CREATING AN INCLUSIVE CAMPUS

UNDERSTANDING AND CHALLENGING IMPLICIT BIAS
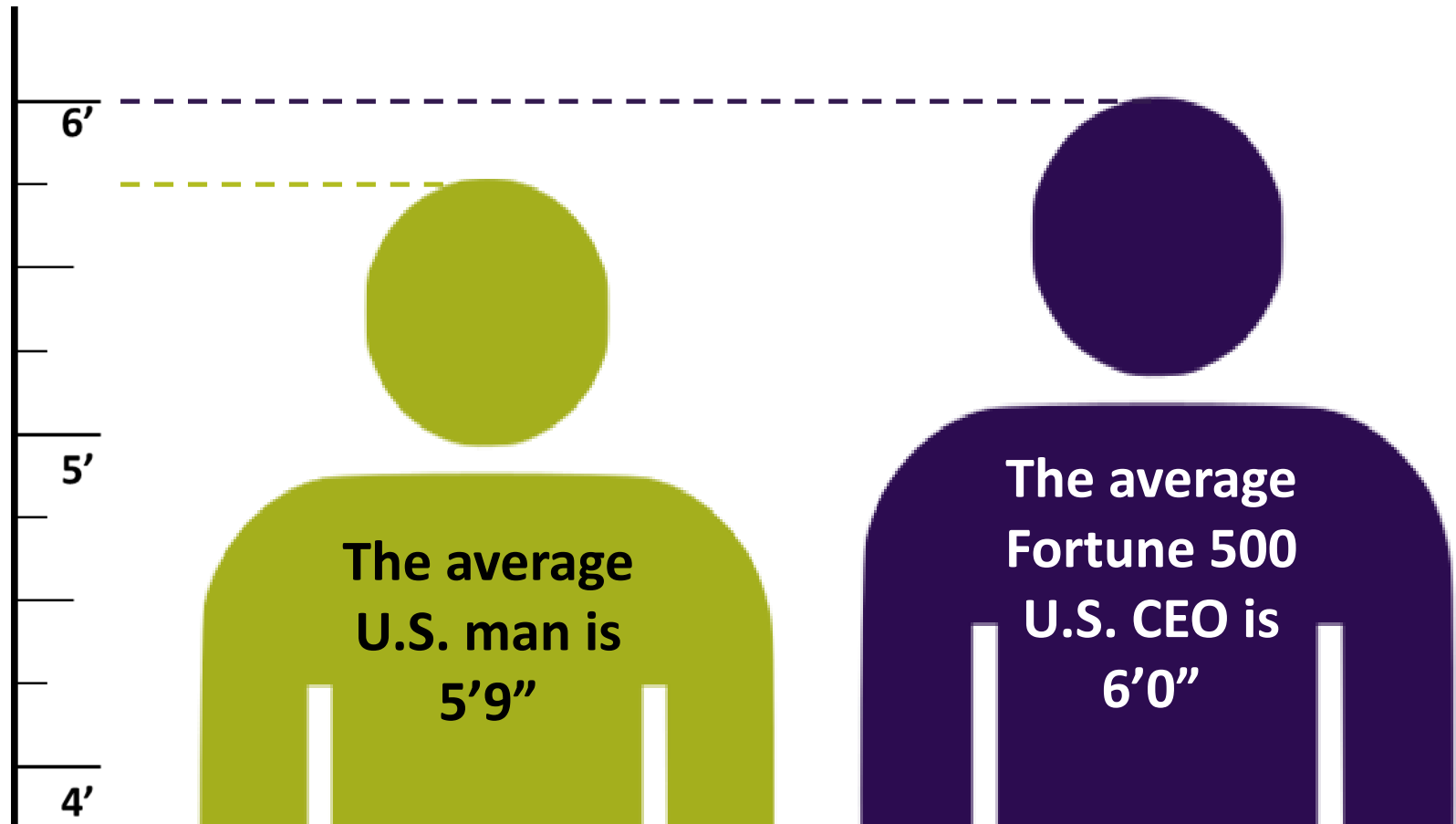
Lena Tenney, MPA, MEd. | Coordinator of Public Engagement | they/them/theirs

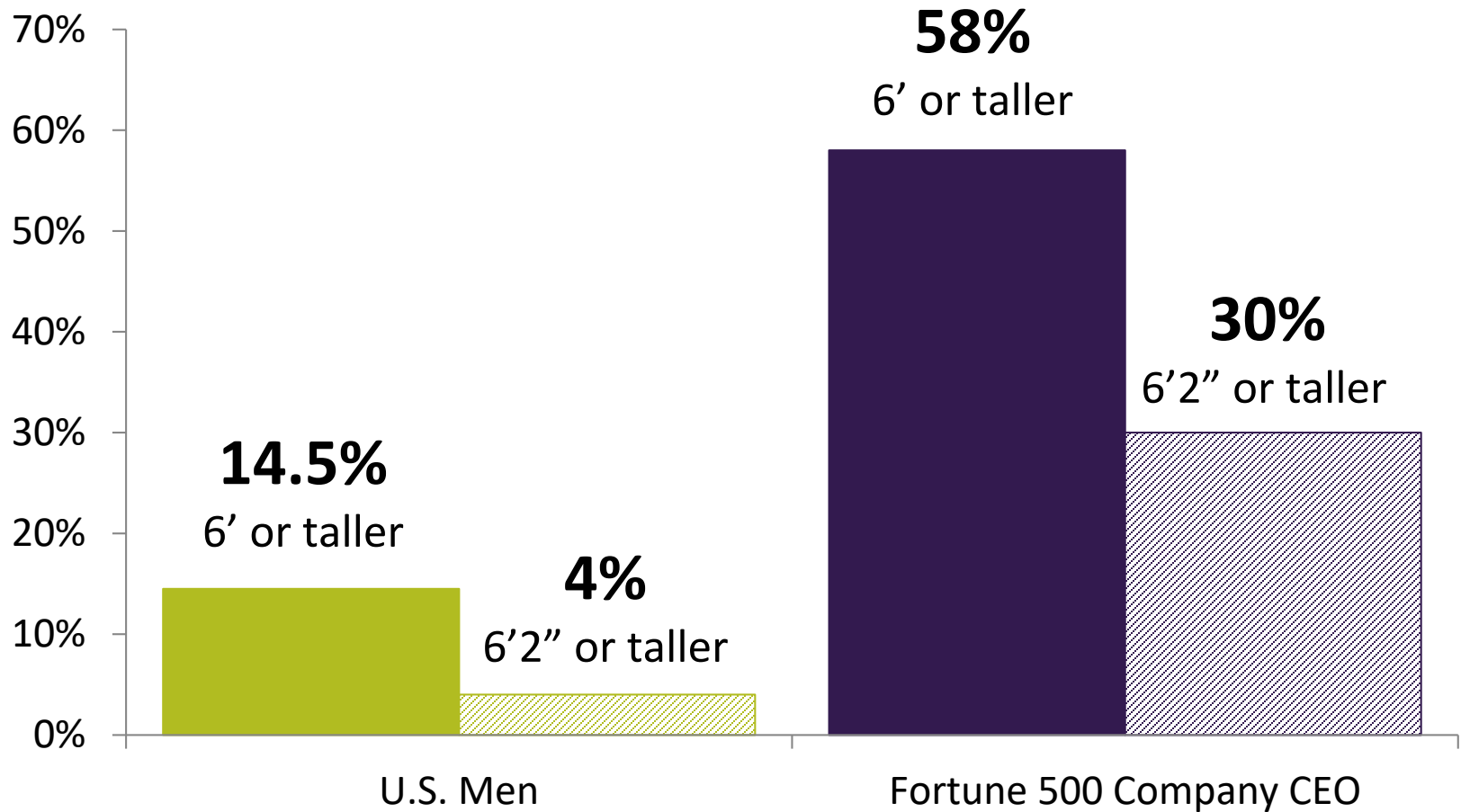**Joshua Bates,** MA, MCRP | Social Policy Analyst | he/him/his

University of Nebraska—Kearney | February 8, 2018

IS IT JUST A COINCIDENCE?

6'

5'

4'

The average U.S. man is 5'9"

The average Fortune 500 U.S. CEO is 6'0"

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Gladwell, Malcolm. (2005). *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking.* Little, Brown, & Co.: New York.

LEADERSHIP AND PHYSICAL STATURE

Gladwell, Malcolm. (2005). *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking.* Little, Brown, & Co.: New York.

WHY IMPLICIT BIAS?

- Implicit bias can be a better predictor of behavior and decision-making than our explicit beliefs.

- Implicit bias gives us a framework for understanding the underlying factors driving overt racism.

- Challenging implicit bias can help us align our good intentions with our desired outcomes.

- Discussing implicit bias does not mean ignoring other causes of disparities—it helps us see the entire picture.

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UNDERSTANDING BIAS

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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CD29UmTyzmk

HOW KIRWAN DEFINES IMPLICIT BIAS

Attitudes or stereotypes that **affect our understanding, actions, and decisions** in an unconscious manner.

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Image Credit

IMPLICIT BIAS CAN TURN EVEN OUR BEST INTENTIONS INTO UNWANTED OUTCOMES

Intent > Effects of Implicit Bias > Outcome
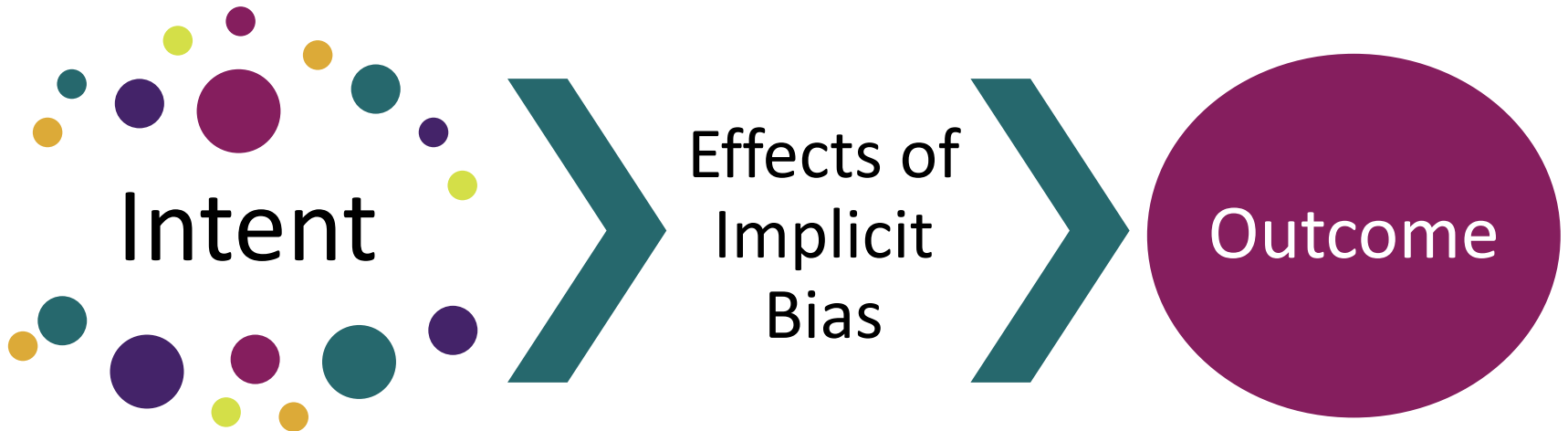
GOALS FOR THIS SESSION

- Help us think differently about the way we think.

