

IMPLICIT BIAS

Understanding and Overcoming our
Implicit Bias
Vermont Human Rights Commission
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GOALS

- To increase understanding of the nature and sources of implicit bias
- To recognize our own biases
- To understand how bias affects behavior
- To develop skills/strategies for reducing or overriding our implicit bias

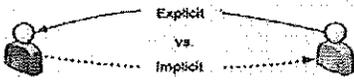


Would You Have Reacted as You Did if Susan Boyle Looked Like This?

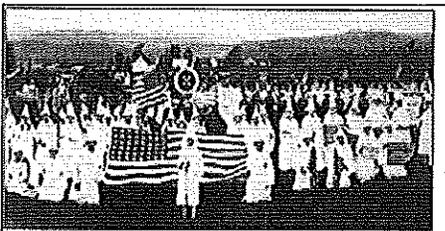


EXPLICIT VS. IMPLICIT BEHAVIOR

The difference between "Explicit Bias" vs. "Implicit Bias"



EXPLICIT BIAS



1927: KKK rally in Utopia, VT

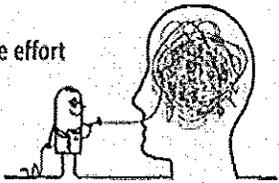
EXPLICIT BEHAVIOR

- Reflective
- Conscious
- Requires motivation, effort
- Takes more time

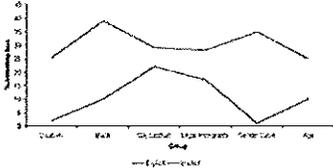


IMPLICIT BEHAVIOR

- Reflexive
- Unconscious
- Requires little effort
- Fast



Implicit vs. Explicit Bias



| Category | Explicit Bias | Implicit Bias |
|----------|---------------|---------------|
| White | 35 | 10 |
| Black | 25 | 25 |
| Hispanic | 25 | 20 |
| American | 35 | 10 |
| American | 25 | 20 |
| All | 30 | 15 |

Explicit vs. Implicit Bias

Explicit bias is a snowball on top of a glacier

Implicit bias is the glacier underneath

Examples of Implicit Bias

There are many studies documenting implicit bias in nearly every aspect of life.

Implicit Bias - Height

What percentage of American men are over 6 feet tall?



What percentage of Corporate CEOs are over 6 feet tall?

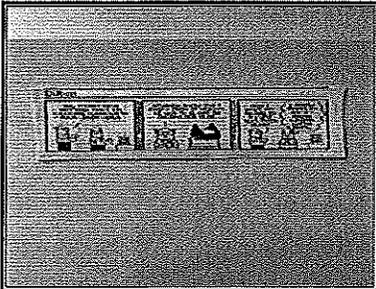


Implicit Bias - Height

What percentage of American men are over 6'2" tall?  4%

What percentage of Corporate CEOs are over 6'2" tall?  56%

Height = Money



IMPLICIT BIAS- NAMES

- Job applicants with names associated with whites received a callback for one of every ten resumes; names associated with Blacks were one in fifteen
 - Carrie and Kristen- callback rate of more than 13%
 - Aisha- 2.2%
 - Keisha- 3.8%
 - Tamika- 5.4%

Other Examples - Race

- Doctors are more likely to recommend heart catheterization to White patients than to Black patients with identical conditions
- Blacks sent to bargain for a used car were offered prices \$700 higher and got fewer concessions than identically qualified Whites
- Identically qualified African-Americans were shown fewer apartments and houses for sale than Whites
- White legislators are less likely to respond to Black constituents than to White ones
- On eBay, iPods held by White hands received 21% more offers than those held in Black hands

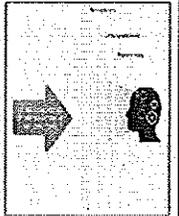
Other Examples - Gender

- There are dramatically higher average death rates for storms named for women (45) than those named for men (23). "In judging the intensity of the storm, people appear to be applying their beliefs about how men and women behave."
- Identical applications for a science lab assistant (except for a male or female name) were sent to faculty at various institutions. The applicants with male names were offered the position more often, offered more mentoring opportunities, and offered thousands more in salary than identically qualified women. Both male and female faculty rated applicants similarly.

