



Strategic Diversity Initiatives™

Training. Consulting. Direction.

# **Beyond Diversity 101: Micro-inequities, Implicit Bias, and Moving toward Equity**

Anne Phibbs, PhD

White Pine Library Cooperative

October 4, 2021

# Agenda

Framing: Diversity, the Changing Landscape, and Equity

Understanding and Addressing Microaggressions and Micro-inequities

Small Group Discussion: My Experience

Understanding and Addressing Implicit Bias

Acting as an Ally

Next Steps



“How Diversity Makes Us Smarter: Being around people who are different from us makes us more creative, more diligent, and harder-working” by Katherine W. Phillips, *Scientific American*, 10/1/14.

- Decades of research by organizational scientists, psychologists, sociologists, economists and demographers show that **socially diverse groups (regarding race, gender, and sexual orientation) are more innovative than homogeneous groups.**
- Simply interacting with individuals who are different forces group members to **prepare better, to anticipate alternative viewpoints,** and to expect that reaching consensus will take effort.

# The Changing Landscape: Disability

From Julia Horowitz, “More people with disabilities are getting jobs. Here’s why.” CNN Business, 1/26/18.

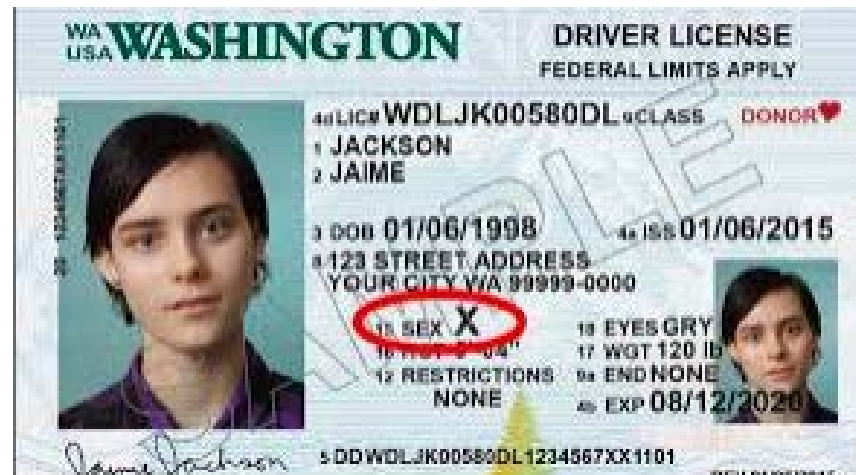
People with disabilities have traditionally been underemployed (**only 40% of adults with disabilities in their prime working years (ages 25-54) have a job, compared to 79% of all prime-age adults**).

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), **1 in 5 Americans live with a mental health condition.**

More and more people are “coming out” about living with mental health conditions. **The stigma associated with mental illness is being addressed widely, with celebrities being open - and with campaigns like #CureStigma**

# The Changing Landscape: Gender

- 14 states now allow people to amend their birth certificates to replace their sex with a nonbinary designation (neither male nor female).
- 20 states now allow a third gender option for driver's licenses. In addition to "M" and "F," "X" can now be checked by any applicant who does not want to identify as male or female.
- In June, 2021, it was announced that the U.S. would soon add a 3<sup>rd</sup> gender option for passports.
- Millennials now make up over 1/3 of the U.S. workforce (Pew Research Center). GLAAD (LGBTQ media organization) estimates as many as 12% of millennials may identify as transgender or nonbinary.



# The Changing Landscape: Race

- The U.S. is projected to become “minority white” in 2045.
- For youth under 18, “minorities” will outnumber whites in 2020. For those age 18-29 –members of the younger labor force and voting age populations– the tipping point will occur in 2027.
- "Our analysis of the 2020 Census results show that the US population is much more multiracial, and more racially and ethnically diverse than what we measured in the past," said Nicholas Jones, the director and senior advisor of race and ethnic research and outreach in the US Census Bureau's population division.
- People of color represented 43% of the total US population in 2020, up from 34% in 2010.
- The non-Hispanic White share of the US population fell to 57% in 2020, shrinking by six percentage points since 2010, the largest decrease of any race or ethnicity.