- Foster understanding of the ways in which bias operates in our lives & institutions.

- Create a space and process to begin to consider the bridge between intentions and outcomes.
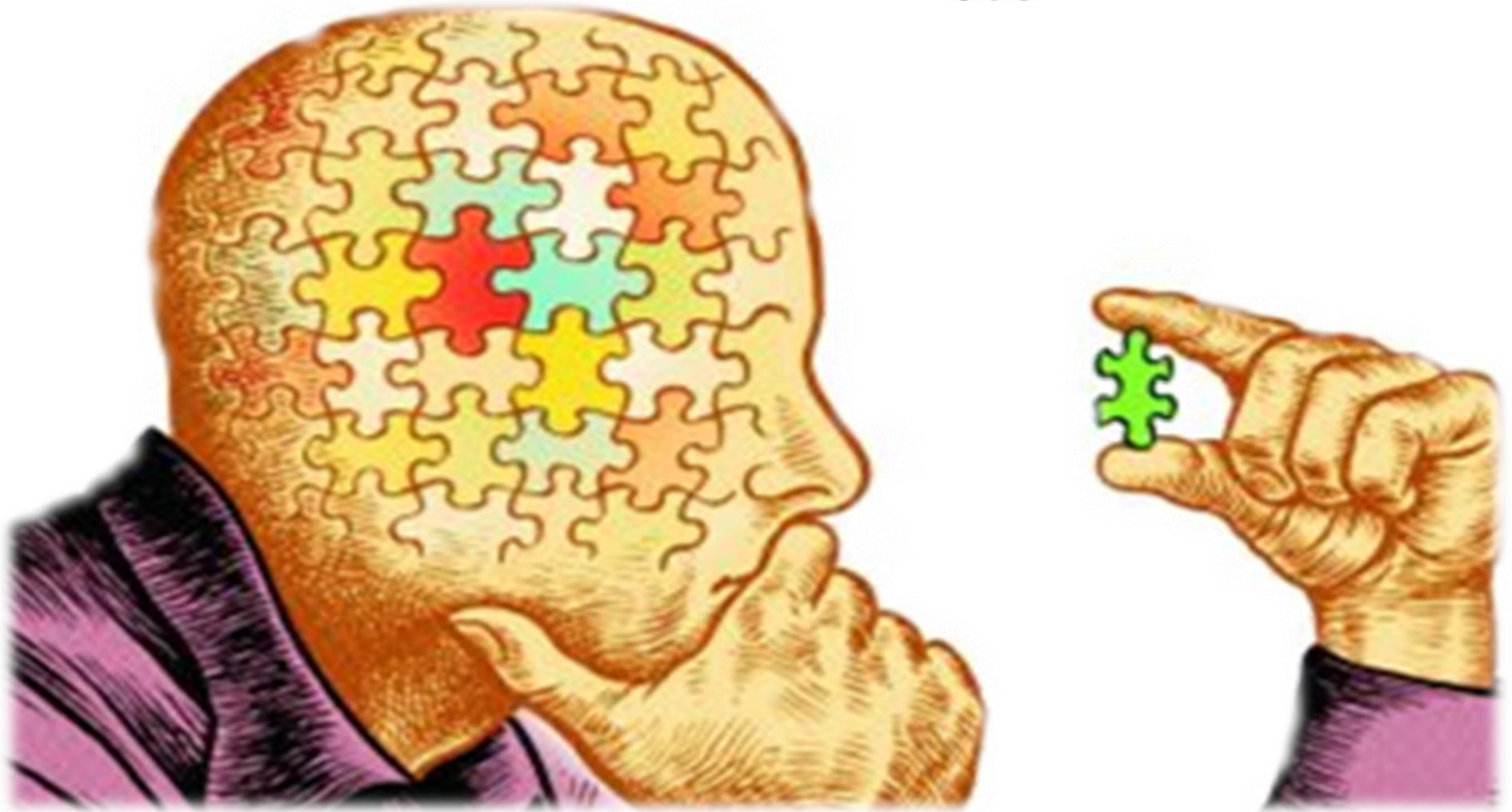
UNDERSTANDING IMPLICIT BIAS
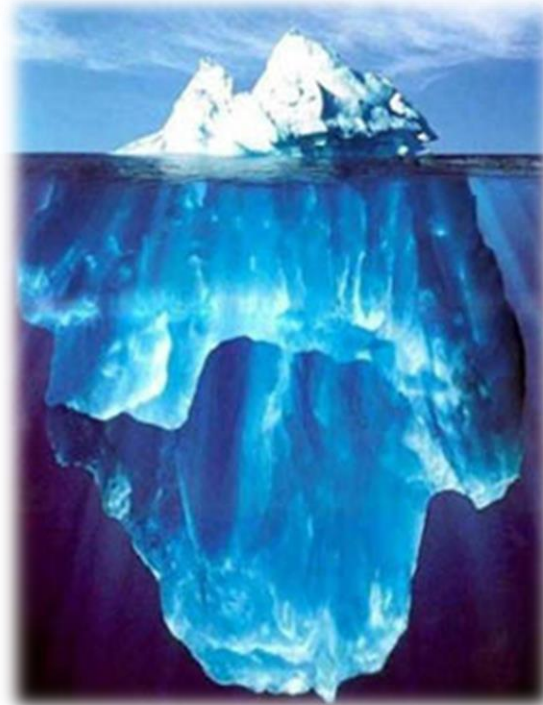## HOW OUR MINDS WORK

AN AWARENESS TEST

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yrqrkihlw-s

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

Conscious Mental Processing
(**7 ± 2 bits of info**)

Unconscious Mental Processing
(**Millions/potentially unlimited bits of info**)

WE HAVE LIMITED CONSCIOUS PROCESSING CAPACITY

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Miller, G. A. (1956). The magical number seven, plus or minus two. Some limits on our capacity for processing information. Psychological Review, 101(2), 343-352. Image Credit

Night and _____

Black and _____

Young and _____

Aoccdrnig to a rscheearchr at Cmabrigde Uinervtsy, it deosn't mttaer in waht oredr the ltteers in a wrod are, the olny iprmoatnt tihng is taht the frist and lsat ltteer be in the rghit pclae. The rset can be a taotl mses and you can sitll raed it wouthit a porbelm. Tihs is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe.

Amzanig huh?... and I awlyas thuhogt slpeling was ipmorantt.

Rawlinson, G. E. (1976). *The significance of letter position in word recognition.* Psychology Department, University of Nottingham. Nottingham, UK.

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WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

= RUN!

OUR BIASES ARE ADAPTIVE AND ASSOCIATIVE

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Image Credit

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

OUR BIASES ARE ADAPTIVE AND ASSOCIATIVE

Image Credit 1; Image Credit 2

Red
Blue
Orange
Brown
Green
Blue
Orange
Red
Brown
Red

Orange
Green
Brown
Red
Green
Orange
Red
Blue
Green
Orange

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Stroop, J. R. (1935). Studies of interference in serial verbal reactions. *Journal of Experimental Psychology, 18*(6), 643-662.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

When under **time pressures** we default to our most efficient way of processing – implicit processing.

Red	Orange
Blue	Green
Orange	Brown
Brown	Red
Green	Green
Blue	Orange
Orange	Red
Red	Blue
Brown	Green
➡ Red	➡ Orange

WE DEFAULT TO OUR IMPLICIT PROCESSING

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

Implicit Processing
- Efficiency
- Exposure
- Associative Memory

Explicit Processing
- Deliberate Processing
- Executive Functioning

IMPLICIT & EXPLICIT BIASES DON'T ALWAYS ALIGN

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THE IMPLICIT ASSOCIATION TEST

- Measures the **relative strength** of associations between pairs of concepts

- Stronger implicit associations = **less time** to pair and **fewer matching errors**

- Weaker implicit associations = **more time** to pair and **more matching errors**

