Addressing Bias and Cultivating Belonging

Jamuna Jones, LCSW
Jake Van Epps, PhD
The Great Resignation

https://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/toxic-culture-is-driving-the-great-resignation/

Top Predictors of Attrition During the Great Resignation

The authors analyzed the impact of more than 170 cultural topics on employee attrition in Culture 500 companies from April through September 2021. These five topics were the leading predictors of attrition. Each bar indicates the level of importance of each topic for attrition relative to employee compensation. A toxic culture is 10.4 times more likely to contribute to attrition than compensation.

- Toxic corporate culture: 10.4
- Job insecurity and reorganization: 3.5
- High levels of innovation: 3.2
- Failure to recognize employee performance: 2.9
- Poor response to COVID-19: 1.8
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Disrespectful</strong></td>
<td>Lack of consideration, courtesy, and dignity for others</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Noninclusive</strong></td>
<td><strong>LGBTQ inequity</strong></td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Disability inequity</strong></td>
<td>.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Racial inequity</strong></td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Age inequity</strong></td>
<td>.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Gender inequity</strong></td>
<td>.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Cronyism and nepotism</strong></td>
<td>.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>General noninclusive culture</strong></td>
<td>.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unethical</strong></td>
<td><strong>Unethical behavior</strong></td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Dishonesty</strong></td>
<td>.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Lack of regulatory compliance</strong></td>
<td>.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cutthroat</strong></td>
<td><strong>Backstabbing behavior and ruthless competition</strong></td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Abusive</strong></td>
<td><strong>Bullying, harassment, and hostility</strong></td>
<td>.50</td>
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</table>
Diversity with Equity and Inclusion

Equitable career advancement and mentorship opportunities

Fundamentally building a sense of belonging for everyone

Cultural humility

Openness to growth and feedback

Compassion and connection as the guiding principles
Practices for difficult conversations

- Ground in breath, intention, compassion
- Acknowledge your emotions
- Center the people most impacted
- Give yourself permission to participate at your level
- Vulnerability/discomfort does not equal unsafe
- Allow nonclosure & ongoing learning
Living BIG

**Boundaries**
- We respect each other’s boundaries
- When we are not clear about what is okay and not okay, we ask
- We are willing to say no

**Integrity**
- Choosing courage over comfort
- Choosing what’s right over what’s fun, fast, or easy

**Generosity**
- We are generous with our assumptions

Brene Brown, PhD. Rising Strong
Implicit Bias
Implicit Bias

Also known as implicit social cognition, implicit bias refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner.

Assess yourself:

https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html
High Stress & Implicit Bias

Nagoshi and Nagoshi, 2020, Burnout: The Secret to Unlocking the Stress Cycle; Image by Turning Within Meditation Foundation

Image by Turning Within Meditation Foundation; (Greeson & Brantley, 2009)
Microaggressions
I did a case this morning and spoke to the family after the procedure while wearing my jacket with my name, MD, and ‘Chair of Surgery.’ Family tells the post anesthesia care unit they haven’t talked to the surgeon, so I was paged to come speak to them.

— Female surgical department chair
Microaggressions

Microaggressions are commonplace remarks, questions or actions that are painful because they have to do with a person’s membership in a group that is discriminated against.
Impact of Microaggression:
Racial Battle Fatigue

- Increased depression, anxiety, and trauma
- Increased suicidality
- Correlation with increased heart attacks, hypertension, hospitalization
- Mistrust in service providers
Breaking the Habit

- Awareness (motivation)
- Concern (Motivation)
- Strategies to break the habit
- Effort, practice and setbacks

Mindfulness Meditation Reduces Implicit Age and Race Bias: The Role of Reduced Automaticity of Responding

Adrian Lueke and Bryan Gibson

Abstract

Research has shown that mindfulness can potentially affect implicit race and age bias in a number of ways, including reducing previously unattended automatic responses. We investigated the impact of mindfulness on implicit age and race bias using implicit association tests (IATs). Participants learned either a mindfulness or a control script and then completed the age and race IATs. Mindfulness meditation caused an increase in state mindfulness and a decrease in implicit race and age bias. Analysis using the Green-House corrected for the interaction was due to weaker automaticity of responding in the IATs.

Keywords
Mindfulness, meditation, implicit attitudes, implicit bias, prejudice

We are here to witness from the darkness of ignorance.
—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Mindfulness meditation enables the individual to observe and experience one’s own actions, thoughts, emotions, and feelings without engaging in mental processes that are separate from the self. This allows the individual to understand and reflect on the self, which is beneficial for personal growth and resilience (Schapiro et al., 2016). Research has shown that mindfulness has the potential to increase self-awareness and improve emotional regulation (Kabat-Zinn, 1990). In addition, mindfulness has been linked to a number of cognitive benefits, including improved working memory capacity and reduced levels of anxiety (Kabat-Zinn, 1990; Petrides, 2003).

