

LEADING WITH EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Unconscious Bias to Inclusive Leadership



CATALYST
WORKPLACES THAT WORK FOR WOMEN

leading with equity and inclusion

ABOUT CATALYST

Catalyst is a global nonprofit working with some of the world's most powerful CEOs and leading companies to help build workplaces that work for women. Founded in 1962, Catalyst drives change with pioneering research, practical tools, and proven solutions to accelerate and advance women into leadership—because progress for women is progress for everyone.

welcome

Leading with equity and inclusion is a journey, not a destination, and this workshop is designed to support you on this journey. The benefits of inclusion are profound: increased productivity, greater team problem-solving and innovation, higher engagement levels, an overall better place to work, and a positive impact on the bottom line.

In this workshop, you will:

- Understand unconscious bias and its impact.
- Become aware of and begin to address internal, interpersonal, and organizational biases.
- Understand the importance of inclusion and your role as an inclusive leader.
- Identify and commit to actions to create a more inclusive culture.

First Impressions

Write "Yes" or "No" in answer to each of the questions the facilitator presents on the slide.

1.

2.

3.

4.

What is UNCONSCIOUS BIAS?

An implicit association or attitude—for example about race or gender—that:¹

- Operates beyond our control and awareness.
- Informs our perception of a person or social group.
- Can influence our decision-making and behavior toward the target of the bias.

BIAS IS PERVASIVE

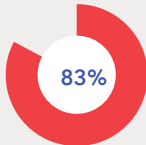
Analyses of tens of thousands of tests on implicit bias have revealed:

People can be consciously committed to equality, and work deliberately to behave without prejudice, yet still possess negative prejudices or stereotypes.²

Showing bias:³



of White people had a pro-White or anti-Black implicit bias.



of heterosexuals showed implicit bias in favor of straight people over gays and lesbians.

Minority Groups are biased too:⁴

Minorities internalized the same implicit biases as majority groups.



of Blacks showed a pro-White or anti-Black bias.



of Arab Muslims showed an anti-Muslim bias.



of gays and lesbians showed a bias in favor of straight people over gays and lesbians.



UNCONSCIOUS BIASES ARE POWERFUL PREDICTORS OF BEHAVIOR



Implicit attitudes affect snap judgments, as well as decisions that are given careful conscious consideration.⁵



The effects of unconscious biases can be seen in action, especially if conscious controls over decision-making are lowered, for example when people are stressed, distracted, relaxed, or in competition.⁶



This is true even if unconscious biases are not aligned with conscious beliefs and convictions. For example, people with egalitarian views can harbor unconscious biases toward certain groups that affect their behaviors and decisions.⁷

BIASES CAN BE OVERCOME



Thinking about strong women leaders or seeing positive images of underrepresented groups can temporarily change unconscious biases.⁸



Working together in structured settings to solve shared problems can dramatically alter people's attitudes about diversity.⁹



A person with biases will not necessarily always act in biased ways; it is possible to consciously override bias.¹⁰



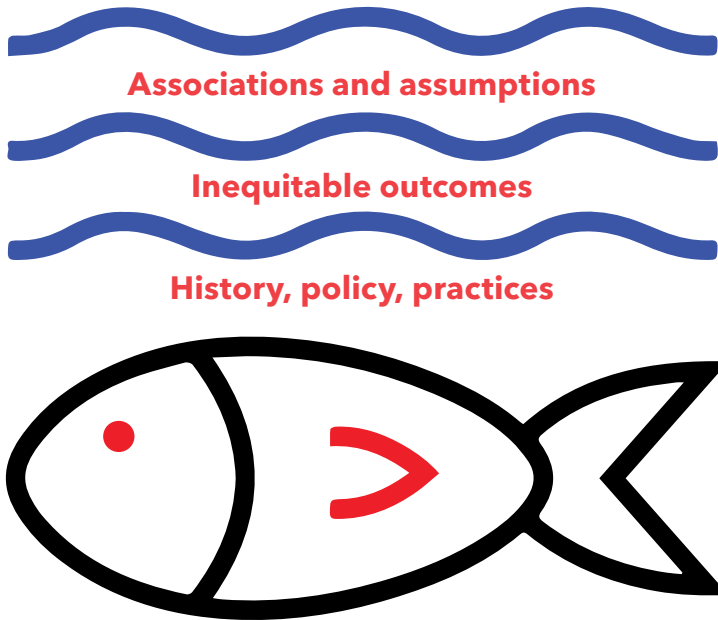
1. Anthony G. Greenwald and Mahzarin R. Banaji, "Implicit Social Cognition: Attitudes, Self-Esteem, and Stereotypes," *Psychological Review*, vol. 102, no. 1 (1995): p. 4-27; Erin Long-Crowell, "Implicit vs. Explicit Attitudes: Definition, Examples & Pros/Cons"; Anthony Greenwald and Linda Krieger, "Implicit Bias: Scientific Foundations," *California Law Review* vol. 94, no. 4 (July 31, 2006): p. 945-967; Ministry of Women's Affairs, *Realising the Opportunity: Addressing New Zealand's Leadership Pipeline by Attracting and Retaining Talented Women* (September 2013).
2. Shankar Vedantam, "See No Bias," *The Washington Post*, January 23, 2005; Teaching Tolerance, "Test Yourself for Hidden Bias."
3. Shankar Vedantam, "See No Bias," *The Washington Post*, January 23, 2005.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Teaching Tolerance, "Test Yourself for Hidden Bias."
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Shankar Vedantam, "See No Bias," *The Washington Post*, January 23, 2005.



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created: 11 December 2014
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Bias in Context



The longer you swim in a culture the more invisible it becomes.

NOTES

Assumptions Exercise–Reflection

What feelings come up as you hear these statements?

What did it feel like as the person making the incorrect assumption?

What cultural or societal experiences may have informed your assumption?

Why Addressing Unconscious Bias Matters

NONDOMINANT GROUPS MAY EXPERIENCE...

- Exclusion and covering.
- Fear of being stereotyped for speaking out.
- The burden of educating the dominant group.

WOMEN/MEN OF COLOR MAY EXPERIENCE...

- Emotional tax, being on guard to protect against bias coupled with lowered well being and productivity.

DOMINANT AND NONDOMINANT GROUPS MAY EXPERIENCE...

- Fear of saying the wrong thing and being penalized for it.
- An assumption of diversity fatigue.
- Struggle to make positive change.

Support given in silence is not support.

NOTES

Sources: Catalyst. *What Is Covering?* New York: Catalyst, December 11, 2014. Dnika J. Travis and Jennifer Thorpe-Moscon, *Day-to-Day Experiences of Emotional Tax Among Women and Men of Color in the Workplace* (Catalyst, 2018). Jennifer Thorpe-Moscon, Alexandra Pollack, and Olufemi Olu-Lafe, *Empowering Workplaces Combat Emotional Tax for People of Colour in Canada* (Catalyst, 2019).

Emotional Tax

The risks of not addressing unconscious bias or of not creating an inclusive culture are high. Women and men of color may experience Emotional Tax. Emotional Tax is the combination of feeling different due to gender, race, and ethnicity, being on guard to experiences of bias, and the associated effects on health, well-being, and ability to thrive at work.