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implicit.harvard.edu

Implicit Association Test (IAT) - Race IAT

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implicit.harvard.edu
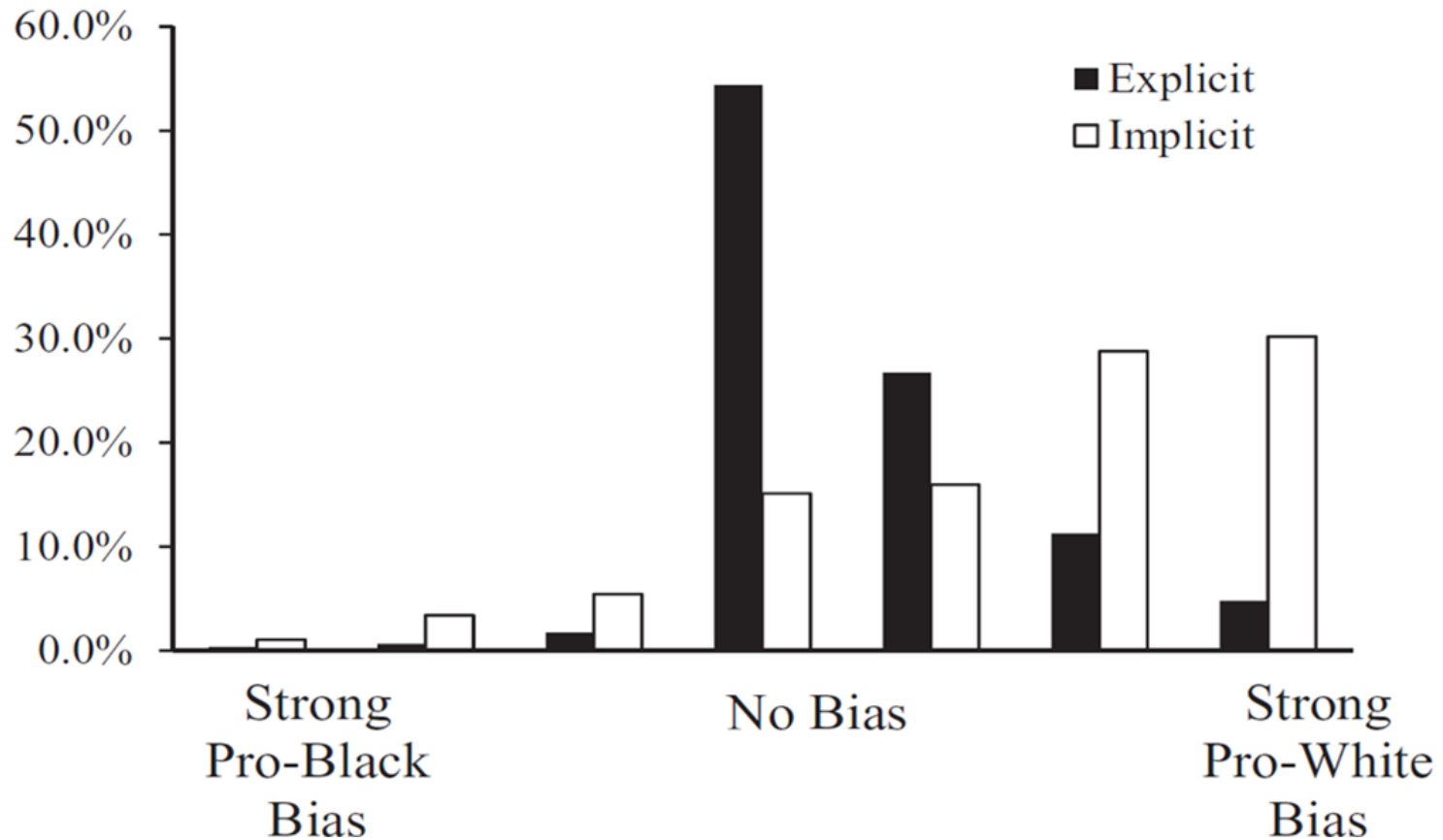
Examples of Publicly Available IATs

Attitudes

- Race
- Age
- Sexuality
- Disability
- Weight

Stereotypes

- Gender - Career
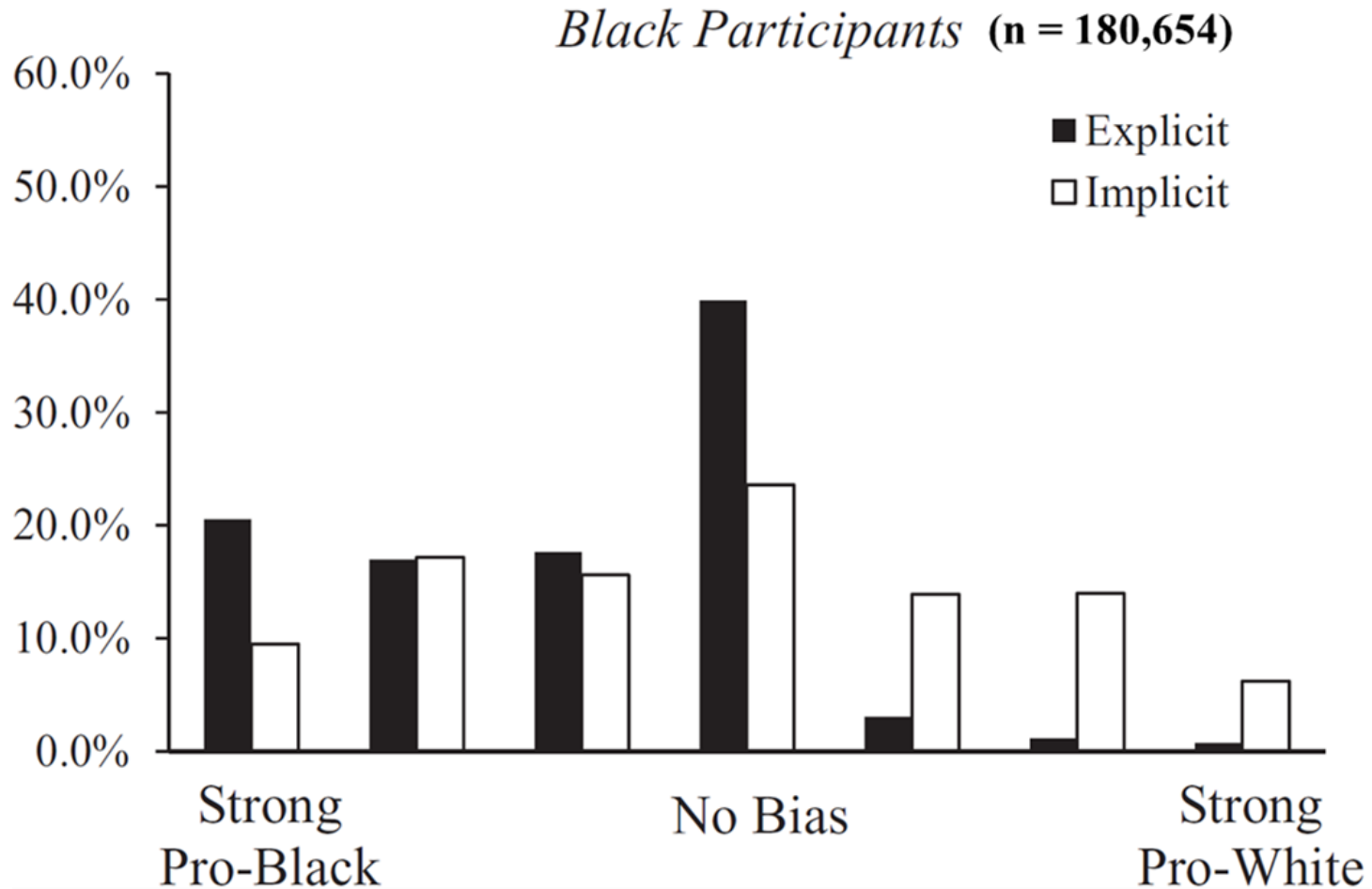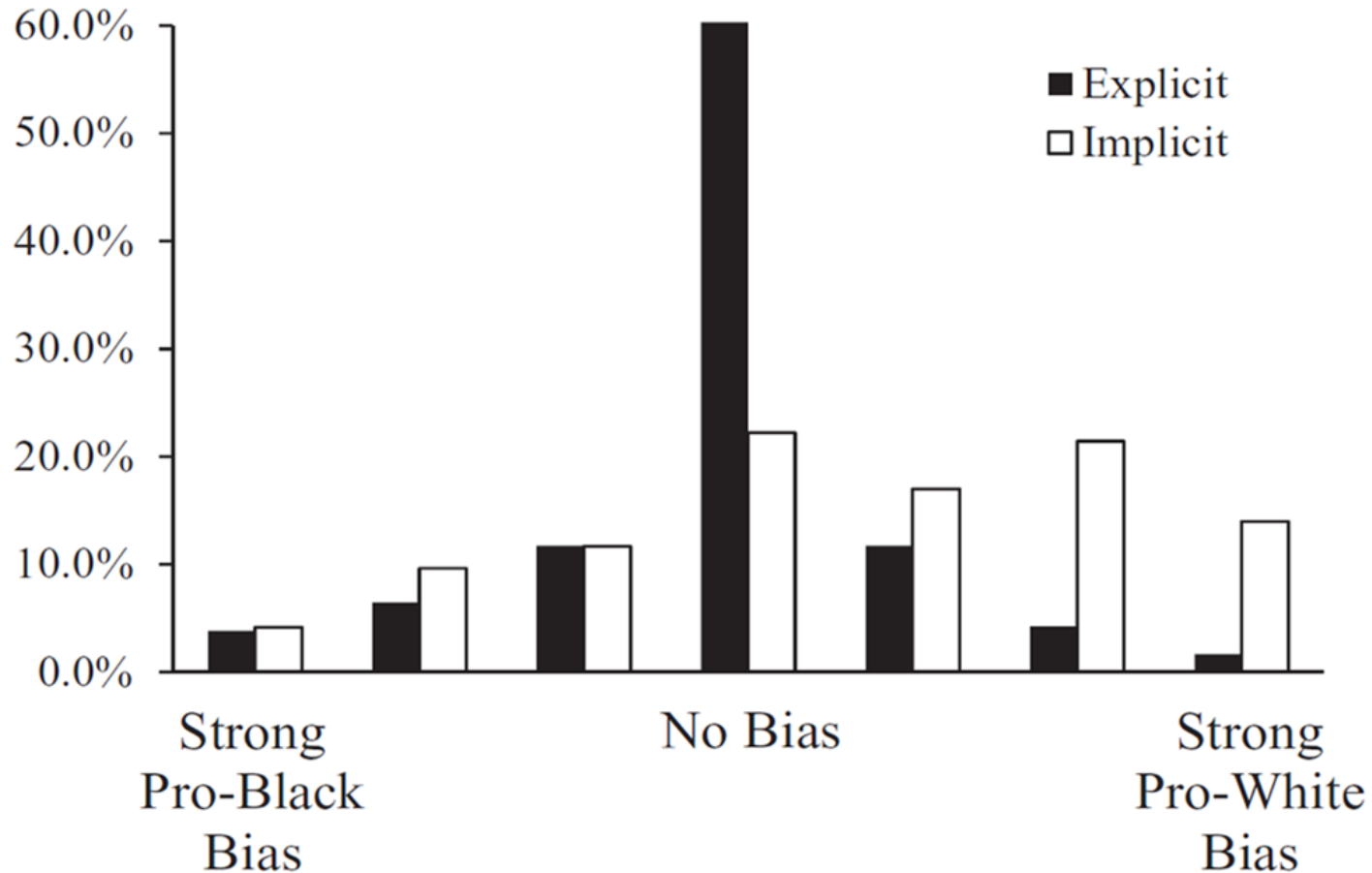- Gender - Science

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implicit.harvard.edu

EXAMPLE: IMPLICIT VS. EXPLICIT

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EXAMPLE: IMPLICIT VS. EXPLICIT

Black Participants **(n = 180,654)**

■ Explicit
□ Implicit

Strong Pro-Black / No Bias / Strong Pro-White

Howell et al., (2015). "Caught in the Middle: Defensive Responses to IAT Feedback Among Whites, Blacks, and Biracial Black/Whites." *Social Psychological and Personality Science.* Online first: 12-15-14.

