

INTRODUCTION TO IMPLICIT BIAS

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Session Objectives

1. Understand the origins, characteristics, and impacts of implicit bias on individuals, institutions, and systems;
2. Practice application of research-based debiasing strategies;
3. Explore strategies and tools for sharing information with colleagues and communities.

AGENDA

1. Opening + Introductions
2. Definitions: A shared language
3. Overview of implicit bias: What it is, how it works
4. Implicit bias in community development and homebuying
5. Debiasing strategies

“Implicit Social Cognition is the process by which the brain uses mental associations that are so well-established as to operate without awareness, or without intention, or without control”

- Project Implicit, Harvard University

Sources: Most of the information in this presentation is derived from *State of the Science: Implicit Bias Review 2013, 2014, and 2015* and “Challenging Race as Risk,” published by the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, Ohio State University.

Implicit Bias Builds Off of Explicit Bias

1700s – 1800s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only “free white men” allowed to vote at founding of our country • Slavery based on belief that Blacks are sub-human, justified by eugenics • Jim Crow perpetuates “separate but equal” by law after slavery
1900s – 1950s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immigration to U.S. from all of Asia barred from 1917 to 1940s • Redlining and restrictive covenants severely limited housing options for people of color
1950s – 1970s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil Rights Movement renders racial discrimination illegal • Categories newly protected from housing discrimination: race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability and family status
1970s – 1980s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gains in racial and gender equity but not to full parity
1980s - present	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New era of “colorblind” • Following 2001 terrorist attacks, U.S. requires special registration of men from 25 Arab, Muslim, and South Asian countries • Predatory lending disproportionately targets Black, Latino and immigrant households • Backslides in health, wealth, education, other measures of well-being of Blacks and Latinos compared to Whites

Boston’s wealth gap

From “Color of Wealth” report, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, 2015

Median household wealth

White	\$ 247,500
Caribbean Black	\$ 12,000
Puerto Rican	\$ 3,020
U.S. Black	\$ 8
Dominican	\$ 0

“The biggest factor in the Black-White wealth gap is years of homeownership”
 from *Challenging Race as Risk: How Implicit bias undermines housing opportunity in America – and what we can do about it*

DEBIASING

- Attempting to repress biases does not work
- Starts with openly acknowledging one's biases and directly challenging them
- Involves constructing new mental associations – like breaking a bad habit
- Takes intention, attention, and time
- Results vary depending on individual's motivation and context

Debiasing Interventions

1. *Get educated* about implicit bias.
2. *Seek out relationships* with people of different identities than you.
3. *Ask for feedback* on your actions from peers or colleagues.
4. *Make time to reflect* on your behavior and actions.
5. *Think of a stereotype* about you.
6. Counter-stereotype training – *Retrain associations*:
 - Display images that defy negative stereotypes;
 - When a stereotype surfaces in your mind, replace it with an individual who does not fit that stereotype.
7. *Get to know people* as individuals.

Debiasing in Employment and Homebuyer Services: Some Proven Strategies

- Use of multiple perspectives and sources of information
- Avoid reliance on first impressions or gut feelings
- Persons who are shown that their actions are biased and then allowed to “practice” neutral judgments are more likely to make gains, especially if they are committed to equity.

Debiasing Institutional Practices and Policies

- Monitor data, look for patterns:
 - Do programs and services reach all types of people you want to reach? What assumptions do you make about people you are not reaching? How do you know?
 - Who successfully accesses and completes your program or services, and who doesn't?
 - Is there a relationship between applicant characteristics and loan performance?
- Assess organizational culture within your organization:
 - How are clients treated when they call or walk in the door?
 - Are there variations in the support provided to different prospective homebuyers?
- Identify problematic policies and practices and work with others to address them.
 - Credit scoring
 - Racial steering
 - NIMBYism

Excerpted from

"BIAS-SPOTTER PARTNERSHIPS: CALLING YOUR TEAM TO ACTION"

by Sondra Thiederman, Ph.D.

