

Session 34 – Addressing Implicit Bias

Materials

- Agenda charted on the board or chart paper, or provided as a handout
- Chart paper containing Community Agreements from Session 7
- AV equipment to play video: [Check Our Bias to Wreck Our Bias](#)
- AV equipment to play video: [Snacks and Punishment](#)
- Handout: “Wheel of Holistic Health”
- Handout: “Implicit Bias, What to Do, Part 2: The Mindful Reflection Protocol”

Opening Ceremony

Read aloud the quote by Sarah Fiarman, author of *Unconscious* Bias: When Good Intentions Aren't Enough* and invite participants to reflect upon it.

“Deconstructing our unconscious bias takes consistent work. We can't address it once and be done. We need to recognize these unwanted, deep-rooted beliefs and limit their influence on us. Then our actions will match our intentions.”

Invite several volunteers to share any thoughts or reflections as well as connections to learnings during previous sessions.

Facilitator Note: Explain that “unconscious bias” is another way to talk about implicit bias



Talk Participants Through Today's Agenda

- Opening Ceremony: Sarah Fiarman on Implicit Bias
- Check Agenda
- Implicit Bias, A Recap
- Implicit Bias, What to Do, Part 1
- Implicit Bias, What to Do, Part 2
- Wheel of Holistic Self-Care
- Implicit Bias, What to Do, Part 3
- Closing Ceremony: Slowing Down

Implicit Bias, A Recap (the Kirwan Institute)

Ask participants what they remember about the notion of implicit bias from the previous session. Invite a volunteer or two to share a definition of implicit bias.

Summarize and remind people of the Kirwan Institute's definition, emphasizing the parts that are underlined. Consider charting or displaying the following quote on an interactive whiteboard:

"Implicit bias refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. These biases, which encompass both favorable and unfavorable assessments, are activated involuntarily and without an individual's awareness or intentional control. Residing deep in the subconscious, these biases are different from known biases that individuals may choose to conceal for the purposes of social and/or political correctness. Rather, implicit biases are not accessible through introspection."

Explain that what is particularly troubling about implicit biases is that they may not align with our values, ethics and/or beliefs. Whereas we have an awareness of explicit biases and prejudices, implicit biases operate on a subconscious level, which makes them much harder to control and address. A person may even express explicit disapproval of a certain attitude or belief while harboring their own similar bias on a more unconscious level.

The good news is that when you become aware of the ways in which you've been socialized, and the fact that we all have implicit biases, there are ways we can push back on the ways in which we act on our biases.

Implicit Bias, What to Do, Part 1: Check Our Bias to Wreck Our Bias

Play the [Check Our Bias to Wreck Our Bias](#) video (3:00 min).

Pair Share

In pairs, invite participants to take turns sharing their IFETs (Impressions, Feelings, Experiences or Thoughts). Each partner will have two minutes to share while the other listens. After two minutes, ask partners to switch roles, so speakers become listeners and listeners become speakers.

Large Group Share

Reconvene the group and invite a few volunteers to share an impression, feeling, experience or thought, reminding participants to maintain confidentiality.

Brainstorm

Invite participants to brainstorm what behavioral patterns they, as educators, can take stock of to check against any implicit biases they might hold.

Examples to consider:

- Who do you wish a good morning when you get to school?
- Who do you greet/welcome at the start of class?
- Who do you call on in class?
- Who receives your follow-up questions?
- Who do you encourage, acknowledge and affirm?
- Who do you redirect, reprimand, and/or send out of class?
- Who do you give second (or third) chances?

Next, have the group consider who might be able to help, like the video recommends: "having a friend [or colleague] observe you in the real world," "have people look at who you call on most in class." Have teachers also consider involving their students in the assessment.

Small Group Assignment

Invite participants to pick one of the examples from the chart. Between now and next session, have them do a self-audit, taking stock around how they treat and respond to different groups of students. Have participants team up with a colleague, group of colleagues, or maybe their grade team, as they commit to taking stock together and keeping each other focused on the assignment.

Provide groups with time to discuss what they'll work on and determine how they'll keep track of their assignment. Let them know that you'll be checking in on the assignment at the start of the next session.

Implicit Bias, What to Do, Part 2: The Mindful Reflection Protocol

From Zaretta Hammond's interview in EdWeek:

[“A lot of school leaders](#) and instructional coaches are trying to figure out how to help teachers interrupt implicit bias, but they usually don't have a process to help teachers see how their negative interpretation of a student's behavior contributes to watering down the curriculum for that student or disproportionately disciplining students of color.

The Mindful Reflection Protocol is process that can help a teacher see their implicit bias in action. I have to give credit where credit is due. This protocol was developed teacher educators, Barbara J. Dray and Debora Basler Wisneski.

The protocol is simple. It asks teachers to look at an incident through three lenses: description, interpretation, and evaluation. Teachers are asked to just describe what is going on literally with no judgment. Then, they are asked to focus on interpreting the action. What does it mean to you when the child does that? Still with no judgment. Once you've interpreted, then try to reflect on how you judge the action or behavior - what value to you give to your interpretation.

I'd also ask teachers to notice how they interpret the same behavior from two students from different racial backgrounds. This process allows teachers to create some distance from thinking and actions that are sometimes on autopilot because things are happening so fast in the classroom.”

Wheel of Holistic Self-Care

Before showing the next video, invite participants to return to their folders, or journals, to review their Wheel of Holistic Self-Care. If they do not have this handout, provide them with a copy. Have them consider where they're at with some of their self-care practices.

Implicit Bias, What to Do, Part 3: Snacks and Punishment

Play the [Snacks and Punishment](#) video (2:05 min).

Pair Share

In pairs, invite participants to take turns sharing their impressions, feelings, experiences and/or thoughts on this video. Each partner will have 2 minutes to share, while the other engages in mindful listening.

Large Group Share

Reconvene the group and invite a few volunteers to share an impression, feeling, experience or thought, reminding participants to maintain confidentiality.

Closing Ceremony

From the video:

“So slowing down seems to help. And slowing down and being more aware might help even more.”

Referencing their Wheel of Holistic Self-Care, and possibly adding to it, ask participants the following question:

- What are (other) practices that help you slow down, be more present and possibly become more aware?

Suggest that they might have partners, colleagues, or friends support them with this practice of slowing down. Remind them of self-care practices like taking a break for lunch, a few deep breaths before walking into their classrooms, a daily/regular gratitude practice with friends or with their students, etc.

Additional Resources: Session 34

Written Resources:

["The Mindful Reflection Protocol,"](#) Protocol for Checking Unconscious Bias

The Inner Work of Racial Justice: Healing Ourselves and Transforming Our Communities Through Mindfulness by Rhonda V. Magee

Video Resources:

[Eye of the Storm Jane Elliot 1970,](#) an experiment in the anatomy of prejudice

Handout: Implicit Bias, What to Do, Part 2: The Mindful Reflection Protocol

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Handout: Wheel of Holistic Health

