MITIGATING IMPLICIT BIAS

Creating Equitable and Just Leaders

Preshuslee Thompson | Training and Development Specialist
Pronouns: she/her/hers

COHHIO | September 20, 2019
ABOUT THE KIRWAN INSTITUTE

“We work to create a just & inclusive society where all people and communities have the opportunity to succeed.”

@KirwanInstitute

/KirwanInstitute
ABOUT THE KIRWAN INSTITUTE

HOW KIRWAN APPROACHES OUR WORK

RACE AND COGNITION
The role of individual-level thoughts and actions in maintaining discrimination.

STRUCTURAL RACIALIZATION
The influence of our country’s racial history on policies, practices and values that perpetuate racial inequity.
WHY IMPLICIT BIAS?

• Implicit bias can be a better predictor of behavior and decision-making than our explicit beliefs.

• Implicit bias gives us a framework for understanding the underlying factors driving overt racism.

• Challenging implicit bias can help us align our good intentions with our desired outcomes.

• Discussing implicit bias does not mean ignoring other causes of disparities—it helps us see the entire picture.
Defining Implicit Bias

Attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner.
Implicit bias can turn even our best intentions into unwanted outcomes.
RACE AND NEIGHBORHOOD PERCEPTIONS

Housing Costs

Safety

School Quality

Property Upkeep

Future Property Values

RACE AND NEIGHBORHOOD PERCEPTIONS

How does the racial composition of a neighborhood impact how individuals perceive it?

Race and Neighborhood Perceptions

For White participants, simply seeing Black residents in a neighborhood elicited more negative evaluations of the neighborhood conditions – even when all aspects except race were comparable between neighborhoods.

• If race influences perceptions of neighborhoods, how might race influence perceptions of the people in the neighborhood?
• What additional barriers might community members face living in a neighborhood that is perceived negatively?
• What role can Social Justice Leaders play in creating a more racially just and equitable society?
GOALS FOR THIS SESSION

• Help us think differently about the way we think.

• Foster understanding of the ways in which bias operates in our lives & institutions.

• Create a space and process to begin to consider the bridge between intentions and outcomes.

• Explore Strategies to mitigate Implicit Bias through the lens of Emergent Strategy.
Understanding Implicit Bias
How Our Minds Work
AN AWARENESS TEST

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iiEzf3J4iFk
Conscious Mental Processing
(7 ± 2 pieces of info)

Unconscious Mental Processing
(Millions/potentially unlimited pieces of info)

WE HAVE LIMITED CONSCIOUS PROCESSING CAPACITY

OUR BIASES ARE RESPONSIVE AND ASSOCIATIVE

Fear
THE HIJACKED BRAIN

The Path of a Hijacked Brain
- Bypasses Executive Functioning
- Immediately in fight, flight or freeze mode
- Not able to consider alternative solutions or consequences

The Path of a Calm Brain
- The prefrontal cortex or higher brain,
- Optimal response to fear and accurately assesses risk
- Quickly able to return to baseline (calm)

http://ptsd-treatment.info/
Implicit Bias Facts

- Our minds quickest and most efficient form of thinking
- Bias is multidirectional and comprises not only discrimination but also privilege.
- We can have Implicit Biases that do not align with our identities or explicit beliefs
- Being aware and intentional about how we reflect on our own identity can help us to be better champions for justice and equity.
There are key conditions under which we are most likely to make decisions based on implicit biases:

- Ambiguous or incomplete information
- Compromised cognitive load
- Time constraints
- Overconfidence in objectivity
Implicit Bias Refresher

Implicit Processing
- Efficiency
- Exposure
- Associative Memory

Explicit Processing
- Deliberate Processing
- Executive Functioning

Implicit & Explicit Biases Don’t Always Align
CHECKING OUR BIASES
IDENTITIES AND PERCEPTIONS
THE IMPLICIT ASSOCIATION TEST

• Measures the **relative strength** of associations between pairs of concepts

• Stronger implicit associations = **less time** to pair and **fewer matching errors**