William H. Frey, “The US will become ‘Minority White’ in 2045, Census projects,” Brookings, 3/14/18, updated to reflect September, 2018 Census Bureau revisions.

Janie Boschma, Daniel Wolfe, Priya Krishnakumar, Christopher Hickey, Meghna Maharishi, Renée Rigdon, John Keefe and David Wright, “Census release shows America is more diverse and more multiracial than ever,” CNN Politics, 8/12/21

# Why Equity Matters

- The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) says hate groups in the U.S. are at an all time high – with 1,020 in 2018. According to the FBI, in 2020, the number of violent hate crimes in the U.S. was the highest since 2008.
- Since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, over 3800 hate crimes against Asian-Americans have been reported (an almost 150% increase), with 68% against Asian-American women.
- An EEOC survey of over 5,200 newly employed workers found black job seekers were offered significantly less compensation than whites by potential new employers.
- A 2018 survey found 38% of women have experienced sexual harassment in their workplace. A 2020 study found that 72% of those who reported sexual harassment faced some form of retaliation, including termination and denied promotions.
- On April 6, 2021, the Arkansas legislature passed a law that would ban gender-affirming medical treatments for transgender youth. This is arguably one of the most restrictive, transphobic laws ever passed by a state legislature. According to the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), in 2021, 82 anti-trans bills have been introduced in state legislatures, the most number of anti-trans bills ever introduced.

# Micro-inequities or Microaggressions

From *Microaggressions: Power, Privilege and Everyday Life*  
[microaggressions.com](http://microaggressions.com)

**This blog seeks to provide a visual representation of the everyday of “microaggressions.”** Each event, observation and experience posted is not necessarily particularly striking in and of themselves. Often, they are never meant to hurt - acts done with little conscious awareness of their meanings and effects. **Instead, their slow accumulation during a childhood and over a lifetime is in part what defines a marginalized experience,** making explanation and communication with someone who does not share this identity particularly difficult.

# Examples of Micro-inequities

- “A security guard approaches me at an upscale shopping district. I am the only black person sitting in the waiting area. I am waiting for a friend and have been sitting for two minutes. **The security guard ignores the throng of people around me, comes to me and asks “What is your business here?” I am 31 & in Chicago & it made me feel like I was...nothing.**
- **“Are you a man or a woman?”**  
Repeatedly, everywhere.
- My boss isn’t around the business much. When he does come in, he firmly shakes hands with and looks into the eyes of every male employee. **I, a female, am the manager of these male employees, and he asks me to make him a cup of coffee and tells me to smile more.**
- Today at work, there was a Latino father and his children. Like children, they were playing and running around the store. **My white boss comes up to me and says “Hispanic people have absolutely no control over their kids.”**

# Examples of Micro-inequities

- I am in a pharmacy and need something for a sports injury. **When I tell the assistant, she laughs and so does her colleague. I am 59 years of age and female.**
- I'm an Asian woman. Whenever there is another Asian woman in my workplace, I inevitably get called by her name, **multiple times a day.** One day, my white colleague told me "You should realize how hard this is for me and stop caring so much!" after calling me the other Asian girl's name. Saying "I'm trying!" or "you know it's not racist" doesn't help when you're not trying and it IS racist.
- **"What if you accidentally slept with a schizophrenic guy and had a nutter baby?"** Said by a girl at work. I have a relative with schizophrenia and have struggled with depression in the past. **Made me feel sad, angry and like people are always going to judge you and define you by your mental illness.**
- **"Oh, I don't know how to pronounce those names."** My supervisor at a new job, about my name. I had frequently repeated my name in order for coworkers & supervisors to learn it.

