

# Implicit Bias Training in Nursing Education

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#### Problem

Healthcare provider implicit bias can have detrimental effects on health outcomes. For healthcare providers, increasing awareness of implicit bias and its various manifestations is key in combating some of the disparities faced by historically marginalized communities. Incorporating implicit bias training into the nursing curriculum is crucial in mitigating the harmful effects to patients that arise because of implicit bias.

To achieve health equity and reduce disparity in health outcomes, nurses need to know:

- The pervasiveness of implicit bias among healthcare professionals
- How implicit bias affects patients and their interactions with healthcare professionals
- How to apply techniques for mitigating the effects of implicit bias

# Implications of Implicit Bias

Implicit bias not only unfavorably impacts healthy outcomes (Chapman et al., 2013; Johnson et. al., 2017; Narayan, 2019), but it also limits our ability to raise awareness and increase knowledge of the very constraints that oppress healthcare delivery. Implications of implicit bias include:

- Less compassion for patient and/or family
- Failure to build trust
- Inadequate/incomplete patient assessments
- Missed signs/symptoms of disease progression/deterioration
- Incorrect diagnoses or inappropriate treatment decisions/recommendations
- Decrease time in patient care
- Incomplete or insufficient discharge planning
- Lack of follow-up care
- Medical and care errors

### Implicit Bias Manifested

- Educational system and educators not reflective of student demographics thereby lacking in diversity and perspective
- Historical inferior treatment of BIPOC and marginalized persons
- Historical use of BIPOC without proper informed consent or humane treatment protocols
- False "Evidence-based" practice algorithms that guide clinical practice using race as a biological factor in diagnosis and treatment
- False beliefs of pain differences, disease presentations and responses to treatment based on race
- Educational materials/textbooks that reinforce false beliefs
- Student observations of disrespect/inequities towards patients and families from nurses in the clinical setting leads to learned behaviors and perpetuates/solidifies implicit biases

# What is Implicit Bias?

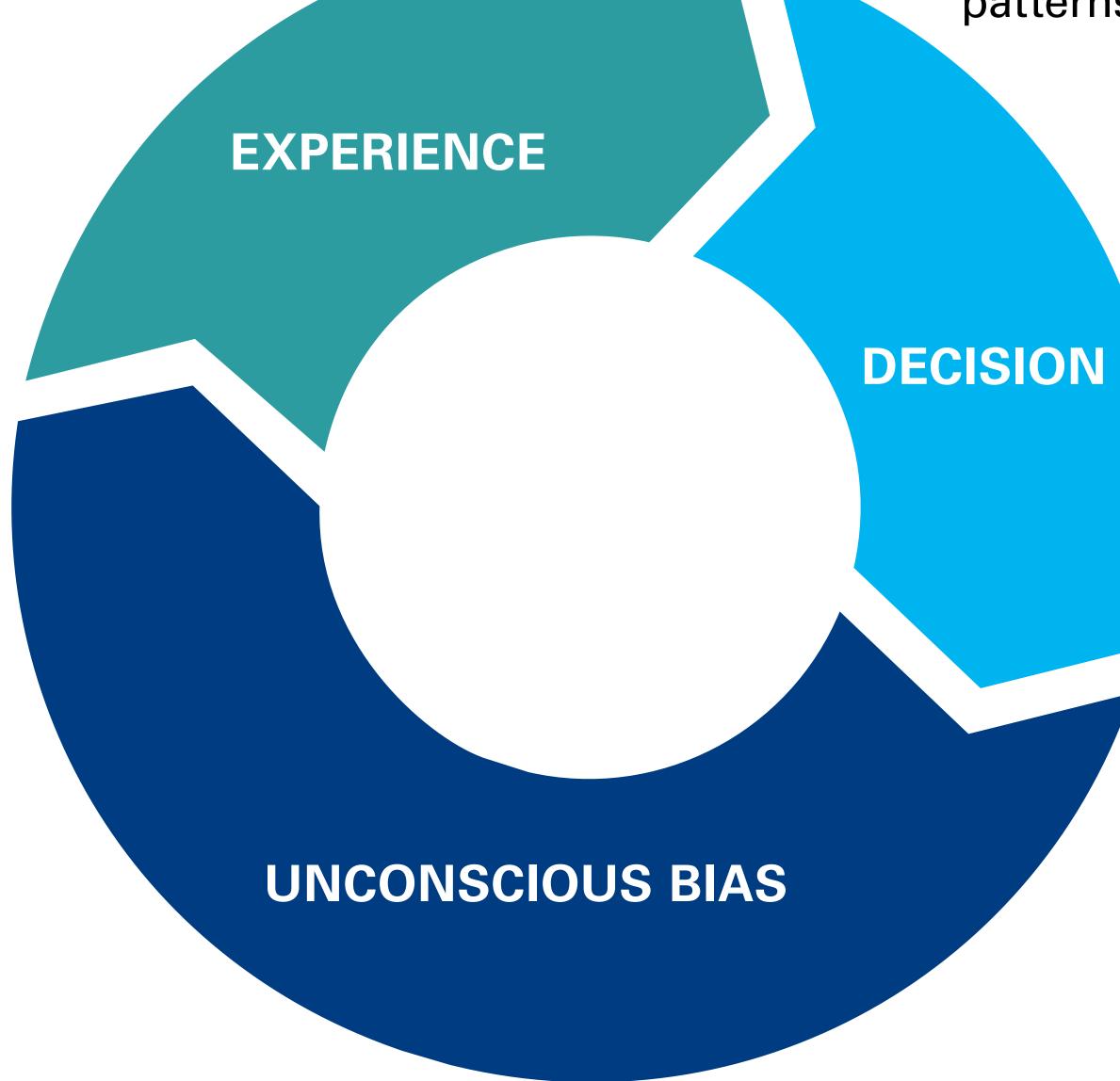
Implicit Bias, also known as unconscous bias, occurs when you make spontaneous judgments about people or situations based on your past experiences, culture, background or exposure to media.

