

Implicit Bias Module Series Transcripts

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Training Introduction

Hi, my name is Kelly Capatosto, and I'm, a Sr. research associate on the race and cognition team at the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race & Ethnicity. At Kirwan we are committed to the creation of a just and inclusive society where all people and communities have the opportunity to succeed. Our commitment to this mission is why we work so hard to understand and overcome barriers that prevent access to opportunity in our society – such as implicit bias and the unequal distribution of public and private resources.

Our annual publication, *The State of the Science*, has highlighted implicit bias as a powerful cognitive mechanism that can derail even the best of our intentions. All of these reasons, and more, are why understanding what implicit bias is and how it operates is vital to creating just and inclusive communities.

This course will introduce you to insights about how our minds operate and help you understand the origins of implicit associations. You will also uncover some of your own biases and learn strategies for addressing them.

Each module is divided into a short series of lessons, many taking less than 10 minutes to complete. That way, even if you're pressed for time, you can complete the lessons and modules at your convenience.

We are delighted that you are starting this process to explore implicit bias and what its operation means for your decisions and actions. Thank you again for joining us.

Module 1, Lesson 1: What is Implicit Bias?

This first lesson will provide the foundational understanding of how we define implicit bias, and why it matters for our pursuit of diversity, inclusion, equity and justice.

During this module, when we talk about implicit bias, we are referring to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. Let's start to unpack that a little bit

Although it's often used in a negative context, the word bias simply means an evaluation or belief. That means, it's possible to have a bias that is favorable or unfavorable. In other words— you can have a bias toward an object, person, or concept that is positive or negative. Bias, in and of itself, is a neutral term.

For example, take these three colors: I could say that I am biased toward red, or biased against blue. Or maybe I'm neutral toward yellow. All of those statements could be true. And, most people would agree that my preferences for red over yellow or blue don't make me a bad person. They are simply my preferences, and I probably did nothing to consciously control these preferences myself.

So, when we say that our psychological processes are "implicit" or "unconscious," we are simply referring to something operating outside of our conscious awareness. Like "bias", the term "implicit" in and of itself isn't a good or bad thing; in fact, as you will learn later in this training, we rely on implicit processes to move efficiently throughout the world.

So by definition, implicit bias is nothing more than our evaluations or beliefs, whether positive or negative, that can exist without us even realizing it. So if it's true that our biases may be hidden to us, and they aren't necessarily bad, why are we talking about them?

Well, we're talking about them because we now know that it is possible for us to form implicit evaluations based on inaccurate information or stereotypes of people, objects, and ideas.

There's also evidence that implicit biases can impact our decisions, perceptions, and behaviors. This makes it more difficult for us to live up to our values of equity and fairness

That means that the actions and decisions resulting from our implicit biases can create real-world barriers to equity and opportunity; you'll learn more about what the research says about the effects of bias later on in these modules.

But these practical applications are why it's so important to learn about implicit bias, particularly those

biases that don't align with your intentions, or explicit beliefs.

To summarize, implicit bias refers to attitudes or stereotypes we hold outside of our conscious awareness. Implicit bias does NOT refer to those beliefs we are aware of but that we conceal or suppress in an effort to appear non-biased

The word attitude describes your evaluation of some concept like a person, place, thing, or idea. For instance, in the color example from earlier, I shared that I prefer red. Attitudes can be positive or negative. In this example, my evaluation of red is positive. Alternatively, my evaluation of blue is negative.

We use the word stereotype to refer to those beliefs that are mentally associated with a given category. For example, people often stereotype Asians as being good at math and men are associated with being in the workplace more often than women are. Even if we don't endorse these stereotypes they can unintentionally influence our mental processes.

At this point, you might be asking yourself, "why is the topic of implicit bias worth our consideration when there are so many other issues that can impact our pursuit of equity and fairness?"

Implicit bias is just another tool we possess to understand how our conscious commitments to fairness and equity can be disrupted—even when people have the best intentions.

More importantly, considering Implicit bias doesn't take away from the importance of addressing explicit or direct instances of discrimination. In fact, the effects of implicit, explicit, and institutional bias are informed by and contribute to each other.

Although the main focus of these modules will be on implicit bias, we will also incorporate information and resources related to institutional and overt forms of bias.

In the next modules, we will dive deeper into how implicit bias can show up in our daily life, and how we can work to counter it. Thank you for joining us.

