



Check Your Bias At The Door

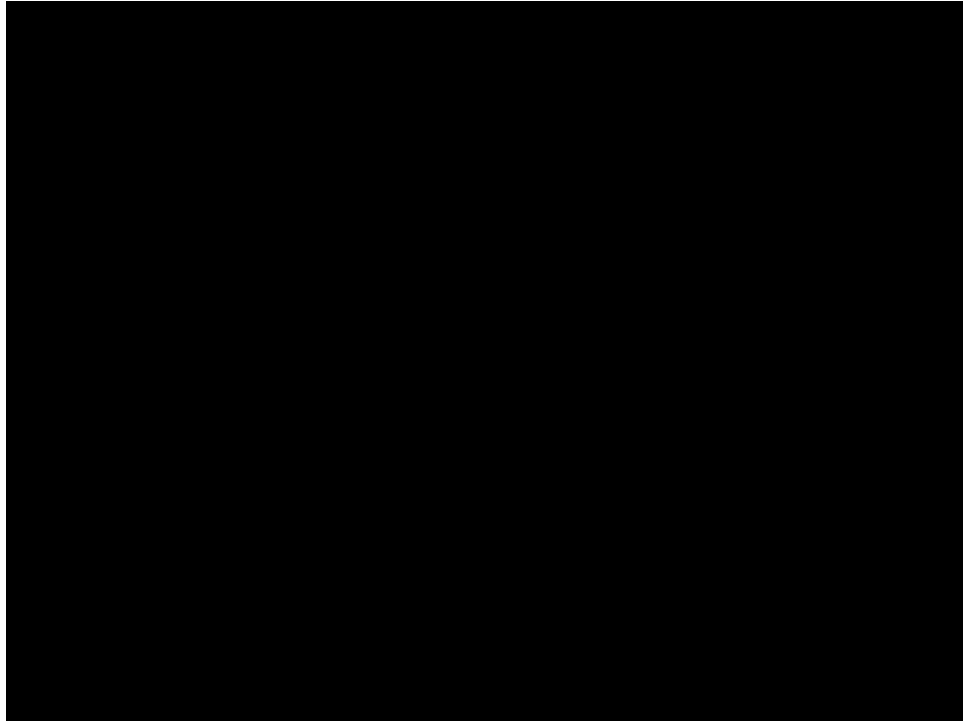
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Agenda

- Introduction of Facilitators
- Video and Definitions
- Grounding Assignment
- We “ALL” make assumptions
- Accountability Card
- Closing Remarks

Bias



Definitions

- **Bias**- An inclination, preconceived notion or a generalization toward or against something or someone. Some biases are positive and helpful—like choosing to only eat foods that are considered healthy or staying away from someone who has knowingly caused harm. But biases are often based on stereotypes, rather than actual knowledge of an individual or circumstance. Whether positive or negative, such cognitive shortcuts can result in prejudgments that lead to rash decisions or discriminatory practices.
- **Cognitive Bias**- Is a systematic error in thinking that occurs when people are processing and interpreting information in the world around them and affects the decisions and judgments that they make.
- **Implicit/Unconscious Bias**- Something that applies to all of us and forming attitudes towards people or associated stereotypes with them without our conscious knowledge. A common example of this is seen in studies that show that Americans will frequently associate terrorist with muslim people without realizing they are doing it.

Definitions Continued

- **Explicit Bias**- With explicit bias, individuals are aware of their prejudices and attitudes toward certain groups. Overt racism and racist comments are examples of explicit bias.
- **Microaggressions**- Microaggression is when people's biases against marginalized groups reveal themselves in a statement, action, or incident regarded as an instance of indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination against members of a marginalized group such as a racial or ethnic minority.
- **Prejudice**- Prejudice is a preconceived judgment or opinion typically adverse in nature and detrimental. Prejudice is an assumption or an opinion about someone based on that person's membership in a particular group. Types of prejudice: Sexism, classism, homophobia, nationalism, religious prejudice, racism, ageism, sexism, xenophobia.

Grounding Assignment

“A father and son were involved in a car accident in which the father was killed and the son was seriously injured. The father was pronounced dead at the scene of the accident and his body was taken to a local morgue. The son was taken by ambulance to a nearby hospital and was immediately wheeled into an emergency operating room. A surgeon was called. Upon arrival and seeing the patient, the attending surgeon exclaimed “Oh my God, it’s my son!”

Can you explain this?”

