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Unconscious Bias: A Quiet Performance Killer

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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 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”.

Sample Negative Impact: RECRUITMENT

2. Confirmation 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.

Sample Negative Impact: INTERVIEWING and SELECTION

3. Conformity Bias

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

Sample Negative Impact: PROBLEM-SOLVING and DECISION-MAKING

4. Halo & Horns Effect 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.

Sample Negative Impact: PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

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>).
 - b. Ask a trusted colleague or friend for **feedback**.
 - c. Identify the unconscious biases that are **impacting your workplace**.
2. **Listen** first and demonstrate **empathy**.
 - a. Active listening: **Sounds like...**
What I hear you saying is...
3. Create opportunities for **culturally different individuals** to interact on a continuous basis.
4. Actively engage in **anti-biased** behavior.
5. Increase the **diversity** of decision-makers and methods.
6. **Reword** job descriptions and job postings.
7. Consider implementing **blind** employment practices.
8. Use the Nominal **Group Technique**.

Identify 1 step you will take to reduce the negative impact of unconscious bias:

Masculine Terms

1. Strong
2. Lead/Leader(s)
3. Analysis/Analyze
4. Individual(s)
5. Decision(s)
6. Driven
7. Competitive
8. Expert
9. Objectives
10. Principles

Gender Neutral Terms

1. Able/Proven/Excellent
2. Head/Manage/Manager
3. Study/Test/Research
4. People/Team Members
5. Choices/Outcomes/Conclusions
6. Inspired/Motivated/Energized
7. Results-Oriented/Enthusiastic
8. Professional/Skilled/Adept
9. Goals/Aims/Targets
10. Values/Beliefs/Practices

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.