

Inclusion, Belonging, and Excellence for One King County: Addressing Implicit Bias, Racial Anxiety, and Stereotype Threat

A Note to Participants

Thank you for being brave and open while you participate in this discussion, and for your commitment to ending racism within our lifetime. This session is designed to foster a nurturing community of learning, where all participants feel empowered to share and have positive interactions.

Achieving Fairness and Opportunity in King County Government Practices

Ensuring fairness and opportunity in how we operate as King County government and how we serve our communities, requires *proactively* dismantling institutional and structural racism.

The concepts and tools provided in this discussion enable us to actively and effectively promote equitable outcomes in our workplaces and communities.

Taking an Implicit Association Test (IAT)

Before you join this discussion, please take the Race Implicit Association Test and at least one other IAT of your choice:

<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>

A considerable part of this discussion is about understanding our individual unconscious biases – yes, we *all* have them. The IAT is an educational tool that evaluates a baseline of some of our most common unconscious biases.

The IAT can only be taken on a computer. It is advised that you take the IATs in a private place where you feel comfortable.

Feedback

How did it go? Share your insights with jake.ketchum@kingcounty.gov, candace.jackson@kingcounty.gov, or arun.sambaturo@kingcounty.gov.

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Participant Guide*

Total time = 90 minutes

Part 1: Getting Started (15 minutes)

Purpose: Achieve King County Equity and Social Justice foundational practice of “fostering an organizational culture that promotes fairness and opportunity.”[†]

Discussion Goals

1. Understand the concept of implicit bias and begin to identify our individual biases.
2. Learn how we experience racial anxiety and stereotype threat, and how these experiences impact our workplace and community interactions.
3. Discuss ways to mitigate implicit bias at decision points:
 - Hiring
 - Work relationships
 - Policy (drafting, interpretation, implementation)
 - Community engagement
 - Customer service
 - Personnel supervision

* Revised by Rachel Godsil from Within Our Lifetime Facilitator Guide created by Patrick L. Scully, Ph.D. Clearview Consulting, LLC. Adapted for King County Equity and Social Justice.

For more information, see <http://www.withinourlifetime.net/Blog/index.html>

[†] King County Ordinance 16948. October 2010 (Pg. 4, Line 80.)

Guidelines for Multicultural Interactions (by Laurin Mayeno and Elena Featherston, 2006, adapted from VISIONS, Inc.)

Be present... Bring your full attention to the process. Acknowledge anything that you need to let go of in order to be present.

Try on new ideas, perspectives... Be willing to open up to new territory and break through old patterns. Remember, “try on” is not the same as “take on.”

It’s OK to disagree... Avoid attacking, discounting or judging the beliefs and views of others. Instead, welcome disagreement as an opportunity to expand your world.

Confidentiality... It helps to remember that the story belongs to the teller.

Step up, step back... Be aware of sharing space in the group. Respect the different rhythms in the room; it is ok to be with silence.

Self-awareness... Respect and connect to your thoughts, feelings and reactions in the process. Monitor the content, the process and yourself.

Check out assumptions... This is an opportunity to learn more about yourself and others; do not “assume” you know what is meant by a communication especially when it triggers you – ask questions.

Practice “both/and” thinking... Making room for more than one idea at a time means appreciating and valuing multiple realities.

Intent is different from impact... and both are important. It is also important to own our ability to have a negative impact in another person’s life despite our best intention.

Listen deeply... Listen with intent to hear, listen for the entire content and what is behind the words. Engage heart and mind -- listen with alert compassion.

Speak from the “I...” is speaking from one’s personal experience rather than saying “we,” it allows us to take ownership of thoughts, feelings and actions.

Instructions for Participants

- *Around your table/group, share what you hope to get out of this discussion.*



Part 2: Understanding the Concepts (45 minutes, with video)

Short video from Rachel Godsil's presentation at the 2014 ESJ Annual Forum – Building a Culture of Equity (28 min.): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AGIRt-5HX_E&feature=em-share_video_user

Implicit bias refers to the process of associating stereotypes or attitudes toward categories of people without conscious awareness.

