

OBJECTIVES

- Understand racial microaggressions and unconscious bias in educational and community settings;
- Recognize the ways in which racial microaggressions and unconscious bias often lead to disparities in education and workplace outcomes; and
- Recognize the benefits of sustaining a diverse workforce



Bias, Microaggressions, and the Workplace

Benefits of Diversity

- Expanded pool of high quality candidates
- Lower turnover of diverse employees
- Enhanced innovation and creativity - *Great minds “don’t” think alike*
- Greater organizational adaptability to target markets and demographics
- Preparing company to compete in a global economy
- More positive public image

(Milem, 2003, Kerby & Burns, 2012)

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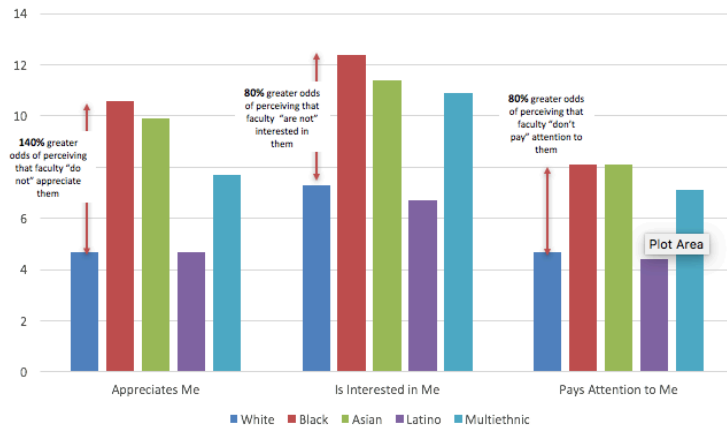
Benefits of Diversity

“A recent study by the RAND Corporation indicates that colleges and universities are producing students with high levels of technical skills...[but] lack cross-cultural competencies, which have been identified by leaders of multinational corporations as a primary human resource need for workers in an increasingly diverse domestic and global economy.”

(Milem, 2003, p. 19)

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BIAS – OUR RESEARCH



(Community College Success Measure, 2016)

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BIAS – OUR RESEARCH

- Black and Latino students are still often the only student from their group in class. And so you're in class, feeling like, 'Wow, the professor is probably going to be biased, or single me out, or whatever.' I'm always thinking about that."
- "Teachers and students—people on campus—they unconsciously make assumptions without thinking. They see you and assume that because you're a Black male, they know all of these things about you that might not even be right."
- "I really try to flip the ideas that people have based on race—you know, the categorizations that people automatically make. Like seeing Latino and Black men as criminals. I'm trying to break those stereotypes and labels, and change them."

(Harris III & Wood, 2016)

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DEFINING IMPLICIT BIAS

- Implicit bias is “the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an implicit manner. Activated involuntarily, without awareness or intentional control. Can be either positive or negative. Everyone is susceptible” (Kirwan Institute, 2016, p. 14).
- Implicit bias is characterized by “the introspectively unidentified (or incorrectly identified) traces of past experience that mediate attributions of qualities to members of social categories” (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995, p. 15).
- “The science of implicit cognition suggests that actors do not always have conscious, internal control over the processes of social perception, impression formation, and judgment that motivate their actions” (Greenwald & Kreiger, 2006, p. 946).

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DEFINING IMPLICIT BIAS

- Implicit bias is the result of system 1 thinking

SYSTEM 1

- Unconscious reasoning
- Implicit
- Automatic
- Low effort

SYSTEM 2

- Conscious reasoning
- Explicit
- Controlled
- High effort

Kahneman, D. (2011). *Thinking, fast and slow*. New York, NY: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux.

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DEFINING IMPLICIT BIAS

- Implicit associations are most likely to drive behavior under the following conditions:
 - Situations that involve ambiguous or incomplete information
 - Circumstances in which time is constrained
 - Times when cognitive control is compromised (e.g., when experiencing stress or insufficient sleep)

(Bertrand, Chugh, & Mullainathan, 2005)

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PRIMACY EFFECT

- Implicit associations are most likely to drive behavior under the following conditions:

Primacy effect refers to the fact that individuals tend to give more weight to information presented earlier when forming opinions and making decisions.

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FORMING IMPLICIT BIAS

- Children pick up on nonverbal cues around them, which influence their development of implicit associations
 - “Young children can catch bias from an ‘infected atmosphere’ — that is, by observing nonverbal bias exhibited by other people around them. What is more, preschool children generalize this bias to other individuals. Thus, exposure to nonverbal bias could be a mechanism for the spread of social bias throughout the world in the hearts and minds of children and adults” (Skinner, Meltzoff, & Olson, 2016, p. 7).

