Making Harassment Unacceptable: Recognizing and Dealing with Unconscious Bias

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April 24, 2019
Last year, we focused on the following:

• It isn’t just about Preventing Harassment
  • People need to see respect, not engage in it because they signed an acknowledgment form
  • Don’t joke about being politically correct or do just enough to be in compliance
  • Deal with bullying behavior, which can lead to harassing behavior
  • Don’t allow inappropriate behavior just because someone is a high performer
  • Make it safe to report inappropriate behavior; take it seriously
  • Top leaders must demonstrate a commitment to respect, dignity and professionalism
Create an atmosphere of Respect and Dignity

- It isn’t just about Preventing Harassment
- Leaders must not over or underreact to behaviors that are inconsistent with culture expectations
- Make it safe to report; don’t allow retaliation in any form by anyone
- Conduct anonymous surveys
- Focus on the bystander – not reporting facilitates the predator-perpetrator
- Don’t just focus on protecting the company and preventing liability
- Ask the question of employees, “What does respect look like?”
What determines if an organization is Tolerant of Sexual Harassment? Leadership!

• Leaders need to talk about company policies and model appropriate behavior

• Leaders must promptly investigate claims of harassment and issue appropriate discipline, even when dealing with a high performer

• Leaders need to focus on creating a culture of respect and dignity
Today will require...

- Be engaged
- Set aside pre-conceived notions
- Don’t judge the material before fully explained
- Willingness to be present, and spend emotional energy into the process
- Be willing to do some heavy lifting
- Honest assessment of our own behaviors
- Focus on great results
If it doesn’t challenge you, it will not change you.
Learning Objectives

▪ Discuss key concepts related to diversity & inclusion
▪ Explain unconscious bias and look at examples
▪ Assess the potential consequences of unconscious biases when interacting with others
▪ Learn actionable strategies to minimize the impacts of unconscious bias in various settings and situations
▪ Throughout workshop, engage in activities to deepen your understanding of the topic
Why Unconscious Bias training?

- Create a more inclusive work environment
- This does not automatically happen, it takes work
- We all harbor unconscious bias that affects the way we interact with others
- It’s important to understand the negative impact unconscious biases can have on the workplace culture and society at large.
- In the realm of the employer-employee relationship, unconscious biases can inadvertently undermine an organization’s goal of creating a diverse and inclusive work environment
The Effects of Unconscious Bias in the Workplace

• Marginalized and under-utilized talent
• Impairs diversity recruiting and retention efforts
• It affects who gets hired, promoted, and developed
• Shapes an organization's culture
• Erodes an individual’s performance
• Stifles creativity, innovation and growth
• Inhibits team work and collaboration
• Can lead to poor employee performance
• We tend to be less empathetic towards people who are not like us
Our attitudes toward things like race or gender operate on two levels.

1. We have our conscious attitudes.

2. Our attitudes on an unconscious level.
...is an inclination or prejudice for or against one person or group

A tendency to believe that some people, ideas, etc. are better than others that usually results in treating some people unfairly
Unconscious BIAS

...social stereotypes about certain groups of people that individuals form outside their own conscious awareness.

...are hidden preferences created over time through our socialization, personal experiences and exposure to the views of others.
DON'T STEREOTYPE ME!
Unconscious Bias Test

How do you feel about people who:

- Own a handgun?
- Don’t attend church?
- Vote for the “other” candidate?
- Are on welfare?
- Don’t eat meat?
- Don’t believe in marriage?
- Drive electric cars?
- Curse?
- Love dogs? Or Cats?
- Have tattoos?
Common Stereotypes

▪ Women aren't as smart as men
▪ All Asians are good at math
▪ Black men who attend college must be athletes
▪ Millennials are lazy and lack loyalty
▪ Native Americans as warriors
▪ In film, Hispanic women portrayed as maids and gardeners
Think about a situation where you once had an unconscious bias towards a co-worker, constituent, client or customer.

Discuss:
• What was the bias?
• How did it impact those around you?
• What steps did you take to change that bias?
Unconscious bias is the result of messages (from a wide array of sources) introduced into our subconscious from an early age.
Activity

Solve the following problem:

A father and son were involved in a car accident in which the father was killed and the son was seriously injured. The father was pronounced dead at the scene of the accident and his body was taken to a local morgue. The son was taken by ambulance to a nearby hospital and was immediately wheeled into an emergency operating room. A surgeon was called. Upon arrival and seeing the patient, the attending surgeon exclaimed “Oh my God, it’s my son!”

Can you explain this?
The Cycle of Socialization
Learning Task

Culture from Childhood to Now

Form small groups and discuss the following questions:

- Where did you grow up?
- What other cultural groups/identities and practices did you encounter – ethnic, race, class, sexual orientation, religious, etc.?
- What messages were you given about people who were different – messages from family, from peers, from the media, and others?
- How has your background experiences influenced your perceptions of other "cultures" that you encounter at work?
Microaggressions

- stressful, anxiety producing, traumatizing
- common, ambiguous, subtle, innocent, unintentional
- AND racially motivated

Is your hair real? Can I touch it?
Microaggressions are the everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership.

