

Controlling the Impact of Unconscious Bias

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Today's Training

- ✓ How does bias show up in the brain?
- ✓ How do we mitigate the impact of bias?

Objectives

- Know that bias is a normal function of the brain
- Understand how bias impacts relationships & decision-making

Notes from Harvard Business Review

- Bias training can backfire & lead to more discrimination
- Not just a 1-time training session
- Only 10% of bias programs gave attendees strategies

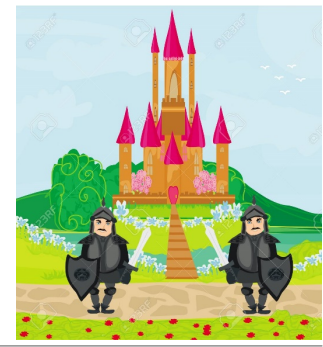




ATP Science

Part 1: How Bias impacts the Brain

Amygdala



- Where our core emotions live
- Plays a significant role in how our body manages and responses to stress
- Moves *very* quickly



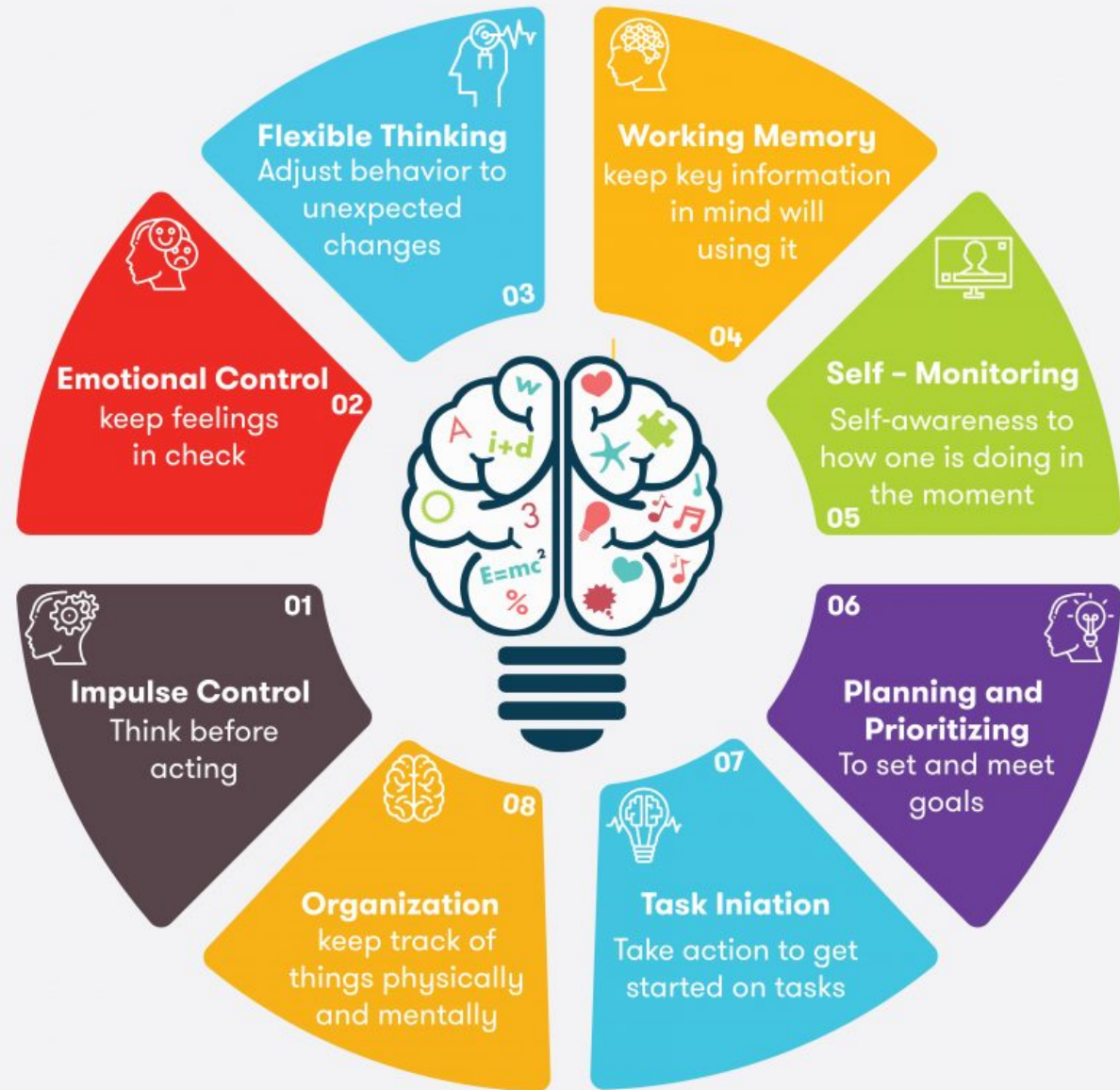


Hippocampus

- Plays a significant role in learning and memory
- Encodes, consolidates, and stores memories
(short term -> long term memory)
- Memory retrieval



Pre-Frontal Cortex





Part 2: About Bias

What is bias?

- Preference for or against a thing, person, or group compared with another
- Can be held by an individual, group, or institution
- Can be positive, benign or negative
- Biases may be in direct opposition to our personal values

How does bias effect us?

“Unconscious biases have a critical and ‘problematic’ effect on our judgment. They cause us to make decisions in favor of one person or group to the detriment of others.”

-Francesca Gino, Professor at Harvard Business School



Too much information?

- Cognitive overload
- Complex decisions

Too many feels?

- Emotional Overload (stress, anger, frustration)
- Feeling Unsafe
- Highly ambiguous decisions

Going too fast?

