

Tools for Life – Weekly Health & Safety Meeting



Home Healthy - Home Safe

October 2021

Unconscious Bias

Unconscious bias (or implicit bias) is often defined as prejudice or unsupported judgments in favor of or against one thing, person, or group as compared to another, in a way that is usually considered unfair.

Unconscious bias occurs when someone who does not know you makes assumptions about your character, intelligence or capabilities based on how you look, speak, or behave. This person does so without knowing that he or she is thinking or reacting this way. Many researchers suggest that unconscious bias occurs automatically as the brain makes quick judgments based on past experiences and background.

Tips for Combatting Unconscious Bias:

Put yourself in the shoes of someone who does not share your demographics, associations, and group loyalties.

- Learn as Much as Possible About Unconscious Bias...and Ways to Combat It
- Tell Your Story...and Listening to the Stories of Others
- Avoid Stereotypes and Over-Generalizations
- Separate Feelings from Facts
- Engage in Self- Reflection to Uncover Personal Biases
- Develop Safe and Brave Spaces to Discuss Unconscious Bias
- Be an Active Ally
- Practice Empathy

Assume good intent: Start by acknowledging the person's positive intentions, then describe the negative results of the statement or behavior.

Ask a question: Sincere and open-ended questions that focus on the behavior, event, or comment and, which do not blame the other person work best.

Redirect: Change the direction of the conversation abruptly, without requiring further discussion. If the conversation continues, it might be appropriate to walk away or remove yourself from the situation.

Narrow the focus: You can call out bias and microaggressions by showing the attribute isn't just about a certain group by suggesting that the trait is universal behavior. This helps narrow the focus to an individual, rather than a whole group.

HEALTHY OR SAFETY REMINDER: Although we all have biases, many unconscious biases tend to be exhibited toward minority groups based on factors such as class, gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, nationality, religious beliefs, age, disability and more.

Discussion Points/Quiz Questions:

1. What are some examples of unconscious bias that you have experienced?
2. What are some of the positive outcomes to combating unconscious biases?
3. What is one step you can take today to become more aware of any biases?