Recognizing and Addressing Unconscious Bias

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Diversity and Inclusion = Innovation and Productivity

Identity diversity among intelligent people on a team contributes more to effective problem-solving than a team comprised of the best-performing, intelligent people without identity diversity.

NY Times, 2008

Studies have shown that companies that achieve diversity in their management and on their corporate boards attain better financial results, on average, than other companies.

What are your associations with “bias” and “unconscious bias”? Why is this important to address in the academic medicine environment?
A Trip to the Grocery Store

www.crackingthecodes.org
What is bias?

A tendency or inclination that results in judgment without question.

- An automatic response
- A shortcut to interact with our world
What is Unconscious Bias?

Mental associations without:

• Awareness
• Intention
• Control

These often conflict with our conscious attitudes, behaviors, and intentions.
Which biases are ours?
Identifying and Navigating Bias

- Recruitment
- Sourcing
- Interviewing
- Hiring
- Onboarding
- Mentoring & Sponsorship
- Calibration
- Performance Review
- Recognizing Talent
- Developing & Promoting Talent

Ross, 2014: *Everyday Bias, “A Top Ten List of Ways to Identify and Navigate Bias in Talent Management”*
The Priming Effect

Medical school applicants interviewed on rainy days received scores equivalent to a 10% lower mark on the MCAT than those interviewed on sunny days.

Donald Redelmeier, MD and Simon Baxter, BSc, University of Toronto Medical School, 2009
Tactics that help us make more conscious decisions

- Priming
- New Forms of Accountability
- Reorganizing Structures and Systems

Ross, 2015: “3 Ways to Make Less Biased Decisions”
6 Ways to Mitigate Your Biases

1. Recognize and accept that you have bias
6 Ways to Mitigate Your Biases

2. Develop the capacity to use a flashlight on yourself
6 Ways to Mitigate Your Biases

3. Practice “Constructive Uncertainty”
Freedom is the pause between stimulus and response.

- Rollo May
Take a P.A.U.S.E.
A quick way to check your reaction.

- Pay attention to what’s actually happening, beneath the judgments and assessments
- Acknowledge your own reactions, interpretations and judgments
- Understand the other possible reactions, interpretations and judgments that may be possible
- Search for the most empowering, productive way to deal with the situation
- Execute your action plan
6 Ways to Mitigate Your Biases

4. Explore awkwardness, and discomfort
6 Ways to Mitigate Your Biases

5. Engage with people you consider “others” and expose yourself to positive role models in that group.
6. Get feedback
6 Ways to Mitigate Your Biases

- Recognize and accept that you have bias
- Develop the capacity to use a flashlight on yourself
- Get feedback
- Practice “Constructive Uncertainty”
- Engage with people you consider “others” and expose yourself to positive role models in that group
- Explore awkwardness, and discomfort

Get feedback
Action Planning: What are you committed to?

• Based on what we have discussed today, identify concrete action-steps:
  – How might you use this information to improve your relationship with a colleague?
  – Identify a situation that may arise and strategize how you could mitigate the impact of bias.
  – Come up with an idea for recognizing, navigating, and/or mitigating biases in your team, department or organization.
THANK YOU!