



**LMU**

**D & I QUICK TIPS**

USEFUL REFERENCES IN THE  
PROMOTION OF DIVERSITY & INCLUSION  
**IMPLICIT BIAS**

**You make  
biased  
judgments  
every day.**

We all do.

# Implicit Bias

As is the case with attitudes generally, implicit bias is malleable and new attitudes can be learned that replace or override previously learned associations.

## DEFINITION

**Implicit biases are attitudes**, both favorable and unfavorable, that are activated without awareness or intentional control and that are different from and sometimes in contrast to explicit, self-reported beliefs. Social science evidence has shown that unconscious, automatically activated, and pervasive cognitive associations related to race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, and other identities can impact decision-making and judgments without our awareness.

**Implicit biases result from normal human cognitive processes** and are therefore applicable to everyone. They develop across the life course as a result of socialization and exposure to certain messages within a culture.

## IMPORTANCE

**Implicit bias can affect behaviors** and can result in [discrimination](#), or the differential treatment of individuals based on their group membership. Implicit bias can also be internalized by those being targeted and can affect their performance as well as psychological and physical health.

As is the case with attitudes generally, [implicit bias is malleable](#) and new attitudes can be learned that replace or override previously learned associations.

**LMU's Definition of Implicit Bias:**  
Visit [resources.lmu.edu/implicitbias](https://resources.lmu.edu/implicitbias)

## Individual Strategies to Mitigate Implicit Bias

### DELIBERATION

**Deliberative thinking and mindful meditation**—Implicit bias occurs because of automatic thinking. [Conscious](#), deliberative thinking minimizes and potentially disrupts the link between implicit biases and overt actions.

- Take time to process information and consider how implicit bias(es) may be influencing decisions.
- Learn meditation techniques. Engage in mindfulness meditation as a way to slow down in general.

### PERSPECTIVE

**Perspective Taking**—Imagine or take another person or group's vantage point.

- Perspective taking increases [empathy](#). Dialogue and communication with members from other groups creates an inclusive culture. Engage in respectful dialogue and [actively listen](#) to different others' points of view.
- Ask yourself: "How would I feel if someone asked me that question?"

### INTERACTION

**Intergroup Contact**—Positive interaction with other groups' members decreases the likelihood that biases will be applied. Engage in activities that include individuals from diverse backgrounds.

- Interact with members of groups with which one does not usually come into regular contact.
- Attend functions that celebrate various social identities and ethnic groups, such as festivals, concerts that feature the art/music of other cultures, and educational events about other communities.

Banaji, M. R., & Greenwald, A. G. (2013). *Blind spot: Hidden biases of good people*. New York, NY: Bantam Books.

## Implicit Bias: Terms to Know

### **Bias Incident**

A discriminatory or hurtful act that appears to be motivated or is perceived by the victim to be motivated all or in part by race, ethnicity, color, religion, age, national origin, sex, disability, gender identity or sexual orientation. To be considered an incident, the act is not required to be a crime under any federal, state or local statutes.

### **Implicit Association**

A person's unconscious association between mental representations of objects or concepts in memory.

### **In-group Bias**

The tendency for groups to “favor” themselves by rewarding group members economically, socially, psychologically and emotionally in order to uplift one group over another.

Center for Diversity and Inclusion. Glossary of Bias Terms. Washington University in St. Louis. (2019, April 30).

Retrieved from <https://students.wustl.edu/glossary-bias-terms/>



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