

# UNDERSTANDING UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

## WHAT IS UNCONSCIOUS BIAS?

**Subtle** and **unconscious** thoughts or feelings that influence our judgment.

**Attitudes, preferences, and stereotypes** we develop based on characteristics such as race, age, ethnicity, religion, or appearance.

From birth to this very moment, we are developing biases.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

- Pervasive & strongly held
- Don't necessarily align with our declared beliefs
- We typically hold to biases that favor our own in-group
- Have real-world effects on behavior
- **Bias is flexible and can be unlearned**

## COMMON FORMS OF BIAS

- **Perception Bias** - The tendency to form stereotypes and assumptions about certain groups that make it impossible to make an objective judgment about members of those groups.
- **Confirmation Bias** - The tendency to seek information that confirms pre-existing beliefs or assumptions.
- **Groupthink Bias** - When you keep your views to yourself just to maintain harmony in the group.
- **Affinity Bias** - The tendency to warm up to people like us. We tend to get along better with people who are 'like' us.
- **The Halo Effect** - The tendency to think everything about a person is good because you like them.

## STRATEGIES TO DEFEAT UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

- **Watch your first thoughts** in order to spot potential biases.
- **Hit the pause button** to allow your rational brain to kick in.
- Think **how would you react** if it were someone else.
- **Change your behaviors** to act in ways that counter your bias.
- **Build relationships** with people different from yourself.

## WHEN ENGAGING WITH OTHERS:

- What are my biases and blind spots?
- What is this person triggering in my background?
- Do I have an automatic feeling or judgment about this person?
- Do I notice any patterns in my decision-making that might be impacted by my biases?
- How might I consciously intervene to move beyond bias?