

# Reducing the Effects of Implicit Bias

Nicole Cammack, Ph.D. and Danielle Busby, Ph.D.  
Black Mental Wellness, Inc.

**May 20, 2021**



Central East (HHS Region 3)

**MHTTC**

Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network

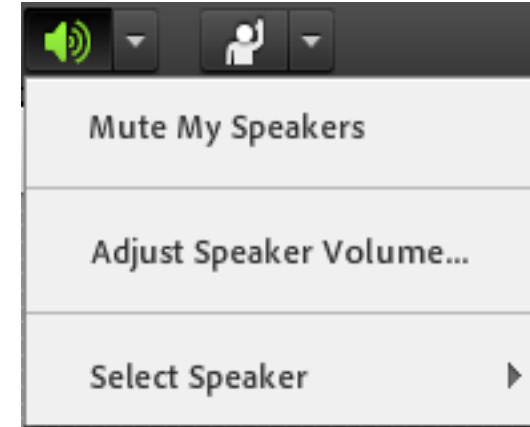
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# Questions and Resources



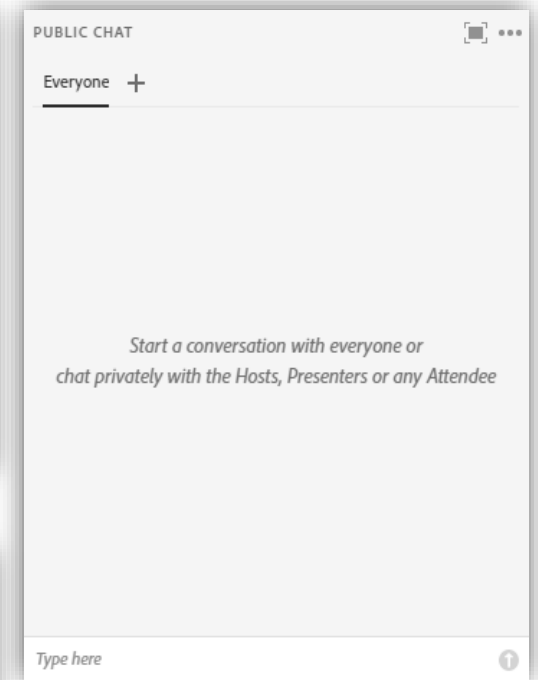
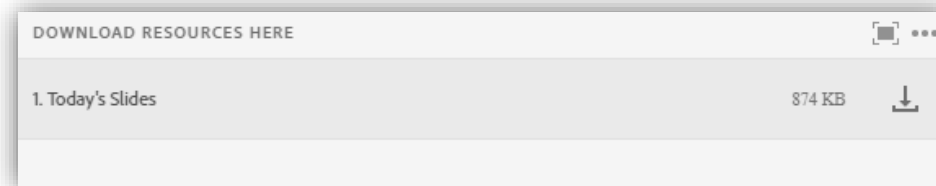
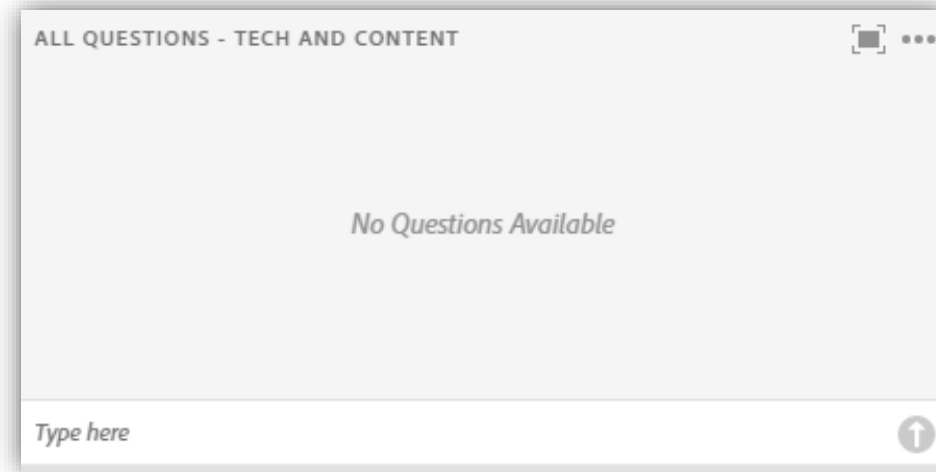
CONTENT QUESTIONS AND  
TECH SUPPORT REQUESTS  
GO INTO THE ALL QUESTIONS  
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SHARE RESOURCES AND  
NETWORK WITH  
COLLEAGUES IN THE PUBLIC  
CHAT.



ENLARGE THE SCREEN WITH  
FOUR OUTWARD FACING  
ARROWS.



