COMBATING UNCONSCIOUS BIAS: TAKING THE BLINDERS OFF
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WAS THIS BIAS?

That look when the salesperson says...
Objectives for today

- Define unconscious bias
- Identify ways in which unconscious bias manifests itself in the workplace
- Identify ways to recognize when unconscious bias is affecting one’s interactions with co-workers, subordinates, and supervisors
- Identify ways in which unconscious bias affects one’s career
- Identify solutions for combating unconscious bias
What is Unconscious Bias?

- Prejudice or unsupported judgments in favor of or against one thing, person, or group
- Usually considered unfair
- Occurs automatically as the brain makes quick judgments based on past experiences and background
- Includes favorable and unfavorable assessments
A PERFECT EXAMPLE
WHAT ARE SOME UNCONSCIOUS BIASES

- Racial
- Gender
- Ageism
- Beauty
- Weight
- Clothing
- Tattoos/Piercings

- Economic
- Children
- Education
- Political
- Affinity
- Halo Effect
- Attribution
HOW BIAS MANIFESTS ITSELF IN THE WORKPLACE

- Race – mishandled calls
- Gender – loss of respect
- Ageism – fail to hire
- Beauty
- Weight – no promotion
- Clothing – no respect
- Tattoos/piercings

- Economic – mishandled calls
- Children - resentment
- Education – feel superior
- Politics – treat differently
- Affinity – cliques form
- Halo Effect – unqualified employees
- Attribution - assumptions
BIAS AFFECTS INTERACTIONS AT WORK

- Affects expectations
- Preoccupation with eating habits
- People avoid you
- People change the subject when you talk
- Limit your social circle
- Make fun of others
- Ignore others
- Avoid those with different political views
- Look for culture fit
- Facial expressions change
- Texting/messaging
- Condescending attitude
Ways unconscious bias affects your career

As front-line personnel

• Inability to be promoted
  • Failure to use communication skills
  • HX of bad interactions with co-workers

• Termination
  • Dispatcher fired after comments on FB stating someone who overdosed should have been left to rot

• Failure to document calls correctly
  • Welfare recipients
  • Non-English-speaking callers

• Lawsuits
  • Assumptions – hang up calls, calls from children
  • A jury convicts a 9-1-1 operator who ignored a child’s calls for his dying parent
As a Supervisor

- Failure to hire the right employee – limiting the applicant pool for:
  - Looks
  - Resume/application
  - Affinity
  - Children
  - Religion

- Failure to grade others appropriately
  - Negligent retention
  - Failure to document employee behavior
  - Documenting too much for a certain employee(s)
...or a Manager/Director

- Negligent Retention
- Promotions based on affinity
- Dismissal of professional information based on gender
How do we combat these biases?
AWARENESS
• Implicit Association Tests
  • https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/iatdetails.html
  • http://projectimplicit.net/index.html

• Acknowledge that everyone is biased
• Remove the labels
CREATE NEW KNOWLEDGE

- Learning is hard...unlearning is even harder
- Substitution

- Create new experiences to unlearn what’s been taught
- Expand your “go to” list
- Take a Kit-Kat break
DEVELOP SKILLS

• Get exposed to different groups
• Engage with them
• Try to understand where they are coming from
• Read about different people

• Expose yourself!
ACTION

- Interact with a group from your list of biases
- Show your compassion and understanding
- Replace feelings of bias with reality of interactions

White, black, man, woman, straight, gay, Catholic, Muslim, American, Mexican...
...all taste like chicken