



Diversity & Inclusion

Unconscious Bias Toolkit

Unconscious bias

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Unconscious biases are social stereotypes and prejudices we have about others. Everyone holds unconscious biases about various social and identity groups, which stem from one's tendency to organize social worlds into categories. This makes our lives easier and helps us to interact with our surroundings.

There are currently more than 220 researched biases that influence one's decision-making. These are, for example, gender, beauty, confirmation, status quo, and authority biases, as well as ageism.

These biases can create unfair advantages and disadvantages. They can hinder equity because we reach out for what we are used to and thus favor some people over others, giving them a benefit or advantage. It is especially evident when working in international teams or in teams with a high degree of difference.

Being aware of unconscious bias is important to:

- Raise awareness of one's own behavior and patterns of thinking and acting
- Spot behavioral patterns in the way one works and in cultural norms in the workplace
- Take action to reduce implicit stereotypes and mitigate the impact of bias

The total elimination of biases is unrealistic. However, we can choose how biases affect our decision-making by accepting that everyone has them. We also need to take targeted action at an individual level to reduce bias in teams and across the organization. Personal leadership by all is needed in order to be inclusive in our daily work. The following proven tools can help you mitigate bias in your everyday work.

For more information, visit www.inclusion-nudges.org



Tools to reduce unconscious bias

Unconscious bias awareness tools will give you insight into how you can make less biased, and therefore better, decisions. These tools can be used in everyday work situations, such as in meetings, discussions, or decision-making processes.

Insist on hearing all views

Description:

- This tool enables you to understand and leverage a diverse range of perspectives by insisting on hearing the viewpoints of each group member.

Objective:

- To reduce interruptions during conversations.
- To avoid disengagement and self-silencing by making everybody feel heard and giving them an opportunity to share their insights.

Implementation:

- If one is interrupted, simply say
 - "I would like to hear this argument."
 - "Let him/her speak, please!"
- Ask explorative questions.
- Ask for concrete examples to better understand the perspectives of others.

Frequency:

- In every meeting, discussion, and decision-making process.

Flip-it questions

Description:

- Using this tool, you can challenge your own biased associations and behaviors in a specific situation with the help of specific questions.

Objective:

- To reflect on your own perceptions and consider the perspectives of others.
- To mitigate unconscious biases during decision-making processes, collaborations, and the evaluation of new ideas.

Implementation:

- Ask "flip-it" questions in your head or aloud such as:
 - "If she was a man, would I have perceived her as being too assertive?"
 - "If this is the data we're focusing on, what are we not focusing on?"
 - "What are we missing by making this decision? What are we not seeing?"

Frequency:

- When considering new knowledge, new ideas, or critical views, such as during presentations, in meetings, discussions, and decision-making processes.

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Bias interrupter

Description:

- This tool helps you to call out recognized biased thinking, draw attention to it, and discuss it.

Objective:

- To raise awareness of biased thinking or prejudice to ensure that it is noticed.
- To understand how often and how quickly discussions deviate from objectivity.
- To get back on track quickly and discuss facts pertinent to the purpose of the discussion.

Implementation:

- Use a bell or a raised hand symbol in an online meeting as soon as someone notices bias or patterns of homogeneity. The team then takes a time-out to address it.
- Use colored cards. Everyone has a card that can be thrown on the table as a bias interrupter.
- Interrupt biased thinking by agreeing to call it out by saying, for example, “awkward” or “is bias sneaking in here?”

Frequency:

- In every meeting, discussion, and decision-making process.

Critical thinking primer

Description:

- With the help of priming, you can develop triggers for specific associations and unconscious perceptions and thereby affect choices and behaviors.

Objective:

- To prime critical thinking so that group members understand that their task is to arrive at the correct solution and thus better disclose what they know and think.
- To engage in more constructive debate. Using different perspectives, teams can perform better.

Implementation:

- To make sure team members feel free to take part in constructive debates, say and/or write the words “Our task is critical thinking” on the walls for an in-person meeting or in the chat of an online meeting at the outset.
- The words themselves are the primer.

Frequency:

- Before every important discussion and decision-making process.

Please share any questions or comments with us at diversity@mahle.com.

Your Diversity team