# MHTTC Network

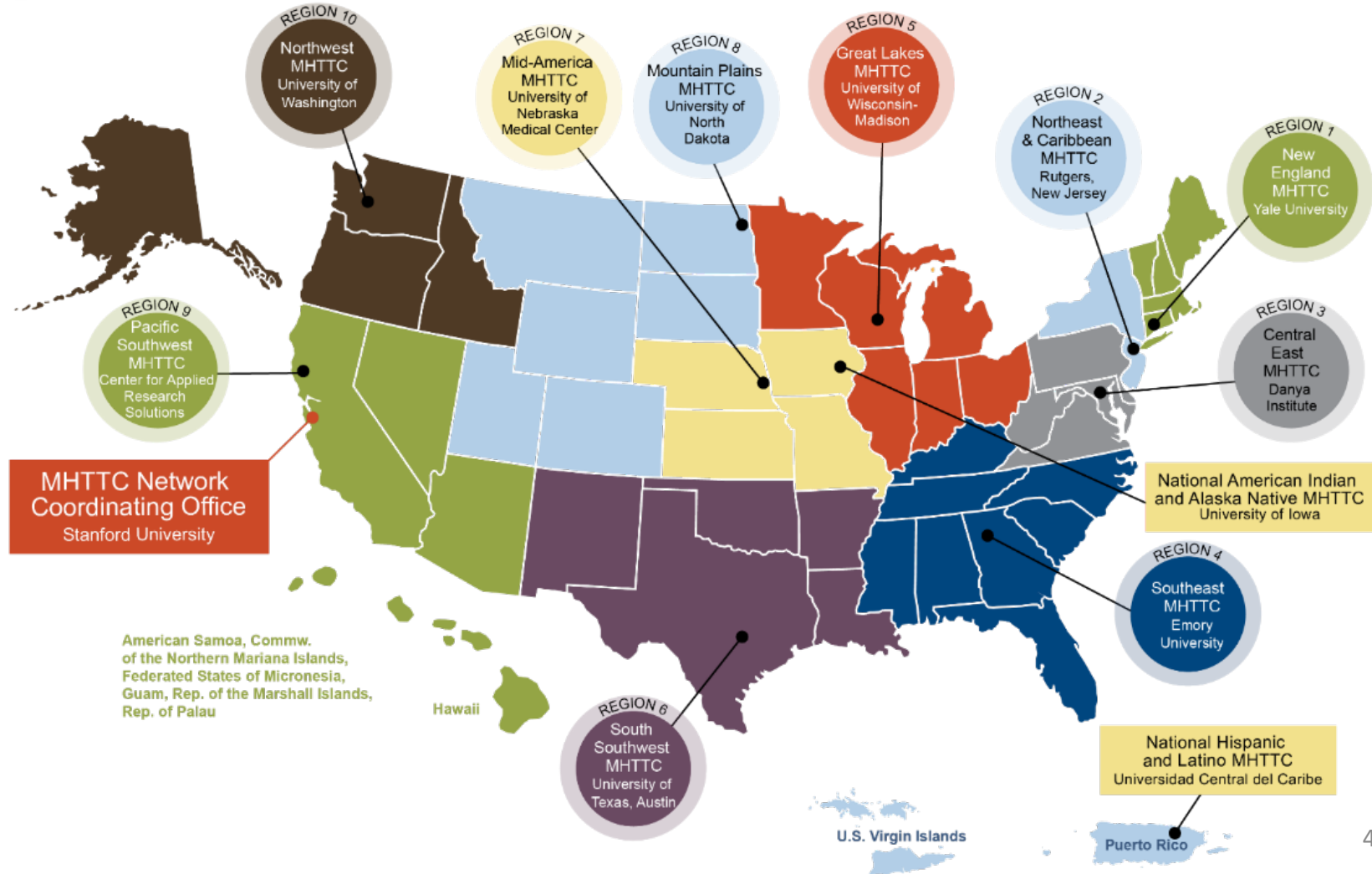


MHTTC

Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network

Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

MHTTC Network



# MHTTC Purpose

The MHTTC Network vision is to unify science, education and service to transform lives through evidence-based and promising treatment and recovery practices in a recovery-oriented system of care.

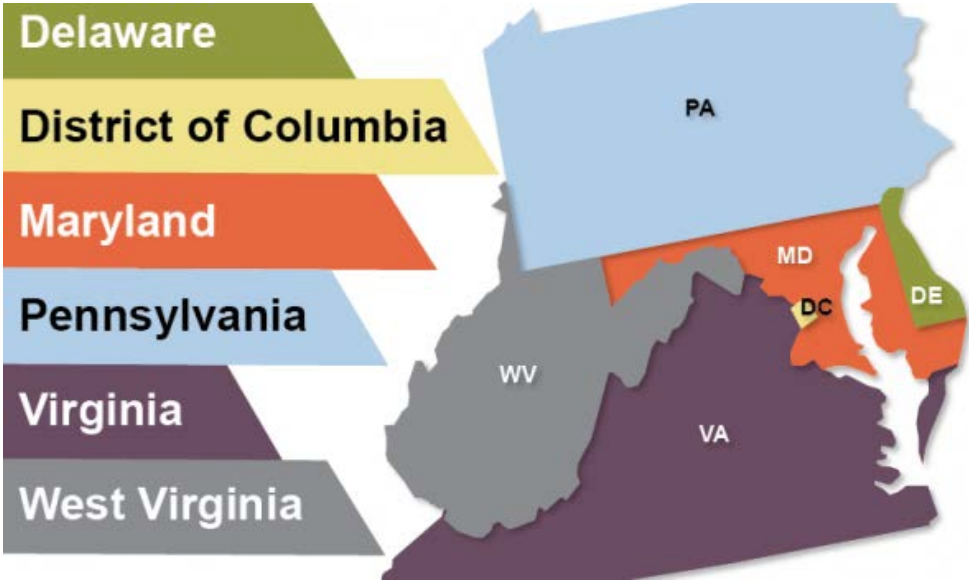


# Central East MHTTC Goals

## Funded by SAMHSA to:

- **Accelerate** the adoption and implementation of mental health related evidence-based practices
- **Heighten** the awareness, knowledge, and skills of the behavioral health workforce
- **Foster** alliances among culturally diverse practitioners, researchers, policy makers, family members, and consumers
- **Ensure** the availability and delivery of publicly available, free of charge, training and technical assistance

