

BIAS

MOVING BEYOND

Implicit Bias is a Habit of the Mind

Simplifies a complex world

- Comes from society (e.g., media, family, friends)
- Affects behavior toward targets of stereotypes
- Can lead to discrimination across sectors

Be Aware Of

- Subtle behaviors
- Microaggressions

Affects Us When We Don't Have

- Time
- Energy
- Ability
- Motivation

What Do We Do About It?

- Pause
- Detect
- Reflect
- Reject

Break the Bias Habit®

• • •

- 1. Individuating**
- 2. Stereotype Replacement**
- 3. Expanding Exposure**
- 4. Perspective Taking**
- 5. Situational Explanations**

Implicit bias is unconscious and automatic. It can affect the way you interact with others. People get spontaneous thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that are different from what they desire. Because people often don't realize when stereotypes influence their actions, and because they affect us most when we are tired, rushed, stressed, fatigued, or distracted, they're like bad habits that occur automatically, before a person notices them or has time to reflect on them. Below are 5 strategies to help you stop bias from affecting your behavior, or "**Break the Bias Habit**[®]":

1. **Individuating:** Stereotyping involves applying the same set of characteristics to all members of a group simply because they belong to that group. Individuating means going beyond group membership and attending more carefully to the specific, personal characteristics of each person, such as family background and personality traits.

Thought Question: How can you individuate those around you?

2. **Situational Explanations:** People usually focus too much on the person — i.e., their qualities or characteristics — and not enough on how the situation shapes their behavior. Stereotypes offer an easy person-centered explanation for what we observe. Situations may explain behavior better. Considering situational factors involves paying closer attention to a person's immediate situation or chronic environment that could have contributed to their behavior.

Thought Question: How can you consider the situation that those around you experience?

3. **Expanding Exposure:** This involves modifying one's environment by gaining knowledge and insight into issues involving minority groups. You can expand your exposure by learning about historical, social, and political issues impacting people from different backgrounds. You can also access media (news, television, movies, social media) that portrays minority groups in authentic ways that don't perpetuate stereotypes. Also, under certain conditions, positive interactions with people from minority groups may help disconfirm stereotypes about that group.

Thought Question: How do you plan to expand your exposure?

4. **Perspective Taking:** This involves imagining what it would feel like to be in another person's situation. This can be very useful in assessing the emotional impact of stereotyping on others. For example, reflect on how it would feel to have your abilities called into question or to be viewed as lazy and potentially violent based on your race, ethnicity, or other characteristic. Perspective taking can be done proactively, without any prompting from outside sources. It can also be done reactively, after you detect that you have relied on a stereotype.

Thought Question: How can you take the perspective of those around you more?

5. **Stereotype Replacement:** This involves **Detect, Reflect, Reject**. Replacing stereotypes requires us to figure out the situations that trigger our reliance on them (e.g., shows, movies, music, or people who endorse stereotypes). While we may not be able to reduce our exposure to these things, we can: 1) **detect** our reliance on stereotypes, 2) **reflect** on where they came from and how they impact those around us, and 3) **reject** them by replacing them with non-stereotypic thoughts.

Thought Question: How can you regularly replace stereotypes in your life?

Institutional Strategies For Mitigating the Impact of Implicit Bias¹

1. Collect data

- Conduct a bias audit
- Examine whether there are disproportionate outcomes instead of focusing on intent, especially in areas consistent with societal stereotypes (e.g., gender & STEM, race/ethnicity)

2. Affirmatively state and pursue equitable outcomes

- Focus on aligning outcomes with goals

3. Involve a diverse cross-section of decision-makers

- At every level of the process
- Especially from underrepresented groups

4. Doubt objectivity and test for bias

- Perceived objectivity enhances the impact of bias
- Include bias-disrupting procedures and processes

5. Educate a critical mass about bias

- Develop a language and culture that allows people to talk about bias productively

6. Collect data (again!) and evaluate outcomes

- Monitor progress toward stated goals
- Identify learning
- Engage in continuous improvement

¹ Compiled from: Kang et al. (2012); Rock & Grant (2016); Powell (2015)