"Being the only one from a different culture in my workplace, I'm constantly on guard. Particularly when racist jokes come up or talk about the presidential election [happens], I'm always on guard. Therefore...I have to take a breather outside, take a break, or just mentally take myself out of the situation and think positive things about my family, my kids, and ignore what I [cannot] change." –Sandra, Latina, age 26; first-level manager

"I try to make sure my i's are dotted and my t's are crossed. So no one can come up and say the quality of the work [isn't good enough]. So again, that's another burden, another string. The feeling that I cannot afford to make any mistakes. We're human beings, we all do make mistakes at times. But the perception is that I cannot make a mistake. It can bite me harder if I make a mistake." –Jacque, Black woman; individual contributor

NOTES

Sources: Dnika J. Travis and Jennifer Thorpe-Moscon, *Day-to-Day Experiences of Emotional Tax Among Women and Men of Color in the Workplace* (Catalyst, 2018). Jennifer Thorpe-Moscon, Alixandra Pollack, and Olufemi Olu-Lafe, *Empowering Workplaces Combat Emotional Tax for People of Colour in Canada* (Catalyst, 2019).

LEAD OUTWARD AND LEAD INWARD TO BUILD AN INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE

You have the power—and responsibility—to lead with inclusion. Learn how and reap the benefits for both your team and your business.¹

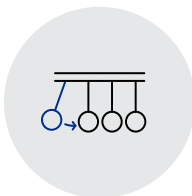
HOW

LEADING OUTWARD, LEADING INWARD

Six core behaviors foster an inclusive culture.²

LEAD OUTWARD

Your ability to bolster team members' capacity to be empowered, treated fairly, and flourish at work.



ACCOUNTABILITY

Hold team members responsible for their behavior, development, and work processes.



OWNERSHIP

Guide them to solve their own problems and make their own decisions.



ALLYSHIP

Actively support people from underrepresented groups.

LEAD INWARD

Your ability to act courageously, learn, and self-reflect.



CURIOSITY

Proactively seek to understand different points of view.



HUMILITY

Take ownership for mistakes and learn from missteps.



COURAGE

Act in accordance with your principles, even when it involves personal risk-taking or is uncomfortable.

WHY

Inclusive leadership explains almost half of employees' experiences of inclusion.



45%

THE IMPACT

AN INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE

Your employees will experience being:



VALUED

They are appreciated and respected for their unique perspectives and talents.



TRUSTED

They make meaningful contributions and are influential in decision-making.



AUTHENTIC

They can bring their full selves to work and express aspects of themselves that may be different from their peers.



PSYCHOLOGICALLY SAFE: LATITUDE

They feel free to hold differing views and make mistakes without being penalized.

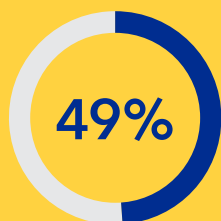


PSYCHOLOGICALLY SAFE: RISK-TAKING

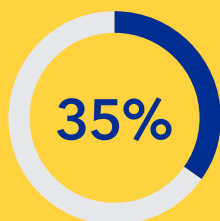
They feel secure enough to address tough issues or take risks.

THE BENEFITS

Employee experiences of inclusion are a key factor in company results. They explain:



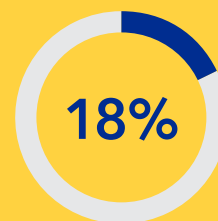
TEAM PROBLEM-SOLVING



WORK ENGAGEMENT



EMPLOYEE INTENT TO STAY



EMPLOYEE INNOVATION

1. Dnika J. Travis, Emily Shaffer, and Jennifer Thorpe-Moscon, *Getting Real About Inclusive Leadership: Why Change Starts With You* (Catalyst, 2019).
2. Catalyst surveyed 2,164 employees in countries across the world. We conducted confirmatory factor analysis to develop the inclusive leadership and inclusion constructs and structural equation modeling to determine the link between inclusive leadership, employee experiences of inclusion, and the outcome variables.



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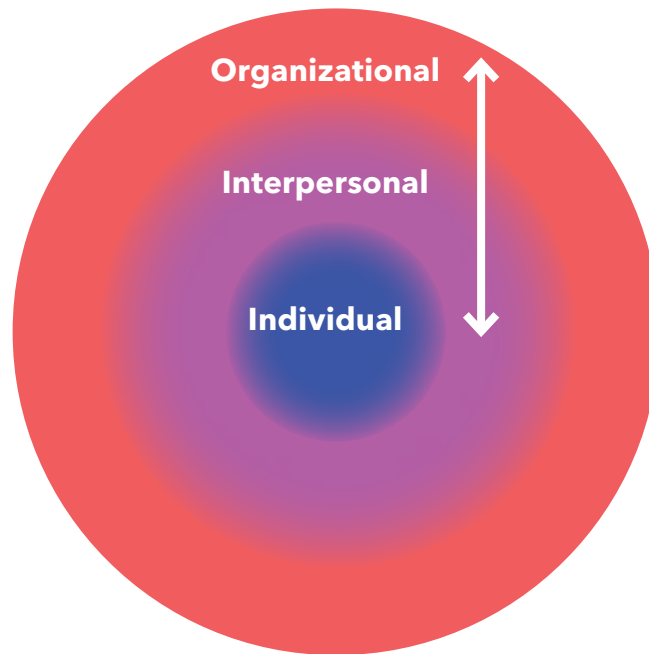
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Lenses to Consider

As we think about interrupting bias at work it is helpful to consider the following three lenses:

1. **Individual:** How bias may influence an individual's beliefs or actions.
2. **Interpersonal:** How bias may influence how people relate and interact with each other.
3. **Organizational:** How bias may influence organizational policies and practices.



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Individual: Who might I be unintentionally including vs. excluding? Why? Who or what might I not be noticing?

Interpersonal: Am I communicating or experiencing bias in my interactions with others? How do I respond to bias when I hear, see, experience, or communicate it?

Organizational: Where might unconscious bias show up in my organization's systems, policies, programs, or culture?

NOTES

Your and Your Team



1.

For whom on your team are you most likely to advocate?

2.

With whom on your team are you most likely to engage socially?

3.

With whom do you have the most conversations about career goals, aspirations, and development needs (yours and/or theirs)?

4.

With whose past work experiences are you most familiar?

You and Your Team—Reflection

1. How often did the same names come up in your answers?

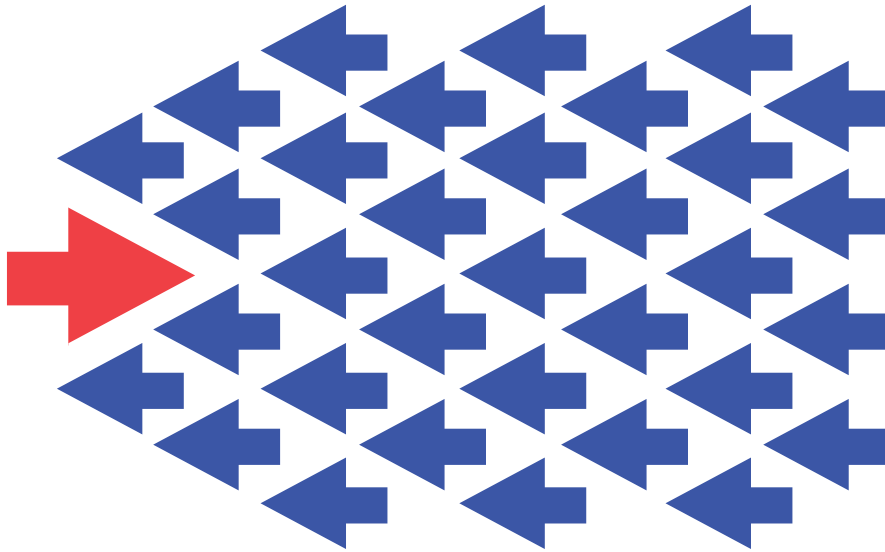
2. What patterns do you see (e.g., demographics, shared identities, similar communication styles)?

3. What is the impact on the team if you consistently turn to the same people?

4. What do you know about your team members' strengths and development needs? What would you like to know?

Affinity Bias

Sometimes bias is about who we favor and less about who we are against. Affinity bias is the unconscious tendency to get along with others who are like us. Becoming aware of who we tend to gravitate toward or who our go-to people are can help us identify our biases and how we may be unintentionally including some at the expense of others.



