UNCONSCIOUS BIAS:
OVERCOMING ETHICAL OBSTACLES WHILE INCREASING MULTI-CULTURAL COMPETENCIES

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2019 MISSOURI & ILLINOIS BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CONFERENCE
ST. LOUIS, MO
OCTOBER 24, 2019
CRCC CODE OF ETHICS FOUNDING VALUES

• Respecting human rights and dignity;
• Ensuring the integrity of all professional relationships;
• Acting to alleviate personal distress and suffering;
• Enhancing the quality of professional knowledge and its application to increase professional and personal effectiveness;
• Promoting empowerment through self-advocacy and self-determination;
• Appreciating the diversity of human experience and appreciating culture;
• Emphasizing client strengths versus deficits;
• Serving individuals holistically; and
• Advocating for the fair and adequate provision of services.
CRCC CODE OF ETHICS SIX CORE PRINCIPLES OF ETHICAL BEHAVIOR

• Autonomy
  • To respect the rights of clients to be self-governing within their social and cultural framework.

• Beneficence
  • To do good to others; to promote the well-being of clients.

• Justice
  • To be fair in the treatment of all clients; to provide appropriate services to all.

• Fidelity
  • To be faithful; to keep promises and honor the trust placed in rehabilitation counselors.

• Non-maleficence
  • To do no harm to others.

• Veracity
  • To be honest.
UNCONSCIOUS BIAS: WHAT IS IT?

• **Bias** is a prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another usually in a way that's considered to be unfair.

• Biases may be held by an individual, group, or institution/organization and can have negative or positive consequences.
There are 2 types of biases we will examine, but we’ll focus on the latter:

- **Conscious bias** (also know as *explicit* bias)
  &
- **Unconscious bias** (also know as *implicit* bias or *hidden* bias)
UNCONSCIOUS BIAS: WHAT IS IT?

Whether they be conscious or unconscious, biases are not limited to ethnicity or race. Although racial bias and discrimination is well documented, biases may exist toward any social group. Many other characteristics are subject to bias:

- Age
- Gender or Gender Identity
- Physical Abilities
- Religion
- Sexual Orientation
- Weight
- Nationality
- Disability
- Veteran Status
- Living Situation
- Criminal Background
- Height
- Skin Tone
- Political Affiliation
**UNCONSCIOUS BIAS: WHAT IS IT?**

- **Unconscious biases** are social stereotypes about certain groups of people that individuals form outside their own conscious awareness.

- Everyone holds unconscious beliefs about various social and identity groups, and these biases stem from one’s tendency to organize social worlds by categorization.
Unconscious bias is far more prevalent than conscious prejudice and often incompatible with one’s conscious values, which can cause cognitive dissonance.

Certain situations can activate unconscious attitudes and beliefs. For example, biases may be more prevalent when multi-tasking or working under time constraints.
In the past, human bias was regarded as conscious and intentional. Today, the new science of bias suggests that human biases are largely unconscious and unintentional. If true, this new research suggests that our biases are infinitely more dangerous than we ever imagined them to be – operating like computer biases to get beyond our best intellectual firewalls and capable of creating tremendous interpersonal damage – without our conscious intent.”

-David B. Hunt-
BIAS:
CONSCIOUS VS. UNCONSCIOUS
EXPLICIT VS. IMPLICIT

So what does this mean to us as professionals?
SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS FOR PROFESSIONALS

• Impact client/counselor relationships
• Influence treatment recommendations
• Direct IPE planning and development
• Threaten clinical objectivity and clinical decision-making
• Affect hiring, selection, and evaluation practices
• Decrease employment opportunities
• Decrease workplace diversity
• Mentoring
• Healthcare disparities
SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS FOR PROFESSIONALS

• “The primary responsibility of rehabilitation counselors is to respect the dignity of clients and to promote their welfare.”
  -Section A.1.a: Welfare of Those Served

