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# CULTURAL DIVERSITY WHAT IS IT AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

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## ABOUT HR ANSWERS, INC.



ANSWERS, Inc.

- Largest independently owned HR Consulting, Staffing and Training organization.
- 35 years old firm headquartered in the NW.
- We work with organizations of all sizes as well as Private Sector, Public Sector and NFP organizations.
- We offer SDAO/SDIS Members HR Support via the Advantage Plan. Unlimited email/phone support, sample language and templates and much more!!!

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● Job Descriptions ● Labor Relations ● Mediation ● Performance Management ● Policies ● Recruitment & Staffing ● Training & Development

## OUR TIME TODAY.....

- Won't be about age...
- Won't be about race...
- Won't be about religion...
- Won't be about gender...
- Or any other typical groups that we easily consider when the subject is non-discrimination, this is diversity, but cultural diversity is much more.

It will instead be about all of these and many other categories that we place people and things in. It will be about having respect and openness to **inclusion** and **diversity**.

## BASIC DEFINITIONS

- **Bias** – Preference that inhibits impartial judgment.
- **Prejudice** – Strong feelings or beliefs about a person or subject; pre-judging others without reviewing facts or information; often based on fear. Prejudice is CONSCIOUS.
- **Stereotype** – Assumption that everyone in a group is the same.

# BASIC DEFINITIONS

**Diversity** means more than just acknowledging and/or tolerating difference. Diversity is a set of conscious practices that involve:

- Understanding/appreciating interdependence of humanity, cultures, and the natural environment.
- Practicing mutual respect for qualities and experiences that are different from our own.
- Understanding that diversity includes not only ways of being but also ways of knowing;
- Recognizing that personal, cultural and institutionalized discrimination creates and sustains privileges for some while creating and sustaining disadvantages for others;
- Building alliances across differences so that we can work together to eradicate all forms of discrimination.



## BASIC DEFINITIONS

- **Inclusion** is the achievement of a work environment in which all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully, have equal access to opportunities and resources, and can contribute fully to the organization's success. It can also address the manner used by the District to address the needs and wants of the population served.

# WHAT IS UNCONSCIOUS BIAS?

- Implicit bias is “a positive or negative mental attitude towards a person, thing, or group that a person holds at an unconscious level”.
- The inclinations, attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions that form outside our own conscious awareness.
- Unconscious bias occurs when you make spontaneous judgments about people or situations based on your past experiences, culture, background, or exposure to media.

*These hidden preferences or prejudices can affect nearly every decision we make.*

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## UNCONSCIOUS BIAS IS A FACT OF LIFE

- **You are NOT alone.** Everyone has them and takes them into the workplace.
- If you can name it, there is probably an unconscious bias for it.
- There are more than 150 identified unconscious biases.
- **It's all in the brain.**
- We ALL suffer from prejudice. They are simply **mental shortcuts** based on social norms and stereotypes.
- Mental grouping is part of the **survival mechanism hard-wired** into our brains.
- What is **unconscious to some** is in fact quite **conscious to others.**



# BIAS AND OUR ACTIONS

**Perception** – how we see people and perceive reality.

**Attitude** – how we react towards certain people.

**Behaviors** – how receptive/friendly we are towards certain people.

**Attention** – which aspects of a person we pay most attention to.

**Listening Skills** – how much we actively listen to what certain people say.

**Micro-affirmations** – how much or how little we comfort certain people in certain situations.

## PROFESSIONALLY IMPLICIT BIAS IMPACTS:

- The judgments we form about individuals (co-workers, peers, supervisors, executives, vendors, District customers), situations, and circumstances that are based on stereotypes.
- Interpretation of an individual's behavior(s).
- How these judgments impact our ability to make decisions, effectively interact with others, etc.

# OUR BRAINS

Our brains want to be around other people

We have a high need to feel valued and cared about which gives us a sense of belonging.

Inclusion impacts our ability to perform - when we feel safe, we performed better - our brains love patterns it gives us certainty because we don't like ambiguity.

