

The University of Iowa
Addressing Unconscious Bias Workshop Series – 2013

~ Key Terms ~

- **Bias:** is a form of stereotyping that is often outside our conscious intention.
 - Explicit Bias: People who hold explicit bias are aware of their views, the views are endorsed and intentional; Implicit bias occur outside of people’s awareness.
 - Implicit bias, also known as Hidden Bias or Unconscious Bias, are unconscious attitudes which often clash with professed (explicit) beliefs about groups. Implicit Bias arose conceptually as a way to explain why discrimination persists, even though polling and other research clearly shows that people oppose it. “Mechanisms of bias [are] produced by the current, ordinary workings of human brains—the mental states they create, the schemas they hold, and the behaviors they produce. Obviously, both history and societal factors play a crucial role in providing the content of those schemas, which are programmed through culture, media, and the material context.” (American Values Institute)
- **Institutional Discrimination:** Policies and practices within institutions which result in the systematic distribution of resources, power, and opportunity to the benefits of the dominant group and the exclusion of the subordinate group. For example, “institutional racism” results in the benefitting of people who are white and disadvantaging people of color.
- **Micro-affirmations:** Apparently small acts, which are often ephemeral and hard-to-see, events that are public and private, often unconscious but very effective, which occur wherever people wish to help others to succeed. (Rowe, 2008)
- **Micro-aggressions:** Brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color. (Sue et al 2007)
- **Micro-inequities.** Apparently small events which are often ephemeral and hard-to-prove, events which are covert, often unintentional, frequently unrecognized by the perpetrator, which occur wherever people are perceived to be ‘different.’ (Rowe, 2008)
- **Prejudice:** Pre-judgments (often negative) about members of a group.
- **Schemas:** In a very general sense, schemas are “templates of knowledge that help us organize specific examples into broader categories. When we see, for example, something with a flat seat, a back, and some legs, we recognize it as ‘chair.’” (Kang, 2009). We have schemas for objects, processes, and people. They allow us to operate without expending valuable mental resources in an automated way, given the extraordinary amount of daily decisions we make. Schemas serve as “mental shortcuts.”
 - When applied to people, schemas are expectations or hypotheses about the characteristics of a person based on their group membership. Schemas influence our judgments of others (often regardless of our own group membership). Schemas

influence group members' expectations about how we will be judged. (ADVANCE, University of Michigan)

- **Social Privilege:** A system of unearned advantages afforded a social group and its members because of skin color, social class, religion, ethnic group membership, gender, sexual orientation or other social characteristics. For example, white privilege provides perks that whites do not earn and that people of color do not enjoy; creates real advantages for whites; and shapes the worldview in which we all live—the way we navigate and interact with one another and with the world. (Holladay, Jennifer)
- **Stereotypes:** Schemas that we use to categorize people using specific human traits. For example, the elderly are often stereotyped as being frail; Asian Americans are stereotyped as being “foreign.” These associations – both positive and negative – are routinized enough that they generally are automatically accessed (Rudman, 2004).

Methods for measuring Implicit/Unconscious Bias:

- Implicit bias is measured “using indirect assessments that bypass awareness and conscious control” (Phelps, 2000)
 - Randomized assignment of gender, race, weight (e.g., resumes, clinical vignettes)
 - Comparative review of job artifacts (e.g., reference letters, performance evaluations)
 - Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) to assess amygdala activation
 - Implicit Association Tests (IAT)