

## 10 Things To Remember About Implicit Bias

# 1 -- A bias is a preference for OR prejudice (aversion) against a person or group of people; **a bias is implicit when the thinking behind biased behavior happens at the unconscious level**; when we're not aware of the mental processing that gave rise to the behavior; our implicit thinking may also contradict what we believe at the conscious level;

# 2 -- Put another way, implicit bias stems from the rapid and automatic mental associations we make between people (and groups) and the attitudes and stereotypes we hold about them; these associations **happen at the unconscious level and can lead to discriminatory behavior**;

# 3 -- As humans, our brains are hardwired to engage in biased thinking; and, believe it or not, **biased thinking is meant to be a good thing (most of the time)**; we put people, objects, etc. into categories (i.e., black, white, male, female) as a way of navigating life more efficiently; if we didn't think and process information using categories, the human sensory system would be overwhelmed;

# 4 -- **Processing information via the use of categories serves as a form of "mental short-cut;"** it's a way to process large amounts of stimuli without having to be fully

conscious of doing so; BUT, when we apply mental shortcuts to other human beings, the results can lead to harm;

# 5 -- We ALL have implicit bias; **having it doesn't make us bad people; it makes us human**; the question is, what do you do (what actions do you take or not take) once you're aware of your implicit biases?;

# 6 -- Busy-ness; rushing; multi-tasking; all can lead to biased behavior; this is because **our prefrontal cortex (also known as the executive brain) is so cognitively busy that it's unable to check and balance other behaviors**;

# 7 -- Implicit bias isn't just individual; it's social; **the prevailing information we learn about other social groups (immigrants, women, etc.) function as frames (stereotypes)** for how we respond to these groups;

# 8 -- Implicit bias is both **predictive** and **preventive**; people can take the Implicit Association Test (IAT) to find out where their vulnerabilities (their weak spots) are with respect to implicit bias; then practice a set of strategies (also known as de-biasing) to reduce their biases;

# 9 -- **De-biasing only works with people who want to do better and be better**; but struggle with negative stereotypes about other groups (or even their own group); it doesn't work with people who have explicit hate and/or prejudice;

# 10 -- **De-biasing is like breaking a habit**; it doesn't work if you do it once or twice; you have to practice de-biasing on a daily basis until it becomes a new habit.