

What You Don't Know: The Science of Unconscious Bias and What To Do About It in the Search and Recruitment Process

A Research Presentation for Search Committees in Academic Medicine

There is overwhelming scientific evidence that unconscious bias may influence the evaluation and selection of candidates in all types of organizations, including medical schools and teaching hospitals. The AAMC presentation, created for academic medicine audiences, is designed to acquaint search committees and others with this research as one step toward mitigating the effects of unconscious bias.

This facilitator's guide is designed for individuals who may wish to lead a group in discussion about the AAMC's seminar on unconscious bias. Find the seminar at: <https://www.aamc.org/what-we-do/mission-areas/diversity-inclusion/unconscious-bias-training>

Suggestions for Group Discussion

1. As facilitator, it will be helpful if you take the Implicit Association Test (information below) and view the presentation prior to the group so that you are familiar with the structure and content of both resources.
2. A week or so before your group views the presentation, invite them to take the Implicit Association Test (IAT). The IAT can be accessed at: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>. Some of the specific tests that your audience might find of interest are:
 - *Gender-Science*: This IAT often reveals a relative link between liberal arts and females and between science and males.
 - *Race*: This IAT requires the ability to distinguish faces of European and African origin. It indicates that most Americans have an automatic preference for white over black.
 - *Gender-Career*: This IAT often reveals a relative link between family and females and between career and males.
 - *Sexuality* (Gay - Straight IAT). This IAT requires the ability to distinguish words and symbols representing gay and straight people. It often reveals an automatic preference for straight relative to gay people.
 - *Disability* (Disabled - Abled IAT). This IAT requires the ability to recognize symbols representing abled and disabled individuals.

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3. Structure of the Presentation and Opportunities for Discussion

- The presentation takes about 20 minutes to view in its entirety. It is divided in two major parts: (1) an overview of what is unknown about the effects of unconscious bias in evaluation, hiring, and perceptions of leadership (14 minutes); and (2) evidence-based suggestions about how to mitigate the effects of unconscious bias at the individual- and organization-level (6 minutes).
- Allocate at least one hour for your group to view the presentation and engage in discussion
- The first 14 minutes review a number of research studies that provide evidence of unconscious bias and its effects in evaluation, hiring, and perceptions of leadership. You may wish to pause the presentation (14:20 mark) and ask the group about their perceptions, for example:
 - What is the top-line message you take away from this series of studies?
 - Which of these studies is most interesting to you?
 - To further our knowledge and understanding, would the group find it useful to have a “journal club” to delve further into any of these studies?
- The next 6 minutes provide suggestions for how to deepen the candidate pool and how to mitigate the effects of unconscious bias individually and organizationally. You may wish to ask the group:
 - Which of these tactics does our search committee or our organization do now?
 - Which of these strategies should we pursue?
 - What should we do as a search committee to deepen our candidate pool?
 - Which of these strategies must our senior leadership pursue, and how can we make them aware of the need to do so?