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Reducing the Influence of Implicit Biases for Healthcare Professionals

by Esther Clervaud, Ed.S.



Esther Clervaud, EdS

Esther Clervaud, ED. S. is an author and educational consultant in South Carolina. She has taught in both primary and secondary education in Florida and South Carolina. As a former educator, she created and implemented several events to increase cultural awareness, self-esteem, student learning, and engagement. As a result, community support improved and student achievement flourished.

In addition to being trained through Cornell University's Diversity and Inclusion program, Esther has gained experience through working with diverse populations and data-driven research. She currently uses her knowledge to facilitate professional development around the nation educating professionals in various fields and expertise. Esther has published over 15 cultural resources - including, but not limited to, books and curricula - and consults organizations on strategies for increasing cultural awareness and sensitivity in their workplace. Her printed resources are presently utilized in several organizations and school districts across the nation.



Disclosures

- **Presenter Disclosure:** Financial: Esther Clervaud has received an honorarium for presenting this course and is an educational consultant with Heritage AcceptED. Non-financial: Esther Clervaud has no relevant non-financial relationships to disclose.
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Learning Outcomes

After this course, participants will be able to:

- Explain the definition and origin of implicit biases.
- Summarize the effects implicit biases.
- Describe strategies that will assist in reducing the influence of implicit biases.



ACTIVITY

- “A father and son were involved in a car accident in which the father was killed and the son was seriously injured. The father was pronounced dead at the scene of the accident and his body was taken to a local morgue. The son was taken by ambulance to a nearby hospital and was immediately wheeled into an emergency operating room. A surgeon was called. Upon arrival and seeing the patient, the attending surgeon exclaimed ‘Oh my God, it’s my son!’ ”
- How would you explain this?



ANSWER

The surgeon is the boy's mother.



ACTIVITY RESULTS

- About 40% of participants invent elaborate stories
 - The boy was adopted.
 - The father in the car was a priest.
- Strong association between surgeon and men



ACTIVITY

Number your paper from 1 – 10. Write “M” for male and “F” for female to indicate the possible gender of the profession on the screen.



1. Doctor



2. Homemaker



3. Millionaire



4. Police Officer



5. Teacher



6. President



7. Soldier



8. Nurse



9. Ballerina



10. Flight Attendant



1. Doctor M



2. Homemaker F



3. Millionaire M



4. Police Officer M



5. Teacher F



6. President M



7. Soldier M



8. Nurse F



9. Ballerina F



10. Flight Attendant F





Implicit Biases Defined

- What are implicit biases?
 - “...the preference for or against a person, thing, or group held at an **unconscious** level.”
 - “...the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an **unconscious** manner.”
 - held by an individual, group, and institutional level.



Implicit Biases

Types

- Affinity Bias
- Attribution Bias
- Beauty Bias
- Conformity Bias
- Confirmation Bias
- Contrast Effect
- Gender Bias
- Name Bias
- Horns Effect



Implicit Biases

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- Affinity Bias
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Affinity Bias

- Definition
 - Unconscious tendency to be more receptive to people who are similar to us
- Fact
 - Difficult to bridge differences
- Examples



Confirmation Bias

- Definition
 - Unconscious tendency to interpret new information as validation of one's existing beliefs
- Facts
 - Neglect information that contradicts or challenges our beliefs
 - Hold on to information that supports our existing beliefs
- Examples



Gender Bias

- Definition
 - Unconscious tendency to prefer one gender over another
- Facts
 - Can lead to gender discrimination
 - Can widen gender gap
- Examples



*“I am a
horrible
person!”*



*“I thought I
held
egalitarian
beliefs!”*

Origin of Implicit Biases

- Cognitive Neuroscience
 - Our brain processes millions of information per day
 - Our brain **unconsciously** categorizes the massive amount of information



Origin of Implicit Biases

- Social conditioning
 - Media and advertising portrayals/representations
 - Cultural conditioning/upbringing



ACTIVITY

First Thought

Directions: Select the first thought that comes to mind.



- Angry or passionate?
- Ghetto or well-mannered?
- Poor or well-off?
- Educated or uneducated?
- Married or single with children?



- Angry or passionate?
- Ghetto or well-mannered?
- Poor or well-off?
- Educated or uneducated?
- Married with children or single with children?



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- Angry or passionate?
- Ghetto or well-mannered?
- Poor or well-off?
- Educated or uneducated?
- Married with children or single with children?



- Angry or passionate?
- Ghetto or well-mannered?
- Poor or well-off?
- Educated or uneducated?
- Married with children or **single with children?**



- Angry or passionate?
- Disrespectful or assertive?
- Poor or well-off?
- Educated or uneducated?
- Married with children or single with children?



- Angry or passionate?
- Disrespectful or assertive?
- Poor or well-off?
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- Do you think the stance of the officer would have been the same?

We are not all bad



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Effects of Implicit Biases

- Implicit biases determine how you perceive, evaluate and react to others.
 - EDUCATION: Black children are more likely to be expelled and suspended than their counterparts.
 - LEGAL SYSTEM: Black defendants are more likely to receive tougher rulings than whites with the same crime.
 - WORKPLACE: Applicants with white-sounding names are more likely to get callbacks.
 - *Example:* Sarah vs. Jamesha or John vs. Jorge



Effects of Implicit Biases

- Implicit biases determine how you perceive, evaluate and react to others.
 - HEALTHCARE: Lack of equal access to housing, mental healthcare and social services.



Reducing the Influence of Implicit Biases

- Understand the nature of implicit biases
- Identify your biases
 - Take implicit association tests
 - Project Implicit by Harvard University
(<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>)
- Exercise individuation



Reducing the Influence of Implicit Biases

- Expose yourself to other cultures
 - www.heritageaccepted.com
- Be ever-learning
- Practice perspective-taking
- Slow down in life



ACTIVITY

Action Plan: Going Past Awareness

Directions: Create steps to tackle your biases.



Immediate Action – Reducing Implicit Biases

- Take Harvard's IAT this week. Retake another test every three months.
- Read a book on diversity by the end of month three.
- Do a quarterly check on my biases.



Immediate Action – Reducing Implicit Biases

- Research and visit more cultural events in my community as they become available. I will attend at least three events per year.
- Set aside at least 15 minutes of daily me-time starting today.
- Do a quarterly check on my biases.



THANK YOU!

“Instead of focusing on the ‘them,’
let’s focus on the ‘us,’ as we learn
to appreciate the ‘you.’”

~Esther Clervaud, Ed.S.



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