BRAIN PROCESSING

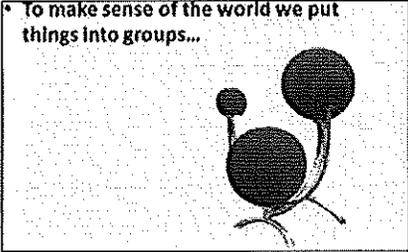
Understanding Human Bias

- **Filters**
- **At any point in time...**
 - We are exposed to nearly 11,000,000 pieces of information
 - Our brains can functionally recognize about 40
 - And focus on only about 7



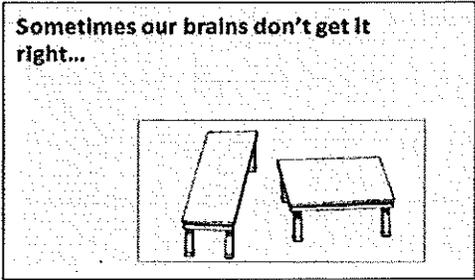
CATEGORIZATION

To make sense of the world we put things into groups...



CONCLUSION/JUDGMENT

Sometimes our brains don't get it right...



Understanding Human Bias

Who and why do we prejudge?

Persons/things who we do not know (ambiguous stimuli)

The capacity to discern "us" from "them" is fundamental in the human brain



Understanding Human Bias

When we don't know an individual, we assign characteristics to him or her by placing the person into categories according to easily and quickly identifiable characteristics.

This happens unconsciously



Understanding Human Bias

The characteristics we attribute to a person come from:

- Categorization/ essentialization
- Fight or Flight- amygdala brain function
- Lack of contact
- Stereotyping
- Institutional bias (press, movies, TV, etc.)

STEREOTYPING

Is the general inclination to place a person into categories according to some easily and quickly identifiable characteristic such as age, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, ethnic membership, nationality, or occupation, height, weight, liberal/conservative, etc. and then attribute to him/her qualities believed to be typical of members of that category.

We ALL Have Implicit Bias

Yes, you do and so do I.

- Implicit bias is often incompatible with our conscious attitudes
- Even well-intentioned people have implicit biases-it does not make us bad people
- We are the products of a racist/sexist/albeist culture
- Implicit biases influence our perceptions and our behavior

Quote of the Day

“In an avalanche, every snowflake pleads innocent.”



Another Obstacle to Overcoming Bias

Racial Anxiety- this refers to the discomfort about the experience of dealing with someone who is different and the potential consequences of inter-racial interactions.

- People of color may feel they will be the target of discrimination or hostility
- White people may feel they will be presumed to be racist and will be met with mistrust and hostility

If two people are anxious that an encounter will be negative, it most likely will be thus creating a negative feedback loop that is confirmed by the behavior of the other.

Yet Another Obstacle

Stereotype Threat- refers to the pressure people feel when they fear their performance may confirm a negative stereotype about their group.

- People of color and women experience this as a distraction that interferes with intellectual functioning.
- White people may experience this as a threat to one's character (being perceived as racist) which is also harmful.

Being perceived as racist has led teachers, professors, and supervisors to give less critical feedback to people of color which is harmful in the long run.

Perception

Pick a partner and take 5 minutes to identify an implicit bias that you know that you have and discuss why you believe you have that bias.

Understanding Human Bias

Understanding how implicit bias can affect our perceptions and behavior is the first step to "overriding" implicit bias.



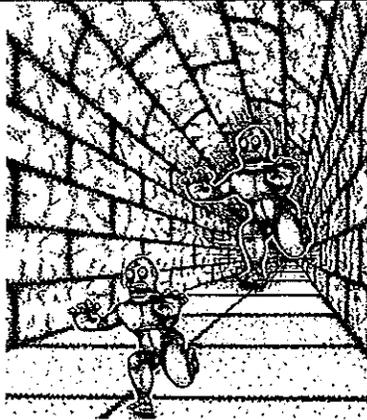
PROCESS OF PERCEPTION

- Data In
- Immediate interpretation
- Attribution
- Categorization/generalization
- Conclusion/Judgment
- Prediction

