

# UNCONSCIOUS BIASES



What are they and how to counteract them!

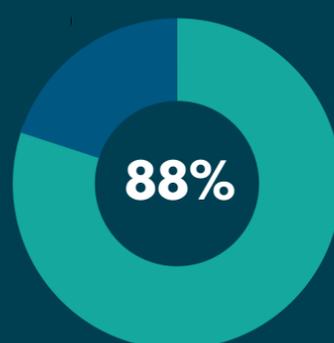
**UNCONSCIOUS BIAS** is an implicit association or attitude—about race or gender, for example—that:



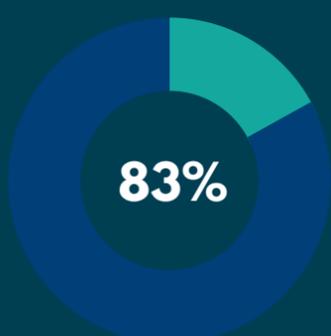
- Operates beyond our control and awareness.
- Informs our perception of a person or social group.
- Can influence our decision-making and behavior toward the target of the bias

## BIAS IS PERVASIVE

Analyses of tens of thousands of tests on implicit bias have revealed that people can be consciously committed to equality, and work deliberately to behave without prejudice, yet still possess negative prejudices or stereotypes.



88%  
of white people had a pro-white or anti-black implicit bias

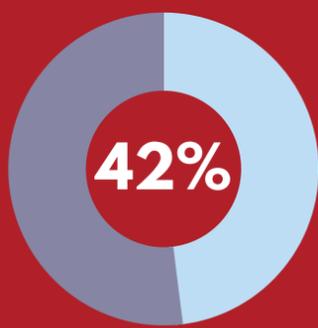


83%  
of heterosexuals showed implicit bias for straight people over gays and lesbians

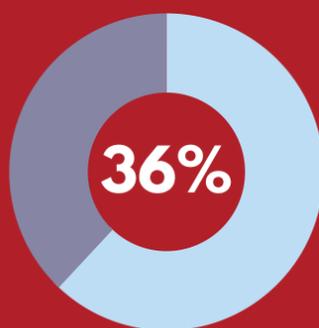
Large majorities of people also showed implicit biases for Christians over Jews, the rich over the poor, and men's careers over women's careers. But these prejudices are not reserved just for the dominant groups.

## MINORITY GROUPS ARE BIASED TOO

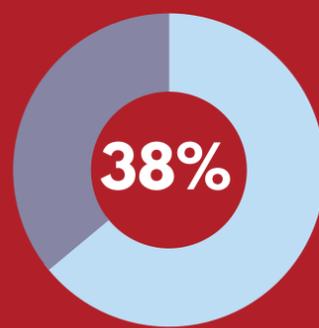
Minorities internalized the same implicit biases as majority groups.



42%  
of blacks showed a pro-white or anti-black bias



36%  
of Arab Muslims showed an anti-Muslim bias



38%  
of gays and lesbians showed a bias for straight people over gays and lesbians

## UNCONSCIOUS BIASES ARE POWERFUL PREDICTORS OF BEHAVIOR

Implicit attitudes affect snap judgments, as well as decisions that are given careful conscious consideration.



The effects of unconscious biases can be seen in action, especially if conscious controls over decision-making are lowered, for example when people are stressed, distracted, relaxed, or in competition.



This is true even if unconscious biases are not aligned with conscious beliefs and convictions. For example, people with egalitarian views can harbor unconscious biases toward certain groups that affect their behaviors and decisions.

Adapted from Catalyst

For more information, visit: [queensu.ca/hreo](http://queensu.ca/hreo)

# UNCONSCIOUS BIASES



## What are they and how to counteract them!

A list of six of the most common biases during hiring situations and practical tips to interrupt them.

### NORMATIVE BIAS



Assumptions about and preference for traditional career path. Lack of understanding of excellence in different forms.



Become informed about different knowledges, experiences and career paths, and how they can be assessed in terms of equivalencies and transferrable skills.

### PERFORMANCE BIAS



Overestimation for individuals historically overvalued and underestimation for individuals historically undervalued.



- Establish selection criteria before hand.
- Consider how unconscious biases might result in over or under estimating qualifications of candidates.
- Consider using techniques such as removing names from applications.

### CONFIRMATION BIAS



Predisposition to "find" or not "find" information in order to confirm expectations and stereotypes



- Look at all of the information about the candidate, and not just pick the material that supports an initial impression.
- Remember biases can be exhibited even by people in the same equity group as the applicant.

### PERFORMANCE - ATTRIBUTION BIAS



Success of those from dominant groups is attributed to abilities, whereas for those from low status groups success is attributed to help or special programs.



- Don't make assumptions about how they got to where they are.
- Recognize that everyone gets 'help' to succeed in some form.
- Recognize that the accomplishments of those who get help to provide them with equitable opportunities are still a result of their abilities.

### LIKEABILITY TRADE OFF



How well someone would "fit" and how much peers think they would like working with someone.

For underrepresented groups this can overshadow assesments of competence.



- Incorporate diversity as a key criterion for selection that will enhance team performance.
- Develop an appreciation of differences and how diversity can contribute to innovation and team problem solving.

### MATERNAL BIAS & DEBASEMENT FILTER



Doubting that someone would be seriously interested/invested in the position because of their family status, age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, etc.



- Don't make assumptions and if there are concerns, ask the candidate about specific job requirements.
- Reconsider traditional expectations of employees in a more diverse society.
- Acknowledge that employers have a social responsibility to support employees personally, as well as professionally.