



Blind spots

Video discussion guide



Introduction

What is a bias?

A bias is a preference or prejudice for or against something. Not all biases are bad: for example, it's natural to have a preference for your family, a favorite sports team, or your alma mater. The issue arises when a bias positively or negatively impacts someone else and creates an unfair advantage or disadvantage for others.

Unconscious bias - or implicit bias - happens without us even knowing it. Experts believe that approximately 90% of our decisions are made by our unconscious minds. Our brains are wired to make cognitive shortcuts to help us process the millions of pieces of information that we receive every second. We make snap judgments, which can sometimes be wrong and might not be aligned with our conscious values and beliefs. This can result in us acting in ways that have unintentional consequences for ourselves and others.

Why focus on unconscious bias?

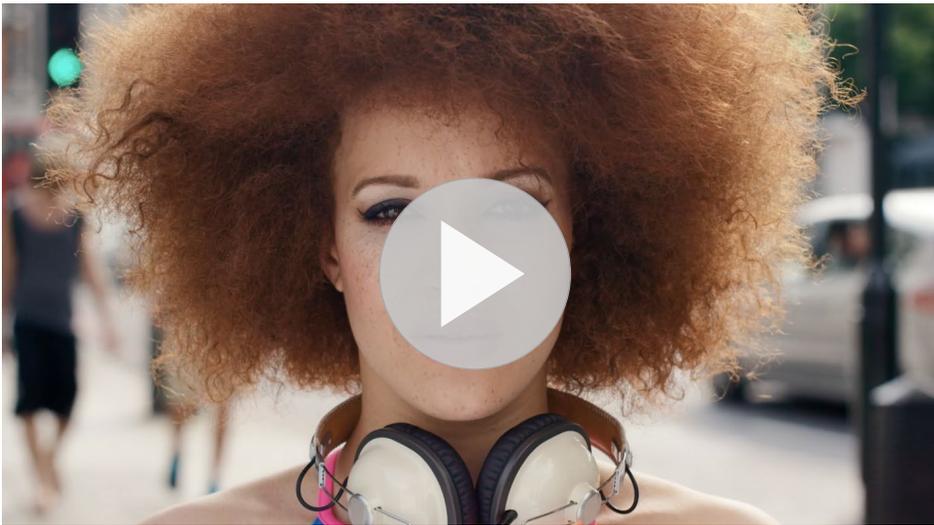
People want to be fair towards others, but our unconscious minds might sometimes get in the way. By bringing awareness to our unconscious minds, we can make decisions and take actions that are more aligned with our declared beliefs.

Challenge assumptions

Our brains are wired to make assumptions, which can sometimes be off base. We think it's an honest mistake; science calls it a blind spot.

Please note

In order to save the text being typed into the guides, save a copy of the pdf to your computer first and then add text to the file.



What messages, if any, in the video surprised you?

Experts say that we all have blind spots, which can lead to snap judgments. Have you ever found yourself “writing off” or rationalizing a snap judgment as an honest mistake? What lesson did you learn from this experience?



Challenge assumptions (cont'd)

In what types of situations do you find yourself allowing your brain to work on autopilot? How can you prevent this from happening?

How can you identify when your unconscious mind is not aligned with your conscious beliefs?



Enhance objectivity

First impressions can block objectivity, which can cause missed opportunities. Sometimes wanting to be “right” can take us in the wrong direction.



What concepts regarding halo/horns or confirmation bias were new to you?

Do you agree with the idea that not all biases are bad? Why or why not?



Enhance objectivity (cont'd)

How can you manage the impact of first impressions on future interactions?

How can having a “halo” bias set someone up for failure?

How can you overcome a “horns” bias?

In what types of situations might you be more likely to rely on confirmation bias? Why?

Studies say that people spend 36% more time looking for information that confirms their beliefs. Have you ever found yourself in a situation where you give more weight to information that supports your beliefs and discard information that does not? What was the outcome?





Enhance objectivity (cont'd)

Take action

The video includes potential actions to manage the impact of halo/horns and confirmation bias. Discuss these as a group. Then take a moment to draft your personal action commitments.