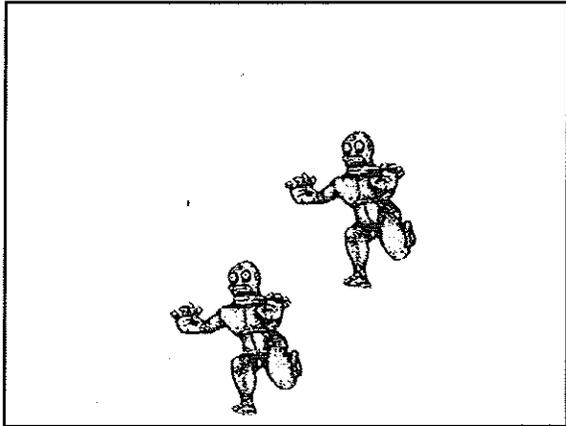


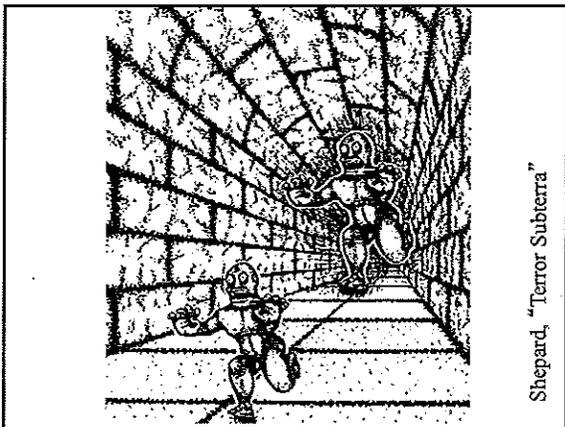
Listen to this...



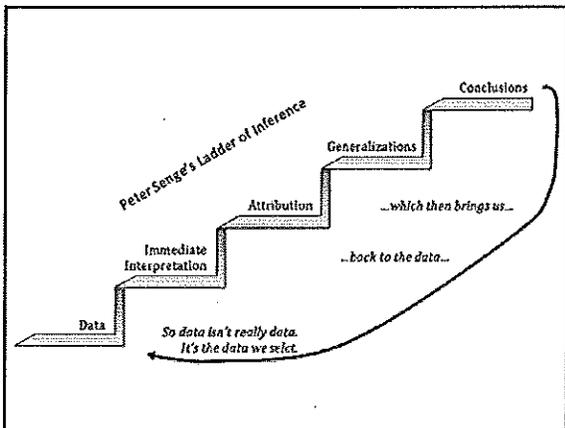


Shepard, "Terror Subterra"





Shepard, "Terror Subterra"



P/A.U.S.E.

Pay attention to what's actually happening beneath the judgments and assessments.

Acknowledge your reactions, interpretations and judgments.

Understand the other possible reactions, interpretations and judgments that may be possible

Search for the most constructive, empowering, or productive way to deal with the situation.

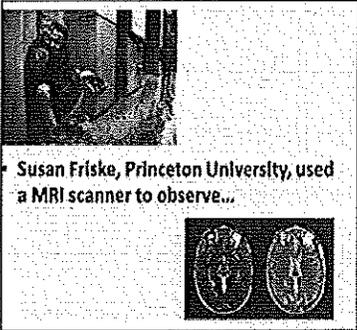
Execute your plan.

The Power of Perception

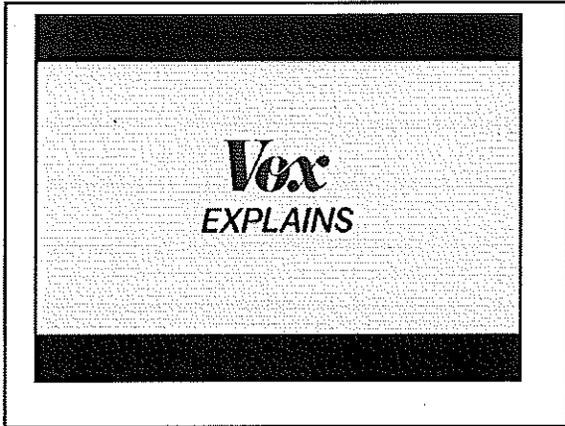
- Insiders (those of us with white privilege) believe in "colorblindness"- discrimination is rare.
- Outsiders (persons of color or members of other protected groups) believe that prejudice is pervasive and deeply rooted in daily social dynamics.