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FORMING IMPLICIT BIAS

- Several factors influence the formation of associations, such as:
 - Media
 - Nonverbal behaviors of others
 - Attitudes of friends and family members
 - Interactions
 - Observations of social roles
 - Perception of social value

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OUTCOMES OF IMPLICIT BIAS

- These possible behaviors result from implicit associations:
 - No outward behavior
 - Nonverbal response (e.g., stepping back, avoiding eye contact, crossing arms, clutching purse)
 - Verbal response (microaggressions)

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IMPLICIT BIAS—LAW ENFORCEMENT

- Sadler and colleagues (2012) study of police officers with armed and unarmed Black and White targets.



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IMPLICIT BIAS—LAW ENFORCEMENT

- Police are more likely to:

	with blacks	than with whites in similar situations	
use hands	2,165 <small>for every 10,000 stops in New York City</small>	1,845 <small>for every 10,000 stops in New York City</small>	17% more likely
push into wall	623	529	18%
use handcuffs*	310	266	16%
draw weapons	155	129	19%
push to ground	136	114	18%
point weapon	54	43	24%
use pepper spray or baton	5	4	25%

(Bui & Cox, 2016)

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IMPLICIT BIAS—JUDICIAL PROCESS

- **Jury** members' implicit associations can impact decisions surrounding a defendant's innocence or guilt (Reynolds, 2013).
- Given heavy case loads and the need for quick decision making, defense **attorneys** must be cautious of the impact that implicit bias has on their work.
- Unequal sentencing indicates that implicit bias likely has an influence on important judicial decisions.

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IMPLICIT BIAS—HEALTHCARE

- “Research supports a **relationship between patient care and physician bias** in ways that could perpetuate healthcare disparities” (Chapman, Kaatz, & Carnes, 2013, p. 1507).
- In response to vignettes, pediatricians with higher levels of pro-White implicit racial bias were more likely to prescribe **painkillers** to White patients as opposed to Black patients (Sabin & Greenwald, 2012).
- Black patients treated by primary care clinicians with higher race bias (as measured by the IAT) report feeling low **confidence** in their doctor, and that they receive less **respect** than other patients (Cooper et al., 2012).

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IMPLICIT BIAS—HIRING DECISIONS

- In-group bias can cause employers/hiring committees to seek candidates who are most like themselves.
- Candidates' names, accents, and physical appearances can activate employers' implicit biases.
- “In the hiring process and other decision-making occasions, allowing adequate time to make decisions is vital” (Kirwan Institute, 2014).

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IMPLICIT BIAS – HIRING DECISIONS

- Participants with higher pro-White bias (as measured by the IAT) spent more time looking at positive information on CVs/resumes of White candidates versus candidates from other racial/ethnic backgrounds.

“Our implicit attitude would seem to be directing our unconscious eye movements to provide exactly the information it wants for a ‘rational’ decision. This is both extraordinary and very worrying” (Beattie, 2013, p. 241).

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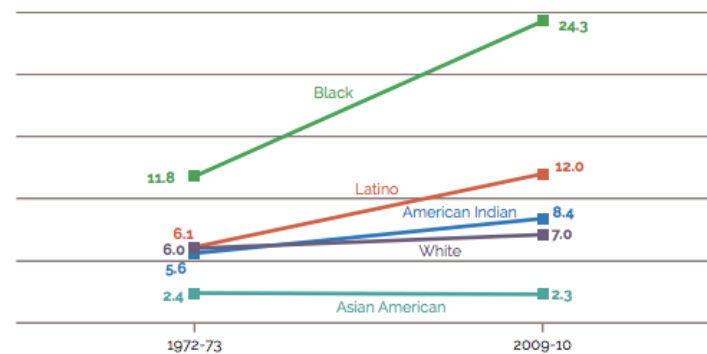
IMPLICIT BIAS - EDUCATION

- The Yale Child Center study found that pre-school teachers spent more time looking at Black children than White children when **looking for disruptive behaviors** (Gilliam et al., 2016).
- Teachers in the study who were given background information about a student engaging in challenging behavior reacted **more empathetically** only if the teacher shared the same racial identity with the student.