SHIFTING DYNAMICS

How will you shift the dynamics on your team and your leadership behaviors to include those who did not appear on your go-to list?

Microaggressions

Our biases can be conscious and overt, and they can also be unconscious and operate in more covert ways. We know that blatant acts of discrimination in the workplace are discouraged, often illegal, and come with some very real consequences to employees and to the business. But there are other, more subtle forms of discrimination that can be conscious or unconscious. The person communicating may even think that he or she is giving a compliment, when in fact there is a negative assumption embedded within the communication.

We call these slights microaggressions. Microaggressions are everyday slights or insults that convey a negative underlying message to the target based solely on their marginalized group identity. They can be:

- Verbal or nonverbal
- Intentional or unintentional
- Hurtful and exclusionary

Examples of Microaggressions

- "You speak great English." "You're so articulate."
- You arrive at a work event and mistake the presenter, who is a person of color, for a member of the support staff and ask him to refill the coffee.
- You greet a group of people and shake everyone's hand except the hand of the only woman on the team.
- "You're not like other Black people."
- "You don't seem gay."
- "What are you?"
- You have team members who are Jewish and observe Shabbat, but you consistently plan an after-work happy hour on Fridays.
- You express surprise and say, "I can't believe you're married!" to a co-worker with a disability.

Can you think of additional examples of microaggressions (verbal or nonverbal)?

Source: Derald Wing Sue, *Microaggressions in Every Day Life: Race, Gender and Sexual Orientation* (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2010).

Addressing Microaggressions

THREE TIPS



1. PAY ATTENTION

Tune in to what you and others are experiencing.

- Do you feel triggered? Do you need time to calm yourself?
- Is your first response to ignore or excuse the microaggression, or do you feel immobilized by it?
- What is causing you to respond this way?
- What may others involved be experiencing or feeling?
- What is the impact on the recipient(s) and his/her/their colleagues?



2. ASSESS CONTEXT

Assess the dynamics, timing, and place for addressing the microaggression.

- What is the impact if you ignore it? What harm may be done?
- Are there power differentials influencing how you are thinking of responding?
- Will addressing it publicly or privately, directly or indirectly, be more beneficial? With whom do you need to speak to interrupt bias and show care?



3. FLIP THE SCRIPT

Choose words and actions that...

- Promote learning, not shame.
- Respond with heart, not harm.
- Assume positive intent.
- Create connection, not conflict.
- Demonstrate curiosity, support, humility, empathy, courage, accountability, and allyship.

Addressing Microaggressions

SCENARIO: SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

Review the scenario below.

Discuss the scenario in small groups, using the Three Tips for Addressing Microaggressions:

- 1. Pay Attention**
- 2. Assess the Context**
- 3. Flip the Script**

Scenario:

Jordan, VP of Client Engagement, introduces Alana, a new Relationship Manager, to the team. Jordan says, "Alana was a long-time customer and knows our customers well. She is really articulate and will be able to help us to connect to our customers better."

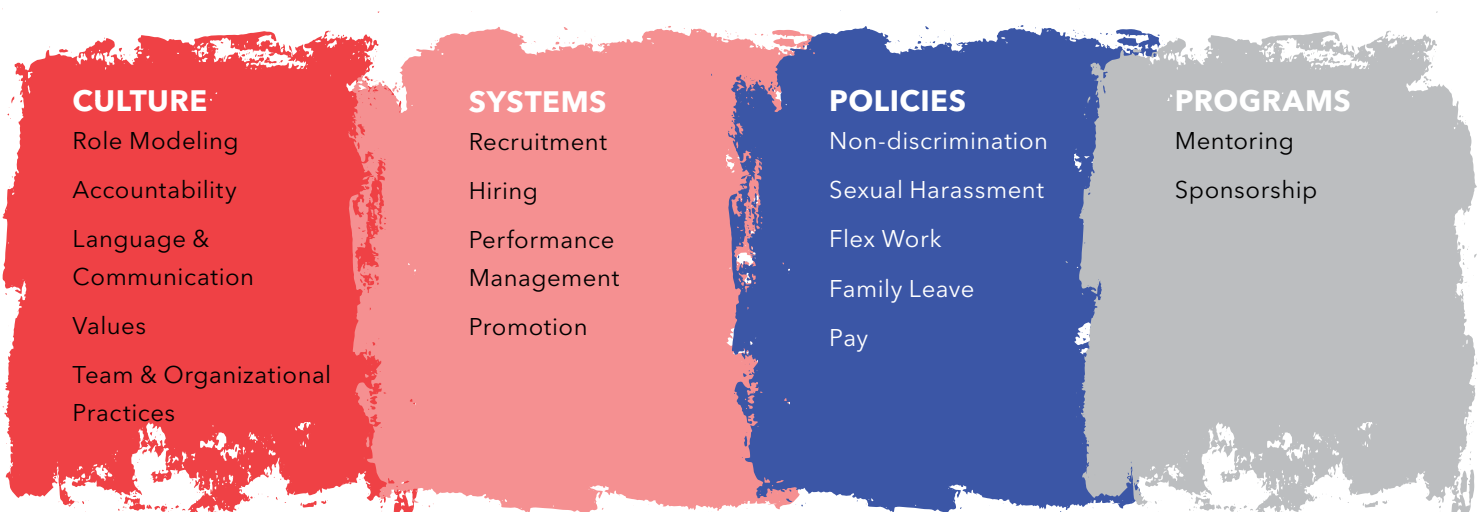
Bill, a Relationship Manager and White male who joined the team only a year ago, is shocked and disturbed by Jordan's use of the word "articulate," which Jordan, his boss, has never used to introduce a colleague before. Jordan is White, as are the rest of the team members. Alana is Black, as are the majority of the company's customers. Bill found this comment to be a microaggression. His heart is racing. He can't tell how Alana experienced Jordan's introduction, or whether Jordan is aware of how her comment came across. He wonders what to do.

What should Bill do?

Unconscious Bias In Organizations

Unconscious bias can pervade an organization. It can be woven into an organization’s culture, systems, policies, and programs. It can adversely impact, among many things:

- The diversity of candidates and clients attracted to the organization.
- The ability to accurately identify and evaluate an employee’s potential.
- The ability to build a culture and team that performs at the highest levels of decision-making and quality.



Where might unconscious bias factor into your organization’s culture, systems, policies, and programs?

Visibility, Access, and Equity Check

Consider how inclusively your organization and/or you are developing your pipeline.

VISIBILITY

- Who seems to get seen the most in your organization or on your team?
- Who seems to get the high-profile projects?
- Who seems to get showcased or “talked-up” to others?
- Who may be made to feel “invisible” or excluded?

ACCESS

- Who seems to have the most access to or face time with key leaders, including you if you are in a position of leadership, through socializing, breaks, or invitations to meetings?
- Who seems to get coaching?
- Are there personality types with which you and other leaders surround yourselves?

EQUITY

- Do you see any patterns related to who is hired, who is let go, or who voluntarily leaves the team?
- How do you think your organization’s “leadership profile” (i.e., the educational experiences, communication style, social identities) of senior leadership affects people on your team and organization-wide?

NOTES

Self-Reflection and Action Plan

Interrupting unconscious bias and becoming an inclusive leader is an ongoing process that takes time and practice. Use this tool to reflect on your key learnings from the session, including your strengths and growth areas as well as priority actions you intend to take to interrupt unconscious bias and foster inclusion in your workplace and beyond.

INDIVIDUAL STRATEGIES

Skill/Tool	Key Learnings	Strengths	Growth Areas	Priority Action(s)
Slow down to check your assumptions and biases.				
Intentionally include underrepresented or excluded team members.				

