Four Steps to Address Unconscious Bias

Awareness, Acceptance, Concern, and Replacement

- Raise **awareness** of unconscious biases
- Help people **accept** that biases affect them, including when working with colleagues, those they serve, and strangers
- Stress their **concern** about the consequences
- Assure people are willing to learn to **replace** those tendencies with ones that more closely match their values

Here are some ways to approach each of these steps. The first bullet point for each step is from the Royal Society video “understanding unconscious bias.” Additional bullet points are from previous sessions and our session at the MCF 2020 Conference. What would you add to this list?

**AWARENESS**

- *Deliberately SLOW DOWN decision making*
- Ask others
- Think before you speak
- Question stereotypes
- Expose yourself
- Reflect
- Be open to other ways
- Be kind to yourself
- Don’t jump to conclusions
- Document
- Pause
- Take away emotions
- Question everything
- Work on understanding stereotypes
- Be aware of body language
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ACCEPTANCE

- *RECONSIDER reasons for decisions*
- Remember it’s not just about me
- Accept differences
- Don’t try to change others
- Move from comfort zone to growth zone
- It’s not a zero-sum game
- Respect differences after votes
- Give ourselves credit for what we’ve learned
- Recognize polarization and realize that everything isn’t good vs. bad

CONCERN

- *QUESTION cultural stereotypes*
- Because you may be afraid of missing out on something
- Because you want to be the best you can be
- Because you don’t want to appear stuck-up, aloof, offensive, and you don’t want to be these things
- Realized that biases affect yourself and others

REPLACEMENT

- *MONITOR each other for unconscious bias*
- Be open to opportunities and try them out
- Read and research, leading you to get comfortable to act
- Replace fear with curiosity, and act on it
- Be generous to yourself and others
- Apologies go a long way
- Ask trusted people to call you out
- Remove yourself from some decisions
- Review your actions
- Recognize it can be uncomfortable
- Practice!