

Reducing Bias in Our Organization

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4-Step Unbiasing Process

Step 1: Pick a **process** (see examples below).

Step 2: Identify the **bias/biases** that are impacting that process.

Step 3: Identify actions you can take to **reduce** the bias/biases.

Step 4: Implement actions and **evaluate** effectiveness.

Sample Organizational Processes

- Recruitment Process
- Employee Referral Program
- College Recruiting Program
- Selection Process
- Job Descriptions/Job Postings
- Behavior-Based Interviewing Process
- Selection Decision-Making Process
- Onboarding Process
- Employee Evaluation Process
- Progressive Discipline Process
- Customer Service Process
- Determining Your Customer Base
- Customer Complaint Process
- Career Development Process
- Formal Mentoring Process
- Compensation/Benefits Process

Example

STEP 1: Pick a process.

ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWING PROCESS

STEP 2: What biases can impact the interviewing process?

AFFINITY BIAS

1. Problem #1: Interviewers are more likely to favor someone who allows them to stay in their comfort zone (i.e., someone who is **similar** and/or **familiar**).
2. Problem #2: Candidates who are outside of our comfort zone are far more likely to be deemed a "**poor fit**."

CONFIRMATION BIAS

1. Problem #1: Confirmation bias may reinforce **stereotypes** about who is most capable of performing various roles within an organization (e.g., sex-role stereotyping as manifested in hiring at top U.S. symphony orchestras).

STEP 3: What actions can we take to reduce these biases?

1. Solution #1: Include a **diverse** array of people in the interviewing and selection process.
2. Solution #2: Implement **blind** employment practices (e.g., resumes/job applications, early interviews).
3. Solution #3: Use **behavior-based** interviewing to standardize/structure the assessment process.
4. Solution #4: Incorporate other forms of candidate **assessment** (e.g., situational judgment test, work sample).
5. Solution #5: Proactively **recruit** high quality, culturally diverse candidate pools for your job openings.

STEP 4: Implement actions and evaluate effectiveness

QUALITATIVE QUESTIONS

How did the unbiasing process change outcomes?

Are there any new policies/procedures?

Are there changes to policies/procedures?

Have any policies/procedures been deleted?

Unconscious Bias Individual Action Plan Template with Example

Specific

What behavior will you focus on? Exactly what will you accomplish?

- I will review institutional policies for bias and make recommendations for modifications as needed. Specifically, I will examine human resource leave policies to ensure they are culturally inclusive.

Measurable

How will you know when you have been successful?

- My HR policy review will be complete once I have created a specific list of the potential weaknesses of our policies relative to cultural inclusion, with specific recommendations for improvement.

Achievable

Is this a realistic plan?

- Yes, it is achievable.

Relevant

Does this behavior connect with your current work goals and responsibilities?

- Yes - since my job as a human resources specialist is to review and modify HR policy.

Time-Bound

When will your plan be complete?

- My goal is to complete the HR leave policy review and make specific recommendations for improvement by December 31, 2022.

9 Ways to Reduce the Negative Impact of Unconscious Bias

1. Be aware of your biases and stereotypes and the impact they have on your interactions.
 - a. Take tests at the **Project Implicit** website (<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>) AND develop a plan to address problem areas.
 - b. Ask a trusted colleague or friend for **feedback** AND develop a plan to address problem areas.
 - c. Identify the unconscious biases that are **impacting your workplace** USING the 4-Step Unbiasing Process.
2. **Listen** first and demonstrate **empathy**.
 - a. Active listening: **Sounds like...**
What I hear you saying is...
3. Increase **contact** with members of biased/stereotyped groups (e.g., facilitate teambuilding activities, start an Employee Resource Group, create opportunities for different employees to engage each other through specific work assignments, facilitate roundtable discussions with diverse groups of employees).
4. Actively engage in **anti-biased** behavior (e.g., challenge problematic comments and behavior, develop a strategy for dealing with problematic behavior within the organization).
5. Increase the **diversity** of decision-makers and methods (e.g., recruitment, interviewing, selection, onboarding, problem-solving/decision-making teams, customer service).
6. Consider implementing **blind** employment practices (e.g., remove names from applications and resumes).
7. **Reword** job descriptions and job postings (e.g., remove masculine adjectives and add gender-neutral adjectives).
8. Use the Nominal **Group Technique** (e.g., problem-solving/decision-making teams).
9. Focus LESS on **labels** and MORE on **individuals** (e.g., make a conscious effort to get to know people on an individual basis).

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Dr. Tyrone Holmes is a professional speaker, consultant and coach who has spent more than two decades teaching thousands of people to build powerful relationships in diverse settings. He has facilitated over 1,500 live and virtual presentations that have taught participants to reduce the “noise” in their lives, to effectively communicate their messages, to connect with diverse audiences and groups, and to reduce the negative impact of unconscious bias. Dr. Holmes served as a full-time faculty member at Eastern Michigan University in the Department of Leadership and Counseling, and at Wayne State University in the Department of Theoretical and Behavioral Foundations. He is also a Past President of the Arizona Chapter of the National Speakers Association. Dr. Holmes was awarded the designation of eSpeakers Certified Virtual Presenter and most recently, Certified Virtual Host.