Module 1, Lesson 2: Implicit Bias in Action

Hello everyone. I'm Joshua Bates and I am a social policy analyst at the Kirwan Institute.

In the previous lesson, we defined implicit bias as those attitudes and stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. But what does it mean to have thoughts and associations that you're unaware of? What does that look and feel like? And why does it even matter? Let's try bringing implicit bias to life by doing some quick exercises. As you'll soon see, these exercises are very simple. The purpose is not whether or not you can complete them, but what they show us about how our brains work.

Let's start by playing a game of word association: Think or say aloud the word that should go in the blank: [visual: young_____, night_____, black_____]

Obviously there was nothing difficult about that exercise. Not only was it easy to fill in the blanks, you likely had a response ready long before you were prompted to fill it in. This is the power of our implicit cognition and our lightning fast associations! When faced with incomplete information we rely on associative memory to quickly fill in the gaps

It's also important to know that most people have the same response. It is possible to have similar associations shared across various groups of people—we usually refer to these as “norms” or “stereotypes”.

For the next activity, please read the following paragraph out loud:

“If you can read this paragraph, it's because our minds are very good at putting together pieces of information in a way that is easy for us to make sense of. Our minds do this automatically, without our conscious control.”

This was a horribly misspelled paragraph, yet you were able to read it without much difficulty at all! Even, if it took you a little longer to read, your unconscious cognition automatically made sense of the paragraph based on your ability to associate it with words you already know.

[See ABC/12, 13, 14 visual]

Most of us see ABC.

Similarly, here we see 12, 13, and 14.

Even though the middle figure in those images never changed, our brains are able to form different perceptions of the same image based only on the context surrounding. And this is done without our

intention or control.

What these three exercises demonstrate is the automatic, adaptive, and associative nature of our implicit processing. When faced with otherwise ambiguous or confusing content, our brains try to quickly make sense of it by relying on associations we've stored in our memory. Importantly, these stored associations don't have to be based on accurate and logical information. By just seeing concepts grouped together repeatedly, we can internalize associations that are skewed, distorted, and inaccurate. Now, let's go through one final exercise that really speaks to the question of why implicit bias matters.

[See visual]

On the screen you will see a column of words. When prompted, please say aloud the COLOR of each word, not what the word says. Try not to read the words, just say what color it is. Ready? Here we go Great! Let's try it again with a similar set of words. Remember, just say the color of the word, don't read the word.

Ready? Go.

This assessment – known as the Stroop Task – is a psychological task that looks at the dynamics of our automatic

For most folks, the first screen was simple. The color and the word themselves matched. Therefore the results of your implicit inclination to read the words aligned with your explicit directions to say the color. On the other hand, your automatic inclination to read the words the second time may have taken a little bit longer. As this demonstrates, our implicit and explicit goals can, and often do, diverge.

THIS is why implicit bias matters. While we'd like to think of ourselves as rational and logical adults, the reality is a lot of our thought processes are occurring unconsciously, without our intention and control.

Those implicit processes – when activated – can derail even our most sincere explicit intentions.

There are limits to the amount of information you can consciously process at any given time. In fact, research shows that, on average, we can only consciously process between 5 and 9 stimuli at a time. So that phone number you misremembered was at the limit of your capacity to process information consciously.

We rely on our implicit cognition to move through the world. Given this, uncovering your biases and understanding their effects on your life and others is critical to ensuring that intentions and outcomes align.

In the next lesson, we're going to dive more deeply into the origins of our biases, how they form, and where they come from.

Module 1, Lesson 3: Origin of Bias

Hi, I'm Lena Tenney, coordinator of public engagement at the Kirwan Institute.

So far, we have talked a lot about what implicit bias is, and how it operates. Now we will share some information about the origins of our biases. To do so, we will discuss a different perspectives on how we internalize the messages in our environment as implicit associations or biases.

Our brain's ability to make connection between two concepts is known as associative learning. The best example of how our minds do this is through the process of classical conditioning. Most of you may have seen or heard about the original classical conditioning study conducted with the scientist Pavlov and his dogs.

Every time Pavlov gave his dogs food, they began to salivate—this was their automatic response. Then he rang a bell every time he presented the food to the animals. Over time, after seeing these two stimuli paired together repeatedly, the dogs eventually exhibited the physiological response of salivating when a bell was rung even when there was no food around--- the association was formed. Even though this classic study uses the examples of animal behavior, we all do the same thing when our brains try to perceive and categorize people. So in the same way that the dogs associated the bell with food, we associate characteristics such as leadership or criminality with aspects of people's identity like race or gender.