# Central East Region 3



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At the time of this presentation, Tom Coderre served as Acting Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use at SAMHSA. The opinions expressed herein are the views of the speakers, and do not reflect the official position of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), or SAMHSA. No official support or endorsement of DHHS, SAMHSA, for the opinions described in this presentation is intended or should be inferred.



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Working together  
to  
build a just,  
humane, and  
health society.

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The Mental Health Association of Maryland is committed to ensuring every Marylander's fundamental right to quality behavioral health care by advancing public policy, monitoring service quality, providing training and education, leading systems change, and advancing new evidence-based treatments.

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# Education and Advocacy

## **Education:**

- Children's Mental Health Matters
- General Adult
- Older Adult – Vibrant Minds
- Healthy New Moms

## **Coalitions:**

- Behavioral Health Coalition
- The Maryland Coalition on Mental Health & Aging
- Children's Behavioral Health Coalition
- Maryland Behavioral Health Criminal Justice Partnership



# Oversight, Training, and Other Initiatives

## **Training:**

- Mental Health First Aid, Maryland
- Engage With™
- PEERS: Seniors in Partnership

## **Oversight:**

- Consumer Quality Team

## **Other Initiatives:**

- The Path Forward for Mental Health and Substance Use



# Connect to MHAMMD

## [www.mhamd.org](http://www.mhamd.org)

- Subscribe for news updates
- Become a citizen advocate
- Order resources & information
- Learn more about programs
- Schedule a training
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# Reducing the Effects of Implicit Bias

Nicole Cammack, Ph.D.  
Danielle Busby, Ph.D.

# Black Mental Wellness, Corp.

## The Mission of Black Mental Wellness

- To provide information and resources about mental health and behavioral health topics from a Black perspective
- To highlight and increase the diversity of mental health professionals
- To decrease the mental health stigma in the Black community



# Black Mental Wellness, Corp.

- **Dr. Nicole L. Cammack:**  
President & CEO
- **Dr. Danielle R. Busby:**  
Professional Relations & Liaison
- **Dr. Dana L. Cunningham:**  
Community Outreach & Engagement
- **Dr. Jessica S. Henry:**  
Program Development & Evaluation





# Overview

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**Goals:** Overview of racial stressors and trauma

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Identify the impact of racial stressors on mental health

---

Understanding implicit bias

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Strategies to reduce implicit bias

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# Racial Discrimination Among Youth

- Children as early as preschool age are able to identify their race, but perceptions associated with race often sharpen beginning in early adolescence
- Several studies indicate that more than two-thirds of African American and Latinx youth report exposure to racial discrimination as young as age 8
- One factor that may explain higher rates of trauma exposure for youth is racial stress and trauma (Williams et al., 2018)

# Racial Discrimination in the Workplace

- On average, 58 % of Black professionals indicated they feel racism on their jobs
  - Midwest having the highest percentage at 79% and the Northeast the lowest at 44%
- 65% of Black professionals say it's harder for Black employees to advance, only 16% of White professionals agree with that statement
- Black men are paid 13% less than White men; Black women are paid 39% less than White men and 21% less than White women
- 3.2% of executives and senior manager–level employees are Black

# Racial Discrimination

*An act conducted by an individual or institution that denies equitable treatment to an individual or group because of phenotypic or racial group affiliation*



# Racial Trauma

*Dangerous or frightening race-based events, stressors, or discrimination that “overwhelm one’s coping capacity and impacts quality of life and/or cause fear, helplessness, & horror...”*

(Carter, 2007)

Photo: Courtesy Burlington School District



# Types of Racial Stressors

- Microaggressions
- Unconscious bias
- Cultural insensitivity
- Humiliating and shaming comments
- Racial harassment
- Discrimination and/or witnessing discrimination of another person
- Institutional, systemic, & structural racism
- Overt/covert racism
- Direct and indirect experiences



# Microaggressions

- A Black person being mistaken for someone in the service industry
- Denial of race or acts of blatant racism
- Following a BIPOC person around the store while shopping
- Clutching your bag when a BIPOC person is around or approaching
- Compliment “You speak so well.” or “You’re so articulate.”
- “Can I touch your hair?”
- “You look intimidating.” or “You look angry.”
- “When I look at you, I don’t see race.”
- “Where are you from?”
  
