Implicit Bias

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Learning Objectives

At the end of this presentation you will be able to:

• Define the term “implicit bias”
• Describe the relationship between the formation of personal identity and implicit bias
• Recognize ways implicit bias affects relationships with students, colleagues, and patients
Ground Rules

- Be kind
- Be open minded
  - Be humble
  - Be thoughtful
- Be willing to hear other points of view
  - Be respectful
We see the world not as it is, but as we are.
The Importance of Identity
How do you identify?

What is visible to others (the leaves, branches, and trunk of the tree)?

What is invisible, but forms the foundation of who you are (the roots of the tree)?
Who Am I?

Reflect and Discuss

• Identify a *visible* piece of your identity
  – How does this piece of you affect how the world sees you?

• Identify an *invisible* piece of your identity
  – How does this piece of you affect how you see the world?

Be prepared to share your thoughts
Begin challenging your own assumptions. Your assumptions are your windows on the world. Scrub them off once in a while, or the light won’t come in

Alan Alda (not a doctor, but he played one on tv!)

Implicit Bias
Discussions about implicit bias can lead to some uncomfortable conversations…
Implicit Bias

• What is it?
  – A prejudice we have or an assumption we make about another person based on common cultural stereotypes, rather than on thoughtful judgement

• Who has it?
  – Everyone!

• Why?
  – Because we humans have a natural tendency to make associations to help us organize our social worlds
Practical Consequences of Our Implicit Biases

• Leads to dissatisfaction and lack of productivity in the workplace
• Impacts hiring and evaluation practices
• Impacts our relationships with coworkers and with our patients
• Affects communication and feedback
• Affects leadership selection
Micro-messages
Micro-messages

Micro-inequities
• Hard to prove
• Often unconscious
• Cause recipient (and empathetic bystanders) to feel…
  – Devalued
  – Slighted
  – Discouraged
  – Excluded

Micro-affirmations
• Intentional
• Conscious practice of common courtesy
• Cause people to feel…
  – Valued
  – Included
  – Encouraged

Subtle & Powerful
Micro-Messaging in Action

**Micro-inequities**
- Interrupting
- Leaving someone out of a discussion or project
- Not paying full attention during a conversation
- Not being introduced
- Avoiding eye contact
- Eye rolling when someone speaks
- Mispronouncing or misspelling names

**Micro-affirmations**
- Seeking input
- Including someone on an email
- Attending conscientiously to the conversation
- Making sure everyone at the table knows one another
- Making eye contact
- Smiling when someone walks into the room
- Asking, “How do you pronounce your name?”
A Tool Kit

What can I do about all this?

Photo is of a Civil War era (1862) military-issued surgical and dental set.
Ok, so I have biases. What do I do about it?

- Increase your self-awareness
- Uncover your biases
- Reflect on why you have these biases
- Reflect on how your biases affect your daily interactions
- Learn to slow your “fast brain”
- Observe the people around you. Watch for, and practice, micro-affirmations. Watch for, work against, micro-inequities
Capture and examine your first thought before you speak.

Awareness is the greatest agent for change.

Eckhart Tolle

Ask trusted friends to describe you.
Uncovering Your Biases: Project Implicit

• Uses a common measure of implicit bias called the Implicit Association Test, or the IAT
  – IAT requires test-takers to rapidly match images of individuals of different demographics to pictures or words of varying pleasantness
  – The quick associations that the test-takers must make reveal their implicit biases
Actually...take three or four!

This will create a space in which you can switch from “fast brain” thinking to “slow brain” thinking.
Practice the P.A.U.S.E.

- Pay attention to what’s happening beneath the judgments
- Acknowledge your own reactions, interpretations, and judgments
- Understand the other possible reactions, interpretations, and judgments that may be possible
- Search for the most empowering, productive way to deal with the situation
- Execute your plan
L.I.V.E. Micro-affirmations

Listening
- Make eye contact
- Pay attention to what others have to say
- Don’t interrupt

Including
- Invite others to participate
- Invite others to socialize
- Keep everyone in the loop

Valuing
- Give credit where it’s due
- Encourage strengths
- Acknowledge accomplishments

Engaging
- Say hello and goodbye
- Give equal time to everyone
- Ask for input
Reflect

• What biases might I have?
• What in my identity might have led to these biases?
• What micro-inequities might I have perpetrated?
• How might I incorporate micro-affirmations in my interactions?
Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.

~Viktor E. Frankl
Want to continue the conversation?

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I look forward to hearing from you!
Resources

• Project Implicit
  https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/
