EXAMINING OUR BIASES

Unconscious Bias

"We see the world, not as it is, but as **we** are"

Anais Nin, Novelist

EXAMINING OUR BIASES

What is unconscious bias? All humans have unconscious bias, because our brains have evolved to save energy by 'going for averages'.

We make rough guesses in a fraction of a second, often based on prior experiences. We are unaware of this happening because it happens even before our minds have had time to process the information fully.

Unconscious bias has kept us safe in some ways – but in today's workplace, the same energy saving, short-cut thinking mechanism can cause us to miss the big picture, misjudge people and make inaccurate, snap decisions – all without being aware.

Quick Thinking
Survival tactics
Familiarity-seeking
Intuition

UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

Assumptions
Stereotypes
Prejudice
Closed Minded

EXAMINING OUR BIASES

Did you have a reaction around these sports logos? This is a **conscious bias**, you are aware of it working and how it makes you feel.

Conscious Bias, the person is very clear about their feelings and attitudes, and related behaviours are conducted with intent. This type of bias is processed at a conscious level

Unconscious Bias operates outside of the person's awareness and can be in direct contradiction to a person's beliefs and values. it can seep into a person's behaviour without full awareness of that person

Did you instantly think these men were friends with their sons? Or did you realise they are in fact a family? If you didn't recognise that they are a family, this is because your **unconscious bias** was jumping ahead without allowing you to make a fully informed decision. Their family unit may be different from the 'average family' and so the instant unconscious reaction is to assume otherwise. It doesn't make you a bad person, but it can be limiting to those around you, in this example the couple with their children

EXAMINING OUR BIASES

TYPES OF UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

Affinity Bias

Feeling a connection to those similar to yourself

"We went to the same school, I knew I liked you!"

Perception Bias

Stereotypes and assumptions about different groups

"I'm assuming because you're a man that you want to watch the football game this afternoon"

Halo Effect

Projecting positive qualities onto people without actually knowing them

"We have the same birthday, she must be just like me, I feel warmly towards her"

Confirmation Bias

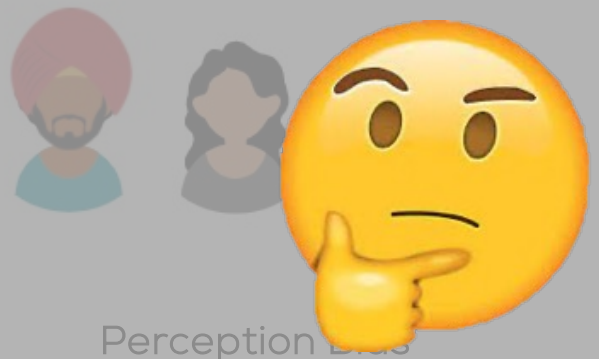
Looking to confirm our own opinions and pre-existing ideas

"Ha! She got the tax amount wrong, knew it, all women are bad at maths.

TYPES OF UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

Affinity Bias

Feeling a connection to those similar to yourself



Perception Bias

Stereotypes and assumptions about members of an group

Halo Effect

Projecting positive qualities onto people without actually knowing them

Confirmation Bias

Looking to confirm our own opinions and existing ideas

UNEXAMINED BIAS

Having bias means we're human – but in a workplace we can't afford to make mistakes about situations or worse, people, so it pays to **examine** what your biases are. When do you notice you have a bias reaction? Is it around gender? Race? Age? Becoming more aware of our biases is a powerful way of not being controlled by them. Slow it down and think about the big picture.

EXAMINING OUR BIASES

Reducing Unconscious Bias

1. Be aware of unconscious biases
First **notice** when you have a bias

2. Make biases conscious
Know what your unconscious biases are, use tools like Harvard's IAT test, or ask colleagues to tell you when you have a bias that you're not aware of

3. Take control
Especially when rushed or tired, **slow down** and think 'what else could be happening here?' Am I judging this person through a bias lens that I know I have? Everyone has them, the trick is to take control