

MINIMIZING IMPLICIT/UNCONSCIOUS BIAS FOR INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE. D. R. Samuels, Dena Samuels Consulting (dena@denasamuels.com).

Introduction: Understanding how implicit bias operates and its impact on our relationships with others, especially across social differences, is the first step in inclusive excellence. Boysen and Vogel (2009) found that many occurrences of bias tend to go unnoticed. Since bias is a natural process, everyone has some type of bias. Thus, we can learn about our own biases without shame or blame, and how to minimize them with specific strategies. Devine (2001) suggests that implicit bias can be mediated by situational circumstances. Powell (2012) asserts that our ideas and associations can be affected by the way we frame them. This is known as “priming.” That is, providing counter-stereotypic information before engaging with someone who has been targeted by that stereotype can reduce bias. For example, when participants were asked to simply conjure a mental image that challenged a stereotype (e.g., a strong woman), Blair, Ma, and Lenton (2001) found that they were subsequently less likely to stereotype women as weak. This study has implications for the malleability of prejudice and the relative ease with which one can challenge bias. Moreover, more exposure to a marginalized group tends to lead to less bias, suggesting that more intergroup contact, and specifically, intergroup friendships, can aid in overcoming bias (Aberson, Shoemaker, & Tomolillo, 2004). These and other findings submit that if leaders are given the opportunity to learn about their implicit, and often unintended biases, then they can learn to challenge those prejudices before they act on them.

Presentation: Leading-edge research finds that effective anti-bias training incorporates strategies on both personal and institutional levels. This presentation unpacks [implicit/unconscious bias](#), invites participants to consider their own biases, especially across social differences, and the ways biases can be minimized in an organization to increase cultural inclusion.

References:

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