INTERPERSONAL STRATEGIES

Skill/Tool	Key Learnings	Strengths	Growth Areas	Priority Action(s)
Address microaggressions (Three Tips: Pay Attention. Assess Context. Flip the Script).				

ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIES

Skill/Tool	Key Learnings	Strengths	Growth Areas	Priority Action(s)
Interrupt bias in systems, policies, programs and culture.				
Ensure and model inclusive and equitable language and practices.				

NOTES

APPENDIX

**tools and
research**

It's Not Easy **FEELING DIFFERENT**

The more different we feel from our coworkers, the more we feel like the other at work.

If we feel like the other, we are:

Less likely to have high-level mentors.

Less likely to receive promotions.

More likely to downsize aspirations.

This can result in **unique disadvantages** in the workplace.

When have you felt like the "Other?" What did it feel like?

Sources

Catalyst, *It's Not Easy Feeling Different* (January 16, 2014).

Jennifer Thorpe-Moscon and Alixandra Pollack, *Feeling Different: Being the "Other" in US Workplaces* (Catalyst, 2014).

HOW TO COMBAT UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

as an Individual

QUESTION YOUR ASSUMPTIONS

Start to ask yourself: Why am I thinking this way? Would I be drawing the same conclusions if this scenario involved someone of a different profile (e.g., a man instead of a woman, a person with no children instead of a mother)?

ANALYZE

Ask yourself if the forms of biases and covering (strategies people use to downplay a stigmatized identity) you are experiencing or enacting are consistent with your personal and organizational values. If they are not, identify opportunities to change.

TAKE A RISK

Put yourself outside your comfort zone. Find people such as your manager, mentors, and sponsors who will help you work through those risks to make them worthwhile.

DISRUPT THE DEFAULT

Challenge elements of the status quo that may perpetuate bias. For example, create connections across differences by finding a mentor or sponsor from a different demographic group than you, joining an Employee Resource Group (ERG) as an ally, or facilitating and/or participating in cross-group learning and engagement.

SPEAK OUT

Discuss issues in ways that are comfortable to you (e.g., private conversations with a mentor, anonymous feedback on employee surveys, discussion points in an ERG meeting). Share your experiences with others to find common ground and start a dialogue that will generate solutions.

HOLD YOURSELF AND OTHERS ACCOUNTABLE

Hold yourself accountable for self-reflection, learning, and continually analyzing your behaviors and experiences. At the same time, interrupt when you see others engaging in biased behaviors by politely calling out their misstep and suggesting constructive alternative ways of thinking.

GOLDEN RULE

“Do unto others as you would do unto yourself.”

SILVER RULE

“Don’t do unto others as you would not do unto yourself.”

PLATINUM RULE

“Treat others as they want to be treated.”

updated: 30 April 2018



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HOW TO COMBAT UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

as a Leader in Your Organization

START WITH YOU

Engage in critical self-reflection. Hold yourself accountable for recognizing and pushing back against your own biases before asking others to do the same. Share your own stories of vulnerability, learning, and growth. Be the first to uncover and role model these behaviors to others.

BE VOCAL

Say to others, "I am a diversity champion. I recognize that I have biases and I am working to identify, acknowledge, and address them." The effects of those small statements will amplify as they are repeated and enacted by others across the organization.

LEARN MORE

Ask questions to understand the root causes of biases. What forms of bias are occurring? What forms of covering are occurring? How do they affect you, your colleagues and teams, your workplace, and your business?

KNOW YOUR PEOPLE

Make personal connections and spend time learning how your coworkers experience your workplace. Don't assume you know what and where solutions can be most effective—ask!

EMPOWER YOUR PEOPLE

Help employees understand their role in making change. Engage stakeholders from a range of backgrounds to help make decisions more inclusive.

BREAK THE CYCLE

Everybody has unconscious biases. Hold your people accountable for relying on structure to modify their judgments and behaviors rather than their own willpower.

TAKE RISKS ON OTHERS

Give others—particularly those who are different from you—a chance. Be open to learning from them as much as they can expect to learn from you. Intentionally mentor and sponsor people who are not like you.

FIND ALLIES

Reach out to other champions with proven track records of success inside and outside your organization. Find others with shared passion and commitment and engage them as partners.

STAY COMMITTED

We all have biases that change and evolve even when we confront them. Remain committed to sustained action over time.

"You will not be as successful as you could be if you cling to biases."

—Ellen Moore, *President & CEO, Chubb Insurance Company of Canada*

updated: 16 July 2018



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Leveraging Microaffirmations

Microaffirmations are a way to convey that you want to help others succeed. Mary Rowe, an economist and professor of negotiation and conflict management at MIT's Sloan School of Management, defines microaffirmations as "tiny acts of opening doors to opportunity, gestures of inclusion and caring, and graceful acts of listening."

According to Mary Rowe, microaffirmations are effective for three reasons:

1. Those who receive them perform more effectively and are more satisfied with their work and achievements.
2. They are contagious—as they spread, they raise morale and productivity.
3. They counteract micro-inequities. "Many micro-inequities are not conscious—but affirming others can become a conscious as well as unconscious process that prevents unconscious slights."

EXAMPLES

- Giving credit when you want to reiterate someone's point. "I like what Sharon suggested. Can we explore that idea?"
- Inviting participation: at a client meeting, an experienced employee brings a younger employee along and the client keeps speaking to the more experienced employee rather than the younger one. The more experienced employee then directs questions to the younger employee and brings them into the conversation.
- Sharing positive feedback about a coworker with others.
- Sending a coworker notes of encouragement.
- Taking time to get to know a coworker at lunch or over coffee.
- Introducing a coworker starting with their accolades.

Can you think of a time you received a microaffirmation that made you feel valued or affirmed?

HOW WHY

TO CREATE AN EMPOWERING WORKPLACE

WHERE EMPLOYEES HAVE THE AUTONOMY, RESOURCES, AND SUPPORT THEY NEED TO SUCCEED.¹

TALK TO ME



WHAT EMPLOYEES SAY

Encourage me and your other direct reports and colleagues to have open discussions of our unique experiences.³

TAKE ACTION

- Inquire across differences: Explore the experiences of others through genuine curiosity.
- Suspend judgment: Actively refrain from adding your own editorial comments or lens to someone else's experiences.
- Demonstrate vulnerability and self-disclose: Acknowledge your shortcomings and share elements of your experience that may feel uncomfortable or risky.

TRUST ME



WHAT EMPLOYEES SAY

Trust me to do my work. Give me the autonomy to do my work where and when works best for me.⁴ Be confident in my ability to achieve results.

TAKE ACTION

- Recognize the talents of employees and create opportunities for ongoing development.
- Ensure flexible working arrangements are equally available and accessible to all employees.⁵
- Do not penalize employees who use flexible working arrangements or treat them differently than those who choose not to use them.⁶

HOW²

STAND BY ME



WHAT EMPLOYEES SAY

When issues occur, back me up and give me air cover.⁷ Focus on solutions rather than blame.

TAKE ACTION

- Treat missteps and challenges as learning moments.
- Assume positive intent.
- Approach difficulties with a growth mindset, helping employees to develop and improve.

EQUIP ME



WHAT EMPLOYEES SAY

Enable me to do my job to the best of my ability. Provide me with the tools and support I need to thrive.

TAKE ACTION

- Make sure employees have sufficient access to the information and resources necessary to do their job well.⁸
- Ensure employees are kept in the know about all issues that are critical to their job performance.

WHY

BLACK, EAST ASIAN, AND SOUTH ASIAN PROFESSIONALS IN CANADA⁹

ASIAN, BLACK, LATINX, AND MULTIRACIAL PROFESSIONALS IN THE UNITED STATES¹⁰

86%

Of those highly on guard to bias aspire to leadership positions at work.

