

Awareness, Adaptation and Acceptance

Working within Indigenous Community Agencies

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Maeve = Meadhbh

Meaning: 'the cause of great joy' or 'she who intoxicates'

Agenda

- ▶ Question: What is unconscious bias?
- ▶ Discussion: What/How do we discover our biases?
- ▶ Stories from the home front - Feedback from Indigenous leaders
- ▶ What can we do to improve & change
- ▶ Being aware of triggers
- ▶ Good practice for Organizations
- ▶ Final thoughts

Questions we will examine:

- ▶ Is there a difference between unconscious bias and implicit bias?
- ▶ How can we identify our own biases?
- ▶ Is it possible to fully set aside our own bias and cultural history when working with or coaching Indigenous (or other cultures) clients?
- ▶ How can we understand the things in our culture that are important, and what impact do they have when working with people of different cultures?
- ▶ When I come across triggers that influence the behaviour of my clients, students or myself, what questions do I need to ask to improve and change?
- ▶ How can I learn the important behaviours and values of other cultures that I am working with and/or teaching?
- ▶ How can I grow and support others in developing flexibility and cultural agility in an environment that is different?

Outcomes:

- ▶ Understand the difference between unconscious bias and implicit bias
- ▶ How we can become more aware of our own biases (Social mind bugs) and how we impart them.
- ▶ Understand how beliefs and biases show up when working/living with indigenous and other cultures,
- ▶ Discover new questions around bias and triggers for reflective practice
- ▶ Appreciate how curiosity can be used to develop trust and understanding in cultural relationships

What is Unconscious (Implicit) Bias

Bias is the tendency to favor one thing over another

Defining Implicit Bias

- ▶ Also known as implicit social cognition, 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. (Kirwan Institute, Ohio)

Tiffany Jana

TMI Consulting

- ▶ ‘A person who behaves in a nonexclusive or even discriminatory way does not have to have negative intent. When we approach people who view themselves as good individuals trying to do the right thing as if they “should have known better,” we are likely to be met with resistance. If we approach them with an assumption of innocence in intent, but with an emphasis on the impact of their behavior, we are more likely to reach them effectively and garner their willing attention’.

How can we identify our own bias?

- ▶ Implicit Association Test: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit>
- ▶ *Fill in the first word or phrase that comes to mind when you see the following:
- ▶ Used Car Salesman: _____
- ▶ Politician: _____
- ▶ Indigenous person: _____
- ▶ Teacher: _____
- ▶ Street person: _____

Where does Implicit bias come from?

- ▶ Personal experience
- ▶ Social Influences
- ▶ Heuristics - intuition/common sense based on what we know, or think we know

- ▶ **Why**
- ▶ Bias arises because of how our brains rapidly process information.

Is it possible to have a belief about a social group that we possess but don't personally endorse or even approve of?

Let's discuss Stereotypes:

- ▶ Stereotypes: Old people are forgetful, Asians are good at math, girls can't do science
- ▶ We tend to stereotype constantly - it helps us to perceive total strangers as distinctive individuals!
- ▶ Stereotypes influence how we see people and what we believe

Is it possible to fully set aside our own bias and cultural history when teaching/coaching Indigenous (or other cultures) students or clients?

- Thoughts?
- ▶ Keys to understanding
 - ▶ Attitude & motivation
 - ▶ Knowing oneself
 - ▶ Understanding others
 - ▶ Communication styles - verbal/non-verbal
 - ▶ Building trust and commitment
 - ▶ Respect

Howard Ross Founder & Chief Learning Officer of Cook Ross Inc., a diversity training and change management

- ▶ ‘Each one of us has some groups with which we consciously feel uncomfortable, even as we castigate others for feeling uncomfortable with our own groups. These conscious patterns of discrimination are problematic, but, again, they pale in comparison to the unconscious patterns that impact us every day. Unconscious perceptions govern many of the most important decisions we make and have a profound effect on the lives of many people in many ways. ...Unconscious patterns can play out in ways that are so subtle they are hard to spot.’