EXAMPLE: IMPLICIT VS. EXPLICIT

Biracial Black/White Participants (n = 19,933)

Howell et al., (2015). "Caught in the Middle: Defensive Responses to IAT Feedback Among Whites, Blacks, and Biracial Black/Whites." *Social Psychological and Personality Science.* Online first: 12-15-14.

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ORIGINS OF THESE ASSOCIATIONS

Family, friends, & early life experiences
Media messaging: both traditional & social

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Image Credit 1; Image Credit 2

REAL WORLD EXAMPLE: SKEWED MEDIA MESSAGING

THE BIG IDEA

- The vast majority of our cognition is unconscious.

- Our associations may be formed based on skewed, overgeneralized, or distorted beliefs and stereotypes.

- Our implicit associations may not necessarily align with our explicit beliefs.

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THE BIG IDEA

- There are key conditions under which we are most likely to make decisions based on implicit biases:

  - **Ambiguous or incomplete information**
  - **Compromised cognitive load**
  - **Time constraints**
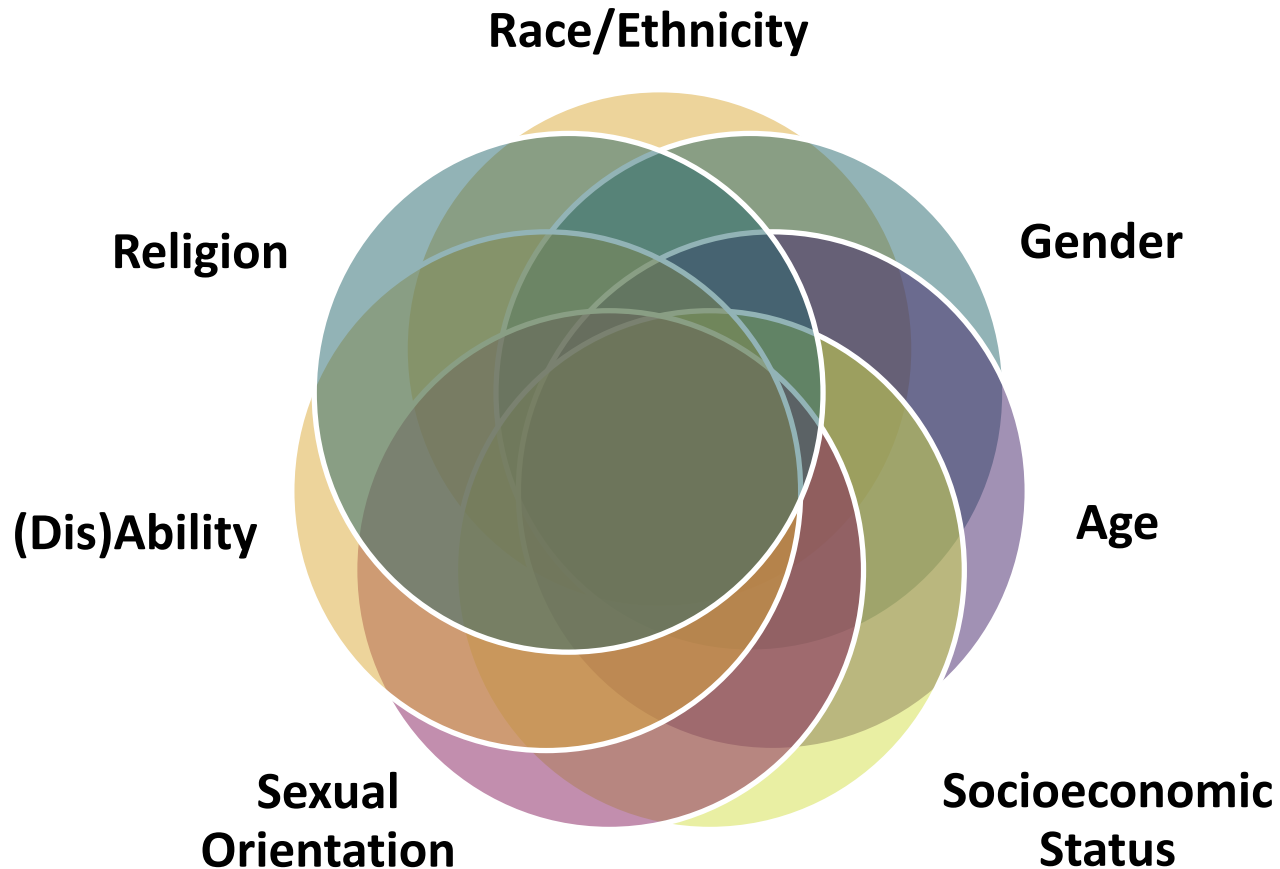 - **Overconfidence in objectivity**

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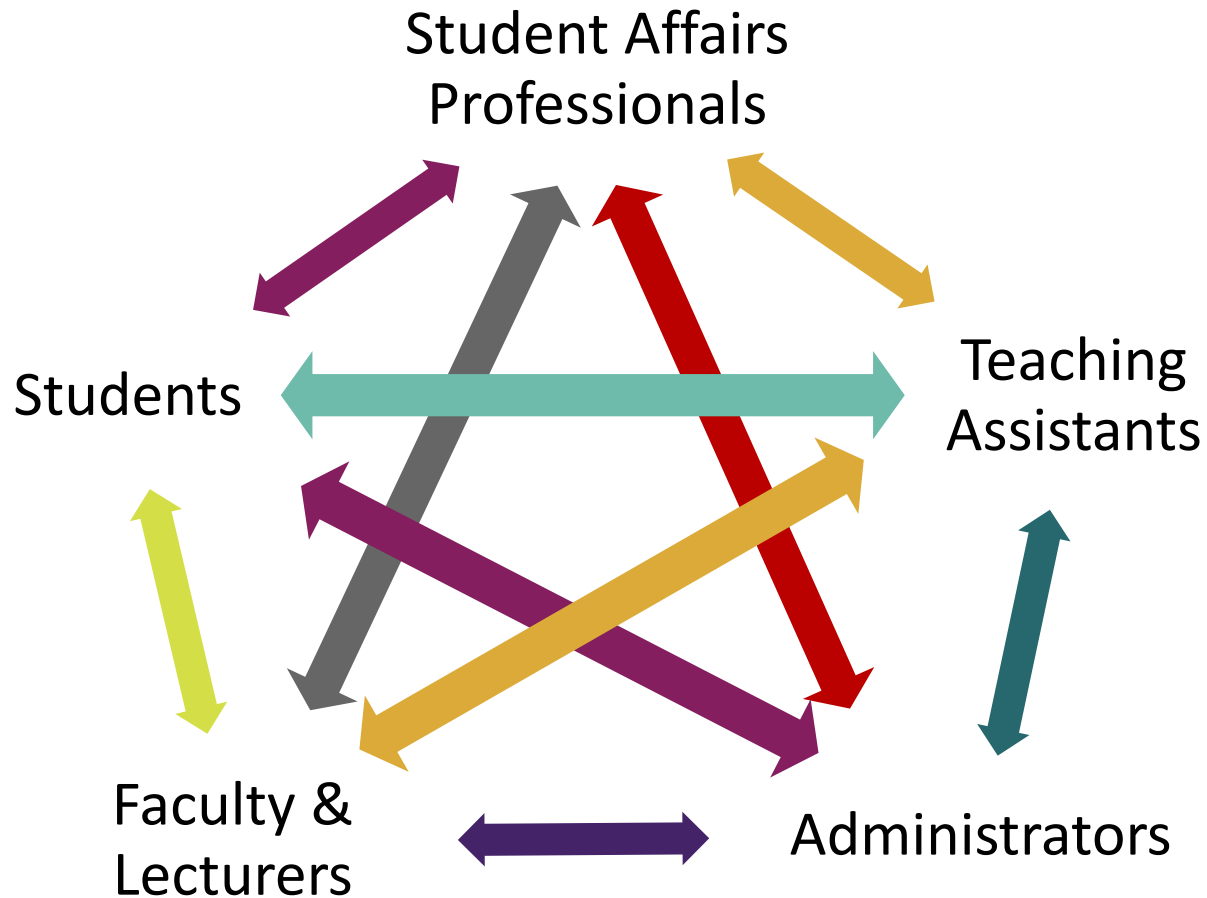
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Image Credit