89%

82%

Of those highly on guard to bias want to remain in the same company.

91%

AND YET

39%

Report being highly on guard to protect against racial and ethnic bias.

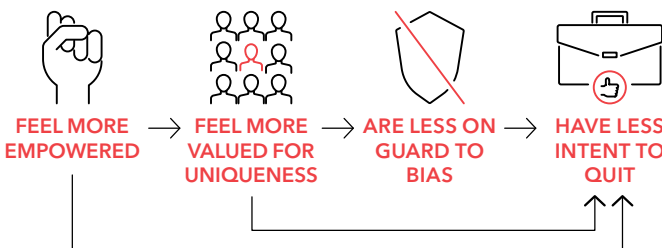
41%

68% **59%** **53%**
BLACK EAST ASIAN SOUTH ASIAN

Who experience high levels of Emotional Tax are thinking about quitting their jobs.

29% **37%** **43%**
ASIAN BLACK LATINX

AN EMPOWERING WORKPLACE CAN COMBAT EMOTIONAL TAX AND ATTRITION¹¹



EMOTIONAL TAX

The combination of feeling different from peers at work because of gender, race, and/or ethnicity, being on guard to experiences of bias, and the associated effects on health, well-being, and ability to thrive at work.

¹ Jennifer Thorpe-Moscon, Alixandra Pollack, and Olufemi Olu-Lafe, *Empowering Workplaces Combat Emotional Tax for People of Colour in Canada* (Catalyst, 2019); Dnika J. Travis and Jennifer Thorpe-Moscon, *Day-to-Day Experiences of Emotional Tax Among Women and Men of Color in the Workplace* (Catalyst, 2018); Jeanine Prime and Elizabeth R. Salib, *Inclusive Leadership: The View From Six Countries* (Catalyst, 2014).
² Jennifer Thorpe-Moscon, Alixandra Pollack, and Olufemi Olu-Lafe, *Empowering Workplaces Combat Emotional Tax for People of Colour in Canada* (Catalyst, 2019).
³ Catalyst, *Engaging in Conversations About Gender, Race, and Ethnicity in the Workplace* (2016).
⁴ Jeanine Prime and Elizabeth R. Salib, *Inclusive Leadership: The View From Six Countries* (Catalyst, 2014); Anna Beninger and Nancy M. Carter, *The Great Debate: Flexibility vs. Face Time—Busting the Myths Behind Flexible Work Arrangements* (Catalyst 2013); Nicholas Bloom, James Liang, John Roberts, and Zhichun Jenny Ying, "Does Working from Home Work? Evidence From a Chinese Experiment," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, vol. 130, no. 1 (February 2015): p. 165-218.
⁵ Emily Cohen, Liz Mulligan-Ferry, and Jan Combopiano, "Flex Works," (Catalyst, 2013); Nicholas Bloom, James Liang, John Roberts, and Zhichun Jenny Ying, "Does Working from Home Work? Evidence From a Chinese Experiment," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, vol. 130, no. 1 (February 2015): p. 165-218.
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⁷ Jeanine Prime and Elizabeth R. Salib, *The Secret to Inclusion in Australian Workplaces: Psychological Safety* (Catalyst, 2015).
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the

**RESPOND WITH HEART, NOT HARM,
IN TOUGH CONVERSATIONS**

Words are powerful. Even with the best intentions, our immediate reactions during tough conversations can sometimes be dismissive, offensive, or unproductive, undermining inclusive dialogue. It's important to use words that demonstrate understanding, partnership, and a commitment to continued communication. Respond with heart by staying engaged and open when discussing difficult topics, which helps to resolve conflicts and work collaboratively across differences.¹

UNSUPPORTIVE ←

→ SUPPORTIVE

WHAT PEOPLE SAY
"NO OFFENSE..."

HOW IT'S UNSUPPORTIVE
Feels offensive and inauthentic as soon as the words are spoken. Puts people in a position to brace for a potential insult, even if that's not your intention.² Takes away a person's right to be reasonably upset as an equal in the dialogue.³

WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD
Nothing. If you want to make this statement, it's generally a sign that what you are about to say is offensive. Don't say it.

Be **SUPPORTIVE** during tough conversations by listening to others to encourage, rather than stifle, dialogue.

NOT CURIOUS ←

→ CURIOUS

WHAT PEOPLE SAY
"I'M NOT COMFORTABLE;
LET'S NOT GO THERE."

HOW IT'S NOT CURIOUS
Leaves no space to resolve differences. Shuts down the conversation because you may be worried about doing the wrong thing, being judged, or hearing a perspective that may challenge your way of thinking.⁴

WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD
"I know this is a delicate subject and I may say the wrong thing, but I'd like to try to talk about this so I can learn more."

Show **CURIOSITY** by asking questions, being open to new or different perspectives, and being willing to go beyond what is familiar or comfortable. You'll learn more about yourself and others.

NOT HUMBLE ←

→ HUMBLE

WHAT PEOPLE SAY
"I'M RIGHT"
AND/OR
"YOU'RE WRONG."

HOW IT'S NOT HUMBLE
Can be perceived as arrogant and overconfident.⁵ Focusing on "right" and "wrong" does not allow for a discussion—only winning or losing the argument.⁶

WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD
"We may not agree, but let's try to reach understanding."

Demonstrate **HUMILITY** by accepting that your views may be incomplete. Listen with humility to better understand others and show you are open to learning and thinking differently.⁷

← NOT EMPATHIC → EMPATHIC

WHAT PEOPLE SAY
"I'M SORRY YOU FEEL THAT WAY."

HOW IT'S NOT EMPATHIC
Takes no personal ownership for any harm done.⁸ Comes across as not being genuine, and devalues the other person's experiences and emotions.

WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD
"I apologize for my actions and how they have impacted you. Although my intention was not to cause any harm, I see it did and will try to do differently in the future."

Express **EMPATHY** by showing that you understand and appreciate another point of view or experience. Acknowledge that your words and actions may have had a different effect than what you intended.⁹

← NOT COURAGEOUS → COURAGEOUS

WHAT PEOPLE SAY
"DON'T ROCK THE BOAT."

HOW IT'S NOT COURAGEOUS
Does not provide a safe space for speaking up. Does not show willingness to step out of your comfort zone in order to make progress.¹⁰ May make others feel like they have to communicate carefully around a topic or "walk on eggshells."

WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD
"Dialogue is important and welcome, even when it's not easy."

Communicate **COURAGEOUSLY** by leaning into difficult conversations, rather than shutting them down. Doing this signals that you are willing to talk about tough or "undiscussable" issues.¹¹