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IMPLICIT BIAS - EDUCATION

FIGURE 1. SECONDARY SCHOOL RISK FOR SUSPENSION



(Perception Institute, 2014)

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DEFINING MICROAGGRESSIONS

- “Racial microaggressions are 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)
 - Microaggressions are pervasive, normal, daily occurrences
 - “put-downs”, “subtle snubs”, “dismissive looks”
 - Often more psychologically damaging than direct acts of racism
 - “A thousand daily cuts.” (Ladsen-Billings)

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ADDRESSING MICROAGGRESSIONS

- Most people view themselves as good, caring, ethical people.
- Reacting to their behavior and naming it racist or discriminatory can be difficult to comprehend.
- Often the initial reaction to addressing microaggressions is:
 - Explain away the microaggression
 - Become defensive in response
 - Accuse others of offending them

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INFLUENCE OF MICROAGGRESSIONS

- Elevates Anxiety
- Fosters Paranoia
- Lowers self-esteem
- Limits self-confidence
- Leads to a loss of drive
- Contributes to emotional exhaustion
- Leads to feelings of invalidation and self-doubt

(Sue et al, 2010; Wood & Harris, 2015)

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MESSAGES CONVEYED

- “You’re different than us.”
- “You don’t belong here.”
- “You’re not intelligent or capable.”
- “People of color are lazy and don’t care.”
- “Your experiences and perceptions are wrong.”
- “You’re being too sensitive.”
- “You are a criminal.”
- “You are dangerous.”
- “Racism doesn’t exist.”
- “You are not of worth.”

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MESSAGES CONVEYED

MICROINSULT

- Ascription of intelligence
- Assumption of criminality
- Second-class citizens
- Pathologizing culture
- Different norming
- Athletic boundedness
- Presumption of defilement

MICROINVALIDATION

- Alien in own land
- Outsider on own campus
- Color blindness
- Myth of meritocracy
- Denial of individual racism
- Transference/avoidance of racial intervention

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Ascription of Intelligence

Assigning a degree of intelligence to a person of color based on race” (Sue & Colleagues, 2007, p. 276)

Examples:

- “You are so articulate!” (Sue et al., 2007, p. 276).
- “Are you sure you were assigned to the IT department?”
- “Wow! I didn’t expect you to know that!” (Wood & Harris III, 2016)
- Highlighting problems on a Black applicant’s resume when other candidates have similar issues
- Double-checking, questioning, or being more critical of the work of a person of color
- Employees assuming that a person of color was hired because of affirmative action rather than their qualifications

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Assumption of Criminality

“Assuming a person of color is dangerous, criminal, or deviant based on race” (Sue & Colleagues, 2007, p. 276)

Examples:

- A person “clutching their purse or checking their wallet as a Black or Latino approaches or passes” (Sue & Colleagues, 2007, p. 276)
- Following a customer of color around a department store to make sure they don’t steal anything (Harris III & Wood, 2016)
- Assuming that high performance from a person of color suggests that they are cheating or cutting corners
- Characterizing persons of color as hostile or verbally “aggressive”
- Making jokes about ‘drugs’ or other criminal activity regarding persons of color

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Second Class Citizen

“Occurs when a White person is given preferential treatment over a person of color” (Sue & Colleagues, 2007, p. 276)

Examples:

- A person of color being mistaken for a service worker (Sue & Colleagues, 2007)
- Overlooking a customer of color at a service counter to attend to a White customer
- Not being prioritized in work shifts
- Being overlooked for promotions
- Being given more menial or dangerous jobs that others don’t want to do
- Ignoring comments made by persons of color but affirming the same statements made by other employees

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Different Norming

“Assuming/having the authority to negatively categorize or uncategorize people of color” (Harris III & Wood, 2016)

Examples:

- “When I talk about those Blacks, I really wasn’t talking about you.”
- “I don’t think of you as Asian.”
- “You are not like the rest of them.”
- “You’re different. You work hard.”
- “Why can’t all minorities be like you?”

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Colorblindness

“Denial or pretense that a White person does not see color or race” (Sue & Colleagues, 2007, p. 276)

Examples:

- “When I look at you, I don’t see color.”
- “America is a melting pot.”
- “There is only one race, the human race.”

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Denial of Individual Racism

“Denial of personal racism or one’s role in its perpetuation” (Sue & Colleagues, 2007, p. 276)

Examples:

- “I’m not racist, I voted for Obama!”
- “My uncle is Black, I’m not racist!”
- “Stop being so sensitive, can’t anyone take a joke anymore!?”
- “Please stop playing the race card.”
- “Talking about microaggressions is making our kids weak”

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Strategies for Improvement

1. Acknowledge that racism is a problem
2. Gain a greater sense of self
3. Engage in cross-racial interactions
4. Learn about microaggressions
5. Be increasingly reflective
6. Convey high expectations and authentic care
7. Take ownership of mistakes

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