upon their group membership**.

*Derald Wing Sue 2010*
Examples of microaggressions in the workplace

“Where are you really from?”

“When I look at you, I don’t see color.”

“Men and women have equal opportunities for advancement.”

Referring to students/adults as “girls” and “boys.”

Asking everyone to contribute money to attend an event.

Assuming everyone is in a heterosexual relationship.
What is a stereotype?

An oversimplified image or statement applied to a whole group of people without regard for the individual.

They have three characteristics:

1. They imply all people in the group are the same.
2. They contain a judgment.
3. They are fairly inflexible.
When have you been stereotyped?

Talk at your tables as you are comfortable about experiences you have had either when you have been stereotyped or others have been.

- How did the experience affect you?
- Did you do/say anything?
Examples of stereotypes in the workplace

- Assuming that employees who are single or don’t have children can work late because they don’t have outside responsibilities.
- Senior employees aren’t good with technology; younger employees aren’t committed or are lazy.
- Men are assertive, independent and confident; women are compassionate, supportive, emotional.
- Expecting women employees to plan office celebrations, complete “office housework.”
Take a 10 minute break
Small group discussion

- Complete the handout - Unproductive classroom and meeting behavior and then discuss at your tables
- Be prepared to report out highlights
How can you respond?

Say nothing - you don’t know the full story, so don’t interfere.
Say “Ouch!” – to convey your disapproval or hurt.
Call out the person – let them know that was not okay.
Ask the person a question – gives them an opportunity to reflect and clarify.
Speak to the person later – express concerns about what you heard.
Escalate the issue – especially if there’s a pattern.
What could you do?

- When a staff member gets confused during a discussion and someone says, “She’s having a blonde moment!”

- A manager listens and considers new ideas when a more experienced staff member raises them, but quickly shuts down new or younger staff who ask questions or offer innovative ideas.
Managers who chastise publicly staff if they are a few minutes late but then will casually walk in 10 minutes late to a meeting and not apologize for keeping others waiting.
Our common ground

- Most of us **want** to use the most respectful terms and representations.
- We are asked to **unlearn** and **relearn** **all the time**.
- Our willingness to do this is necessary to break divisions and create positive change.
- Our **first step** in facilitating change is to create **safe spaces** for conversations about difference.
Categories of Connection

- Recognize differences in power and privilege among people.
- Create coalitions around common causes.
- Build empathy by taking an interest in the lives of those different from ourselves.
Micro-affirmations are defined as...

“small acts in the workplace fostering inclusion, listening, comfort, and support for people who may feel unwelcome or invisible in an environment” (Rowe, 2008).

Within the context of higher education, micro-affirmations can communicate that all are welcome, visible, and capable.
How does this relate to employee engagement?

There are:

- fewer absences
- less accidents
- lower employee turnover
- higher productivity, customer service, and profitability (21% more)

D & I boost innovation and creativity, improve reputation, make better decisions, improve employee engagement
Inclusion and Diversity Best Practices

- Establish a sense of belonging
- Be fair to all employees
- Offer equal growth opportunities
- Rewrite job descriptions and job ads
- Support innovation and creativity
- Educate employees on D & I
- Support teamwork and collaboration
- Support flexibility in the workplace
VT Strategic Plan

Strategic Priority 2
Elevate the Ut Prosim Difference

Aspirational Vision
Goal 1 - increase representational diversity
Goal 2 - increase cultural competence
Goal 3 - address societal issues impacting humanity and equity
What can you do to be more inclusive?

Diversity is being invited to the party; inclusion is being asked to dance.

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