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Unconscious Bias and Uncomfortable Conversations

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Unconscious Bias Defined

Attitudes, preferences, & stereotypes that affect our **thinking** and **behavior** in ways that are invisible to us.

4 Types of Unconscious Bias

1. Affinity Bias (the “like me” bias)

The human tendency to gravitate toward those we perceive to be most like ourselves and therefore, away from those we perceive to be less like ourselves. We do this to remain in our “comfort zone”.

2. Confirmation Bias (the “what you get is what you expect” bias)

The human tendency to see what we EXPECT to see in others, whether it is actually there or not. In other words, we “confirm” what we expect to see.

3. Conformity Bias (the “Groupthink” bias)

The human tendency to go along with the group; to be influenced by others.

4. Halo & Horns Effect Bias (the “first impression” bias)

The human tendency to see 1 good (halo) or bad (horns) thing in a person and think everything is good or bad about that person.

Microaggressions

Short, common statements or questions that send **derogatory** messages to certain individuals because of their **group** membership. They can be **intentional** or **unintentional**.

Microaggression Examples

1. "Nurse, can you find me a doctor?" to a **female** doctor. ISSUE: **Gender** bias.
2. "So, what are you?" to a **racial/ethnic** minority. ISSUE: Need to **categorize**.
3. "You're not like other _____ people I've met!"
to an **underrepresented** group member. ISSUE: Don't fit a **stereotype**.

Managing Uncomfortable Conversations

1. Understand the impact of **emotional noise**.
2. Choose the right **time** and **place**.
3. Start with an **end** in mind.
4. Keep it relatively **short**.
5. Use active **listening**.
6. Give effective, structured **feedback**.

Identify 1 step you will take to manage uncomfortable conversations more effectively:

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.