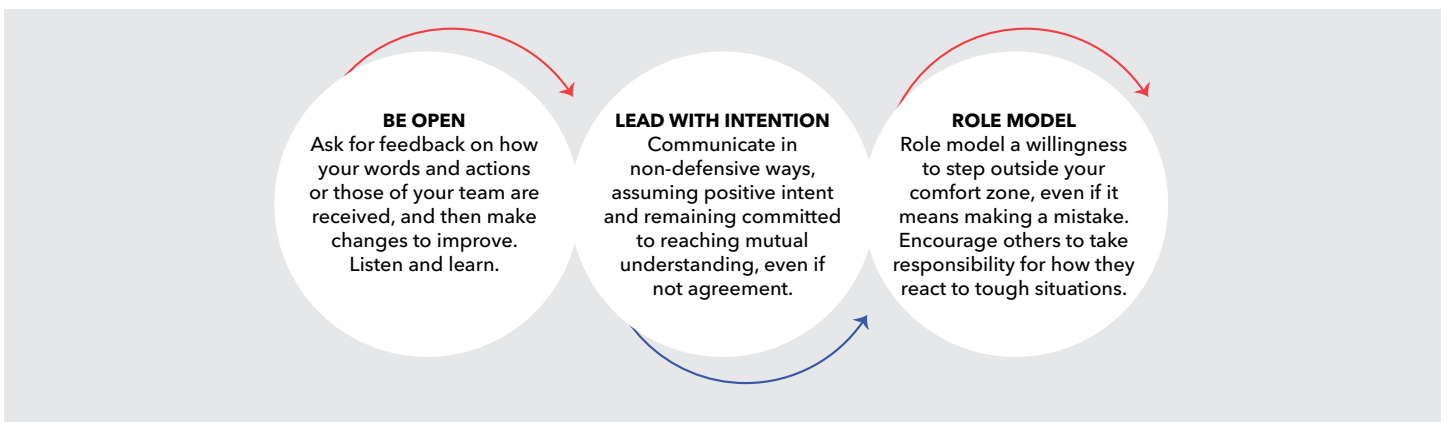
← UNACCOUNTABLE → ACCOUNTABLE

WHAT PEOPLE SAY
"DON'T BE SO SENSITIVE."

HOW IT'S UNACCOUNTABLE
Blames a person for their reaction and does not take responsibility for the way your words came across.¹² Suggests the other person is the problem for being "overly sensitive" and harms their sense of worth.

WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD
"It sounds like what I was trying to say came across differently than how I intended it. Can you help me understand how you heard what I said? That might help me try again."

Demonstrate **ACCOUNTABILITY** by taking responsibility for how your words and actions affect those around you. Use words and actions that demonstrate you want to work toward a constructive conversation.¹³



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CREATE CONNECTIONS, NOT CONFLICT, IN TOUGH CONVERSATIONS

Words are powerful. Even with the best intentions, we can say or do things that shut down dialogue before it gets started. It's especially easy to do this when the topic is sensitive, controversial, or provocative. But we need to have these tough conversations to understand and bridge differences¹ and successfully collaborate in teams.² Create opportunities for connections by using words that invite different perspectives and help people feel heard and valued.³

UNSUPPORTIVE ←

→ SUPPORTIVE

WHAT PEOPLE SAY
"IF YOU DON'T HAVE SOMETHING NICE TO SAY, DON'T SAY IT AT ALL."

HOW IT'S UNSUPPORTIVE
 Shuts down a conversation. Doesn't allow for disagreement or the safety to call out others' missteps.⁴ Makes it difficult to give honest feedback that can help others learn.

WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD
 "I want to hear what you have to say, even if it may be difficult."

Be **SUPPORTIVE** of tough conversations by encouraging honesty and transparency, even when what is being shared may be challenging to hear.

NOT CURIOUS ←

→ CURIOUS

WHAT PEOPLE SAY
"I'VE HEARD THIS ALREADY."

HOW IT'S NOT CURIOUS
 Sounds dismissive. Can be hurtful to suggest that your colleagues' feelings, perspectives, or experiences do not deserve to be heard.⁵ Implies that you think you know it all and can't possibly have more to learn.

WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD
 "This is what I know... Help me understand what I may be missing or getting wrong."

Show **CURIOSITY** by asking questions, being open to new or different perspectives, and being willing to go beyond what is familiar or comfortable. Listening to and acknowledging the emotions of others lets them know you are interested in their experiences.⁶

NOT HUMBLE ←

→ HUMBLE

WHAT PEOPLE SAY
"OH NO, HERE WE GO AGAIN."

HOW IT'S NOT HUMBLE
 Puts the speaker on the defensive and closes the opportunity for open dialogue.⁷ Assumes you know what someone will say before you've taken the time to actually listen to them.

WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD
 "It sounds like you have a strong point of view. Help me understand how you see this issue."

Demonstrate **HUMILITY** by accepting that your views may be incomplete and showing your willingness to hear other points of view.

NOT EMPATHIC ←

→ EMPATHIC

WHAT PEOPLE SAY
"THAT HAPPENS TO ME, AND YOU DON'T HEAR ME COMPLAINING."

HOW IT'S NOT EMPATHIC
Downplays the challenges people face. Suggests their feelings and perspectives are not valid, creating an "empathy gap."⁸ Signals that you are unwilling to see the difference between your own experiences and those of others.⁹

WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD
"I think I face something similar, but it sounds like it impacts you differently. Tell me more about why it affects you that way."

Express **EMPATHY** by showing that you understand and appreciate another point of view or experience. Actively listen to the meaning of others' words to deepen your understanding of their perspectives.

NOT COURAGEOUS ←

→ COURAGEOUS

WHAT PEOPLE SAY
"THERE'S NO POINT IN TALKING ABOUT THIS."

HOW IT'S NOT COURAGEOUS
Sends a message that you are unwilling to engage in dialogue.¹⁰ Suggests that the goal of understanding each other better is not worthwhile, when, in fact, it can help build inclusion.¹¹

WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD
"To make real change, we have to understand each other. That takes talking and, importantly, listening to each other to bridge our differences. Let's start there."

Communicate **COURAGEOUSLY** by acknowledging that talking about some topics is challenging but that you are open to doing so, even when difficult. Demonstrate that it is safe to bring sensitive issues up with you.

UNACCOUNTABLE ←

→ ACCOUNTABLE

WHAT PEOPLE SAY
"I'M NOT SEXIST, BUT...."

HOW IT'S UNACCOUNTABLE
Opening the statement with denial shuts down candid conversations and says that you are unwilling to explore your potential blind spots.¹²

WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD
"I acknowledge that I have biases that may be bubbling up here. I'd like to have a courageous and honest conversation to help me uncover my blind spots or see things from a different perspective."

Demonstrate **ACCOUNTABILITY** by taking responsibility for how your words and actions affect those around you. Invite feedback to learn how your impact might be different from what you intended.¹³

BE OPEN
Start with an open mind, and invite conversations by asking questions. Respect and affirm your colleagues' views, even if you disagree or their views are different from your own.

LEAD WITH INTENTION
Use your words and actions to purposefully create different opportunities for dialogue. Rethink the "I tried once, and it did not work..." mindset—it takes time to build trust and connection. Continue to assume positive intent.

ROLE MODEL
Inspire others to connect across divides through your example. Seek to learn, even in tough situations, and encourage others to do the same.

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WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE

Words reflect workplace culture and can reinforce negative gender stereotypes.

Stop using these common words and phrases, which harm women's advancement opportunities, and focus on performance and outcomes instead.

IMPACT		RESEARCH SAYS
Can put women in a stressful double-bind where they are either too soft or too hard and never just right.	"SHE COMES ACROSS AS ABRASIVE."	To be perceived as competent leaders women are expected to be both assertive and warm. ¹
WHAT TO DO INSTEAD Shift attention away from style and focus on her work performance.		

IMPACT		RESEARCH SAYS
Diminishes women's contributions, relegating them to "supporting" rather than "central/leading" roles.	"SHE'S SO HELPFUL."	When women are praised for their supportiveness, they are less likely to be thought of as leaders. ²
WHAT TO DO INSTEAD Describe her contributions to the project or team.		

IMPACT		RESEARCH SAYS
Puts unfair pressure on women to monitor and manage their emotional expressions.	"SHE GETS OVERLY EMOTIONAL."	Women are seen as less competent and less deserving of high status positions when they display anger. ³
WHAT TO DO INSTEAD Describe the consequences of her behavior without using labels.		