# Examples of Micro-inequities

- **I mention to a co-worker that I grew up in a trailer park, and she says, “But you’re so smart!”**
- **My classmate makes a joke about Jews running the media. We all laugh, including me, because they think there are no Jews around to hear it. Made me feel humiliated.**
- **I have no idea how to come out to my colleagues as transgender after I overheard them using transphobic slurs and calling another transgender person an “it.” I’m a young teacher in a rural area. I felt invisible, humiliated, and hopeless.**
- **Pretty much any time I leave the house in my wheelchair and go to a public place, people feel entitled to come up and ask me the most intrusive personal questions. On a weekly basis, someone asks me: “What’s wrong with you?” People frequently talk over my head to my friends or family members like I am mentally impaired. Many people have told me that they can relate to my disability because they were on crutches for several weeks with a sprained ankle or broken leg. I’m 27 years-old and the comments are always the worst in big cities and on public transportation. Makes me feel anxious, frustrated, angry, and sad.**

## Small Group Discussion: My Experience

- Have you ever witnessed or experienced a microaggression/micro-inequity? If so, what happened?
- Do you think you have ever committed a microaggression/micro-inequity? If so, what happened?

## Tips for Taking Action

**5 questions to ask yourself when weighing the consequences of responding to a microaggression (and other disrespectful behavior):**

1. If I respond, could my physical safety be in danger?
2. If I respond, will the person become defensive and will this lead to an argument?
3. If I respond, how will this affect my relationship with this person (e.g., co-worker, family member, etc.)
4. If I don't respond, will I regret not saying something?
5. If I don't respond, does that convey that I accept the behavior or statement?

“How to Respond to Microaggressions,” Hahna Yoon, *New York Times*, 3/3/20

## Tips for Taking Action

### Suggestions from diversity consultant Dr. Diane Goodman:

- **Ask for more clarification:** “Could you say more about what you mean by that?” “How have you come to think that?”
- **Separate intent from impact:** “I know you didn’t realize this, but when you \_\_\_\_\_ (comment/behavior), it was hurtful/offensive because \_\_\_\_\_. Instead you could \_\_\_\_\_ (different language or behavior.)”
- **Share your own process:** “I noticed that you \_\_\_\_\_ (comment/behavior). I used to do/say that, too, but then I learned \_\_\_\_\_.”

“How to Respond to Microaggressions,” Hahna Yoon, *New York Times*, 3/3/20

# Implicit/Unconscious/Unexamined Bias

“Unexamined bias is a form of stereotyping that is often **unintentional, automatic, and outside of our awareness**. Often contradicting to our conscious beliefs. Also called subtle or implicit bias. Framing it specifically as “unexamined” puts onus for change on the person who harbors or acts on bias, holding them accountable.”

Center for Institutional Change, University of Washington

**TEDx Basel:**  
*Are You Biased? I am*  
*(August, 2016)*

**Kristen Pressner**  
**Global Head Human Resources,**  
**Roche Diagnostics**

# Resources

## Project Implicit

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.**

[implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/research](http://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/research)

**Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, Ohio State University**

[kirwaninstitute.osu.edu](http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu)

**Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society**

[haasinstitute.berkeley.edu](http://haasinstitute.berkeley.edu)

**Perception Institute - [perception.org](http://perception.org)**

**Biased: Uncovering the Hidden Prejudice That Shapes What We See, Think, and Do, Jennifer L. Eberhardt, PhD, Viking, 2019**

# Research on Implicit Bias

**“Are Emily and Greg More Employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A Field Experiment on Labor Market Discrimination,” (Bertrand & Mullainathan, American Economic Review, 2004)**

- Stereotypical “white” vs. “black” names (in a U.S. context); otherwise identical resumes
- **Resume with “white” names had 50% more callbacks**
- Many other studies, including those dealing with housing, health care, online sales, and perceptions of risk and safety, have demonstrated that **people of all racial identities demonstrate a pro-white and anti-black bias.**

