

## UNCONSCIOUS BIAS WORKSHEET

### Blurb and Goal of this Exercise:

Unconscious (or implicit) bias affects everyone. It describes the associations we hold, and judgments we make, outside our conscious awareness and control. The point of this exercise is to develop a deeper understanding of what constitutes bias and to try to pin down some of the biases we have as an individual or as a group, bringing them from the unconscious to the conscious mind.

Some additional goals are:

- To reflect on our tendencies and biases
- To identify patterns in our ways of judging, evaluating, sizing up others
- To start a conversation around organizational culture, some mistaken for values and norms and how there might be unconscious biases blended into them
- To think about ways in which we can eliminate these biases in order to become more open-minded and benefit from diversity.

### Instructions:

1. Read this [HBR Article](#)
2. Visit the different types of biases ([below](#)) and their definitions
3. Ask yourself the following questions. If in a group, depending on how you are running this exercise, you may want to discuss or have each individual jot down notes.
  - a. What type of questions do you typically ask when meeting a new person and what biases could they reflect?
  - b. Have you ever made a judgment of someone and, later, found out you were wrong?
  - c. Can you reflect on a time when you observed someone be left out / not included because they were perceived to be different? What did you do?

- d. Have you ever been in a new environment and felt pressured to change to be included? How did that feel?
  - e. How do you decide on your team capabilities and what are you basing these decisions off of?
  - f. How do you / does your manager distribute / assign work?
  - g. Have you ever compared your previous manager to your current manager and how does that affect your perception of them?
  - h. (For managers) Do you compare your reports? How does this reflect on your leadership?
  - i. How do you think your biases may affect your career?
  - j. What are ways we can combat these biases?
4. Make some commitments (to yourself or as a team). You can use some of the examples in the HBR article as inspiration, here below are some too:
- a. You can elect a DEI guru in the team
  - b. You can have UB / DEI sessions where everyone speaks up about an UB they caught (in themselves) and changed
  - c. Find a mentor and solicit feedback
  - d. Commit to hiring a more diverse team going forward
  - e. Etc.

## TYPES OF UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

### 1. AFFINITY BIAS

The tendency to gravitate toward people like ourselves in appearance, beliefs, and background. And we may avoid or even dislike people who are different from us.

#### **Examples:**

- Gravitating towards socializing, sitting with, and bonding with the group you were onboarded with
- When you are in a new place (i.e. a party) and you interact with people who are of a similar age, appearance, perceived gender, from the same country, etc.

## 2. CONFIRMATION BIAS

The tendency to process information by looking for, or interpreting, information that is consistent with your already existing beliefs.

- Largely unintentional and often results in ignoring inconsistent information
- Existing beliefs can include one's expectations in a given situation and predictions about a particular outcome
- People are especially likely to process information to support their own beliefs when the issue is highly important or self-relevant.

### Examples:

- When you go to an event expecting things to go wrong, and then you only notice those things.
- When you read your daily horoscope in the morning, and you notice how it comes true throughout the day.
- When you have a bad encounter with a driver on the road, and you start noticing this behavior in cars of the same make.
- When you 'torture' the data so it confesses! When you look at the data to find areas that would support your thesis or what you had already decided to do in the first place.

## 3. CONFORMITY BIAS

The tendency people have to behave like those around them rather than use their own personal judgment.

### Examples:

- Nodding in a meeting because you see everyone else agrees on a point, when you actually disagree / are indifferent / do not understand what is being discussed.
- Going along with what your manager is promoting as opposed to supporting your own arguments
- When you are new to a job and pick up the behaviors of those around you to fit in

- When you ever follow a fashion trend just because your friends were doing it

#### 4. ATTRIBUTION BIAS

Attributional bias occurs when individuals make assumptions that lead to inaccurate conclusions about others' behavior and motivations.

##### **Examples:**

- When you assume negative intent when someone cuts you off while you are driving
- When you think your manager or coworker doesn't like you because of their short ping or chat responses
- Thinking that someone must have a character flaw if they are late to a meeting or other engagement

#### 5. HALO & HORNS EFFECT

Halo: The tendency to place another person on a pedestal after learning something impressive about them.

Horns: The tendency to view another person negatively after learning something unpleasant or negative about them.

##### **Examples:**

- Halo: You see a fit/healthy person on social media and assume they are overall a good person
- Horn: You assume your friend is always trying to one up you because they dress up for every occasion
- Horn: You assume someone doesn't care about their job because you saw them dress casually for work.

#### 6. CONTRAST EFFECT

The contrast effect is when you compare two or more things that you have come into contact with — either simultaneously or one after another — causing you to exaggerate the performance of one in contrast to the other.

**Examples:**

- Your manager compares your performance to another coworker to evaluate your growth
- When your entire class has a presentation due that day and you use the 1st person's presentation to compare everyone else's