In this study, we aimed to explore the potential of mindfulness in reducing implicit age and race bias. We hypothesized that mindfulness meditation would reduce implicit bias by increasing awareness of automatic associations and reducing automatic responses. Participants were randomly assigned to either a mindfulness or a control group. The mindfulness group received a 30-minute mindfulness meditation, while the control group engaged in a similar relaxation exercise. After the intervention, participants completed the Implicit Association Test (IAT) to assess implicit age and race bias.

Results

The results showed that participants in the mindfulness group had significantly lower implicit age and race bias compared to the control group. The mindfulness intervention increased state mindfulness and decreased automaticity of responding (Green-House corrected for the interaction). These findings suggest that mindfulness meditation has the potential to reduce implicit age and race bias by increasing awareness of automatic associations and reducing automatic responses.

Discussion

Mindfulness meditation has the potential to reduce implicit bias by increasing awareness of automatic associations and reducing automatic responses. These findings contribute to the growing body of research on the potential of mindfulness in reducing implicit bias and promoting greater awareness of implicit processes. Further research is needed to explore the mechanisms underlying these effects and to understand the implications for reducing implicit bias in real-world contexts.

Figure 1. Implicit bias on the race and age IAT for the control and mindfulness conditions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stereotype replacement</td>
<td>Detecting stereotypic thoughts or media portrayals and replacing them with non-stereotypic responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counter-stereotypic imagery</td>
<td>Spending time thinking about counter-stereotypic exemplars</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perspective-taking</td>
<td>Imagining what it would feel like to be in the position of a member of a different group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individuation</td>
<td>Gather and focus on information that makes someone an individual, rather than generalizing based on group membership</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increasing intergroup contact</td>
<td>Making positive, personal contact with members of stereotyped groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider situational explanations for behavior</td>
<td>Actively consider situational explanations for behavior, rather than jumping to dispositional explanations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modify your environment</td>
<td>Increase representation of underrepresented group members in your visual environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committing to credentials</td>
<td>Commit to evaluation of criteria in advance of viewing any candidate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What to do socially?

Example

Call out vs. Call in
Bias Feedback
Effectiveness

- Witness (as opposed to targeted) seen as supportive and objective
- Staying silent is perceived as complicity
- Presented calmly and appealing to fairness principles lowers defenses
- Clear and tethered to specific evidence of bias

Supporting self

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Acknowledge</th>
<th>Connect</th>
<th>Support</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Take a breath. Acknowledge feelings and experience.</td>
<td>Remember community past and present</td>
<td>Self kindness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I feel unseen.”</td>
<td>“ I am not alone.”</td>
<td>“What do I need now?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“What do I need later?”</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Bystander Response

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<th>Acknowledge</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“It sounds like a microaggression; I can understand you being upset.”</td>
<td>“Thank you for sharing with me. You’re not alone.”</td>
<td>“What do you need right now? Let's problem solve together when you’re ready.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Acknowledging Mistakes

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<th>Acknowledge</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledge impact and emotions. Intentions later.</td>
<td>Apologize and thank</td>
<td>Support the other and yourself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I can see what I’ve said was hurtful”</td>
<td>“Sorry I said that but thank you for sharing with me the feedback.”</td>
<td>Be committed toward growth of self and community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Scenario

The faculty committee is reviewing a graduate student application. A faculty member says, this is going to be a diversity candidate. You want to ask what they mean by that and have a conversation about this statement.

How might you start?
What do you hope to discuss?
What will be challenging about this conversation?
What are negative stereotypes of a diversity hire?
What are additional perspectives?
It’s a long-term practice of habit change.

Patricia Devine
Questions or Comments
Resources
online Resources

https://accelerate.uofuhealth.utah.edu/connect/how-to-respond-with-compassion-when-someone-is-hurt-by-racism
https://accelerate.uofuhealth.utah.edu/explore/commit-to-confronting-the-microaggressions-that-are-affecting-your-learners
https://www.cultureamp.com/blog/how-to-help-black-employees/
https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/03/smarter-living/how-to-respond-to-microaggressions.html
http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/research/understanding-implicit-bias/
Colleagues,

We thank you for your presence and engagement with the important material. Our hope is to acknowledge the impact of bias as well as normalize this reality for us as humans and Americans. If this presentation has brought up challenging emotions for you, Jamuna Jones and Jake Van Epps from the Resiliency Center are happy to speak with you in a one-on-one confidential context or provide you with resources. We understand the discomfort these conversations have and want everyone to feel supported in growing through them.