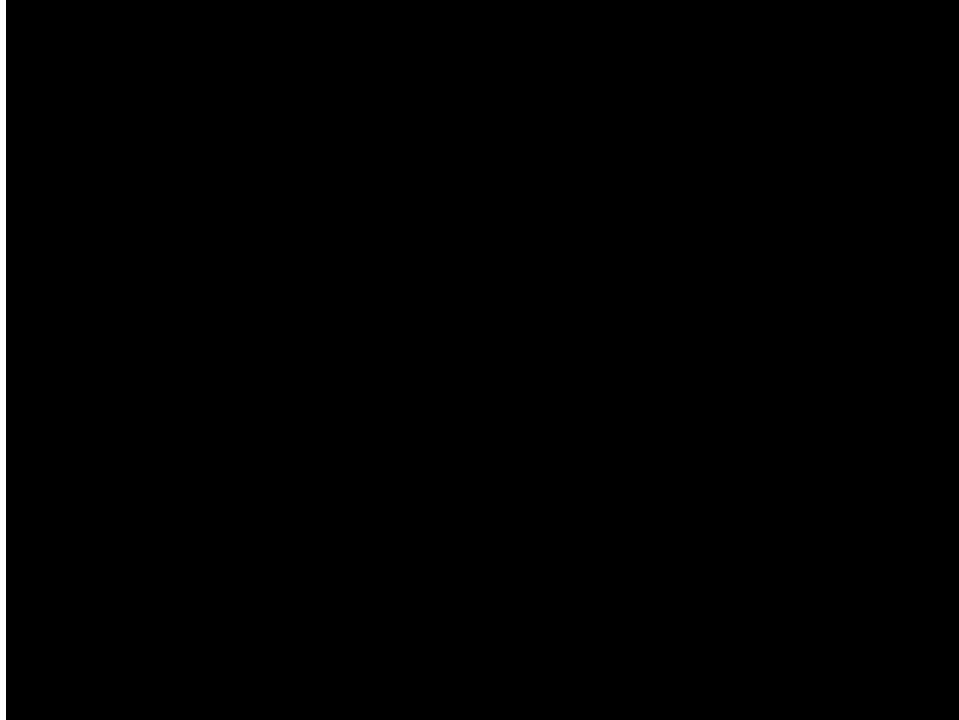
Takeaways

- 1) Be aware of the language you use: Think about your language and how powerful a tool it is. Example: Automatically assuming a person of authority is a male/he rather than using a gender-neutral phrase. “The engineer for this project will be in touch” “Great, please tell him he can contact me here...” Phrases like this make the assumption the engineer is a man.
- 2) Ask yourself questions: “Is this bias of mine fair, relevant or even worthy of having?” Did something happen to you by a certain person that you made an unfair judgement of the entire group based on that interaction?
- 3) Devil’s Advocate: Surround yourself with individuals who will challenge your thought processes and may think differently than yourself
- 4) Test yourself: take assessments to test and challenge your biases

We All Make Assumptions

- Each attendee will receive a card that contains 3 qualifiers (race, gender, permit status) of a cadet.
- Participants should take 1 minute to think about what type of cadet the individuals were at VMI based on the following:
 - Academic Success
 - Involvement in the Corps of Cadets
 - Commissioning/ Non-Commissioning
- Each participant will take 30 seconds to 1 minute to discuss their assumptions based on the cadet card.

Know your Blindspots



Accountability Card

Assignment: Participants will create an accountability card to utilize in moments that they realize they are exhibiting negative biases, prejudice, or microaggressions. Think of scenarios in which you most exhibit bias and write either a counter statement to correct that thought, or ask yourself why do I hold this belief, and describe a way to reduce or check your bias.

Purpose: To have a tangible card of reference anytime you recognize your negative biases. These cards are for personal improvement and sharing is not mandatory. Please try to address your most common biases.

Accountability card

Develop the accountability card through questions or statements such as:

- ❖ I will not assume someone is incompetent when I notice they have an accent foreign or otherwise.
- ❖ I will intentionally redact name, race, and gender from resumes before ranking applicants.
- ❖ Why do I assume all nurses are women? Is this belief based on television? Or actual experience, if so then why do I generalize.
- ❖ I will not assume someone more/less astute based on the degree they hold.
- ❖ I constantly make the mistake of assuming older employees are more responsible than younger workers.

Common misconceptions/biases:

- ❖ Corps of Cadets are deplorable
- ❖ Older employees are not familiar with the newest software or technology
- ❖ Many faculty members don't understand the VMI system

Closing Remarks

- Eight tactics to identify and reduce your IMPLICIT bias
- “You are not so smart” by David McRaney
- Project Implicit - Implicit Associations Test <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>





Questions?