Most instances of perceived discrimination contain some ambiguity.

Thus the person's perception will likely determine his or her reaction to the same set of circumstances.



• Susan Fiske, Princeton University, used a MRI scanner to observe...



Racism, Sexism, Ableism

Prejudice/bias (explicit or implicit) + systemic institutional power

A black and white photograph of a historical sign. The sign is divided into two sections. The top section has a signpost with a sign that says 'WHITES ONLY'. The bottom section has a sign that says 'PUBLIC SWIMMING POOL'. A person is standing in front of the sign.

Examples of Institutionalized Racism/Sexism

- Slavery/ Women as property of men
- Taking land from Native Americans by force and extermination
- Denial of the right to vote (blacks and women)
- Paying women less for the same job
- Jim Crow/Segregation
- Separate But Equal

Institutional Media Bias

In case you are not convinced of institutional media bias...

White Suspect

Alabama suspect brilliant but social misfit
That's how the Lobstock Avalanche Journal chose to present the story of Amy Bishop, a former college professor who eventually pleaded guilty to killing three colleagues and wounding three others at a faculty meeting in 2010.

Black Victim

Montgomery's latest homicide victim had a history of narcotics abuse and tangles with the law
And that's the headline Al.com ran about the shooting death of a 25-year-old black man in Alabama earlier this year

More Headlines

White Suspect

Son in Staten Island murders was brilliant, athletic— but his demons were the death of parents
This is how the Staten Island Advance covered the case of Eric Belucci, a mentally ill New York man who allegedly killed his parents.

Black Victim

Trayvon Martin was suspended three times from school
Meanwhile, NBC News ran this headline during ongoing coverage of the Trayvon Martin killing.

Still More Headlines

White Suspect

Santa Barbara shooting: Suspect was 'soft-spoken, polite, a gentleman', ex-principal says
In the wake of the mass shooting in Santa Barbara, California, earlier this year, the Whittier Daily News offered a headline showing one man's disbelief that Elliot Rodger could have committed such a crime.

Black Victim

Ohio man was carrying variable pump air rifle—not a toy— when cops killed him: attorney general
Earlier this month, the New York Daily News ran this headline, carrying comments by the Ohio attorney general that appeared to defend police after killing a black man at a Walmart.

And on it goes...

White Suspect

Ohio Shooting Suspect, T.J. Lane, described as 'fine person'

This was the headline given to an Associated Press story at Mlive.com about an Ohio teen who later pleaded guilty to a school shooting in which three students were killed and two were wounded.

Black Victim

Deputy killed Marine out of fear for children's safety, officials say

But when an unarmed father of two was killed by a police officer while entering a vehicle that contained his own children, the Los Angeles Times served up this claim from officials.

You Get the Picture...

These two nearly identical photos with very different captions appeared almost simultaneously...

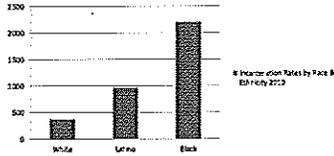


White Privilege

- Being white in the United States means that you are born with privileges of historical access and advantage
- This leads white people and institutions controlled by them, to intentionally perpetuate or unintentionally collude in racism
- People of color as a social group do not have the institutional power to oppress white people as a group

Institutional Bias Matters

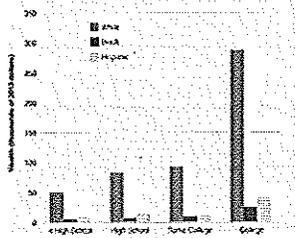
Incarceration Rates by Race & Ethnicity 2010
per 100,000 in that group



Source: Prison Policy Initiative from Bureau of Justice Statistics, Correctional Population in United States 2010 and U.S. Census 2010

If we have achieved true equality, how can we explain these disparities?

Median Wealth By Race & Education (2013)



Whiteness as Property

Whites possess nearly twelve times as much median net worth as Blacks, or \$43,800 vs. \$3,700

Average white household controls \$6,999 in net assets; the average Black family has none

Poverty level whites control nearly as many net assets as the highest earning Blacks.