- Emotional & cognitive resources are depleted

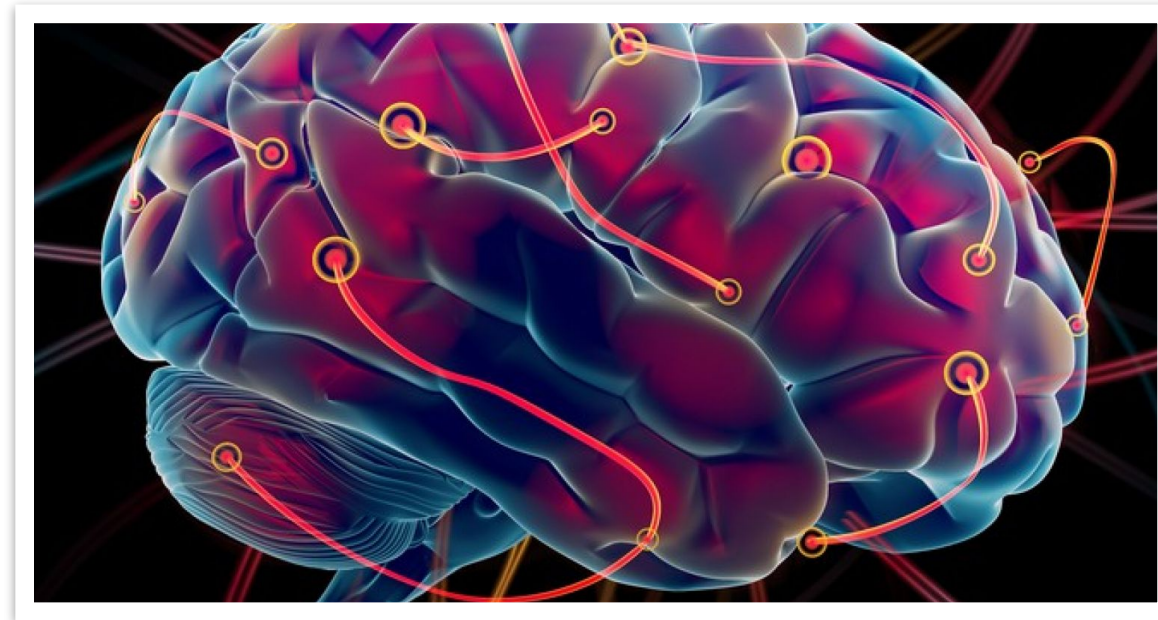
Quick Note about Bias Traps

There are some situations where we are more likely to allow bias to influence our decisions.



Part 3: Controlling for Bias

What should we do about bias?



Mitigate bias' impact

Remember, the goal is to control bias' impact on our relationship & decision making.



Personal Mitigation Tools

- *Identify your biases
- *Diversify your life
- *Mindfulness & meditation

Identify your Biases



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Weight IAT

Weight ('Fat - Thin' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to distinguish faces of people who are obese and people who are thin. It often reveals an automatic preference for thin people relative to fat people.

Asian IAT

Asian American ('Asian - European American' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to recognize White and Asian-American faces, and images of places that are either American or Foreign in origin.

Gender-Career IAT

Gender - Career. This IAT often reveals a relative link between family and females and between career and males.

Native IAT

Native American ('Native - White American' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to recognize White and Native American faces in either classic or modern dress, and the names of places that are either American or Foreign in origin.

Race IAT

Race ('Black - White' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to distinguish faces of European and African origin. It indicates that most Americans have an automatic preference for white over black.

Sexuality IAT

Sexuality ('Gay - Straight' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to distinguish words and symbols representing gay and straight people. It often reveals an automatic preference for straight relative to gay people.

We cannot control for bias if we don't know how bias impacts us

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

Diversify your Life

Why?

- This begins to teach our brain that those who are different from us are not “bad”.
- Helps change the story we have about individuals and groups who are different.

How?

- Expand your network and the content you consume.

Mindfulness & Meditation

What?

- Mindfulness is about being in the present moment,
- Meditation slows down the brain & increases oxygen to our pre-frontal cortex.

How?

- Limiting distractions & multi-tasking.
- Intentionally taking time to engage in deep breathing.

Why?

- Slowing our brain down allows us to use our pre-frontal cortex to make decisions as opposed to our amygdala.

Workplace Mitigation Tools

- *Review decision-making processes
- *Accountability practices
- *Don't let this be a 1-time event

Workplace Decisions

What?

- Decrease the likelihood that bias will impact decisions

Why?

- Begins to shift our systems & allow for long-term change

How?

- Slowing down workplace decisions
- Ensuring diversity AND inclusion when making decisions

Accountability Practices

What?

- Create measure to hold staff team accountable based on bias mitigation tools

Why?

- To create systemic change that is long-term, we must hold ourselves and others accountable.
- Holding ourselves accountable allows us to change practices if they are not working.

How?

- Create ways to measure how mitigation tools are being implemented.

Continue to discuss & learn about bias

Why?

- Controlling bias is not effective with one training, repeated actions are required.

How?

- Discuss bias with your team,
- Engage in ongoing education,
- Practice bias mitigation tools.

Don't forget to take the bias assessment.

How you will be different?

Take a few minutes to think about how your actions will be impacted by this training?

Now, talk with a partner about what you & your organization can do to control for bias.

Let's Talk!

In summary...

Preference for or against a thing, person, or group compared with another.

We have to make a conscious effort to create new neural pathways.

Bias mitigation work begins with an acknowledgement of our biases and includes work to actively control bias's impact on our relationships and decisions.

Questions & Contact Information

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