A Partnership of Accountability

A Bias-Spotter Partnership is the pairing of team members for purposes of observing each other's actions and, ultimately, identifying the biases that might lie behind them.

Not only do the observations of the partner serve to identify manifestations of bias, but the very fact that another person is "on duty" motivates each partner to watch carefully for their own bias-based behaviors. Research, in fact, shows that even just being accountable to another person is a key component of bias awareness and reduction.

A Partnership of Mutual Support and Trust (No "Gotcha!" Allowed)

The Bias-Spotter Partnership strategy is not about setting up a mini-police state. To the contrary, it is rooted in trust and friendship. In this spirit, these guidelines should be kept in mind.

1. As in any good partnership, both parties must commit to the betterment of the team.
2. Both partners must be willing and able to make all observations in the spirit of mutual support; this is not a "Gotcha!" strategy.
3. Bias Spotter partners need to be extra vigilant when the partner is functioning in a new environment, when they are rushed, or when they are under an unusual amount of stress. It is then that biases are most apt to influence our thinking and our actions.
4. Both team members must commit to seriously considering the accuracy of any observations made by their partner. To do this, it is helpful to sit with the feedback for a few days before responding. This gives our natural defensiveness time to settle down and allows for a clearer perspective and more productive response.

A FEW RESOURCES – LEARN MORE

TAKE the online Implicit Associations Test at www.implicit.harvard.edu

Reading/Research:

Implicit Bias Review, Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, Ohio State University. Published annually, this Review summarizes all of the latest research on implicit bias, including data specific to employment, housing, education, health care, criminal justice, and more.
<http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/researchandstrategicinitiatives/implicit-bias-review/>

“Challenging Race as Risk,” report on how implicit bias feeds into structural racism that keeps U.S. housing market separate and unequal, Jillian Olinger, Kelly Capatosto, and Mary Ana McKay (Dec. 2016).
<http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/my-product/challenging-race-as-risk-implicit-bias-in-housing/>

“Chipping Away at Implicit Bias”

Focuses on long-term and systemic impacts of bias on communities from the perspective of housing and financial services industries. Jillian Olinger and Kelly Capatosto, shelterforce.org (August 23, 2017).

“4 ways you might be displaying hidden bias in everyday life,” [cnn.com](http://www.cnn.com), Nov. 25, 2015,
<http://www.cnn.com/2015/11/24/living/implicit-bias-tests-feat/>

“Psychology’s Favorite Tool for Measuring Racism Isn’t Up to the Job”

Critique of the online Implicit Associations Test. Jesse Singal, nymag.com/scienceofus (January 2017).

“bias cleanse” 7-days of “bias cleansing” activities on race, gender, anti-LGBTQ bias, sent to your inbox lookdifferent.org/what-can-i-do/bias-cleanse

Thinking Fast and Slow

Insight from decades of research on how human intuition works from a Nobel-prize winning psychologist. Daniel Kahneman (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011).

Videos:

Race: The Power of an Illusion, Part 3: The House We Live In

History of racialized U.S. immigration and housing policies and their impact. California Newsreel.

Brain Tricks – This Is How Your Brain Works

5 min. video describes how our unconscious (fast) brain overrides our conscious (slow) brain.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JiTz2i4VHFw>

José V. Joe: Who Gets a Job?

1 min. video about the real-life experience with implicit bias of a job seeker named José.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PR7SG2C7IVU>

What Would you Do?

5 min. video of a bike theft, and different reactions of passersby based on race and gender of apparent thief.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ge7i60GuNRg>

The Danger of a Single Story

19 min. TED talk by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie eloquently describes the deep impact of implicit bias.

https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?language=en

What does my headscarf mean to you?

14 min. TED talk by Yassmin Abdel-Magied about stereotypes.

https://www.ted.com/talks/yassmin_abdel_magied_what_does_my_headscarf_mean_to_you