

WHAT IS IMPLICIT BIAS?

Implicit bias is unconscious bias. Implicit means that actions and behaviors that result due to implicit bias are activated without realizing it. Bias refers to preferences for certain groups of people. We all develop these biases from our life experiences, and they can lead to stereotypes or attitudes about others.

How Does Implicit Bias Impact Patient Outcomes?

Medical Decision Making:

Modern medicine is still full of historical inaccuracies and bias. These myths and others lead to discriminatory treatment of patients.

Patient-Centered Care:

Patient-centered care means a provider is actively listening to a patient and allows for the patient to be the driver in medical decisions. Imploring patient-centered care can prevent medical decisions from being made from a place of implicit bias. Making decisions without listening to a patient, and instead using preconceived notions of an individual, leaves room for medical error.

LEARN MORE:

Take the first DCRx implicit bias course: <https://dchealth.dc.gov/dcrx>

Explore trainings from Ohio University's Division of Diversity and Inclusion: <https://www.ohio.edu/diversity/trainings>

Understand your own implicit biases: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>

Research tools from the American Academy of Family Physicians: <https://www.aafp.org/family-physician/patient-care/the-everyone-project/toolkit/implicit-bias.html>

Collect information from the Joint Commission: <https://www.jointcommission.org/resources/news-and-multimedia/newsletters/newsletters/quick-safety/quick-safety-issue-23-implicit-bias-in-health-care/implicit-bias-in-health-care/>

Read this article from the Institute for Healthcare Improvement: <http://www.ihc.org/communities/blogs/how-to-reduce-implicit-bias>

For more information and to complete the course, scan this QR code



Implicit Bias: A Practical Guide for Healthcare Settings

Your companion guide to understanding implicit bias and a DCRx course resource.



“Giving all a fair shot in healthcare”

HOW CAN WE LEAD THE C.H.A.N.G.E?

The continuing education course *Implicit Bias: A Practical Guide for Healthcare Settings* has realistic scenarios showing implicit bias in healthcare settings where you can learn more!

Challenge your own thinking

The world we live in shapes the way we see people and things. Sometimes this has a negative impact on how we think about those who are different from us. And many times, we are not even aware it is happening. To do better we have to unlearn these associations, which can be referred to as implicit biases, and stop some of the routine ways we do our work.

Action: Consider feedback from colleagues when someone approaches you about a particular action or behavior.

Be Humble

The key to doing better is recognizing that we do not know all the answers, and rarely do we see the full picture. We must take the time to learn about the unique stories of each person we interact with. This will help us communicate better; and empower us to make better decisions. In this way, we can avoid errors, improve quality, and meet needs and expectations.

Action: Take the time to learn how to pronounce the names of your patients' and colleagues.

Be Aware

Awareness of the conditions in which bias is most likely to show up is important. When we are rushed, stressed, or have an urgent need for closure, our brains will naturally short-cut to associations and potentially harmful decisions.

Action: Slow down when working with patients or when completing a task at work. Really take your time and pay attention to the tasks at hand.

Normalize behaviors to prevent bias

This work takes effort and must be practiced every day. When interacting with patients and coworkers, doing things like taking "pause" moments, actively listening, practicing mindfulness to avoid distractions, and humbling ourselves can make a big difference and make us more effective.

Action: If a patient asks for their pronouns or name to be corrected in their file, take preventative action by making sure that the change is reflected everywhere in the system.

Grow in your own journey

We must think about our own experiences and the limitations of our limited perspectives. This is lifelong work. And we can educate ourselves by uncovering our own biases through tests like the Implicit Association Test (IAT); and exposing ourselves to different people, places, or things to counteract those biases.

Action: Complete the IAT and reflect on your results with an open mind. The IAT is an easy to use online resource <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit> that helps people understand their own biases.

Educate and engage others

Our ability to provide the best services requires us to work as a team. Leading the C.H.A.N.G.E. we wish to see in the world requires us to respectfully hold each other accountable. When we see bias at play or when we recognize a policy or practice that can lead to a biased outcome, we must say something.

Action: Follow the QR code on the back of this guide to the online course. By participating in this module, you are contributing to making healthcare settings a safer and healthier place for everyone.