Racial anxiety is discomfort about the experience and potential consequences of inter-racial interaction:

- People of color can be anxious that they will be the target of discrimination and hostile or distant treatment;
- Whites can be anxious that they will be assumed to be racist and, therefore, will be met with distrust or hostility.

People experiencing racial anxiety often engage in less eye contact, have shorter interactions, and generally seem—and feel—awkward. Not surprisingly, if two people are both anxious that an interaction will be negative, it often is. So racial anxiety can result in a negative feedback loop in which both parties' fears appear to be confirmed by the behavior of the other.

Stereotype threat occurs when a person is concerned that she will confirm a negative stereotype about her group. When people are aware of a negative stereotype about their group in a domain in which they are identified, their attention is split between the activity at hand and concerns about being seen stereotypically.

Implicit Association Test (drawing from Discussion Materials, Patricia Devine) **(15+minutes)**

Questions for Participants

- *Have you taken the Race IAT and one other IAT of your choice?*
- *What are your thoughts or reactions?*
- *What does it mean for how you work with your colleagues? The public?*

If you took the Race IAT and found it easier to pair white faces with positive words and black faces with negative words or the Gender IAT and found it easier to associate words linked to work with men and family to women, you are not alone. More than 85% of whites are shown to have a “preference” for whites, for example. The good news is that this “preference” is not fixed – you can change it – and that you can make sure your behavior is not affected by this automatic response that is not consistent with your conscious beliefs.

Part 3: Preventing Effects of Implicit Bias (30 minutes)

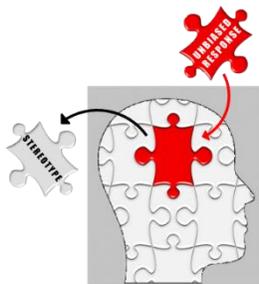
It is important that people consciously engage in the process (Wald and Tropp^{*‡}, 2013):

- Have intention and motivation to bring about change
- Become aware of bias
- Pay attention to when stereotypical responses or assumptions are activated
- Make time to practice new strategies

Instructions for Participants

Take a moment to review the interventions handout. (2 min.) We will focus on the interventions that we can practice easily on our own as individuals, and start to develop immediately within our workplaces, to bring about positive change.

Individual Interventions



Stereotype Replacement



Individuation



Increasing opportunities for contact

Institutional Interventions

- Improve Conditions of Decision-making
- Count

[‡] Wald, J., Tropp, L. *Strategies for Reducing Racial Bias and Anxiety in Schools* (PDF document). Retrieved from http://www.onenationindivisible.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Strategies-for-Reducing-Racial-Bias-and-Anxiety-in-Schools_Wald-and-Tropp.pdf

Questions for Participants

Consider a specific decision point (select one from list on page 2) and discuss how we can apply these concepts and interventions that we reviewed above, during decision-making to minimize/eliminate negative impact.

1. What are some known risk areas where bias can influence interactions and decision-making?
2. How is implicit bias, racial anxiety, or stereotype threat at play?
3. How can you determine whether bias, racial anxiety or stereotype threat might be impacting decisions?
4. Which of the interventions (see definitions sheet) are likely to be most useful and how can they be applied to the situation?
5. How will you measure success?

FOOD for THOUGHT

(additional reading on these mind sciences)

Blindspot: Hidden Biases of Good People by Mahzarin Banaji and Anthony Greenwald, explore hidden biases that we all carry from a lifetime of experiences with social groups – age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, social class, sexuality, disability status, or nationality.

Whistling Vivaldi: How Stereotypes Affect Us and What We Can Do (Issues of Our Time) by Claude M. Steele offers a vivid first-person account of the research that supports his groundbreaking conclusions on stereotypes and identity.

