

Strategies to Address Implicit Bias

Implicit Bias: Steps Individuals Can Take to Break the Prejudice Habit¹

1. **Stereotype replacement:** 1) Recognize that a response is based on stereotypes; 2) label the response as stereotypical; and 3) reflect on why the response occurred. This creates a process to consider how the biased response could be avoided in the future and replaces it with an unbiased response.
2. **Counter-stereotypic imaging:** Imagine counter-stereotypic others in detail – friends, co-workers, respected community members, even celebrities. This makes positive images more available and begins the process of replacing the negative often inaccurate stereotypes.
3. **Individuation:** Learn specific information about your colleagues. This prevents stereotypic assumptions and enables association based on personal and unique, rather than group, characteristics.
4. **Perspective taking:** Imagine oneself to be a member of a stereotyped group. This increases psychological closeness to the stereotyped group, which ameliorates automatic group-based evaluation.
5. **Increasing opportunities for contact:** Increased contact between groups can reduce implicit bias through a wide variety of mechanisms, including altering their images of the group or by directly improving evaluation of the group. (ex: learn about other cultures by attending community events and other public educational opportunities like exhibits, media, etc.)

Implicit Bias: Practices Institutions can Establish to Prevent Biases from Seeping into Decision-making²

1. **Doubt Objectivity:** Presuming oneself to be objective actually tends to increase the role of implicit bias, teaching people about non-conscious thought processes will lead people to be skeptical of their own objectivity and better able to guard against biased evaluations.
2. **Increase Motivation to be Fair:** Internal motivations to be fair rather than fear of external judgments tend to decrease biased actions.
3. **Improve Conditions of Decision-making:** Implicit biases are a function of automaticity. Think slowly by engaging in mindful, deliberate processing, not in the throes of emotions prevents our implicit biases from kicking in and determining our behaviors.
4. **Count:** Implicitly biased behavior is best detected by using data to determine whether patterns of behavior are leading to racially disparate outcomes. Once one is aware that decisions or behavior are having disparate outcomes, it is then possible to consider whether the outcomes are linked to bias.

¹ <http://www.kingcounty.gov/elected/executive/equity-social-justice/tools-resources.aspx>, Perception Institute, Devine et al, 2012.

² <http://www.kingcounty.gov/elected/executive/equity-social-justice/tools-resources.aspx>, Perception Institute, Kang et al., 2014.