

Unconscious Bias in the Workplace

Length: 1 hour to ½ day (options)

Overview

Every human being makes immediate, snap decisions about new people. It is purely instinctual and happens faster than we can comprehend, as quickly as 30 milliseconds. This process is called Unconscious Bias, and can have a huge influence on how we respond to new people or groups of people.

Part of the bodies defense mechanism is to make these immediate decisions about people, to try and understand if it is safe. It is also a way to speed up new interactions; we cannot possibly process everything we initially take in about a new person. The brain will subconsciously categories based on gender, age, race, weight, attractiveness and disability. Along with this, our past experiences will also play a part, so that the brain also looks for familiar patterns of language, accent, nationality, religion and education. Social Psychologists call this part of the process Social Categorization.

We all form categories which pre-judge others, and other groups, based on past experiences with a similar group. This pre-judging will also be based on what we have seen, heard and absorbed unconsciously during the course of our lives. Influences can come from family and friends but may also be affected by the News, social media and peers; creating patterns which we unconsciously process and store. These categories get reinforced by our daily lives, without us thinking consciously about them.

These unconscious decisions we make about someone's character will then help create a bias, whether good or bad, towards them. Unconscious bias cannot be stopped, but we can learn how to use logical thought to ensure that we don't let it impact negatively in the workplace.

Learning Objectives

'Unconscious Bias' workshop your participants will be able to:

- Identify what Unconscious Bias is.
- Recognize how you, your colleagues and organization can be affected by Unconscious Bias.
- Explain how you can manage your own Unconscious Bias.
- Identify steps to raise awareness and manage Unconscious Bias in the workplace.

Instructional Strategies

This workshop is highly interactive. The instructor presents key concepts, then helps the participants build personal connections through discussions and interactive exercises.

Prerequisites

None

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416-829-8529

Content Outline

To appreciate Unconscious Bias, we must:

1. Identify what Unconscious Bias is.
 - Instinctual snap decisions on people as quickly as 30 milliseconds.
2. Recognize how Unconscious Bias affects you and your organization
 - Understand how it influences how we respond to new people or groups of people.
3. Learn how to recognize and manage your Unconscious Bias
 - Take the test and discuss findings.
4. Raise awareness and manage Unconscious Bias in the workplace
 - Put in place processes and policies, within the organization, that are fair and inclusive to all.