SITUATING IMPLICIT BIAS

PIECES OF THE PUZZLES

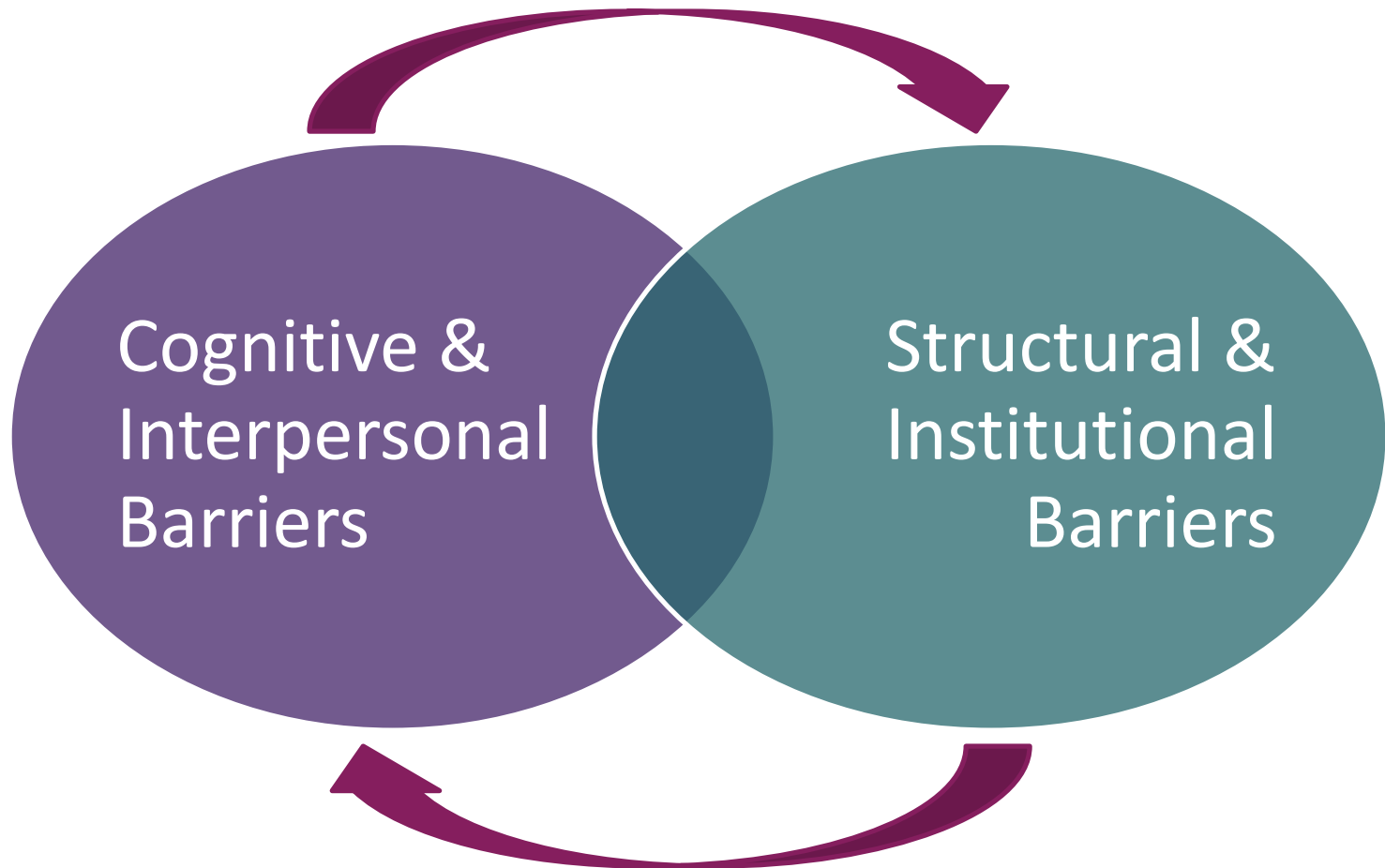# ALL ACTORS IN HIGHER EDUCATION ARE SUSCEPTIBLE TO IMPLICIT BIAS

DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, EQUITY, AND JUSTICE

DIVERSITY ASKS...

"Who's in the room?"

EQUITY RESPONDS...

"Who is trying to get in the room but can't? Whose presence in the room is under constant threat of erasure?"

INCLUSION ASKS...

"Has everyone's ideas been heard?"

JUSTICE RESPONDS...

"Whose ideas won't be taken as seriously because they aren't in the majority?"

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Adapted from the article "Colleges need a language shift, but not the one you think (essay)" by Dr. Dafina-Lazarus Stewart. Created by Sheri Atkinson, Ed.D.

DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, EQUITY, AND JUSTICE

DIVERSITY ASKS...

"How many more of [pick any minoritized identity] group do we have this year than last?"

EQUITY RESPONDS...

"What conditions have we created that maintain certain groups as the perpetual majority here?"

INCLUSION ASKS...

"Is this environment safe for everyone to feel like they belong?"

JUSTICE RESPONDS...

"Whose safety is being sacrificed and minimized to allow others to be comfortable maintaining dehumanizing views?"

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Adapted from the article "Colleges need a language shift, but not the one you think (essay)" by Dr. Dafina-Lazarus Stewart. Created by Sheri Atkinson, Ed.D.

REAL WORLD IMPLICATIONS

FINDINGS FROM THE FIELD

RACE AND PERCEPTIONS OF COMPETENCE

Thomas Meyer
African American Male
3rd Year Associate
NYU Law School

Thomas Meyer
Caucasian Male
3rd Year Associate
NYU Law School

RACE AND PERCEPTIONS OF COMPETENCE

Spelling Errors

5.8/7.0

2.9/7.0

Technical Errors

4.9/6.0

4.1/6.0

Factual Errors

3.9/5.0

3.2/5.0

"African American" Thomas Meyer

"Caucasian" Thomas Meyer

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Reeves, A. N. (2014). Written in Black and White: Exploring confirmation bias in racialized perceptions of writing skills *Yellow Paper Series*. Chicago, IL: Nextions.

RACE AND PERCEPTIONS OF COMPETENCE

3.2/5.0

**"African American"
Thomas Meyer**

4.1/5.0

**"Caucasian"
Thomas Meyer**

Reeves, A. N. (2014). Written in Black and White: Exploring confirmation bias in racialized perceptions of writing skills *Yellow Paper Series*. Chicago, IL: Nextions.

RACE AND PERCEPTIONS OF COMPETENCE

"African American" Thomas Meyer

"needs lots of work"

"can't believe he went to NYU"

"average at best"

"Caucasian" Thomas Meyer

"generally good writer but needs to work on..."
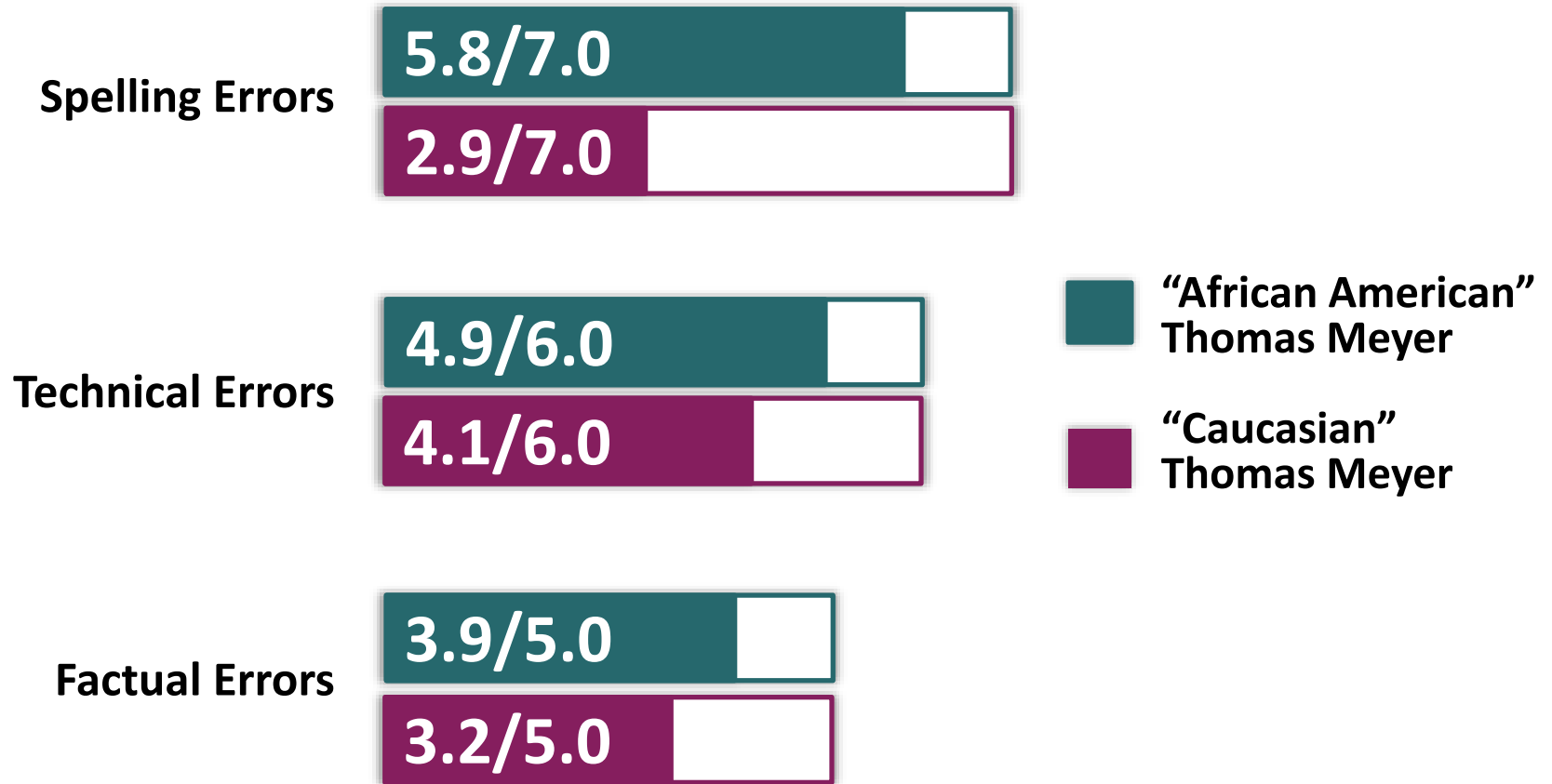
"has potential"
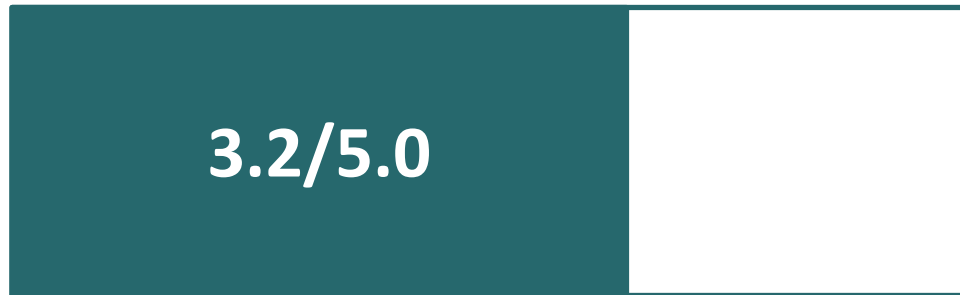
"good analytical skills"

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Reeves, A. N. (2014). Written in Black and White: Exploring confirmation bias in racialized perceptions of writing skills *Yellow Paper Series*. Chicago, IL: Nextions.
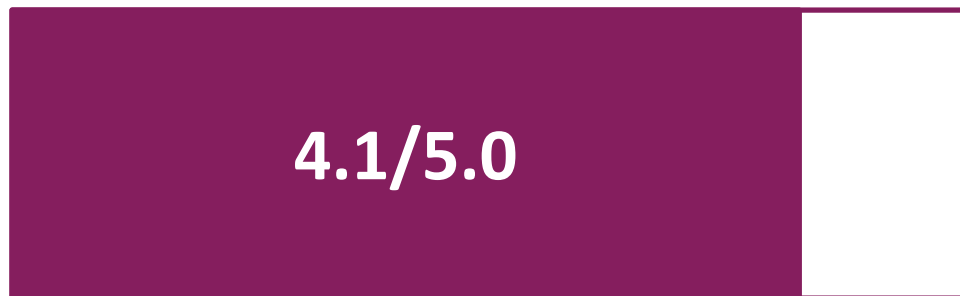
UNDERSTANDING THESE RESULTS

Partners expected more errors and lower quality in the memo written by the African American male.

AND/OR

Partners expected fewer errors and higher quality in the memo written by the Caucasian male.