• “Rehabilitation counselors are aware of and avoid imposing their own values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Rehabilitation counselors respect the diversity of clients and seek training in areas in which they are at risk of imposing their values onto clients, especially when the rehabilitation counselor’s values are inconsistent with the client’s goals or are discriminatory in nature.”
  -Section A.4.: Avoiding Value Imposition
SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS FOR PROFESSIONALS

A.2. RESPECTING DIVERSITY

• “Rehabilitation counselors demonstrate respect for the cultural identity of clients in developing and implementing rehabilitation and treatment plans, and providing and adapting interventions.”
  -Section A.2.a: Respecting Culture

• “Rehabilitation counselors do not condone or engage in the prejudicial treatment of an individual or group based on their actual or perceived membership in a particular group, class, or category.”
  -Section A.2.b: Non-Discrimination
SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS FOR PROFESSIONALS

• “Rehabilitation counselors work to develop and maintain awareness of the cultural meanings of confidentiality and privacy. Rehabilitation counselors hold ongoing discussions with clients as to how, when, and with whom information is to be shared.” -Section B.1.d: Cultural Diversity Considerations

• “Rehabilitation counselors develop and maintain knowledge, personal awareness, sensitivity, and skills and demonstrate a disposition reflective of a culturally competent rehabilitation counselor working with diverse client populations.” -Section D.2.a: Cultural Competence
“Time and again, the research shows that interviews are poor predictors of job performance because we tend to hire people we think are similar to us rather than those who are objectively going to do a good job.”

-Ori Brafman

Fictitious resumes with White-sounding names sent to help-wanted ads were more likely to receive callbacks for interviews compared to resumes with African-American sounding names. Resumes with White-sounding names received 50% more callbacks for interviews (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004).
UNCONSCIOUS BIAS IN THE WORKPLACE

• Science faculty rated male applicants for a laboratory manager position as significantly more competent and hirable than female applicants. Faculty also selected a higher starting salary and offered more career mentoring to the male applicant (Moss-Racusin et al, 2012).

• Among mentored career K08 or K23 recipients – mean salary of female researchers was about $31,000 less than males (Jagsi et al., 2013).
Implicit bias among health care professionals can influence their behaviors and judgments (Stone & Moskowitz, 2011).

Since 1997, more than 30 studies have been published relevant to unconscious bias and clinical decision-making. Racial bias is prevalent among healthcare providers and it appears that race influences medical decision making of healthcare providers (Paradies, 2013).
“Flexible work” arrangements are one area in which the conflict between our conscious choices and the “organizational unconscious” is coming to a head.

“Flex schedules” - alternative arrangements or schedules that deviate from the traditional working day and/or week – are often established to allow employees, especially parents, to meet personal or family needs.
In principle the policy makes business sense and may even draw a lot of corporate and employee support.

Turnover among young, talented parents can cause an organization to lose some of its best employees and cost hundreds of thousands, or even millions, of dollars in replacement costs.

Thus, many organizations have a flexible work policy clearly articulated in the employee manual.
• However, when employees actually take advantage of flex schedules, they can often be viewed by others – including coworkers, bosses, and company leadership – as a “less committed,” “less valuable,” or “less desirable” member of the team.

• The “official rules” say that flex schedules are acceptable, but in actuality a conflict exists!

• While the organization consciously acknowledges that offering flexible work arrangements is the “right” thing to do and may even help increase retention and employee satisfaction, the organizational unconscious believes differently.
• Unconsciously, the organization’s culture of fear and mistrust pervades: fear that the company will ultimately lose productivity and revenue through flexible work arrangements, and mistrust that employees are misusing the policy and “cutting corners” in terms of time requirements.

• Conflicts such as this can leave employees frustrated by the feeling that their leaders and the company as a whole are disingenuous in their statements, when in actuality the leaders may not see the conflict themselves.

Perception is key!
PERCEPTION IS REALITY

• Which table top is bigger?

• Are they the same shape?

