

UNCONSCIOUS BIAS IN THE WORKPLACE

To create an inclusive workplace, we need to address unconscious biases: attitudes, words and stereotypes that affect our daily lives.

Unconscious bias is showing prejudice toward numerous personal identifiers including gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity and disabilities. It could be an action you do without realization or meaning, but in turn is hurtful to others. These actions are microaggressions, or subtle things that are targeted toward people that experience discrimination.

Experts agree: Bias in the workplace leads to uninspired output, low morale and even slow sales. By taking steps to become aware of your unconscious bias, you can establish a place for everyone to feel welcome and comfortable sharing ideas.

Note Your Bias

Evaluate yourself and become aware of your thoughts and actions. You may notice you feel uncomfortable sitting next to colleagues during a meeting. Is it because of their race, gender, ethnicity or other identity? Determine the reason for your thoughts. If you're having trouble learning your own biases, ask a friend to observe you one day. An unconscious bias is something you don't realize you are doing, but easily noticed by others.

Take Ownership

Once you've identified what unconscious biases you have, acknowledge them and where they came from. It could be due to your upbringing, people around you, or perceived social norms. By confronting your biases, you are working toward bettering yourself and the world around you.

Face Your Bias Head-On

Think about your friends and colleagues. Does everyone look and act the same? Research has shown we tend to surround ourselves with people just like us. But, by doing so, we are closing opportunities for new voices. Make an effort to become aware of your social circle. Reach out to diverse groups of people to learn about your differences. Listen and develop an awareness, and push yourself to be open to differing viewpoints so that you can learn. If we address our unconscious bias, we create spaces that offer trust to our colleagues and create an environment and a dialogue that encourages creativity, sharing and inclusivity.

Remember, having unconscious biases doesn't make you a bad person. It's important to develop an awareness of our unconscious biases and work to change our responses and our interactions with others so that everyone feels welcome and can thrive.



References

The New York Times. Check Our Bias to Wreck Our Bias, <https://www.nytimes.com/video/us/100000004818668/check-our-bias-to-wreck-our-bias.html>. Accessed February 24, 2021.

Employee Benefit News. How to Fight Against Unconscious Biases in the Workplace, https://www.benefitnews.com/news/how-to-fight-against-unconscious-biases-in-the-workplace?position=editorial_1. Accessed February 24, 2021.

University of California, San Francisco, Office of Diversity and Outreach. Unconscious Bias, <https://diversity.ucsf.edu/resources/unconscious-bias>. Accessed February 24, 2021.

Forbes. Unconscious Bias: How It Affects Us More Than We Know. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/pragyaagarwaleurope/2018/12/03/unconscious-bias-how-it-affects-us-more-than-we-know/?sh=dd610fd6e13e>. Accessed February 24, 2021.

NPR. Microaggressions Are a Big Deal: How to Talk Them Out and When to Walk Away. <https://www.npr.org/2020/06/08/872371063/microaggressions-are-a-big-deal-how-to-talk-them-out-and-when-to-walk-away>. Accessed February 24, 2021.

We are here for you

For additional resources and assistance, visit
MutualofOmaha.com/eap or call an Employee
Assistance Program professional
at 1-800-316-2796.