CONFIRMATION BIAS

Tendency to see **evidence to support** what you implicitly think while **overlooking other evidence.**

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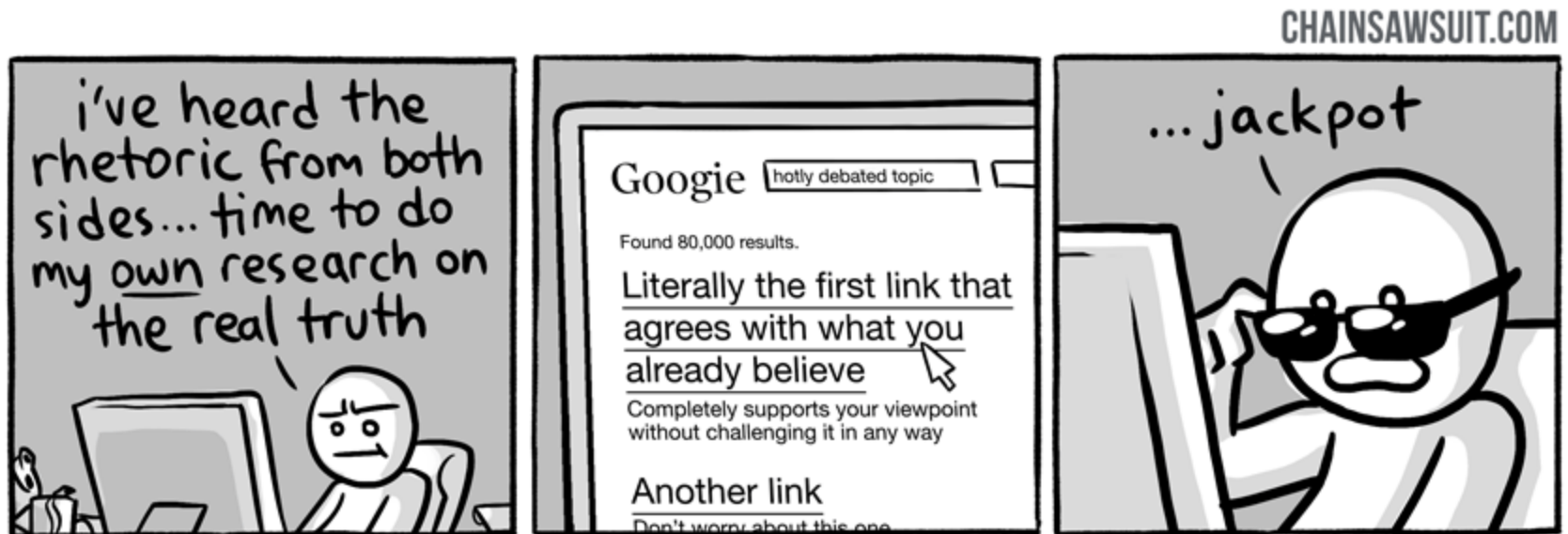
MICROAGGRESSIONS

"…brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory or negative racial slights and insults to the target person or group."

Sue, D.W., Capodilupo, C.M., Torino, G.C., Bucceri, J.M., Holder, A.B., Nadal, K.L., et al. (2007). Racial microaggressions in everyday life. American Psychologist, 62, 271–286.

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Microaggressions

- 78% of participants experienced at least 1 racial microaggression over the two week study period

- Students of color reported experiencing an average of 291 microaggressions in the past 90 days

- About a quarter of instructors and half of students perceived bias in their classrooms in the last year

- 34% of undergraduates reported perceiving themselves as a target of subtle bias in the classroom in the last year

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Ong et al. (2013); Blume, Lovato, Thyken, & Denny (2012); Boysen, Vogel, Cope, & Hubbard (2009).

Frequencies of Overt and Subtle Bias, Targets of Bias, and Types of Bias

Percieved Bias	Professor % (n = 333)	Graduate % (n = 443)	Undergraduate % (n = 1,747)
Perceived overt bias	27	25	44
Perceived subtle bias	30	40	63
Target of bias			
Sexual orientation	20	19	19
Race	19	18	21
Sex	16	19	15
Ethnicity	15	13	14
Religion	12	12	15
Class	10	7	6
Disability	3	8	7
Other	4	5	3
Type of bias			
Stereotype	47	36	34
Offensive humor	20	25	28
Isolation	12	10	5
Slurs	9	13	15
Insults	9	13	16
Other	3	2	3

Boysen, G. A., Vogel, D. L., Cope, M. A., & Hubbard, A. (2009). Incidents of bias in college classrooms: Instructor and student perceptions. Journal of Diversity in Higher Education, 2(4), 219–231.

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EFFECTS OF MICROAGGRESSIONS

- Psychological distress
  - Anxiety
  - Depression
  - Suicidal ideation
- Binge drinking
- Pain, fatigue, physical illness

Blume, Lovato, Thyken, & Denny (2012); Smith (2004); Hwang & Goto (2009)

ANCHORING BIAS
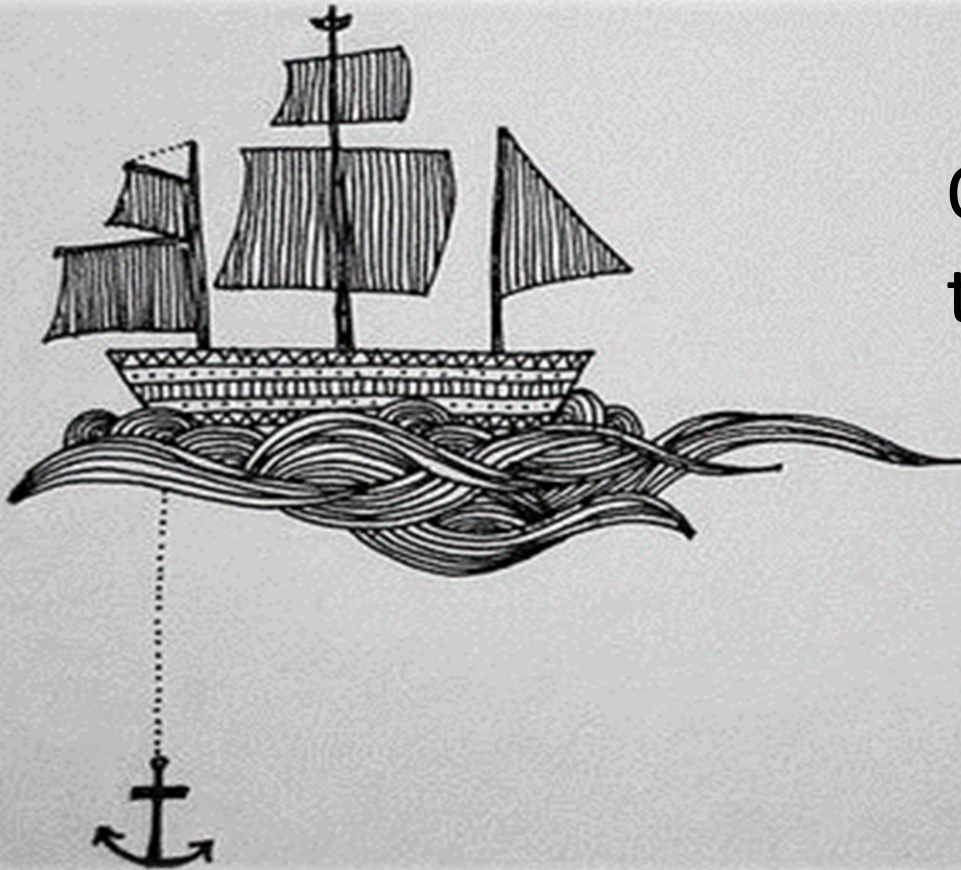
Over-reliance on the **first piece of information** received in a situation.

Image Credit

AFFINITY BIAS

Implicit preference for **people similar to you**.

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Image Credit

THE BIG IDEA

- All moments of human decision-making are susceptible to the operation of implicit biases.

- Implicit associations that fail to align with reality may cause us to make decisions that are detrimental to our best interests, personally and/or organizationally.

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THE BIG IDEA

- Bias is multidirectional and comprises not only discrimination but also privilege.

- We all have both marginalized and privileged identities simultaneously.

- Being aware and intentional about how we reflect on our own identity can help us to be better champions for justice and equity.

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Image Credit

CHALLENGING IMPLICIT BIAS

INDIVIDUAL & INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIES

# STEP #1: KNOW YOUR BIASES

STEP #2: CHANGE UNWANTED BIASES

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Pascual-Leone, A., Freitas, C., Oberman, L., Horvath, J. C., Halk, M., Eldaief, M., . . . Rotenberg, A. (2011). Characterizing brain cortical plasticity and network dynamics across the age-span in health and disease with TMS-EEG and TMS-fMRI. *Brain Topogr, 26*, 302-315. Image Credit

USE MINDFULNESS TO CHANGE YOUR BRAIN

"Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way; on purpose, in the present, and non-judgmentally. -- Jon Kabat-Zinn
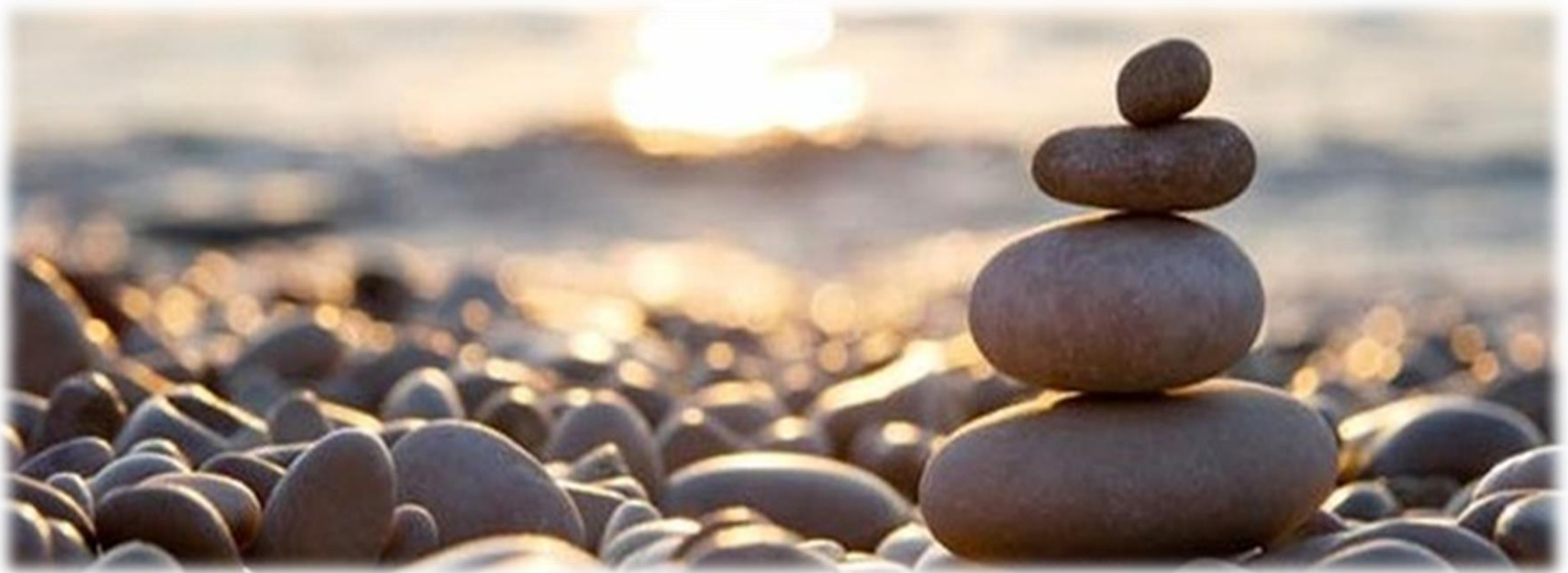
https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-courage-be-present/201001/how-practice-mindfulness-meditation. Image Credit

USE MINDFULNESS TO INCREASE COGNITIVE CONTROL

Mind Full, or Mindful?