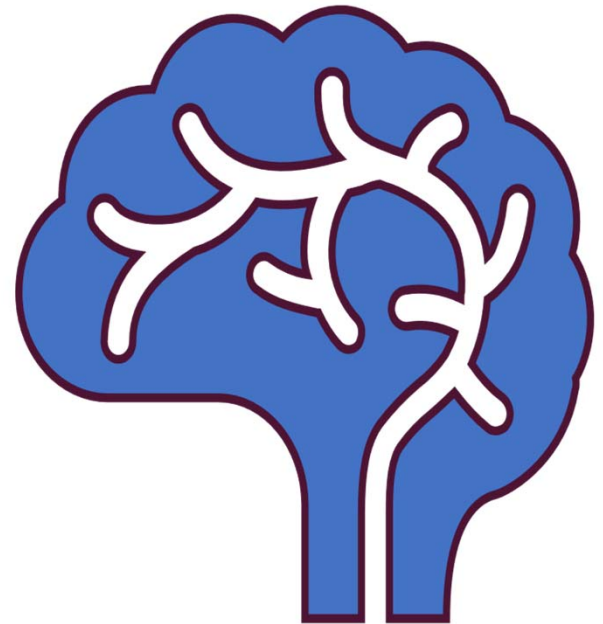
## OUR BRAINS (CONT.)

If we're honest, sometimes our brains are lazy

- we try and pass it off as efficiency because it allows us to conserve energy
- this is the mother of all biases - when something is new, it takes more energy than when something is familiar - it provides us with our comfort zone

## ONE STEP FURTHER


- Our modern brain requires energy - the modern brain needs to think, analyze, evaluate, imagine
- We also have the ancient brain which reacts – it has a pattern of recognition that goes to the next conclusion/step. This is where we are 70-80% of the time.



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What happens in our brain when we are excluded

- pain circuits light up just like if we experienced physical pain
- This is called social pain



When we are protecting ourselves from pain...it is like multi-tasking

- 20 to 30% less efficient when we multi-task ... being distracted is a pain

LET'S TALK  
EXCLUSION

# EVERYONE HAS A JOURNEY

- Recognize that everyone has a story, everyone has history, we don't always know, and people don't always share
  - and for a lot of us we don't ask, instead we assume
- **We need to ask ourselves why do I believe what I believe**
- Diversity is not our problem – closed mindedness is
  - closed mindedness is our challenge and what we need is external curiosity - this is being open minded

## JOURNEY (CONT.)



JOURNEY - THEY WALK



JOURNEY - I WALK



# PARADIGM SHIFT

- A paradigm is “a cognitive framework shared by members of any discipline or group”, according to [Dictionary.com](https://www.dictionary.com). Our paradigms include our views, options, beliefs, values and observations.
- As we navigate solutions to overcoming our biases, it’s important to remember that we will only make real progress when we make an effort to empathize with people who have different paradigms than us.
- Organizational leaders have a tremendous opportunity to build real trust with ALL people if they are intentional about conversations and messaging in the workplace. Here are some thoughts:

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## TO CREATE AND SUPPORT POSITIVE DIVERSITY

- Make sure employees understand exactly what, diversity, inclusion, ethics, unconscious bias is, when it happens, and the ways in which it can impact your District's objectives.
- Training should highlight clear and actionable steps that employees can take when they recognize behavior that should be challenged.
- Create a workplace where employees are encouraged to speak freely about a topic, and where they are open to discussion.

# WHAT DISTRICTS CAN DO



A critical key to transforming it involves having *uncomfortable* and *awkward* conversations.



We don't like uncomfortable and awkward conversations, *but they often accelerate us to a place of understanding.*



Provide training and education to managers and supervisors on handling difficult conversations...perhaps conversations that involved conflict

# STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS IMPLICIT BIAS

1

Become aware of your own individual perceptions, stereotypes, and their impact on decision making.