For example, because CEOs of large companies have historically been older, white, men this may be the first image that comes into our mind when we think of someone in this role.

One of the most interesting things about this style of learning is that people internalize associations at a young age and it's our childhood experiences that engrain them in our minds. So even if we hold beliefs that value equity and fair treatment, we can still be implicitly influenced by those messages we already received.

I'm a perfect example of that. People who know me are always surprised to learn that I have a strong implicit association connecting women with being at home, and associating with men and careers. In

my life, this association is pretty ironic. Here I am, a non-binary person in the workforce who believes very strongly that people of all genders should be able to pursue their dreams. And yet, I still hold this strong association that directly opposes my own values and self-interest. But I know this association didn't appear out of nowhere. My own family experience reflected this dynamic—my mother was an incredible stay at home mom who cared for six children and my father served in the Air Force. I don't think I really knew any women who worked outside of the home—other than my teachers—until middle school. Because of this early experience, it's no surprise that I still unconsciously associate women with family and men with the careers. But since I know about the implicit associations I hold, I can be mindful of my biases, or inclinations and intentionally try to stop them. For example, if I am part of a hiring committee for a job, I need to be aware of the possibility that my implicit associations might cause me to more harshly evaluate candidates who are women while giving the benefit of the doubt to candidates who are men. With this awareness I am actually able to start behaving in ways to address my biases.

Module 2: Intro

Next we will focus directly on the real-life impacts of these implicit associations within various contexts, delving into topics related to your line of work. Again, our ongoing conversation about bias is not about who is a “good person” or who is a “not-so-good person,” but rather about how our implicit associations can have meaningful effects on your day-to-day life personally and professionally.

Module 2: Lesson 1: Implicit Bias and Academic Achievement

As educators, we are all deeply invested in creating positive experiences for our students. However, we now know that we all hold implicit biases that may impact our attitudes and decision-making in the classroom, without us knowing it. These implicit biases, positive or negative, don't reflect our conscious beliefs about students, but they can still have an impact on their educational outcomes. Let's see how implicit bias can affect students' academic achievement by looking at two studies.

In the first study, researchers watched and recorded children's behavior while they were playing with toys and other children in the lab. The researchers then rated the child's level of “imaginative play” on a 1-5 scale based on how creative and imaginative the children were when they interacted with the toys.

The children's teachers, watching the same interactions as the researchers, rated the students' readiness for school, and how the student interacted with other children. When analyzing the data, the researchers found that the students' race affected how teachers interpreted student's imaginative play as it pertained to their ratings for school readiness, and the student's behavior. For Black students, those with highly imaginative play were rated as less academically prepared and less accepted by peers. White students with highly imaginative play received more positive ratings of school readiness and peer interaction.

A second study examined the implicit biases of teachers in culturally diverse schools.

A group of White teachers filled out questionnaires about their experiences with White and Arab students in their classroom. The teachers also took an online test to measure unconscious racial biases. The teachers also identified what practices they used in the classroom. The study revealed a connection between implicit bias and educators' teaching style and engagement with students. In particular, teachers with strong, implicit pro-White biases were more likely to take a "teach-to-the-test" approach with Arab students, instead of helping them master the content. In other words, teachers were more likely to use less effective teaching methods with Arab students if they had a pro-white bias. The researchers also found that teachers who reported using more culturally responsive teaching methods, like promoting mutual respect and resolving racial conflicts in their classroom, actually used mastery-focused teaching practices with all students. This finding demonstrates that teachers were able to combat this unconscious negative impact on how they taught Arab students. The good news with this study is that the negative effects of automatic and unconscious biases can be interrupted or prevented.

Module 2, Lesson 2: Implicit Bias and School Discipline

Another way that implicit biases can impact our decision-making without us even knowing it is when we discipline students. Let's turn to this now.

We know that discipline decisions are challenging and stressful for everyone involved. While school districts typically issue guidelines intended to make discipline "uniform," research has shown that it isn't applied evenly across the student body or even among schools. In fact, differences in discipline show up

strongly with regards to race and gender.

In this module, we are going to uplift implicit bias as a possible contributing factor.