“

Stories from the Home Front

- ▶ Be curious about the person and their history
- ▶ Understand the people you are working with, where they have come from - history of lack of understanding
- ▶ Each of us has a spirit (inner self) it's important to work on self - use mindfulness, meditation and how to develop the inner self. Take time to sit in silence
- ▶ We all come from the same source (God, the Creator, ?), and have different gifts
- ▶ Be curious about where the root of your challenge comes from, recognize it and work on it, to let it go
- ▶ Pay attention! 'We are different Nations, each Nation has it's own protocols' 'Respect where I am'

How can I understand the things in my culture that are important, and what impact do they have when I am working, teaching or instructing people of different cultures?

- ▶ What is your cultural heritage?
- ▶ Think back to growing up, what traditions, songs and understandings were important to your family?
- ▶ What are some of the contexts where you might be affected by, or have encountered bias?
- ▶ What are plans for response that you can put in place?

How can I learn the important behaviours and values of other cultures that I am working with, teaching or instructing?

Always be Curious

- ▶ Think about where you are going.
- ▶ Who will you be working with?
- ▶ What do you know about their culture?
- ▶ What are the similarities between your own culture and those you are/will be working with?

Ask Questions

Think about your own triggers or hot button issues. What should you be asking yourself as a reflective practice?

Pay attention: Listen and reflect on any internal conflict you may have

What happens to you physically when something or someone sets you off?

Pay attention to the topics that are present when this occurs -is there a pattern in your reactions?

Where do you think your biases came from?

How do you know you have them?

What personal beliefs and opinions that once shaped you have changed over time?

*After this event take 24 hours, pay attention to all you see and hear in the media, around you. Try to identify any bias in the perspectives shared.

When I come across triggers that influence the behaviour of my students, clients, or myself, what questions do I need to ask to improve and change?

- ▶ The stories we tell ourselves about a particular group of people can change if we seek to know and understand that group and if we challenge the assumptions and beliefs that we've adopted rather than experienced on our own.
- ▶ Research shows that even before teachers interact with students, they have already formulated a number of opinions based on the students race, appearance and other factors and have begun to formulate a certain set of expectations.
- ▶ Students will sense bias and will often internalize your low expectations and lack of confidence in them.
- ▶ Raise expectations, raise results. Lower expectations, lower results

How can I grow and support others in developing flexibility and cultural agility in an environment that is different?

- ▶ Think about your ‘words’, the language you use.
- ▶ Reframe conversations to focus on respect, moving away from discrimination, ugly jokes
- ▶ The limiting patterns of unconscious behavior are not restricted to any one group. All of us have them, and those of us who are diversity professionals particularly have to focus on our own assumptions and biases if we expect to have the moral authority to guide others in acknowledging and confronting theirs.
- ▶ Notice your defensiveness and accept the discomfort of unlearning & relearning - it requires a desire to know, motivation to be informed, opportunities to practice and the wiliness to correct mistakes (<http://www.cookcross.com/docs/UnconsciousBias.pdf>)

Good Practice for Organizations

- ▶ Conduct an image audit of your organization
- ▶ Ensure a diversity of guest speakers - analyze, evaluate and address any imbalance that is noticed
- ▶ Consider the content of the curriculum and how it could be diversified to ensure a balanced view point

Final Thoughts

- ▶ We should not rely on any sense of subjective determinations of attitude, either individually or collectively, to determine whether our training organizations are functioning in inclusive ways. Our conscious attitudes may have little to do with our success in producing results.
- ▶ We have to create objective measurements that give us individual and collective feedback on our performance if we are to create training organizations that are truly inclusive.

References:

- ▶ *Jana, T. & Freeman, M. (2016) *Overcoming Bias, Building authentic relationships across differences*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., CA
- ▶ **Banaji, M. R., & Greenwald, A. G. (2016) *Blind Spots, Hidden biases of good people*. Bantam Books, NY, NY
- ▶ Resources:
- ▶ <https://ethicsunwrapped.utexas.edu/video/implicit-bias>
- ▶ <http://www.cookcross.com/docs/UnconsciousBias.pdf>
- ▶ <http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/research/understanding-implicit-bias/>
- ▶ <https://tmiconsultinginc.com/>
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Thank you



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