An Interactive and Practical Approach to Implicit Bias for Facilitators and Commissioners

Friday, September 15, 2017

Exercise

Read these words:

- Couch
- Stool
- Seat
- Pew
- Bench
Read these words

Apple
Orange
Seed
Pit
Juice

Read these words

Glass
Curtains
Blinds
Pane
Sill

Read these words

Pillow
Slumber
Bed
Doze
Snore
Memory Test...

Schematic Memories

- Test Words from our memory task:

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Word Memory Task

- Sky
- Sleep
- Seed
- Water
- Bench
- Fruit
Word Memory Task

- Fire
- Chair
- Glass
- Street
- Window
- Pillow

How Did You Do?

Schematic Memories

- Test Words from our memory task:
  - 1. Sky
  - 2. Sleep
  - 3. Seed
  - 4. Water
  - 5. Bench
  - 6. Fruit
  - 7. Fire
  - 8. Chair
  - 9. Glass
  - 10. Street
  - 11. Window
  - 12. Pillow
PART I: AN OVERVIEW OF IMPLICIT BIAS

Categorization of and preference for people based on group identity is a normal, fundamental process of the human brain.

Our ability to categorize our experience is an “indispensable cognitive device for understanding, negotiating, and constructing our social world.”

Social Cognition Research

The Brain Identifies

Race
Age
Gender

within a fraction of a second
During the process of categorization, our brains encode information about groups of people into our memories, along with favorable or unfavorable impressions or values. These mental constructs are sometimes called “schemas.”

Akin to Computers

These mental processes can be likened to computer hardware. What goes into that hardware will differ from person to person, but we all process, code, store, and retrieve the data we receive similarly.

In v. Out Groups

This research shows that we are, by nature, prone to prefer most strongly persons in the social categories to which we ourselves belong (“in-groups” as opposed to “out-groups”).
**Particularity/Sameness**

We also tend to perceive persons in our own groups with PARTICULARITY (as unique individuals).

BUT, we view “out-group” members as homogeneous, or ALL THE SAME.

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**For Example**

When we are faced with information inconsistent with our beliefs, we revise our beliefs under certain circumstances, but we are more likely to create a subgroup category (an “exception”), leaving our belief intact.

This is especially true when the “out-group” is large and the stereotype negative.

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**Implicit Biases**

Cognitive scientists also believe that these early stereotypes or beliefs (“implicit biases”) about groups of people continue to exist at an unconscious level, despite our brain’s increasing ability to reason, understand, and exercise judgment as we mature.
Factors that can increase the likelihood of reliance on Unconscious Bias

- Distraction
- Stress
- Boredom
- Time pressure
- Absence of accountability
- Lack of motivation to be accurate and fair

Bicycle Thief Video

Keypoint Polling
Do you give more instructions?
Yes
No

Only give the sample handout?
Yes
No

Sit and help directly?
Yes
No
Do you take into account lifestyle?
Yes
No

Do you give listed child hardships?
Yes
No

PART II: DEBIASING
**How to Minimize the Effects of Implicit Bias**

Be and stay motivated to be fair;

Maximize accountability;
  - Ask a peer to observe
  - Look for patterns in your behavior or decision-making.

Minimize distraction—pay attention;
  - Minimize stress
  - Deal with anxiety and/or depression

Make the category of the person explicit/salient;
  - Acknowledge (to yourself) the social categories of people

Consciously confront cultural stereotypes.
How to Minimize the Effects of Implicit Bias

Attention
Intention
Effort

Make a conscious effort to wait until all facts are present before reaching a conclusion. Engage in constant vigilance.

Even people with few implicit biases are assisted by reminding themselves or being reminded by others that it is an ongoing challenge to minimize their effects.