Footnote: If you desire more data and information on these disparities, trends over time, reasons cited for disciplinary actions, or related information, the Kirwan Institute has an extensive website devoted to exploring racialized disparities in K-12 school discipline. This website not only looks at race, but also gender and ability status to provide an in-depth analysis of how implicit bias can operate and suggestions for addressing these disparities.

In particular, we'll discuss how student behavior is perceived and how unconscious associations may affect those perceptions in three different ways.

First, research has found that subjective or ambiguous situations can particularly activate implicit associations. For subjective disciplinary actions like "disruptive behavior," school employees must judge what disciplinary response is appropriate. The ambiguity and highly contextualized nature of these situations means implicit bias can emerge strongly during the decision-making process.

For example, one study found that students of color were more likely to receive office referrals and other disciplinary measures for subjective infractions like "disruptive behavior," "disrespect," or "excessive noise." In contrast, the White students received office referrals for specific events like smoking or vandalism.

Another way implicit racial biases can be activated is when there is a cultural mismatch between the student and teacher. While the educator workforce has gradually diversified, the majority of teachers in the United States are White; however, approximately half of public school students are students of color.

This demographic difference can lead to culturally-influenced perceptions of student behavior.

Research has shown that students who are suspended often differ from their teachers in terms of race or gender. Also, research has shown that when Black and White students are rated on classroom behavior, Black students are rated as "poorer classroom citizens" than their White peers. However, when Black and White students are taught by same race teachers, Black students' classroom behavior is viewed more favorably than White students. Cultural differences between students and teachers may activate teachers' implicit racial biases.

Similarly, a student's culture can affect how they engage in the classroom. For instance, Black girls often

learn the importance of being assertive; however, this may be unintentionally misperceived as abrasive or aggressive. As such, when educators make discipline decision based on limited or culturally misaligned information, their implicit association can be activated.

Finally, in addition to cultural mismatch, the pervasive implicit associations related to Black students impacts how they are perceived. Broadly speaking, research suggests that most Americans – regardless of race – hold an anti-Black/pro-White implicit bias. Implicit racial bias affects all genders, but research shows Black males are associated with negative traits like aggression, violence, and criminality.

Pervasive cultural narratives and media portrayals perpetuate stereotypes and further the negative associations of Black males. For example, research shows that Black boys are often perceived as being older than they are, and this may impact how “innocent” or “childlike” others perceive them to be. This can greatly influence how others perceive the behavior of Black youth. For example, if Black boys are “horsing around,” their behavior can be implicit construed as something more hostile, like fighting. These implicit associations can affect how educators view the behavior of Black boys, especially in subjective or ambiguous situations.

Implicit bias can turn even our best intentions into unwanted outcomes. We all want the best for their students, but the unconscious activation of implicit biases can influence how educators’ perceive potential disciplinary situations, as well as how they respond to them. Repeated, disparate treatment of students depending on their race, culture, and gender can potentially inhibit students’ chances for success as they move towards higher education, as we will see in the next module.

Module 2, Lesson 3: Access & Evaluation

Not only can students suffer from negative implicit biases in k-12 education settings, but they can also be negatively impacted as they look toward higher education or employment.

Many of us are aware of the historic legacy of discrimination, which resulted in the exclusion Black, Hispanic, other racial and ethnic applicants and women from higher education institutions. In addition to this history of institutional discrimination, research is growing around the role of implicit bias in limiting opportunities for racially marginalized students and University employees.

For example, one study demonstrated that students may already face implicit discrimination before the

formal application process begins. In this study, researchers looked at an informal step students take to find a good program fit: emailing potential advisors.

The study reviewed how professors around the country responded to emails asking to meet about the program. The emails were randomized according to race and gender. All other aspects of the email were identical. The study found that potential mentors were much more likely to respond positively to White Males compared to every other identity. Interestingly, the race, gender, and program affiliation of the professor didn't have an overall impact on the responses. Only fine arts professors strayed from this pattern, and were actually more likely to respond to women or racial minority applicants.

In addition to the disparities in student admission, there is a gendered pay gap in higher education. One study looked at implicit bias as a potential source of this inequality. Researchers created a series of resumes to apply for a lab manager position.

On one version of the resume, the student was named Jennifer, and the other the student was named John. Everything else on the application was the same. The results showed that reviewers not only perceived that Jennifer's resume reflected less competence, but that they were less willing to hire or mentor Jennifer in this role. Most shocking was the average recommendation for Jennifer's salary being \$4,000 less than for John's salary, a nearly 15% difference in pay.