- Black individuals may persistently experience microaggressions, which can lead to feelings of marginalization and emotional exhaustion

# Implicit Bias

- Subtle
- Subconscious stereotypes
- Impact our expectations and interactions with people
- Judgments based on race, ability, gender, culture, language, etc.
- Impact how you perceive and respond to others





# Implicit Bias

## Defined as:

- The unconscious prejudice individuals might feel about another thing, group, or person
- Attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner
- Encompass both favorable and unfavorable assessments
- Activated involuntarily and without an individual's awareness or intentional control

## May be influenced by

- Childhood Experiences
- Family and friends
- Social experiences
- Life experiences
- Media
- Education

# Explicit bias

Expressed directly

Aware of bias

Operates consciously

Example -- "I like whites more than Latinos."

# Implicit bias

Expressed indirectly

Unaware of bias

Operates sub-consciously

Example -- sitting further away from a Latino than a white individual.

Source: Unconscious (Implicit) Bias and Health Disparities: Where Do We Go from Here?

# The Impact Of Racism On Mental Health:

Feeling disconnected / lonely

Increase risk of  
depression and anxiety

Second-guessing things

Decreased hope  
(in the future, justice,  
the government etc.)

Trauma  
(both from the present and  
triggering past instances /  
generational trauma)

Increased  
"Survival Mode"

Existential  
questioning  
"How can the world  
be so cruel?"

Decreased trust



Worry

Feelings of powerlessness  
(You can do the right thing and still  
end up with a horrific outcome)

Panic

**#BlackLivesMatter**

@RealDepressionProject



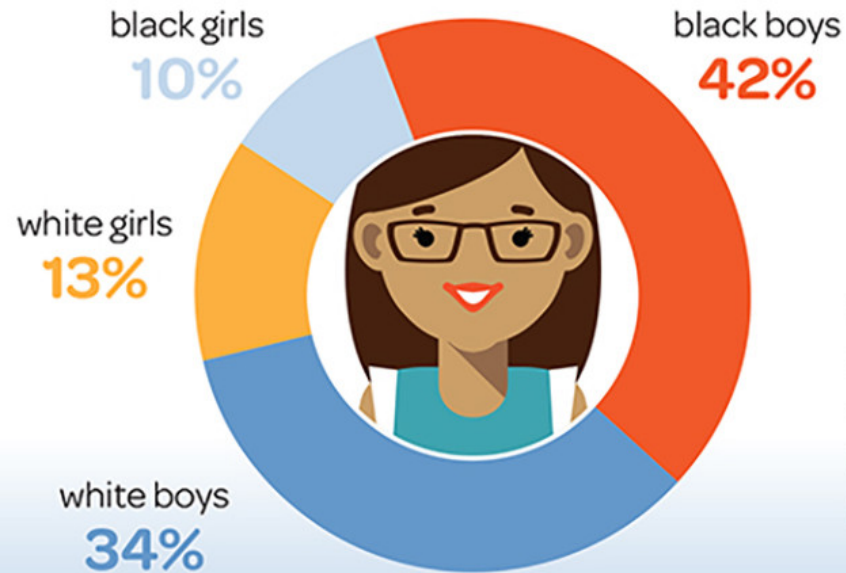
# Reflection Activity:

What are common examples of implicit bias?  
What contexts do examples of implicit bias show up most frequently?

# Implicit Bias: Schools and Education

We are interested in learning about how teachers detect challenging behavior in the classroom. Sometimes this involves seeing behavior before it becomes problematic. The video segments you are about to view are of preschoolers engaging in various activities. Some clips may or may not contain challenging behaviors. Your job is to press the enter key on the external keypad every time you see a behavior that could become a potential challenge.

## Track the eyes: Which students are teachers watching?



Preschool teachers tend to more closely observe blacks than whites, especially black boys, when challenging behaviors are expected.

# Implicit Bias: Schools and Education

- Biases can worsen achievement gap in education
- Racial disparities in school discipline
  - California's Black students, specifically Black boys, are more likely than their peers to be suspended or expelled, especially during kindergarten through third grade, a recent study by San Diego State University professors found.
  - Black students are suspended more often than any other student racial group in California.
  - Suspensions for more subjective reasons compare to white students
- School to prison pipeline
  - Increases probability of school drop out rates
  - Increases probability of incarceration

Taketa, K. (2021, February 20). In California disparity in suspending Black boys is widest in early grades, report says. *Bakersfield Californian*

# Implicit Bias: Mental Health

- Psychotherapists were less likely to offer appointments to African-American and working-class potential clients than to white, middle-class ones.
- Therapists in the study offered appointments to
  - 28% of White middle-class callers
  - 17% of Black middle-class callers
  - 8% of both Black and White callers

## **“Sorry, I’m Not Accepting New Patients”: An Audit Study of Access to Mental Health Care**

**Heather Kugelmass<sup>1</sup>**

### **Abstract**

Through a phone-based field experiment, I investigated the effect of mental help seekers’ race, and gender on the accessibility of psychotherapists. Three hundred and twenty psychotherapists received voicemail messages from one black middle-class and one white middle-class help seeker from one black working-class and one white working-class help seeker, requesting an appointment. Results revealed an otherwise invisible form of discrimination. Middle-class help seekers had appointment offer rates almost three times higher than their working-class counterparts. Race differences emerged only among middle-class help-seekers, with blacks considerably less likely than whites to be offered an appointment. Average appointment offer rates were equivalent across gender, but women were favored over men for appointment offers in their preferred time range.