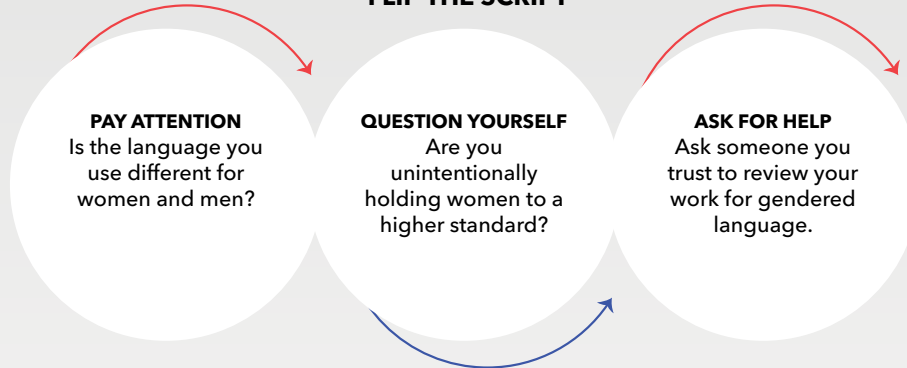


WHAT TO DO INSTEAD
Stop using code and explain what you mean other than "not her."



WHAT TO DO INSTEAD
Don't make it about leadership style, but whether she is demonstrating good judgment.

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RACE & ETHNICITY

Even with the best intentions, we can say or do things that are offensive and hurtful. Getting past these missteps means recognizing that our words matter. This means taking action by using words that create inclusive environments where people feel both that they are valued and that they belong.¹

IMPACT		RESEARCH SAYS
Ignoring differences can stifle trust, authentic communication, and your ability to connect with someone who is different from you in some way.	"WE DON'T SEE COLOR-ONLY PEOPLE."	It is not racist to see a person's race or ethnicity—it is in fact a natural tendency. Avoiding conversations about race to maintain neutrality will not create an ideal work environment for <i>all</i> employees. ²

WHAT TO DO INSTEAD

Ask your colleagues who have a different racial, ethnic, or cultural background than yours if they feel your workplace honors their identity and experiences.

IMPACT		RESEARCH SAYS
Implies that you had lower expectations, possibly because of the person's race or ethnicity.	"YOU ARE SO ARTICULATE."	This reinforces the stereotype that people of color and ethnic minorities are less competent than their white counterparts, and that those who are successful are an "exception to the rule." ³

WHAT TO DO INSTEAD

Provide concrete examples of why and how you felt the individual excelled. For example, *"Your presentation was very motivating, and it aligned with our business goals very well."*

IMPACT		RESEARCH SAYS
Insinuates that racial or ethnic minorities are "outsiders" who can't speak English and don't really belong where they live or work.	"SHE SPEAKS ENGLISH WELL."	People of all races and ethnicities can speak English well. ⁴

WHAT TO DO INSTEAD

Unless the person has previously struggled with the English language and has made vast improvements, it is better to congratulate your peer on the content of their work.

IMPACT

Shutting down authentic conversations disempowers and shames people by diminishing their experiences, feelings, and sense of worth.

RESEARCH SAYS

Minimizing another person's experiences can raise tensions, lead to defensiveness, and reinforce exclusion.⁵

"YOU ARE OVERLY SENSITIVE."

WHAT TO DO INSTEAD

Step into another person's shoes and learn more about their experiences. For example, "I recognize that this is important to you; I'd like to understand more..."

IMPACT

Questioning the qualifications of other colleagues can make them feel that they must always "prove" themselves worthy to be in their role.

RESEARCH SAYS

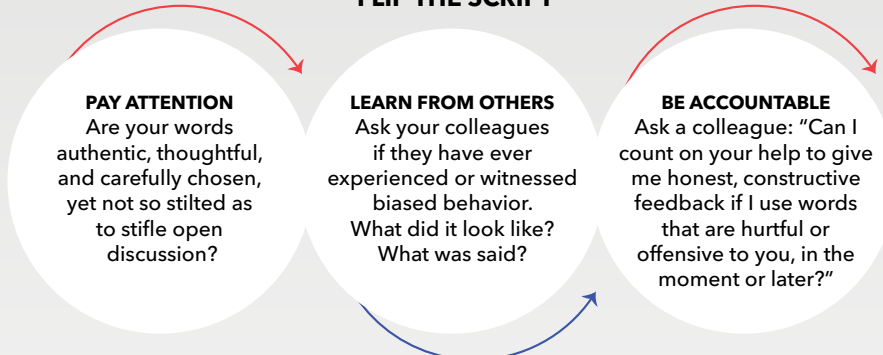
Some people assume that people of color have benefitted from special treatment through affirmative action or quota systems and are therefore not qualified.⁶

"SO, HOW DID YOU GET THIS NEW POSITION?"

WHAT TO DO INSTEAD

Congratulate your colleague on the new position. Ask questions such as, "What energizes you about your new role? How can I support your transition? How can we team up to advance our company's mission?"

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SEXUAL ORIENTATION IN THE WORKPLACE

Words reflect workplace culture. Even when we have the best intentions, our words can reinforce negative stereotypes around sexual orientation. We must recognize that our words matter and take action by using words that create inclusive environments where people feel both that they are valued and that they belong.

IMPACT		RESEARCH SAYS
Not being able to bring their whole selves to work can isolate lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) employees and chip away at their ability to forge valuable relationships with co-workers.	"TALKING ABOUT YOUR SEXUAL ORIENTATION IS NOT PROFESSIONAL."	Straight workers often make casual references to their sexual orientation with colleagues during routine small talk. Similar sharing by LGB individuals can be unfairly deemed inappropriate or unprofessional. ¹

WHAT TO DO INSTEAD

Use inclusive language such as "partner" or "spouse" rather than "husband" or "wife."

IMPACT		RESEARCH SAYS
Depending on the situation, outing colleagues can have serious repercussions on their emotional and/or physical well-being, employment, economic stability, personal safety, and/or religious or family situations. ²	"YOU KNOW THEY'RE GAY, RIGHT?"	Coming out is a deeply personal individual choice and process that rarely happens just once. Approximately three-quarters of all lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) workers hide who they are in the workplace to some extent, with nearly half choosing to be open with some colleagues but not others. ³

WHAT TO DO INSTEAD

Ask colleagues how you can best be an ally for them while respecting their privacy.⁴

IMPACT		RESEARCH SAYS
This phrase can demean LGB employees, make them feel unsafe and unwelcome, and may lead them to become less engaged at work. ⁵	"THAT'S SO GAY."	Over 40% of LGBT employees have experienced some form of discrimination on the job ⁶ or take actions such as hiding who they are to avoid it. ⁷

WHAT TO DO INSTEAD

Interrupt derogatory language, offensive comments, and "jokes" to let people know that this kind of language is not okay.⁸

IMPACT		RESEARCH SAYS
Stereotyping can exacerbate bias and discrimination ⁹ and may heighten experiences of "otherness" for LGB employees. ¹⁰	<p>"HE'S GAY, SO OBVIOUSLY HE'S NOT RIGHT FOR THIS."</p>	Stereotyping may limit employees' ability to innovate and perform to their full potential. Stereotypes related to sexual orientation that conflict with prevailing leadership norms may cause LGB employees to be overlooked for opportunities, ¹¹ resulting in downsized aspirations and loss of talent. ¹²

WHAT TO DO INSTEAD

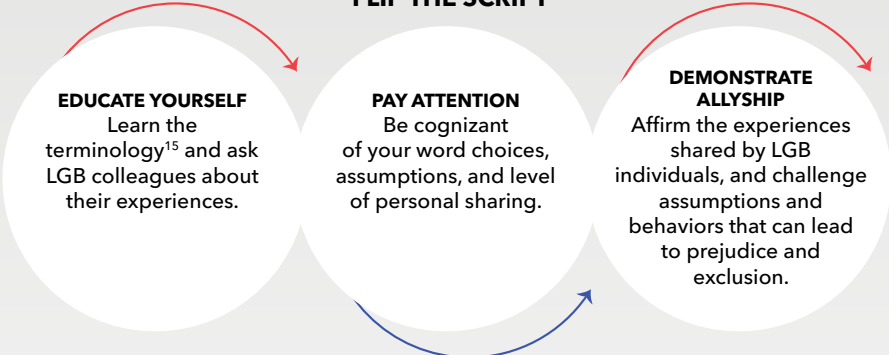
Focus on objective standards of performance, not assumptions or subjective preferences such as "style" or "fit."