These hidden preferences or prejuidices can affect nearly every decision you make.

Our brains are bombarded with thousands of messages each second but instead of constantly seeing the world and making decisions as if for the first time the human brain has learned to work more efficiently...

Our minds archive patterns and associations we observe throughout our upbringing from family, education, peer groups, media exposure and other life experiences.

We have evolved to be able to process 200,000 times more information by making rapid unconscious decisions based on assumptions we make from our archive of patterns and associations.



The impact is that we are no longer neutral. If we have seen two "things" occur together, our unconscious mind will often assume we'll see them together again. As a result we display micro-behaviours and unknowingly discriminate against one group and in favor of another.

# Mitigating Implicit Bias

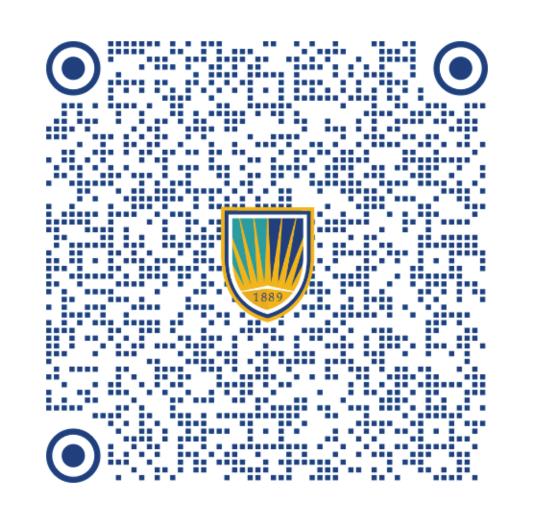
Implicit bias training should be viewed as one component of an organization's widespread, overarching strategy for implementing structural and institutional changes to achieve equitable health outcomes for its community. Training goals should include:

- Promoting awareness of implicit bias among all members of the healthcare team including faculty, staff and students
- Providing resources for moderating the negative effects of implicit bias on patient care
- Increasing self-awareness by reflecting on the results of the implicit bias self-assessment by Project Implicit
- Demonstrating conscious mitigation strategies to overcome implicit bias
- Applying implicit bias reduction skills in didactic and clinical settings
- Understanding the effects of implicit bias on real-life patients

## Implicit Bias Training Action Plan

Boards of Nursing and state licensing regulatory agencies have recognized the need for implicit bias training and more states are mandating nurses to complete implicit bias training as part of their nursing curriculum prior to licensure or as a requirement for licensing renewal. In order to be in compliance, nursing schools should develop or incorporate implicit bias training into their curricula by:

- Utilizing ANA Code of Ethics for Nurses, Scope and Standards of Practice
  & Social Policy Statement
- Utilizing the Future of Nursing report and AACN Essentials to guide and transform curricula across all program for nurses at all levels
- Threading and scaffold DEI concepts across the curricula using the introduce, reinforce and apply method
- Applying a community informed process to DEI curricular assessment and revision
- Mandating faculty development to equip faculty with the knowledge to address and counter implicit bias
- Facilitating crucial conversations between faculty and students utilizing real scenarios from personal experience or interactions/events from clinical environments
- Modeling appropriate respectful and considerate behaviors
- Supporting students who experience microaggressions/discrimination
- Supporting staff as they use strategies to dismantle implicit bias and racism



#### Resources and References

Click or scan to view resources and references.

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