White financial accumulation at comparable education levels is 5-10 times that of Blacks



Race and Inheritance
(a will and a won't)

- One in four white families receives a bequest on the death of a relative compared with only one in twenty Black families
- Whites inherit seven times more money than Blacks

Overall it is worth \$94,426 in net financial assets and \$136,173 in net worth to be white



The segregation tax

Between 1996 and 2002 the typical home owned by white families increased in value by \$28,000 more than homes owned by Blacks.

Homes lost more than 16% of their value when located in a neighborhood that is more than 10% Black

If average-earning Blacks could live in the same neighborhoods as average-earning whites, their houses would be worth 39% more

For average-earning Latinos the difference is 76% more



The Wealth Gap is Growing

- A 2010 study by the Institute on Assets and Social Policy at Brandeis University found that the already large wealth gap between whites and Blacks **quadrupled** between 1984 and 2007.
- In 1995 white households had **ten** times as much wealth as Black households. In 2014 white households are worth **twenty** times what Black households are worth.

Combating Bias

Step 1

Recognize and acknowledge your implicit biases and implement controlled responses.

<http://www.understandingprejudice.org/iat/racframe.htm>
<http://www.tolerance.org/hiddenbias>

Concern About Discrimination

Step 2

Be concerned about the consequences of failing to acknowledge or override your implicit bias

Dormant beliefs, attitudes, intentions and other similar constructs are activated below conscious awareness and have observable effects on judgments and actions despite your good explicit intentions.

Implement Strategies to Control Behavior

| Training | Strategy description |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 1. Stereotype replacement | Recognizing stereotypic responses within oneself and society, labeling them, and replacing them with non-stereotypic responses |
| 2. Counter-stereotypic imaging | Imagining examples of out-group members who counter popularly held stereotypes |
| 3. Individuation | Viewing others according to their personal, rather than stereotypic, characteristics |
| 4. Perspective taking | Adopting the perspective in the first person of a member of a stigmatized group |
| 5. Contact | Increasing exposure to out-group members |

Devine, P.G., et al. Long-term reduction in implicit race bias: A prejudice habit-breaking intervention. *Journal of Experimental Psychology* (2012). Doi:10.1016/j.jesp.2012.06.003

Stereotype Replacement

- Recognize that a response is based on stereotypes
- Label the response as such
- Reflect on why the response occurred
- Consider how it can be avoided in the future
- Replace it with an unbiased response

Counter-Stereotypic Imaging

Imagine in detail counter-stereotypic others.

They can be abstract or real, famous (Michelle Obama, Michael Jordan, Denziel Washington) or not famous (relative, friend, co-worker, etc.)



Individuation

Obtain specific information about individual group members.



Avoid profiling by proxy. Evaluate people based on personal attributes rather than group-based evaluation and don't assume that the individual speaks for a group.

Perspective Taking

Take the first person perspective of the member of the stereotyped group.



This increases psychological closeness and ameliorates the automatic group-based evaluations

Increase Opportunities for Contact

Positive contact between members of different groups improves inter-group attitudes and reduces both explicit and implicit bias.



Other Strategies for Overcoming Bias

- Empathize with people- see them as individuals and humans not objects
- Educate yourself about cultural differences
- Be willing to talk about difference; don't ignore it
- Read about civil rights and institutional bias
- Speak out against hate speech
- Educate yourself about microaggressions
- Avoid profiling by proxy

It Works!

Eventually new brain pathways will lessen your primal reactions. No really!

Challenges

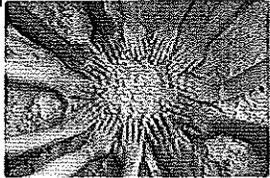
- Pay more attention to what you read and see in the media, in the news, movies and on TV? Do you see examples of institutional media bias now? How might that bias affect your reactions to people of color, women, elders, etc.?
- Pay attention to the ladder of assumptions as it applies to all aspects of your personal and professional lives but particularly when encountering difference.
- Pay attention to your own bias and how you react to it. Implement strategies to overcome it.

Some final thoughts

Race, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, etc. are all social constructs

Final Thought

"We are more alike than different."
Maya Angelou



With gratitude

- To TJ Anderson and the Vermont Criminal Justice Training Academy for large parts of this presentation
- To the staff of the Human Rights Commission for their assistance in critiquing and providing material for this presentation
- To all of you for opening your minds to understanding and taking steps to combat implicit bias