Journal of Health and Social Behavior  
2016, Vol. 57(2) 168–183  
© American Sociological Association  
DOI: 10.1177/0022146516647098  
jhsb.sagepub.com



# Implicit Bias: Mental Health

- Incomplete assessment and/or misdiagnosis
- Ineffective treatment
- Overlook diagnostic criteria and symptoms and/or client report of symptoms
- Decrease access to care
- Biases can worsen health outcomes
- Biases can increase feelings of mistrust among individuals seeking care
- Prevent individuals from seeking help in the future



# What Is Implicit Bias, How Does It Affect Healthcare?

Healthcare leaders working toward health equity will need to recognize their own implicit biases to truly enhance patient care.



Source: Getty Images

## “Sorry, I’m Not Accepting New Patients”: An Audit Study of Access to Mental Health Care

Heather Kugelmass<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

Through a phone-based field experiment, I investigated the effect of mental help seekers’ race, class, and gender on the accessibility of psychotherapists. Three hundred and twenty psychotherapists each received voicemail messages from one black middle-class and one white middle-class help seeker, or from one black working-class and one white working-class help seeker, requesting an appointment. The results revealed an otherwise invisible form of discrimination. Middle-class help seekers had appointment offer rates almost three times higher than their working-class counterparts. Race differences emerged only among middle-class help-seekers, with blacks considerably less likely than whites to be offered an appointment. Average appointment offer rates were equivalent across gender, but women were favored over men for appointment offers in their preferred time range.

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CONTENTS: HEALTH DISPARITIES: ORIGINAL RESEARCH

## Racial and Ethnic Inequities in Postpartum Pain Evaluation and Management

Johnson, Jasmine D. MD; Asiodu, Ifeyinwa V. PhD, RN; McKenzie, Christine P. MD; Tucker, Christine PhD, MPH; Tully, Kristin P. PhD; Bryant, Katherine MA, MSPH; Verbiest, Sarah DrPH, MSW; Stuebe, Alison M. MD, Msc [Author Information](#) ☺

Obstetrics & Gynecology: December 2019 - Volume 134 - Issue 6 - p 1155-1162  
doi: 10.1097/AOG.0000000000003505

# What Does the Data Say?


- A literature review was conducted to understand the pervasiveness of and impacts of implicit bias. Through the review, the team was able to indicate at least **moderate** implicit bias in most medical providers.
- The Implicit Association Test, which measures implicit bias, detected about equal bias across Black, Latinx, and dark-skinned patients.
- The researchers did specifically acknowledge that most clinicians are committed to providing excellent medical care to all of their patients, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, or ability to pay.

# Implicit Bias: Healthcare

- White women had more pain assessments than women of any other race and ethnic group.
- Black and Hispanic women were evaluated for pain less frequently, had higher pain scores, and received less pain medication than white women.
- These differences persisted with adjustment for measured clinical factors, suggesting that differential delivery of care contributes to the observed racial inequities in pain management.

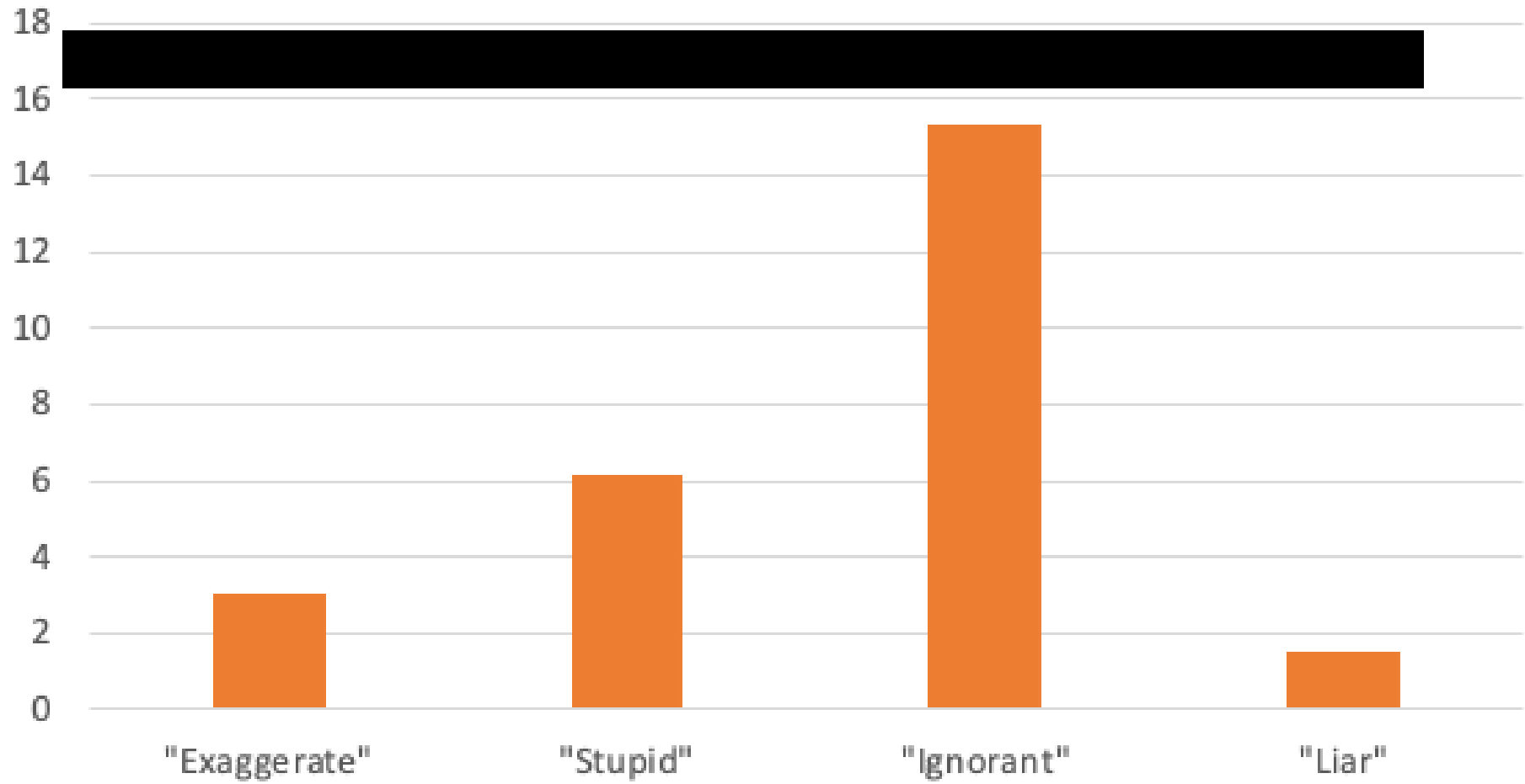
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# Implicit Bias: Healthcare