Module 2, Lesson 4: Implicit Bias and Structural Racism

"As professionals in your field and as members of your communities, you care about doing what is best for your family, friends, colleagues, and neighborhoods. However, through the lessons in this module we have seen that unconscious thought processes can interrupt these well-intended goals. Learning about implicit bias and how to adjust for it, can help you improve the opportunities available to those around you.

How do the ways our society is structured impact the types of implicit biases people have?

Module 3: Intro

Congratulations on making it to the half-way point. In this module, we'll discuss how to understand our own biases.

We know that everyone has biases: it's a natural part of human brain activity. But how do we actually measure implicit bias? How do we identify what biases we personally may hold?

This module will answer these important questions and set you on a path to understanding your own biases so that you can start doing something about them.

One unique aspect of this module is the opportunity for you to uncover some of your own biases by taking one particularly well-known and highly-regarded assessment:

We want to acknowledge upfront that the results you receive may be challenging, but stick with us even in the difficult moments, as awareness of your own implicit biases better positions you to mitigate the effects of those biases, as discussed in Module 4.

Module 3, Lesson 1: How Do We Measure Implicit Associations?

As we have discussed, a key characteristic of implicit bias is its unconscious nature. Put simply: Folks generally are not aware of their biases and the ways in which they impact others. Equally important is that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to uncover our implicit biases through introspection.

Given these dynamics, tools have been created to help us measure our implicit biases to better understand them.

Generally speaking, there are two ways to measure our implicit biases. The first is by examining our behavior -- the automatic choices we make. The second is "neurological measurement"—actually looking at how our brain is activated, using imaging technology.

Let's start by looking at the first set of implicit bias measurement tools – those that examine our behavior.

Behavioral assessments are the primary way researchers examine implicit biases. Most of these tools measure how we process the relationship between concepts. The underlying assumption is that we are quicker and more efficient at grouping concepts and attitudes together that are closely associated in our minds (such as ice cream and joy). There are people out there who hold a negative implicit association

toward ice cream. Therefore, these type of tests do not assume any particular association, instead measuring the direction and strength of these associations. In other words, the test measures: do I have a positive or negative association with ice cream, and how strong is this feeling?

The most well-known of these assessments is the Implicit Association Test – also known as the IAT. In a later lesson, we'll explore this test in more depth. But for now, it's important to know that tests like the IAT and the Implicit Relational Assessment Procedure are considered by most researchers to be accurate measures of one's implicit associations.

Other forms of behavioral assessments rely on what's known as "priming" to determine the positive and negative preferences people have about certain concepts. Priming takes place when our memory unconsciously influences our current thoughts and behaviors on a given task. For example, a person who sees the word "yellow" will be slightly faster to recognize the word "banana" since those two things happen to be closely associated in their memory. These associations can spill over into concepts unrelated to the "prime." For example, if an individual has a negative implicit bias toward women, they are more likely to have a negative disposition toward an unrelated image (for example, a letter from a different language). Their negative thoughts or feelings toward the image would likely be different if they were instead primed with a "positive" image of a man.

The other way we measure implicit bias is by using medical brain scanning technology. For example, one may use an fMRI to examine what areas of the brain are activated when we perceive same-race versus other race faces. By using these tools we can see in real time how our brains respond when we engage in these split second decisions to group concepts together. This is why tools like fMRIs and the IAT are often utilized together in studies examining the unconscious nature of how humans perceive and respond to different groups of people.

Module 3, Lesson 2: What is the IAT?

We want to spend some time talking about one particular test that researchers use to measure implicit bias, the Implicit Association Test, or IAT. The IAT is free and publicly available online. It allows people to learn about their implicit biases from the comfort and privacy of their own home or office.

So how does the test work? The IAT measures the relative strength of associations between pairs of concepts. Let's start with a simple example. Each IAT has several sets of trials that ask you to make various pairings. Suppose if every time you were given the prompt of "cookies" and told to pair it with "milk," this likely would be an easy task you could complete quickly given these two concepts are often in tandem.

But, suppose if you were given the prompt of "pepper" and asked to pair it with "cookies," or to match "salt" and "milk." It will likely take you longer to complete these matches. Most people do not have an existing association for "pepper & cookies" or "salt & milk," so this task would not feel automatic; making these associations would require some deliberate, conscious thought—so they would take more time to pair. You may also make more mistakes trying to match these concepts in this way.