Image Credit

USE MINDFULNESS TO ALTER YOUR BIASES

Six weeks of practicing loving kindness meditation aimed at **increasing empathy** toward a marginalized people was shown to decrease levels of unfavorable implicit bias.

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Kang, Y., Gray, J. R., & Dovidio, J. F. (2014). The Nondiscriminating Heart: Lovingkindness Meditation Training Decreases Implicit Intergroup Bias. *Journal of Experimental Psychology, 143*(3), 1306-1313. Image Credit.

"But if I go over there and get to know them as individuals, what am I supposed to do with my sterotypes?"

INTERGROUP CONTACT

Allport, G. W. (1954). The Nature of Prejudice. Cambridge, MA: Addison-Wesley. Peruche, B. M., & Plant, E. A. (2006). The Correlates of Law Enforcement Officers' Automatic and Controlled Race-Based Responses to Criminal Suspects. Basic and Applied Social Psychology, 28(2), 193-199.

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STEP #3: REDUCE SUSCEPTIBILITY AT KEY DECISION-MAKING MOMENTS
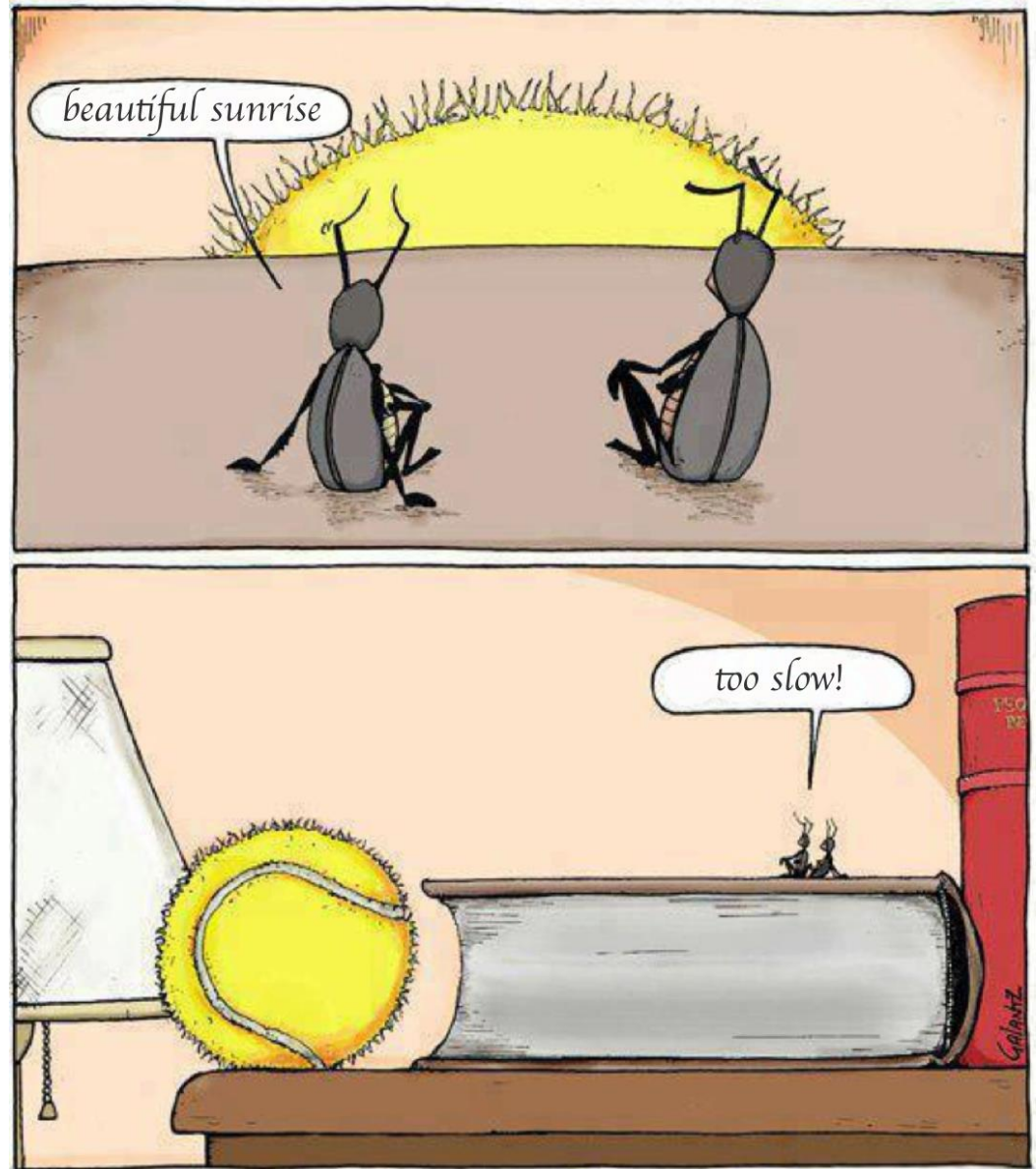
Time Constraints

Compromised Cognitive Control

High Ambiguity

Overconfidence in Objectivity

QUESTION YOUR OBJECTIVITY

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Image Credit

UTILIZE DATA

Logging data may be the first way to establish that bias may be an issue and can help inform next steps.

Set clear goals, track progress, & analyze trends

powell, j. a. (2015). Implicit Bias and Its Role in Philanthropy and Grantmaking. *Responsive Philanthropy*(2). Williamsburg, VA. Blair, I. V., Steiner, J. F., and Havranek, E. P. (2011). "Unconscious (Implicit) Bias and Health Disparities: Where Do We Go From Here?" *The Permanente Journal* 15(2): 71-78

STEP #4: INTERRUPT BIAS IN YOUR ENVIRONMENT

BE AN ACTIVE BYSTANDER

IDENTIFY the emergence of bias

DECIDE to address the situation

SPEAK OUT

FOLLOW UP

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Image Credit

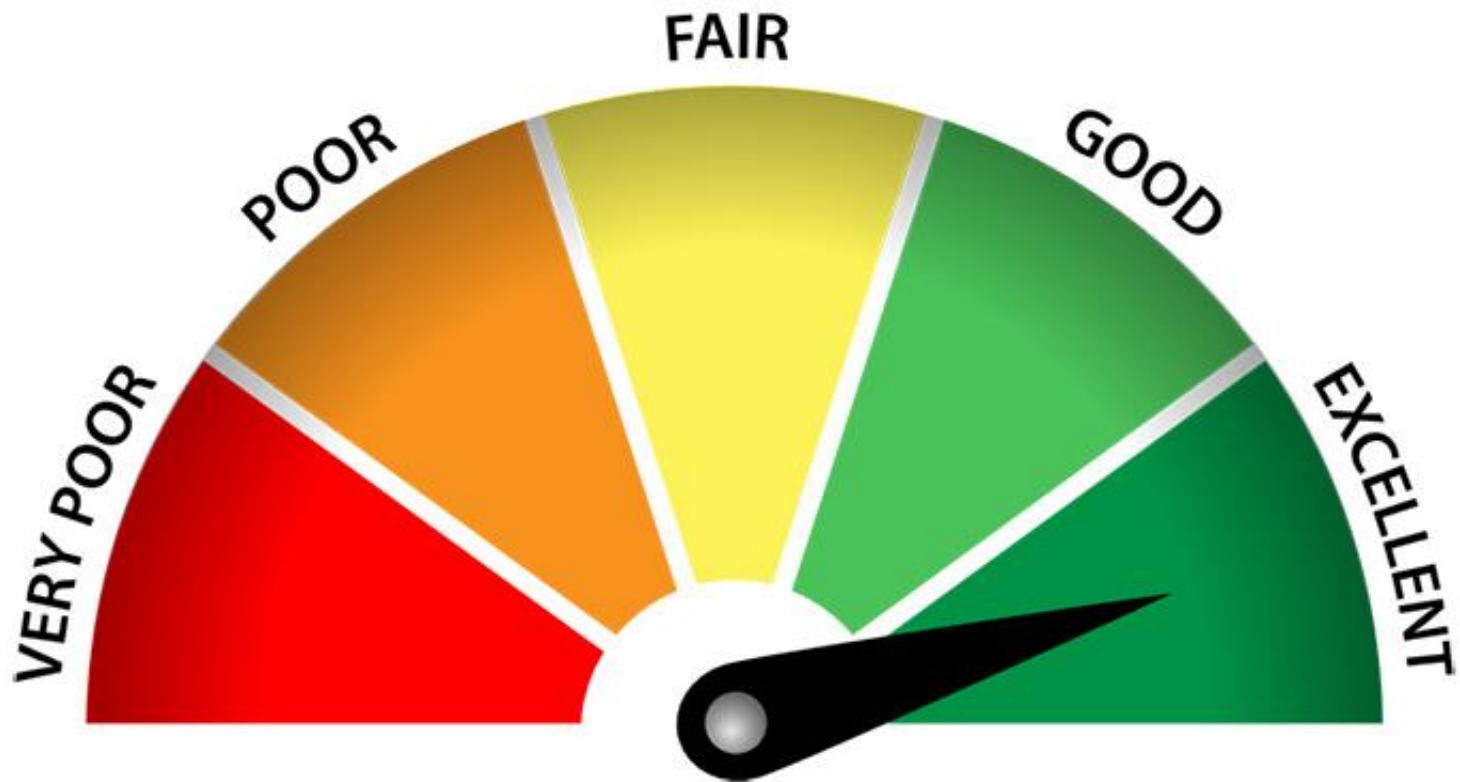# STEP #5: CONTINUALLY CREATE AN INCLUSIVE CAMPUS