2

Engage in opportunities to learn about diverse cultures, beliefs, and suspend your negative judgments

3

Reach out to get to know your colleagues, residents, etc. and their backgrounds

4

Recognize that diversity is real, dynamic, and legitimate – there is more than one way to do things.

5

Engage in courageous conversations to increase your knowledge and address different perceptions, stereotypes, and attitudes.

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# STRIVING FOR EFFECTIVE MESSAGING

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1. Create a message that articulates your District's commitment to anti-racism and anti-discrimination.
  2. Let your people know that you insist respect for diversity and inclusion. **BE LOUD** about your commitment to those principles through your policies and practices.
  3. The more public you are about this (putting these up on the website), the more trust you will build with your employees, your residents, and your community.

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- **Most** of us **believe** that we are ethical and unbiased.

- We **imagine** we're good decision makers, able to **objectively** size up a job **candidate** or a new policy's implications and consequences, and reach a **fair** and rational **conclusion** that's in **our**, and our District's, **best interests**.
- But more than two decades of **research confirms** that in reality most of us fall woefully short of our **inflated self-perception**.

Mahzarin Banaji  
Harvard University Researcher

## MORE IDEAS FOR GETTING STARTED!

- Strike a **balance** between limiting **defensiveness** about unconscious bias while **communicating** the **importance** of knowing and managing bias.
- **Organize** content around specific workplace **situations!**
- Define goals. **Movement is not progress and progress is not excellence!**
- **Identify** the components in your system that are **functioning well** now!
- **Pair** raising awareness with **action-oriented strategies**.
- Have **conversations** about the issue, using the cultural proficiency continuum!
- Identify and **examine** your individual biases and District **barriers**.



**QUESTIONS**



# RESOURCES

- <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/economy/news/2012/07/12/11900/the-top-10-economic-facts-of-diversity-in-the-workplace/>
- <https://www.thebalance.com/cultural-diversity-3306201>
- <https://www.forbes.com/sites/ekaterinawalter/2014/01/14/reaping-the-benefits-of-diversity-for-modern-business-innovation/#2872577c2a8f>
- <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/diana-rodriguezab/10-ways-workplace-diversity-benefits-13520528.html>
- <http://blog.bonus.ly/5-competitive-benefits-of-diversity-in-the-workplace>
- <http://www.businessinsider.com/the-future-of-workplace-diversity-is-here-2013-9>
- <https://hbr.org/2016/07/why-diversity-programs-fail>
- <https://www.wonolo.com/blog/50-must-read-articles-on-diversity-in-the-workplace/>

## RESOURCES, (CONT.)

- Invisible Gorilla Video <http://theinvisiblegorilla.com/videos.html>
  - video examples of cognitive bias and perception tests.
- The Invisible Gorilla <http://theinvisiblegorilla.com/overview.html> Book by: Christopher Chabris and Daniel Simons
- Everyday Bias <http://everydaybias.com> Book by: Howard Ross
- Blindspot <http://spottheblindspot/the-book> Book by: Mahzarin Banaji and Anthony Greenwald

# THANK YOU!



## *Human Resources*

- Affirmative Action Plans
- Compensation
  - Salary Surveys
  - Pay Equity
- Employee Relations
- Policy & Procedure
- Human Resource Practices Audit
- Compliance
- Employment
- Labor Relations
- Investigations
- Job Descriptions
- Recruitment/Staffing
- HR Resource Library
- Career Management & Outplacement Services



## *Training*

- Employee and Managerial Training
- Needs Assessment
- Confidential Employee Surveys
- Customized Training
- One-on-One Coaching
- Facilitation of:
  - Meetings/Retreats
  - Strategic Planning Sessions
- Train-the-Trainer Materials
- Training Room Access
- Monthly Workshops/Programs for HR and employees

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**THANKS FOR SPENDING SOME TIME WITH  
ME...MY HOPE IS THAT YOU WILL TAKE AWAY A  
COUPLE OF IDEAS OR THINGS TO THINK ABOUT**