This idea – the notion that concepts that are closely associated are easier to mentally process vs. unfamiliar associations that take longer to process is a key idea underlying the Implicit Association Test. Now, instead of milk and cookies, Implicit Association Tests measure unconscious associations for various social attitudes and stereotypes. IATs are able to assess positive or negative implicit attitudes for race, age, gender, ability, and other identity groupings. They can also measure implicit stereotypes. Each IAT takes about 10 minutes, and at the end, the test taker is given about the strength of their association – strong, moderate, slight, or none.

Since its debut in 1998, the IAT has been extensively studied. Like any human assessment, it is not without limitation, but the IAT has withstood many tests of its reliability and validity. This means that IAT results are statistically significant and not simply due to random chance.

In the next lesson, you'll have an opportunity to explore some of your own implicit biases by taking an IAT.

Module 4: Intro

The lessons in this module aim to help you understand when you are most susceptible to implicit biases, and then offer ideas and strategies for addressing them. This conversation will encompass ideas for interventions that can be used by individuals and institutions to minimize the influence of bias. Think about your own work environments and what ideas may be meaningful for you and your colleagues to consider.

Module 4, Lesson 1: Our Brain are Malleable

In this process of understanding what implicit bias is and getting to learn about our own biases, it is normal to start to feel like they are too deeply ingrained in our thoughts and actions to be able to combat their effects. However, as more research comes to light, we are able to find more and more ways to either lessen the effects of bias, or change the biases themselves. Although the latter is certainly a larger undertaking, it is very possible to do so. In the same way that our implicit biases were learned over time, we can disrupt this process with intention, attention and time.

This is because the neural connections between our associations get stronger as we take in more information that confirms our stereotypes or biases. By paying better attention to what we are exposed to and making the intentional choice to seek out experiences that go against our biases, we are able to disrupt this automatic chain of events, and those physical connection in our mind can be weakened. Two interventions we will be talking about later—mindfulness and intergroup contact, have shown the ability to not only stop the manifestation of these biases, but alter the implicit biases we possess.

Module 4, Lesson 2: Identifying Susceptibility to Unwanted Bias

As we illustrated with exercises and examples earlier in this module series, the likelihood that we will default to our implicit processes can be increased in certain situations.

For example, Cognitive Load, also described as mental fatigue, can increase the likelihood that an activated stereotype will be applied when interacting with others.

We can experience cognitive load through a variety of experiences and circumstance. Some include having a lot of distractions or time pressure. This can even be related to not getting enough sleep or not having enough to eat.

Since these types of distractions are common in our day to day life, the goal isn't to eliminate cognitive load, but to have a healthy skepticism of decisions that we make during these times

Beyond just being watchful of bias happening during those times, there are also strategies we can use to help improve our decision-making capabilities

For example, taking short breaks, reflecting on the decision at hand, or engaging in brief mindfulness exercises can help us get back on track when it comes to our deliberate thought processes.

Having subjectivity or ambiguity in the decision-making process can also increase our reliance on our implicit associations

Let's use an example from the education context. If a school has a broad or subjective discipline policy, we would be left to our own judgments in how we interpret that policy and how we adhere to it.

This can cause us to rely on bias when filling in the decision-making gaps, and lead to systematic differences if many people interpret these policies in different ways.

Research shows us that without standardized procedures in place, individuals are more likely to rely on their implicit associations or stereotypes & social cues when making decisions

These reasons highlight the importance of improving the objectivity of our decision making processes and policies –rather than just improving our own, individual decision-making skills.

Using Data-based Decision Making is a great place to start. As many of us may be unaware of our implicit biases, tracking data may be the first way to identify trends and to establish that bias may be an issue. Data is also crucial for informing how we should intervene.

It's also important to speak up when you see a policy that may lead to racial disparities because of the ambiguity in how it's interpreted

Identifying and articulating policies to specifically improve racial equity or inclusion help reduce the ambiguity by bringing the problem to the surface.

Taking notes and articulating the decision-making process also decrease the possibility that the negative effects of bias may slip through, unnoticed

Finally, one of the most important predictors of the unconscious attitudes we possess, are our friends, family, and the people we surround ourselves with.

For example, research shows us that limited exposure to people who are different than ourselves can increase the likelihood that one will rely on stereotypes, rather than experience, to make judgments about others' actions.