- Strained patient-provider relationships and poorer clinical outcomes
- Additionally, implicit bias can influence how well a patient understands their own health or is invited to engage in their care.
  - For example, some providers may limit the depth of shared decision-making or explanations of medical concepts because their implicit bias tells them a patient does not have the health literacy to fully engage with her care.
- Implicit bias can also shape the tone with which a provider speaks to a patient, the content of their communication, and the types of tests or referrals clinicians order.



Reflection: What Can You Do?

# Reflection

## **Self-Reflection**

- How is my perspective different from my colleagues? Students and families?
- Am I making any assumptions?
- Where do I have room to grow in my cultural understanding of others?
- How can I develop a better understanding of those who have different identities than me?

## **Building Relationships**

- Use of inclusive language in written and verbal discussions
- Proper pronunciation of names
- Ask pronouns
- Be open when corrected about cultural terms, customs or expectations

# The Bias In Me

- Before you can help others, you must first acknowledge, understand, and address your own personal biases
- This can help you to effectively show up for others and assist them in navigating their emotions, particularly in schools, mental health treatment, and healthcare settings
- Biases are more likely to show up :
  - When you have vague or incomplete information about a topic or person
  - When acting under time constraints
  - When you're tired, burned out, or have a lot on your plate

Staats, C. *Understanding Implicit Bias: What Educators Should Know*. American Educator, 2015, 39(4), pp. 29-33.[9]



# ACTIVITY

## IDENTITIES

- Race
- Sexual Orientation
- Gender Identity
- Class
- Biological Sex
- National Origin
- Immigration Status

### *Statements*

1) The part of my identity that I am most aware of on a daily basis is \_\_\_\_\_

2) The part of my identity that I am the least aware of on a daily basis is \_\_\_\_\_

3) The part of my identity that I wish I knew more about is \_\_\_\_\_

4) The part of my identity that provides me the most privilege is \_\_\_\_\_

5) The part of my identity that I believe is the most misunderstood by others is \_\_\_\_\_

6) The part of my identity that I feel is difficult to discuss with others who identify differently is \_\_\_\_\_

7) The part of my identity that makes me feel discriminated against is \_\_\_\_\_

# Reflection Questions

- How did it feel to do this activity?
- What did you find surprising?
- What do you want to explore further?

# Project Implicit

Project Implicit offers free online tests to help individuals better understand their implicit biases related to a range of factors including:

- Race or ethnicity
  - Disability
  - Age
  - Gender or sexual orientation
  - Religion
  - Skin tone
- 
- [Test](#)
  - [More information](#)

# Addressing Microaggressions

Diane Goodman, Ed.D., a social justice and diversity consultant:

- **Ask for more clarification:** “Could you say more about what you mean by that?”  
“How have you come to think that?”
- **Separate intent from impact:** “I know you didn’t realize this, but when you \_\_\_\_\_ (comment/behavior), it was hurtful/offensive because \_\_\_\_\_.  
Instead you could \_\_\_\_\_ (different language or behavior.)”
- **Share your own process:** “I noticed that you \_\_\_\_\_ (comment/behavior). I used to do/say that too, but then I learned\_\_\_\_\_.”