IMPACT		RESEARCH SAYS
Implicitly asking employees to cover or downplay aspects of their personality or presentation to conform to heteronormative standards (i.e., "gender performance" ¹³) prevents them from bringing their authentic selves to work.	<p>"CAN YOU TONE DOWN THE GAY?"</p>	Over 60% of employees of all backgrounds, including LGB individuals, report actively hiding an aspect of themselves at work. Covering can lead employees to feel unable to fulfill their potential and can damage their sense of self and commitment to the organization. ¹⁴

WHAT TO DO INSTEAD

Get to know colleagues who are different from you, and engage in courageous conversations to broaden your perspectives.

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THE DOUBLE-BIND DILEMMA FOR WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

Damned if you do, doomed if you don't.
Too soft. Too tough. Never just right.



GENDER STEREOTYPES CREATE A NO-WIN SITUATION FOR WOMEN LEADERS

STEREOTYPE

DOUBLE-BIND



Men Take Charge

- Strong
- Decisive
- Assertive

When women **take charge**, they are viewed as competent leaders—but disliked.



Women Take Care

- Nurturing
- Emotional
- Communicative

When women **take care**, they are liked—but viewed as less competent leaders.

RESULT

Women leaders are seen as competent or likeable, but rarely both.



THE "THINK LEADER, THINK MALE" MINDSET CREATES AN INVISIBLE BARRIER FOR WOMEN

Women spend additional time during work hours:

Proving they are competent leaders, again and again.

Monitoring, and compensating for, stereotypical perceptions of them as leaders.



Women leaders are held to a higher standard for competency and often reap smaller rewards than men.



Women leaders work twice as hard as men for the same recognition.

RESULT

It's time to redefine what it means to be a leader to increase opportunities for women at all levels, in all professions, and in all walks of life.



STRATEGIES FOR DISMANTLING THE DOUBLE-BIND



Interrupt bias. Speak up if you notice colleagues using words that reinforce negative gender stereotypes. Phrases such as "she is abrasive," "she's so emotional," or "she talks too much" can undermine a woman's perceived competence and ability to lead.



Use the same standards for women and men when formally evaluating employees.

Challenge your thinking by reversing the gender of the person you're evaluating to see if it makes a difference in your language and assessment.



Be a visible champion.

Promote the accomplishments of women and actively advocate for their development and advancement. You will serve as a powerful role model for others to do the same.

Source: Catalyst, *The Double-Bind Dilemma for Women In Leadership: Damned If You Do, Doomed If You Don't* (2007).

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Research Partners: Altria, Bank of America, Bloomberg, BMO Financial Group, The Boston Consulting Group, Cargill, Chevron Corporation, Debevoise & Plimpton LLP, Dell Inc., Deutsche Bank AG, EY, IBM Corporation, KeyBank, Kimberly-Clark Corporation, McDonald's Corporation, Merck & Co., Inc., Sodexo, UPS.



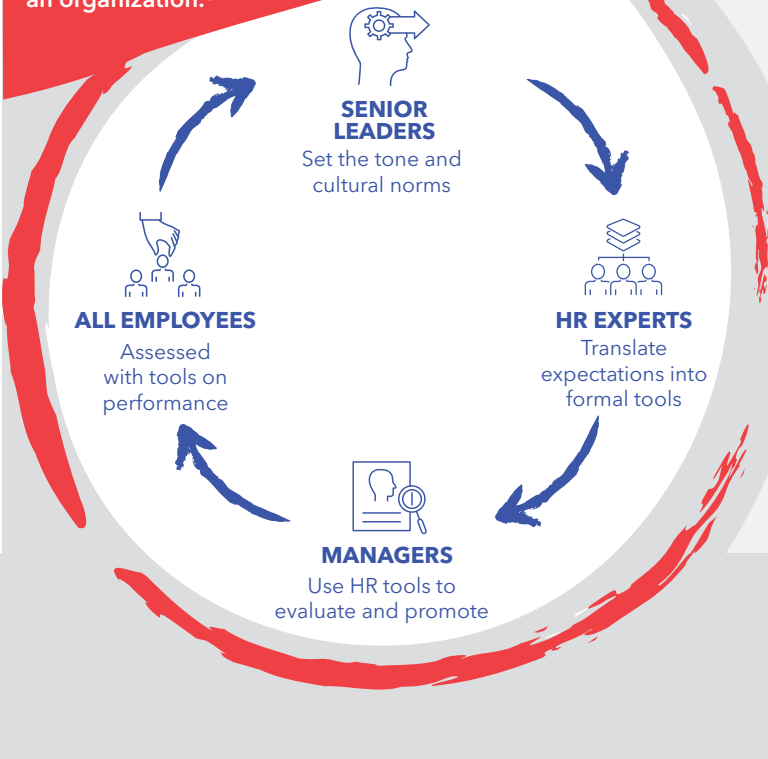
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CATALYST
WORKPLACES THAT WORK FOR WOMEN

BREAK THE CYCLE

Eliminating Gender Bias In Talent Management Systems

Our research shows that gender bias can seep into talent management systems and create an endless cycle that cascades down to every employee at every level of an organization.¹



SENIOR LEADERS

set the tone and cultural norms for the behaviors that are rewarded and those that aren't, and they determine the kinds of leaders who are promoted, often because "like likes like."

RESULT: Since senior leaders tend to be male, they may also tend to value stereotypically masculine behaviors and skills.

HR EXPERTS

translate senior leaders' expectations into talent management programs, processes, and tools.

RESULT: Everyone is judged against masculine standards, disadvantaging women.

MANAGERS

use HR's tools and processes to evaluate direct reports, identify high potentials, allocate "hot jobs," and promote individuals.

RESULT: Managers see emerging male leaders as the "best fit" because stereotypically masculine behaviors are baked into the system.

ALL EMPLOYEES

are assessed on their performance regularly.

RESULT: Based on potentially biased evaluations, some people are rewarded, some are not, and the cycle starts again.

TAKE ACTION TO BREAK THE CYCLE



SENIOR LEADERS

Your behavior matters. Become a model for inclusion by championing people who are different from you and building inclusive teams with diverse voices.



HR EXPERTS

Your process matters. Check yourself and your recruitment systems for cracks where biases can seep in.



MANAGERS

Your assignments matter. Make sure you offer development opportunities and "hot jobs" to everyone on your team, not just the usual suspects.

ASK YOURSELF:

Who gets visibility in your organization? Who gets rewarded?

What competencies does your organization value? Are these competencies gendered?

Who has access to "hot jobs"? Who have you identified as an emerging leader?

Source:

1. The findings from this report are based on an assessment of 110 talent management systems representing 19 industries. Anika K. Warren, *Cascading Gender Biases, Compounding Effects: An Assessment of Talent Management Systems* (Catalyst, 2009).

Research Partners: Altria Group, Bank of America, Bloomberg, BMO Financial Group, The Boston Consulting Group (BCG), Cargill, Incorporated, Chevron Corporation, Debevoise & Plimpton LLP, Dell Inc., Deutsche Bank, EY, IBM Corporation, Kimberly-Clark Corporation, McDonald's Corporation, Merck & Co., Inc., Sodexo, UPS, Verizon Communications Inc.



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