Additionally, limited contact with diverse social circles can decrease our empathy and positive emotions toward others.

This is why the research shows time and time again that having meaningful intergroup contact with different social, racial or ethnic groups is one of the best ways to reduce implicit bias. It's even more effective if you are working toward a common goal.

To some extent, this can even work if intergroup contact is imagined (Turner, R. N., & Crisp, R. J., 2010) for example, taking the time to challenge ourselves and really take the perspective of others has been shown to reduce implicit biases in a variety of contexts

The last point, unlike the others, does not create a context where bias is likely to occur, but it greatly decreases the likelihood that bias will be caught and corrected for.

Over-confidence in one's ability to make objective or inclusive decisions makes it very difficult correct for prejudice or bias. If we don't have a healthy skepticism for our own decision-making and we aren't aware of how we may unintentionally be biased, we can't take the proper steps to intervene.

Instead, sharing awareness of implicit bias and its effects can help us be more accountable, and help others get involved in these practices too.

Module 4, Lesson 3: Individual Interventions

Sometimes the enormity of the problems in the world can feel overwhelming. “What difference can one person really make?” we ask ourselves. However, mitigating the unwanted effects of implicit bias is the perfect opportunity to make the spaces and places we are in more inclusive, equitable, and just. Each one of us has the power to enact individual interventions that can align our good intentions with our desired outcomes. So how do we do this?

The first step is to become aware of your own biases. In the previous module, we talked about the Implicit Association Test (IAT) and how it can be used to measure implicit associations. Taking an IAT—or several—is the best way to identify the biases we may hold. Becoming consciously aware of our own biases is crucial because we can’t solve a problem without knowing what it is.

After we are more familiar with our own biases, we can practice mindfulness and perspective taking. Research shows that these are some of the most effective ways of increasing our cognitive control. Mindfulness can improve our personal ability to fully focus on the present, be aware of what is happening around us, and understand how others may be experiencing the world. Mindfulness can also help us to align our associations with our beliefs. Studies have shown that through meditation focused on specific marginalized populations, people are actually able to alter their implicit biases! By intentionally thinking about marginalized populations in a positive, loving manner, individuals can increase their empathy and decrease the strength of their implicit biases.

Intergroup contact is another effective strategy for mitigating implicit bias. We know from decades of research that having meaningful interactions with people who are different from us can actually reduce our implicit biases toward those people by helping our brains form new associations. Intergroup contact requires individuals to work together toward achieving a common goal. In other words, it is cooperative rather than competitive. In addition, there must be equal status within the group—no one is considered more or less important than anyone else. It’s much more difficult to continue to rely on stereotypes about a type of person if you have a meaningful relationship with someone who belongs to that group. Finally, exposure to counter-stereotypical examples can challenge implicit biases. When we see people who challenge commonly held stereotypes about their identity groups, we begin to realize that not everyone fits into those stereotypes. We begin to question the stereotypes that we have learned throughout our lives and understand that an entire group of people cannot be assumed to be the same.

Typically, we tend to see people like ourselves as individuals while seeing people who are different from us as a homogeneous group. Counter-stereotypical examples can change this thinking by helping our brains not rely on the cognitive shortcuts that stereotypes provide.

Module 4, Lesson 4: Institutional-Level Interventions

Many of the individual interventions we have talked about are also helpful for mitigating bias at an institutional level. Organizations can provide time for mindfulness exercises, or collecting data on their equity impact in order to address implicit bias on a large-scale. Many of these practices can affect organizations' policies and decision-making processes if employees at multiple levels take active steps to reduce bias.

Beyond creating bias-conscious practices and policies, organizations must ensure that how people engage with each other in the workplace is also helpful for preventing, rather than perpetuating bias. To share some examples of how to do this, we will hear from Kip Holley, Kirwan's Civic Engagement specialist.

Module 4: Closing

Congratulations! You have successfully completed the Kirwan Institute's online implicit bias training modules! We hope you have found this experience engaging, enriching, and even a bit challenging. So, you may be wondering, what now?! How do you begin to take this information and move into action? By disrupting undesirable implicit biases within ourselves, our institutions and our communities, we can make a meaningful and positive impact in our society. We will move one step closer to being the individuals we want to be, and a part of a society that values all.

If you are interested in learning more about implicit bias or you want to share this information with others, please explore the Supplemental Resources section of this training website for additional materials, ideas, and inspiration.