\*\*If it’s not safe or you’re uncomfortable confronting these behaviors, it may be helpful to report them to the appropriate leadership



# Reducing Implicit Bias in Various Settings

# 6 Things School Staff Can Do to Interrupt Unconscious Bias

*“Bias is a universal human condition that must be recognized and managed, not a personal defect. We all carry biases from swimming in the waters of a racialized, inequitable society.”*

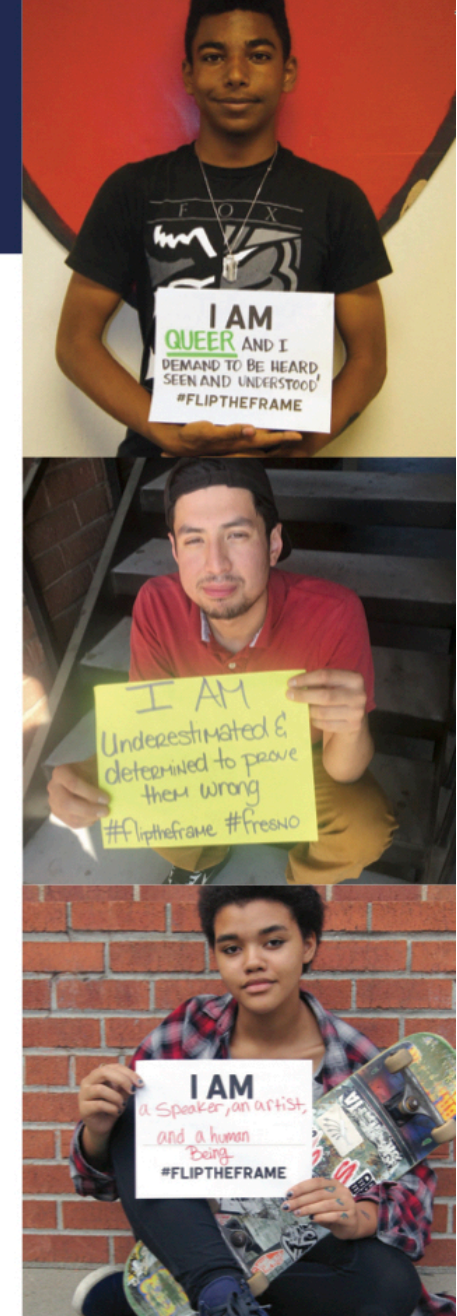
- Shane Safir, educator and author of *The Listening Leader*

*“Biases are the stories we make up about people before we know who they actually are.”*

- Vernā Myers, inclusion strategist and author of *Moving Diversity Forward*

- 1 Notice:** In order to interrupt our racial and other biases we must first become aware of them. If you find yourself struggling with a particular student, parent, or colleague, take a 10-second pause to ask yourself: “What are my biases toward this person? How can I disrupt my autopilot thoughts so that I can genuinely see and listen to them?”<sup>1</sup>
- 2 Listen:** Slow down your interactions and deeply listen, not to solve, correct, or fix, but to take in someone’s story. Notice what’s said and unsaid—tone, body language, and emotions. “Listening helps us take in a person’s multiple stories and disrupts biased thinking.”<sup>2</sup>
- 3 Reflect:** Read, discuss, journal—ask yourself: “Where do I see implicit biases playing out in our school? What fear or apprehension do I have about addressing this issue?”<sup>3</sup>
- 4 Connect:** Build in time for dialogue in classroom and staff spaces through circles, small groups, or one on ones that create openings for students and staff to talk about race and identity. “How am I getting to know students as complex individuals? How are we building trust?”<sup>4</sup>
- 5 Affirm:** Intentionally embrace and affirm students’ identities around race, class, gender, sexual orientation, immigration status, etc. to counter stereotypes and bias. Ensure students see themselves reflected in the diversity of staff, culturally relevant curriculum, and visual landscape of the school and classroom.
- 6 Act:** 1) Practice slowing down, noticing your biases, and looking for options to interrupt your patterns. 2) Call on colleagues to listen, reflect, and learn about their own biases. 3) Choose an equity challenge in your classroom or school and work with students of color and those most impacted as co-creators, trainers, or evaluators.

<sup>1-4</sup> Safir, Shane. (2016, March 14). 5 Keys to Challenging Implicit Bias. Retrieved March 28, 2019, from <https://www.edutopia.org>



# Reducing Implicit Bias: Schools and Education

- Assess school and community policy and procedures for potential biases
- Consult with other appropriate professionals regarding best strategies for culturally inclusive teaching and school structure
- Model for youth and families the importance of diversity and inclusivity through staff and teacher diversity

## **Diversify Learning Material and Environment**

- Teach curriculums and promote trainings that promotes tolerance of people from all backgrounds and ability levels
- Embrace teaching about culture from a strengths-based approach
- For example, instead of teaching on the enslavement of Africans explore pre-colonial history, Black historical figures beyond slavery, etc.

## **Variety in featured content**

- Incorporate authors of color into course content or professional trainings to not only showcase scholars that reflect diverse individuals, but to expand your own scope as well.