• Weaker implicit associations = **more time** to pair and **more matching errors**
**Examples of Publicly Available IATs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitudes</th>
<th>Stereotypes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>Gender - Career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Gender - Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexuality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

implicit.harvard.edu
Implicit Association Test (IAT) - Race IAT
RACE IAT Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comparison</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strong automatic preference for European American compared to African American</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate automatic preference for European American compared to African American</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slight automatic preference for European American compared to African American</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little to no automatic preference between African American and European American</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slight automatic preference for African American compared to European American</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate automatic preference for African American compared to European American</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong automatic preference for African American compared to European American</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This distribution summarizes 3,314,277 IAT scores for the Race task completed between December 2002 and December 2015.

https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/selectatest.html
Origins of These Associations

Family, friends, & early life experiences
Media messaging: both traditional & social
DISCUSSION: SKEWED MEDIA MESSAGING
REAL WORLD EXAMPLE: SKewed MEDIA MESSAGING

Was this portrayal intentional or an act on implicit bias?

How might does this video perpetuate stereotypes?

How can we work to debunk these skewed messages?
THE BIG IDEA

• The vast majority of our cognition is unconscious.

• Our associations may be formed based on skewed, overgeneralized, or distorted beliefs and stereotypes.

• Our implicit associations may not necessarily align with our explicit beliefs.

• Self reflection is vital to mitigating our biases and creating a more just and inclusive society.

“If I can see the ways I am perpetuating system oppression, if I can see where I learned the behavior and how hard it is to unlearn it, I start to have more humility as I see the messiness of the communities I am part of, the world I live in.” –Adrienne Maree Brown
SITUATING IMPLICIT BIAS

PIECES OF THE PUZZLES
Implicit Bias Can Be Activated by Any Perceived Social Identity

- Our social identities can intersect
- We can have both privileged and marginalized identities simultaneously
- Having a privileged identity does not mean you never experience oppression.
- Being aware and intentional about how we reflect on our own identity can help us to be better champions for justice and equity.
IDEN'TITIES INFLUENCE PERCEPTIONS

**Warmth**
(perception of intention)
- Kind, Friendly, Good-natured
- Sincere, Honest, Moral
- Helpful, Fair, Understanding

**Competence**
(perception of ability)
- Efficient, Capable, Skillful
- Confident
- Knowledgable

THE NON-VERBAL EMERGENCE OF BIAS

Higher levels of implicit bias against a group have been associated with:

- Fewer Positive Gestures
  - Less Smiling
  - Less Visual Contact
  - Fewer Impromptu Comments

- More Indicators of Discomfort
  - More Speech Errors
  - More Speech Hesitations
  - More Blinking
A Verbal Manifestation of Bias: Micro-aggressions

“...brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory or negative racial slights and insults to the target person or group.”

• Types of Micro-aggressions
  • Micro-Insult: Unconscious, don’t understand offensiveness of their comments
  • Micro-Assault: Consciously being offensive with comments
  • Micro-Invalidation: Discrediting someone’s biased experience

EFFECTS OF MICROAGGRESSIONS

• Psychological distress
  • Anxiety and hypervigilance
  • Anger
  • Depression and hopelessness
  • Suicidal ideation
• Binge drinking
• Pain, fatigue, physical illness

Blume, Lovato, Thyken, & Denny (2012); Smith (2004); Hwang & Goto (2009)
### How People Experiencing Homelessness are Dehumanized

1. Segregation
2. Fear
3. Illegal to be Poor
4. The Criminal Label
5. Attacked by Police
6. Refused a Place to Sleep
7. Property Stolen Legally
8. Denied Food, Bathrooms, Health Care
9. Existence Denied
10. Verbally abused
11. Attacked
REAL WORLD IMPLICATIONS
CONNECTING STRUCTURAL RACIALIZATION AND HEALTH DISPARITIES
Implicit bias is only part of the American story of inequity.