Source: Sue Wang's, “Racial Microaggressions”
“Your English is so good.”
“I can’t tell Asians apart.”
“You’re pretty for a dark girl.”
“What up, Bin Laden?”
3 Types of Microaggressions

- **Micro-assault**
  - Name calling, slurs, purposeful discriminatory actions

- **Micro-insult**
  - Behavioral/verbal remarks or comments that convey rudeness, insensitivity and demean a person’s racial heritage or identity (i.e., “articulate,” “that’s gay,” “that’s retarded”)

- **Micro-invalidation**
  - Verbal comments or behaviors that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings or experiential reality of someone in a target group.
Examples of Microaggressions

- Targeting a coworker or manager who looks different
- Intolerant jokes, disparaging comments
- Exclusion from meetings
- An assumption of older employees’ merit—or lack thereof
- Men ignoring or talking over women
- Pregnancy-related comments
- Telling a woman to use a different tone of voice
Shutting down Microaggressions at Work

1) Pause.
2) Try to understand what happened and use empathy.
3) Confront the microaggressor.
4) Help them understand how it made you feel.
5) Share another perspective.
The workplace exerts a powerful influence on people’s social attitudes and values.
“At the root of all institutional injustices are unconscious biases that went unchecked.”

-Michelle Kim, Co-Founder and CEO at Awaken, D&I Advocate & Speaker
Institutionalized Bias

Institutionalized bias is practices, scripts, or procedures that work to systematically give advantage to certain groups or agendas over others.

Institutionalized bias is built into the fabric of institutions.

Source: Encyclopaedia Brittanica
Making the Unconscious Conscious
How Bias affects us and our Decision Making

- Our perception
- Our attitude
- Our behaviors
- Our attention
- Our listening skills
- Our Micro-affirmations
Unconscious biases that directly impact the workplace

1) Affinity bias
2) Halo effect
3) Perception bias
4) Confirmation bias
5) Group think
Unconscious biases that directly impact the workplace

6) Performance bias
7) Performance attribution bias
8) Competence/Likeability Trade-Off bias
9) Maternal bias
Take Action

- What steps can you take to overcome your own unconscious bias?
Actionable Strategies to reduce Unconscious Bias

Individual Strategies

1. Recognize that we all have biases and identify what those biases are.
A Tool for Identifying Unconscious Bias

To take the test, go to https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html
Actionable Strategies to reduce Unconscious Bias

**Individual Strategies**

1. Recognize that we all have biases and identify what those biases are.
2. Perspective taking
3. Counter-stereotypic Imaging
“What kind of Asian are you?”
All Blacks are not thugs.
All whites are not racist.
All Muslims are not terrorists.
All Hispanics are not illegal.
All cops are not bad.
Actionable Strategies to reduce Unconscious Bias

Individual Strategies

1. Recognize that we all have biases and identify what those biases are.
2. Perspective taking
3. Counter-stereotypic Imaging
4. Exposure to positive images to counteract negative bias
5. Stereotype replacement
Actionable Strategies to reduce Unconscious Bias

Individual Strategies

1. Recognize that we all have biases and identify what those biases are.
2. Perspective taking
3. Counter-stereotypic Imaging
4. Exposure to positive images to counteract negative bias
5. Stereotype replacement
6. Make culturally appropriate attributions
7. Engage in authentic intercultural exchanges
8. Individuation
Institutional Strategies
Actionable Strategies to reduce Unconscious Bias

Institutional Strategies

1. Declare your intentions about valuing a diverse workforce.
2. Be intentional about creating an environment of inclusivity.
3. Recognize your biases.
4. Use blind resumes/applications.
6. Develop concrete, objective indicators & outcomes for hiring and evaluation to reduce standard stereotypes.
7. Adopt the “Rooney Rule.”
8. Utilize diverse recruiting panels.
9. Develop and utilize structured interviews where you ask every candidate the same targeted questions.
In every encounter we either give life or we drain it; there is no neutral exchange.

Brennan Manning
Wrapping Up: “If it doesn’t challenge you, it will not change you”

• Learn what unconscious bias is and why it’s important to know about:
• Examine the harmful effects of unconscious bias
• The Cycle of Socialization
• Become aware of the impact of unconscious biases on you, your colleagues, and the workplace
The Payoff: Our constituents and our employees tell the story of their day to someone at the end of their day. What part of their story...the story of their day...do you want to be? Someone who lets their biases cloud interactions? Affect service delivery? Or someone who is honest with themselves, and seeks to understand before being understood.

The choice is yours. All the time.
When attitude is changed
When thought is changed
When behavior is changed
When action is changed

thought is changed
behavior is changed
action is changed
result is changed
Reflection: Write at least one thing you will do differently in your work environment based on what you learned in this session.
Thanks!
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Any questions?
Research

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- Unconscious Bias & Implicit Bias, Insight Education Systems
- Conscious vs. Unconscious Bias, Prezi
- Felicity Menzies is CEO and Principal Consultant at Include-Empower.Com, https://cultureplusconsulting.com/2015/11/03/unconscious-bias-activities/