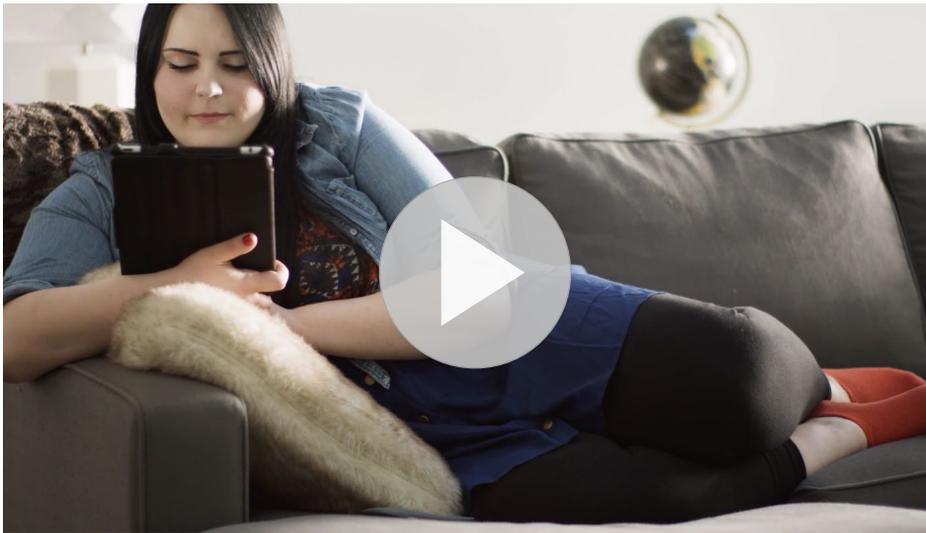
- **Be open.** Don't let one shining moment or one speed bump sway your opinion forever.
- **Look at all evidence objectively.** Play your own devil's advocate and seek out contradictory views.
- **Slow down your thinking.** Ask questions and bring in other perspectives to expand your point of view.

Actions I will commit to:



Overcome stereotypes

Stereotypes can influence our perception of who's the "right fit". They may create a road block towards our destination.



What studies or messages in the video surprised you the most? Why?

Have you experienced a time when your mental picture of someone did not match their appearance? How/why did you develop that mental picture? How did you handle the disconnect?

A photograph of three business professionals standing in a hallway with large columns. On the left is a man with a beard wearing a blue blazer and a purple tie. In the center is a woman with blonde hair wearing a brown blazer over an orange top. On the right is a man with glasses wearing a dark suit and a brown tie. The image is partially obscured by an orange horizontal bar at the bottom.

Overcome stereotypes (cont'd)

What challenges might “fit” present for our ideas of who is a leader?

How does the media influence prototypes?

How can you challenge or change potential societal stereotypes of who may be right for a particular role/profession/career?

A photograph of three business professionals standing in a hallway with large columns. On the left is a man with a beard wearing a blue blazer and a purple tie. In the center is a woman with blonde hair wearing a brown blazer over an orange top. On the right is a man with glasses wearing a dark suit and a brown tie. The text 'Overcome stereotypes (cont'd)' is overlaid in white on a dark orange background at the bottom of the image.

Overcome stereotypes (cont'd)

Take action

The video includes potential actions to manage the impact of prototype bias. Discuss these as a group. Then take a moment to draft your personal action commitments.

- **Set objective criteria.** This can help prevent you from being swayed by irrelevant factors.
- **Share the “why” behind your decisions.** This will help you double check your objectivity.
- **Don’t make assumptions based solely on fit.** Make decisions based on examining skills and supportable objective criteria.

Actions I will commit to:



Broaden perspectives

It's natural to gravitate towards people who are like us. But making decisions solely on who we're comfortable with can cause tunnel vision.



Have you ever experienced the similarity bias? If so, in what areas of your identity, outside of race and gender, have you encountered this? (Consider neighborhoods, hobbies, alma mater, employer, etc.)?

Consider a time when you felt an immediate connection with or had a strong preference for someone. How might similarity bias (your preference for someone you perceive is similar to you) have influenced your behavior towards them?



Broaden perspectives (cont'd)

Conversely, how might a belief that someone is different influence one's behavior towards them?

What techniques can you use to counteract the potential impact of similarity bias?

Take action

The video includes potential actions to manage the impact of similarity bias. Discuss these as a group. Then take a moment to draft your personal action commitments.

- **Examine your network.** Who's in it? Who's not? Don't unintentionally exclude people who aren't like you.
- **Open the door to your inner circle.** Invite others with different experience and perspectives in.
- **Encourage ideas.** It's one thing to give someone a seat at the table. It's another to give them a voice. Make sure to foster the sharing of ideas across all team members.

Actions I will commit to:



To learn more, visit:

<https://www.pwc.com/us/blindspots>

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