1. Biased Racial Perceptions
2. Structural Inequity
3. Differential experiences & access
4. Disparate Outcomes

The Ohio State University
Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity
WHAT ARE SOME STRUCTURAL CAUSES OF HOMELESSNESS?
WHEN WE CRIMINALIZE THOSE WHO ARE ALREADY IN VULNERABLE STATES OF BEING, WE CONTINUE TO PERPETUATE DEHUMANIZING STEREOTYPES

Examples of municipal codes that criminalize life sustaining behavior include:

- Laws that prohibit sleeping in public city-wide
- Laws that prohibit sleeping in a particular public place
- Laws that prohibit camping in public city-wide
- Laws that prohibit camping in a particular public space
- Laws that prohibit sitting/lying in a particular public space
- Laws that prohibit lodging, living, or sleeping in vehicles (or parking a vehicle used as a lodging/living accommodation)
- Laws that prohibit loitering/loafing/vagrancy city-wide
- Laws that prohibit loitering/loafing in particular public places
- Laws that prohibit begging in public places
- Laws that prohibit food sharing city-wide or in particular public places (i.e. ban)

REDLINING: 1930s TO 1970

The practice of denying or limiting financial services to certain neighborhoods based on racial or ethnic composition without regard to the residents’ qualifications or creditworthiness.
WHY THIS IS RELEVANT TODAY:
REDLINING IMPACTS CITIES & RACIAL EQUITY

Redlining

Disinvestment
Housing Decline
Predatory Lending
Property Value Loss

Foreclosure & Vacancy

Asset Wealth Loss,
Dwindling Tax Base

Crime & Safety,
Health Problems

Infant Mortality
Asthma
Lead
Diabetes

Racial Wealth Gap
City Services and Maintenance

City Services and Maintenance

Property Value Loss

Predatory Lending

Housing Decline

Disinvestment

Redlining

Foreclosure & Vacancy

Asset Wealth Loss,
Dwindling Tax Base

Crime & Safety,
Health Problems

Infant Mortality
Asthma
Lead
Diabetes
Columbus, OH
Overall Child Opportunity Index Categories

- Very Low
- Low
- Moderate
- High
- Very High
Life Expectancy

PRISON ADMISSION RATE
Spatial Inequality: From birth to death

Infant Mortality

Life Expectancy
MOVING FORWARD

Understand and Recognize the direct relationship between historical patterns of discrimination and today’s community equity challenges

Implications: Working with Communities

• Living history resonates with community members
  • These are their lived experiences, or those of their parents and grandparents

• Understanding a community’s apprehension or mistrust
  • Focus on establishing trust and rebuilding severed relationships and creating new ones.
  • Be intentional about providing resources the community states they need not just what we believe they need.
  • Increase community involvement in decision making.
MOVING FORWARD

Understand and Recognize the direct relationship between historical patterns of discrimination and today’s community equity challenges

Implications: Upstream

- Policy’s explicit role in shaping community inequities
  - Policy must be a tool to revitalize communities
- Relationship between values, biases and policy
  - Whose values are reflected in our policies today in relation to equity?
- Incentives for restorative investment in communities (policy-driven)
  - What role can COHHIO play in creating community buy in for policy driven Social Justice?
MOVING BEYOND DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION
DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, EQUITY AND JUSTICE

Diversity vs Equity

Diversity Celebrates...
Increases in numbers that still reflect
minoritized status on campus and
incremental growth.

Equity Celebrates...
Reductions in harm, revisions to abusive
systems and increases in supports for
people’s life chances as reported by those
who have been targeted.

Adapted from the "Colleges need a language shift, but not the one you think" by Dr. Dafina-Lazarus Stewart in *Inside Higher Ed*. 
DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, EQUITY AND JUSTICE

Inclusion vs Justice

Inclusion Celebrates...
Awards for initiatives and credits itself for having a diverse candidate pool.

Justice Celebrates...
Getting rid of practices and policies that were having disparate impacts on minoritized groups.

