

# 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.

### FACILITATING A MEETING

STEP 2: What biases can impact meeting facilitation?

#### AFFINITY BIAS

1. Problem: We are more likely to select people for meeting participation if they allow us to stay in our comfort zone (i.e., people who are **similar** and/or **familiar**).

#### CONFORMITY BIAS

2. Problem: Conformity bias may significantly reduce the **intellectual** capital we can utilize during a problem-solving and/or decision-making meeting (e.g., if 3 out of 10 meeting participants are impacted by conformity bias, you have lost 30% of your intellectual capital).

#### HALO & HORNS EFFECT BIAS

3. Problem: Based on a relatively small sample size, we may wrongly boost (Halo Effect) or limit (Horns Effect) one's participation (e.g., you may perceive someone as a relatively low performer and discount their really good ideas, solely because of who those ideas come from).

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

1. Solution #1: When selecting people for meeting participation, proactively seek a **diverse** array of individuals to participate.
2. Solution #2: Proactively seek out the **input** of all meeting participants.
3. Solution #3: Use the **Nominal** Group Technique.
4. Solution #4: Give participants meeting **responsibilities** in advance.
5. Solution #5: Create **ground rules** for how people will engage each other.
6. Solution #6: Create opportunities for participants to get to **know each other** better, especially if they will be working together over an extended period of time.

STEP 4: Implement actions and evaluate effectiveness

### METACOMMUNICATION QUESTIONS

1. How do you feel about the **quality of our communication**?
2. Are we accomplishing what **we need to accomplish**?
3. Do we need to change anything about the **way we interact**?

# 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.

## 8 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. Focus LESS on **labels** and MORE on **individuals** (e.g., make a conscious effort to get to know people on an individual basis).

## Dr. Tyrone A. Holmes, Ed.D.

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.