

NOTE: Please print a copy of this handout prior to the session!

Unbiasing Your 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.

NEW EMPLOYEE ONBOARDING PROCESS

STEP 2: What biases can impact the onboarding process?

AFFINITY BIAS

Insiders vs. Outsiders

1. Cultural differences can unconsciously activate affinity bias and keep culturally different new members (OUTSIDERS) from successfully connecting with established organizational members (INSIDERS).
2. The formation of outsider groups that decrease engagement.

CONFIRMATION BIAS

Confirmation bias may reinforce stereotypes about members of culturally different groups and lead to inaccurate assumptions on the part of established organizational members (i.e., Insiders). For example, some people may unconsciously judge a physically challenged individual as less qualified, more dependent and deserving of pity, instead of thinking of them as a highly qualified individual ready to make a lasting contribution to the organization.

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

1. Solution #1: Include a diverse array of people in the onboarding process.
2. Solution #2: Create formal **mentoring** and **coaching** opportunities.
3. Solution #3: Create **Employee Resource Groups** (ERGs) for underrepresented group members (i.e., Outsiders).

STEP 4: Implement actions and evaluate effectiveness

SAMPLE METRICS

Turnover Rate

Number of Terminated Employees/Average Employee Population

Diversity Mentoring Rate

Number of Culturally Different Employees with a Mentor/Total Number of Employees with a Mentor

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 January 31, 2021.

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...**
 - b. Self-disclosure: **That's something I can relate to...**
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. Focus LESS on **labels** and more on **individuals** (e.g., make a conscious effort to get to know people on an individual basis).
6. Increase the **diversity** of decision-makers and methods (e.g., recruitment, interviewing, selection, onboarding, problem-solving/decision-making teams, customer service).
7. Use the Nominal **Group Technique** (e.g., problem-solving/decision-making teams).
8. Consider implementing **blind** employment practices (e.g., remove names from applications and resumes).
9. *Reword job descriptions and job postings (e.g., remove masculine adjectives and add gender-neutral adjectives).*

Dr. Tyrone A. Holmes, Ed.D.

Dr. Tyrone A. Holmes is a professional speaker, coach and author who has spent more than two decades teaching thousands of people to build powerful relationships in diverse settings. As the owner of T.A.H. Performance Consultants, he has facilitated more than 1,500 keynotes, training seminars and virtual workshops that have taught participants to connect with others despite their differences, to effectively articulate their messages, to connect with diverse audiences and groups, and to reduce unconscious bias. His most recent book is *Making Diversity a Competitive Advantage: 70 Tips to Improve Communication*, which is a tool we can use to build powerful connections in diverse organizations. Dr. Holmes is a Past President of the Arizona Chapter of the National Speakers Association, and he loves to facilitate fun, interactive sessions that provide useful tools and techniques for participants.