Adapted from the "Colleges need a language shift, but not the one you think" by Dr. Dafina-Lazarus Stewart in Inside Higher Ed.
DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, EQUITY AND JUSTICE

Inclusion vs Justice

Inclusion Asks...
“Is this environment safe for everyone to feel like they belong?”

Justice Responds...
“Whose safety is being sacrificed and minimized to allow others to be comfortable maintaining dehumanizing views?”

Adapted from the "Colleges need a language shift, but not the one you think" by Dr. Dafina-Lazarus Stewart in Inside Higher Ed.
Diversity, Inclusion, Equity and Justice

Diversity vs Equity

Diversity Asks...  
“Isn’t it separatist to provide funding for safe spaces and separate student centers?”

Equity Responds...  
“What are people experiencing on campus that they don’t feel safe when isolated and separated from others like themselves?”

Adapted from the "Colleges need a language shift, but not the one you think" by Dr. Dafina-Lazarus Stewart in Inside Higher Ed.
CHALLENGING IMPLICIT BIAS

INDIVIDUAL & INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIES
Know Your Biases

Project Implicit

PROJECT IMPLICIT SOCIAL ATTITUDES
Log in or register to find out your implicit associations about race, gender, sexual orientation, and other topics!

PROJECT IMPLICIT MENTAL HEALTH
Find out your implicit associations about self-esteem, anxiety, alcohol, and other topics!

PROJECT IMPLICIT FEATURED TASK
Do pets like some groups of people more than others? Tell us your opinion and learn your own implicit attitudes regarding race.
"But if I go over there and get to know them as individuals, what am I supposed to do with my stereotypes?"

REDUCE SUSCEPTIBILITY AT
KEY DECISION-MAKING MOMENTS

- Time Constraints
- Compromised Cognitive Control
- High Ambiguity
- Overconfidence in Objectivity
Logging data may be the first way to establish that bias may be an issue and can help inform next steps.

Set clear goals, track progress, & analyze trends
INCREASE KNOWLEDGE OF BIAS AND THE EFFECTS OF BIAS
Provide ongoing training for staff.

NARRATIVE MANAGEMENT
Debunk single storied and stereotypical narratives of people's identities and experiences by increasing awareness of counter narratives.

CULTURAL HUMILITY
Actively practice being culturally humble and make the lifelong commitment to developing cultural humility.

ACTIVE BYSTANDER
Identify the emergence of bias. Decide to address the situation. Speak Out. Follow up.

SAFE SPACES
Create spaces where people can safely engage in courageous conversations and transformative dialogue.

EMPOWERMENT
Empower people to be brave, live in and speak their truth and ensure they have the resources to act against bias.

"You have to act as if it were possible to radically transform the world. And you have to do it all the time."  - Angela Davis
BE AN ACTIVE BYSTANDER

IDENTIFY the emergence of bias
DECIDE to address the situation
SPEAK OUT
FOLLOW UP
CONTINUALLY CREATE
AN INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT

COHHIO
Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio
“If you always think what you always thought, you will always do what you’ve always done.

If you always do what you’ve always done, you will always get what you’ve always got.

If you always get what you’ve always got, you will always think what you’ve always thought.”

THINK Different  |  DO Different  |  GET Different
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
INCREASE KNOWLEDGE OF BIAS AND THE EFFECTS OF BIAS
Provide ongoing training for staff.

NARRATIVE MANAGEMENT
Debunk single storied and stereotypical narratives of peoples' identities and experiences by increasing awareness of counter narratives.

CULTURAL HUMILITY
Actively practice being culturally humble and make the lifelong commitment to developing cultural humility.

ACTIVE BYSTANDER
Identify the emergence of bias. Decide to address the situation. Speak Out. Follow up.

SAFE SPACES
Create spaces where people can safely, in the context of their identity, engage in courageous conversations and trans-formative dialogue.

EMPOWERMENT
Empower people to be brave, live in and speak their truth and ensure they have the resources to act against bias.

"You have to act as if it were possible to radically transform the world. And you have to do it all the time." ~ Angela Davis

Additional Resources