Testing Your Hidden Bias

Introduction: All of us have preferences or biases. Sometimes people say, “I may be biased, but I think\_\_\_\_\_\_is better than \_\_\_\_\_\_.” Can you remember a time when you made such a statement? It may have been in reference to a particular type of food, car, or clothing. It is natural and consistent with human behavior to have such preferences or biases. Research also demonstrates that we have hidden biases. They are not conscious or intentional but they can influence our beliefs, attitudes, expectations, and behaviors. This lesson provides a unique opportunity to self-examine one’s own hidden biases. Though this may be uncomfortable, the intent is to enhance self-awareness and self-knowledge that can lead to a culture of acceptance. This is a completely confidential activity. You will not be asked to share the results.

Key Terms

- A stereotype is an exaggerated belief, image or distorted truth about a person or group — a generalization that allows for little or no individual differences or social variation. Stereotypes are based on images in mass media, or reputations passed on by parents, peers and other members of society. Stereotypes can be positive or negative.

- A prejudice is an opinion, prejudgment or attitude about a group or its individual members. A prejudice can be positive, but in our usage refers to a negative attitude. Prejudices are often accompanied by ignorance, fear or hatred. Prejudices are formed by a complex psychological process that begins with attachment to a close circle of acquaintances or an "in-group" such as a family. Prejudice is often aimed at "out-groups."

- Discrimination is behavior that treats people unequally because of their group memberships. Discriminatory behavior, ranging from slights to hate crimes, often begins with negative stereotypes and prejudices.

If people are aware of their hidden biases, they can monitor and attempt to ameliorate hidden attitudes before they are expressed through behavior. This compensation can include attention to language, body language and to the stigmatization felt by target groups. Common sense and research evidence also suggest that a change in behavior can modify beliefs and attitudes. It would seem logical that a conscious decision to be egalitarian might lead one to widen one's circle of friends and knowledge of other groups. Such efforts may, over time, reduce the strength of unconscious biases. It can be easy to reject the results of the tests as "not me" when you first encounter them. But that's the easy path. To ask where these biases come from, what they mean, and what we can do about them is the harder task.

**Directions:**

1 – Access <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>

2 – Click “GO” from the bottom left under Project Implicit-Social Attitudes.

3 – Read the preliminary information and click “I wish to proceed”.

4 – Select one of the following tests:

-Arab-Muslim

-Race

-Sexuality

-Weight

5 – Complete the test.

6 – After receiving your results, reflect on them.

How did you feel taking the test?

What made taking the test a comfortable or uncomfortable experience for you?

Did the test results surprise you? Why or why not?

What insights did you gain from taking the test?

Additional Resources

• The Bias Cleanses: Our seven-day de-biasing programs deliver scientifically grounded, daily exercises to help people unlearn biases that have built up over years. Developed in partnership with the Kirwan Institute, the racial- and gender-bias cleanses include activities like setting a counter-stereotypical image as the background on your phone, engaging in intergroup contact and consuming media that help build empathy for people of other backgrounds.

• Look Deeper: In response to the fact that nearly 70 percent of young people believe that there should be more safe online spaces to have respectful discussions of bias, MTV invited its audience to help create a platform for conversation around these topics through the "Look Different Challenge.” The winning idea inspired the creation of Look Deeper, a digital space where young people can share personal stories about bias in pop culture, the news and in their own lives using images, videos, audio clips, links and more.

Look on back for computer lab assignments.

Computer Lab 101 – Mr. Dixon & Mr. Miller

Computer Lab 102 – Mrs. Fraley & Mrs. A. Mann

Computer Lab 112 – Mrs. Wilson

Computer Lab 215 – Mrs. Lambert & Mr. Mustain

Computer Lab T10 – Mr. Blevins

Mrs. Nester & Mr. Neel will use their own labs