# Research from Nextion, Consulting Firm

- 60 partners from 22 law firms received copies of a memo with 22 errors (minor spelling or grammar errors, technical writing errors, errors in fact, and errors in analysis of the facts).
- Half told memo written by an African-American man and half told writer was a white man (both Thomas Meyer).
- **The reviewers gave the memo supposedly written by a white man a rating of 4.1 out of 5, while they gave the memo supposedly written by a black man a rating of 3.2 out of 5. The white Thomas Meyer was praised for his potential and good analytical skills, while the black Thomas Meyer was criticized as average at best and needing a lot of work.**
- **Reviewers found an average of 2.9 out of 7 spelling and grammar errors in the memo by the white Thomas Meyer and 5.8 out of seven errors in the memo by the African-American Thomas Meyer.**

# Research on Implicit Bias

**“Science faculty’s subtle gender biases favor male students,” (Moss-Racusin, Dovidio, Brescoll, Graham & Handelsman, PNAS, 2012)**

- Male & female science professors asked to review apps for lab manager position
- Both male & female professors **rated male applicants more competent, more hireable, more suitable for mentoring, and offered males higher salaries**
- As with race-focused research, **people of all gender identities demonstrate a pro-male and anti-female bias**



# Research on Implicit Bias

“Pride and Prejudice: Employment Discrimination against Openly Gay Men in the United States,” Tilcsik, *American Journal of Sociology*, 2011.

- Study revealed bias against openly gay candidates

“Attitudes towards individuals with disabilities as measured by the Implicit Association Test: A literature review,” (Wilson and Scior, 2013)

- 17 articles were reviewed. Across all studies, **implicit bias was evident against people with disabilities.**

An Ally is someone who is willing to **pay attention to – and take action around - the social, economic & political differences and inequities that attend to people** based on distinctions of race, ethnicity, age, class, sexual orientation, gender identity & expression, disability, religious or spiritual identity, and nationality (this is not an exhaustive list)

# What Can We Do? Acting as an Ally

- No one person is completely marginalized or completely privileged. **Most of us have complex identities involving both marginalization & privilege.**
- Allies move past shame, guilt, and blame, working to understand how **privilege works in their life**, as well as how marginalized “others” are perceived through stereotypes & cultural myths.
- Anyone can become an ally to people with less privilege & institutional power, but it first **requires an understanding of one’s own social identities.**
- “Being an ally” is an on-going process that involves **self-reflection**, an **openness to new ideas**, *believing* other people’s lived experiences, a commitment to **on-going education**, and **taking action & risks.**

One Example: Acting as an Ally

**Dr. Joy DeGruy in**  
*Cracking the Codes:*  
*The System of Racial Inequality*

(Shakti Butler, 2012)

# Next Steps: Daily Experiment/Daily Practice

“Here is a thought experiment I encourage you to make a part of your daily habit. As you move throughout your day, sit in a classroom, a department meeting, a social space, or as you go to the supermarket, to your neighborhood and residence, or visit with your friends and family, **I want you to think about the inequality that might exist in that space.**

This may not initially be an easy task; we tend to make the assumption that if we feel a space is safe, inclusive and pleasant, then everyone must feel the same way. **I want you to think about what the experience might be like for people who represent marginalized or non-privileged communities;** for example, people of color, non-Christians, immigrants, people experiencing homelessness, women, LGBTQIA people, indigenous people, people with disabilities, people with low income, or people for which English is not their first language.

Consider who is represented in that space and who is not and then ask why. Then consider who has a voice that is being heard in the space and who does not and then ask why. **Then ask yourself how you might *act as an ally* in order to support those people who may not be represented, or who may not have a voice in order to actively make the space more equitable.”**

From “Ally is not a Noun” by Dr. Makini King

## Next Steps: Advancing Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

- **What can you do, personally, to help advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in the places and spaces you inhabit? Be specific. Consider what you can do to help advance diversity, equity, and inclusion within your library?**
- **What can your library do to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion? Again, be specific.**
- **What barriers or challenges might get in the way of this work? How can you overcome these barriers and challenges?**



Strategic Diversity Initiatives™

Training. Consulting. Direction.

**Thank you!**

**Anne Phibbs, PhD**

**[anne.phibbs@strategicdi.com](mailto:anne.phibbs@strategicdi.com)**

**[strategicdi.com](http://strategicdi.com)**