# Reducing Implicit Bias: Mental Health

- Engage in ongoing trainings to improve knowledge and comfort with working with diverse and multicultural clients
- Training programs must diversify learning and multicultural competency
- Hire diverse faculty and staff with expertise to lead training and courses
- Provide an open and trusting space for healing
- Be mindful not to judge an individual's past experiences
- Ask questions and invite individuals to share their experiences in treatment
- Conceptualize client's presenting concerns/treatment needs in the context of intersecting identities
- Request suggested books, movies, and/or articles



# Reducing Implicit Bias: Healthcare

- Familiarize yourself with facts regarding historical trauma, medical trauma, and health disparities.
- The establishment of systems that use electronic medical record data to inform quality improvement efforts, through identification of and subsequent efforts to reduce health inequities.
- Continued investment in clinical training with specific attention given to implicit bias and range of outcomes associated with implicit bias
- Ongoing internal evaluation of data that may identify implicit bias or practices that may support implicit bias

# Reducing Implicit Bias: Workplace

- Assess current policies and procedures for potential biases
- Develop clear policies against any forms of racism
- **Questions to Consider**
  - Are employees provided equitable opportunities for growth?
  - Does the current hiring practices ensure diversity among new hires?
  - Are there clear procedures around how the workplace will respond to reported incidents of racism?
  - Are there processes for employees to safely report racial experiences either directly experienced or witnessed?
  - Are employees aware of the process for reporting events?

# Additional Strategies

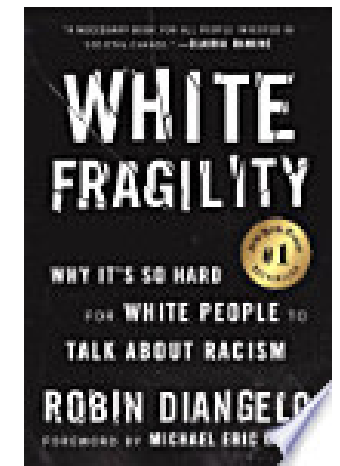
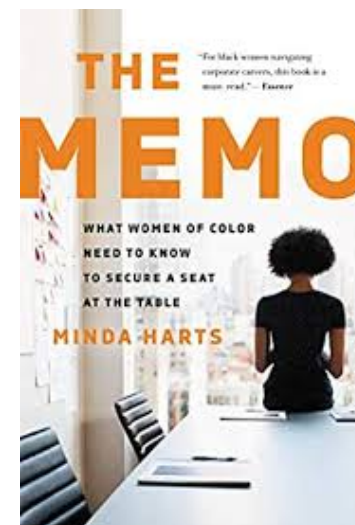
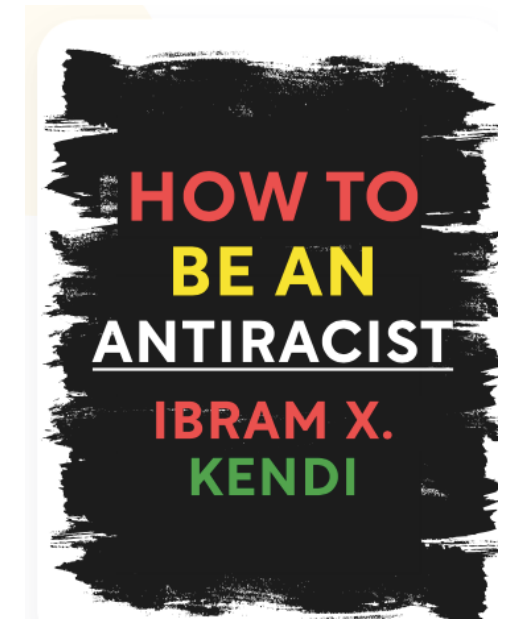
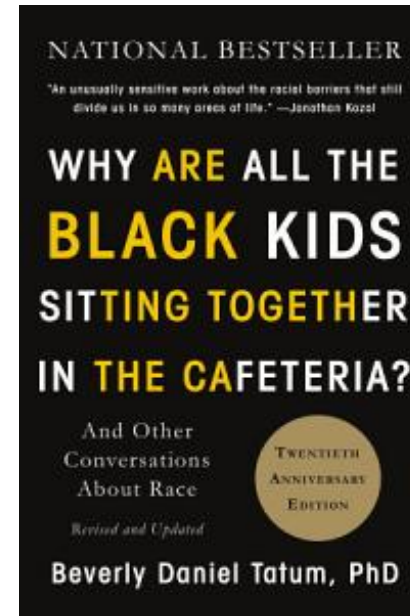
- Lead with humility and openness
- Be willing to learn from others who may have different experiences and worldviews
- Continue to educate yourself about the experiences of others and to learn more about what you can do to support them.
- Initiate and engage in conversations, even when there are risks of embarrassment, suspicion or discomfort
- Avoid using the words “You,” “But,” “Everyone,” and “Should” in response to an individual expressing concerns
- Be mindful of your intentions
- Listen and provide an opportunity to clarify the meaning and intention of what others are saying
- Notice what triggers your assumptions and work to reduce your biases
- Engage in ongoing self-awareness and reflection

# Learning Resources

- [These Books Can Help You Explain Racism and Protest to Your Kids](#)
- [Helping Kids Process Violence, Trauma, and Race in a World of Nonstop News](#)
- [I Am An Educator: I care about my students' racial consciousness and want to develop their racial awareness.](#)
- [First Encounters With Race and Racism: Teaching Ideas for Classroom Conversations](#)

# Learning Resources

- **Rachel Cargle** conducts antiracist work and offers a free 30-day course
  - [Rachel Cargle website](#)
  - [#DoTheWork course](#)
- [A Guide to Responding to Microaggressions](#)



# Questions



# Evaluation

## Evaluation Link

Once you complete the evaluation, you will be directed to the resource page and certificate request form.

# Appreciation





# Contact Us



Central East (HHS Region 3)

MHTTC

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