• Are they the same size?
PERCEPTION IS REALITY

BOTH TABLE TOPS ARE IDENTICAL IN SIZE!

• If you cut out or trace the table top on the left and lay it over the table top on the right, you will see they are exactly the same!

• Rarely do we realize how subjective our perception can be and the lens we view the world!
IMPLICIT ASSOCIATION TEST (IAT)

- [https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html](https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html)

- The University of Virginia, University of Washington, and Harvard University founded Project Implicit in 1998.
  - “Project Implicit is a non-profit organization and international collaboration between researchers who are interested in implicit social cognition - thoughts and feelings outside of conscious awareness and control. The goal of the organization is to educate the public about hidden biases and to provide a “virtual laboratory” for collecting data on the Internet.”

- IAT topics include: Disability, Race, Religion, Sexuality, Weapons, Skin Tone, Age, Weight, Arab-Muslim, Gender-Career, Gender-Science, Native, Asian, etc.
AMERICAN DENIAL: IAT ON RACIAL BIAS


• “This IAT aims to “[measure] the strength of associations between concepts (e.g., black people, gay people) and evaluations (e.g., good, bad) or stereotypes (e.g., athletic, clumsy)” that remain “outside of conscious awareness and control.” The test reveals that even the most consciously tolerant of us may hold racial biases…”

• [https://www.rev.com/captions-editor/shared/sTuoN0omgaYj1ubUd9Du66Hmb0hnc8TvAGruwrw_ivNHkZUJ37qgXewf0e7_7PnZnbC5A](https://www.rev.com/captions-editor/shared/sTuoN0omgaYj1ubUd9Du66Hmb0hnc8TvAGruwrw_ivNHkZUJ37qgXewf0e7_7PnZnbC5A)
MY DISABILITY IAT RESULTS

Debriefing

The sorting test you just took is called the Implicit Association Test (IAT). You categorized good and bad words with images of Disabled Persons and Abled Persons.

Here is your result:

Your data suggest a slight automatic preference for Disabled Persons over Abled Persons.

Your result is described as an "Automatic preference for Disabled Persons over Abled Persons" if you were faster responding when Disabled Persons and Good are assigned to the same response key than when Abled Persons and Good were classified with the same key. Your score is described as an "Automatic preference for Abled Persons over Disabled Persons" if the opposite occurred.

Your automatic preference may be described as "slight", "moderate", "strong", or "no preference". This indicates the strength of your automatic preference.

The IAT requires a certain number of correct responses in order to get results. If you made too many errors while completing the test you will get the feedback that there were too many errors to determine a result.

Note that your IAT result is based only on the categorization task and not on the questions that you answered.
7 STEPS TO IDENTIFY AND ADDRESS UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

• 1. Recognize that you have biases

• 2. Identify what those biases are

• 3. Dissect your biases

• 4. Decide which of your biases you will address first

• 5. Look for common interest groups

• 6. Get rid of your biases

• 7. Be mindful of bias kick back
USBLN ON UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RYRIyEq7ytQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RYRIyEq7ytQ)

- Unconscious biases are not permanent. In fact, they are malleable and steps can be taken to limit their impact on our thoughts and behaviors (Dasgupta, 2013).

- Identify it! Challenge it! Overcome it!

- It is our responsibility as ethically practicing CRCs to do so!
  - Section L.1a: Knowledge of the Code
DISCUSSION

• Have you had experience with clients activating an unconscious bias?

• In your experience, what have you found works best in managing your unconscious biases as a professional? Worst?

• Do you read all case information before meeting with a client?

• What skills do you now have moving forward in combatting your unconscious bias?

• Are you willing to act, communicate, and get uncomfortable?

• Have you ever taken an IAT before?

• Have you practiced introspection of yourself lately or at all?
  • If not, you probably should do so sooner than later! Go get reflective!
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THE END 😊

ENJOY THE

REST OF THE

CONFERENCE!