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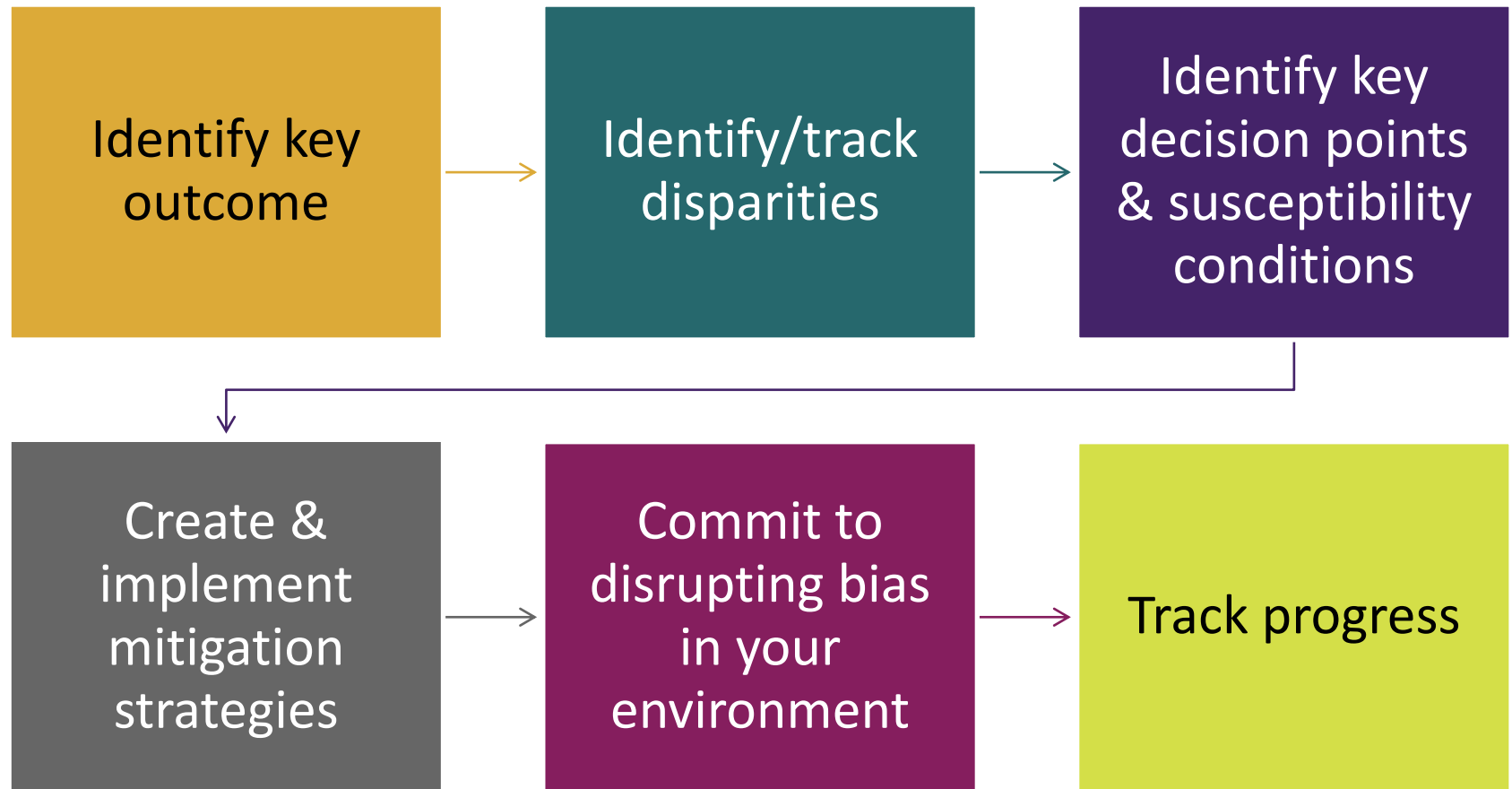KIRWAN INSTITUTE FOR THE
STUDY OF RACE AND ETHNICITY
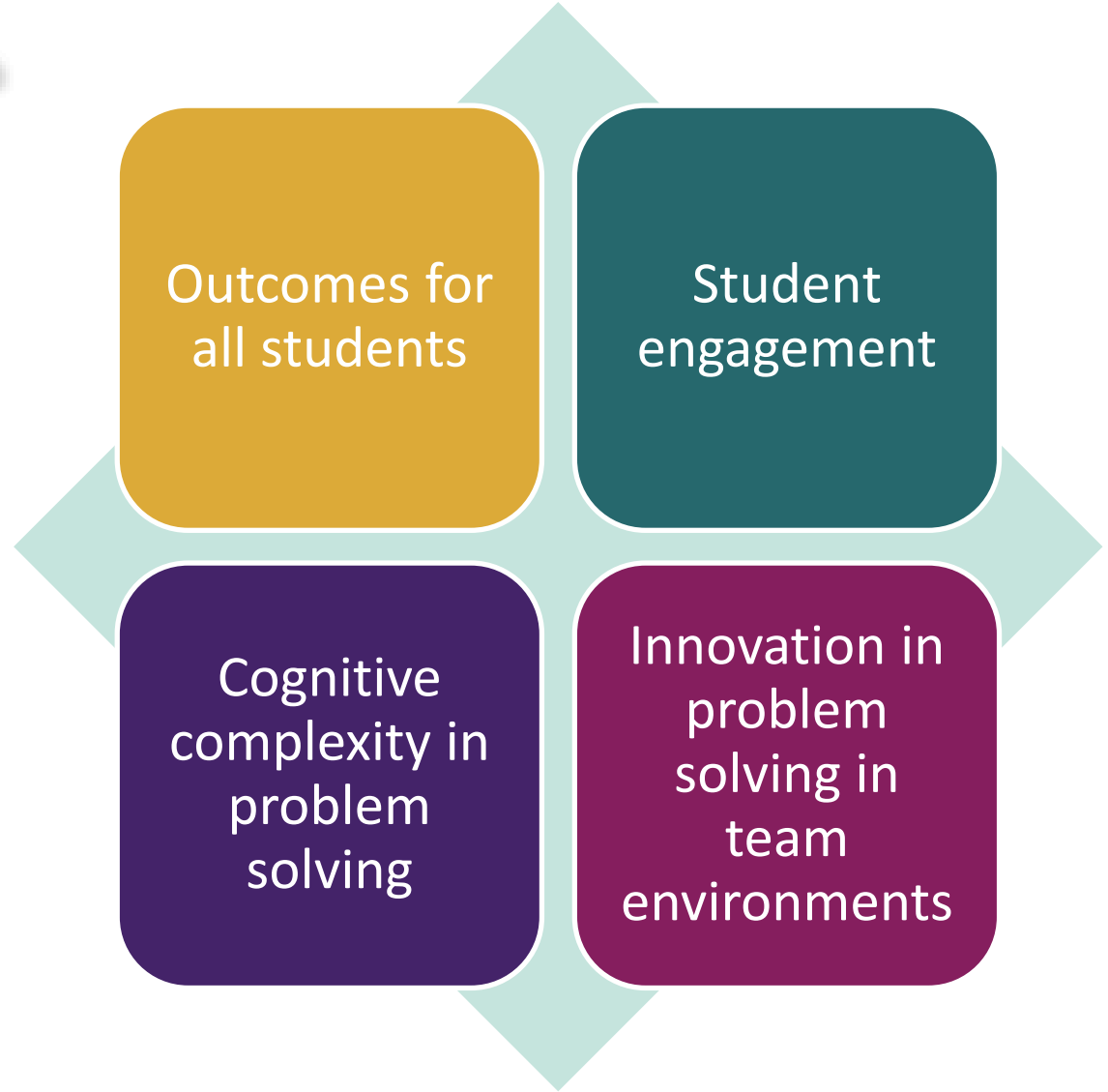
Image Credit

CONTINUALLY DO YOUR BEST WORK

Image Credit
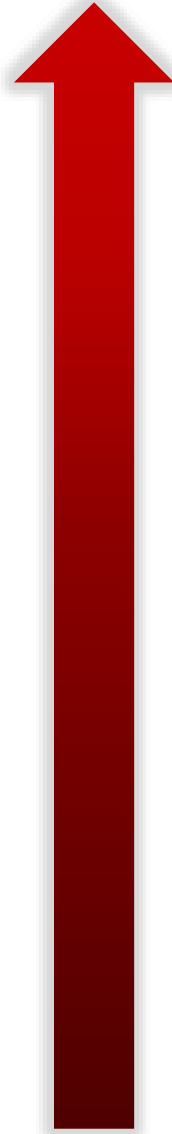
THE CONTINUAL PROCESS

Identify key outcome → Identify/track disparities → Identify key decision points & susceptibility conditions

Create & implement mitigation strategies → Commit to disrupting bias in your environment → Track progress

BENEFITS OF INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Outcomes for all students

Student engagement

Cognitive complexity in problem solving

Innovation in problem solving in team environments

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Milem and Hakuta, 2000; Gurin et al., 2002; Hurtado et al., 2003; Milem, 2003; Antonio et al., 2004; Page, 2007; Page, 2010

"If you always think what you always thought,
you will always do what you've always done.

If you always do what you've always done,
you will always get what you've always got.

If you always get what you've always got,
you will always think what you've always thought."

THINK Different | **DO** Different | **GET** Different
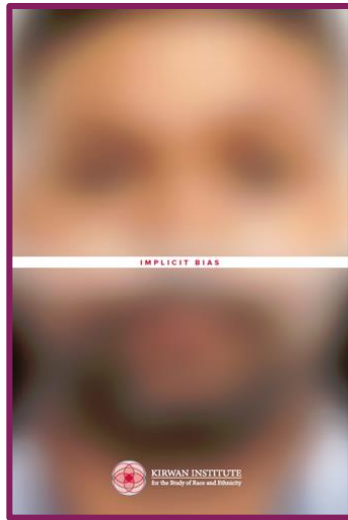
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Image Credit

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

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