

How Can We Help Mitigate Implicit Bias in Healthcare?

MITE Monthly Tip

November 2023

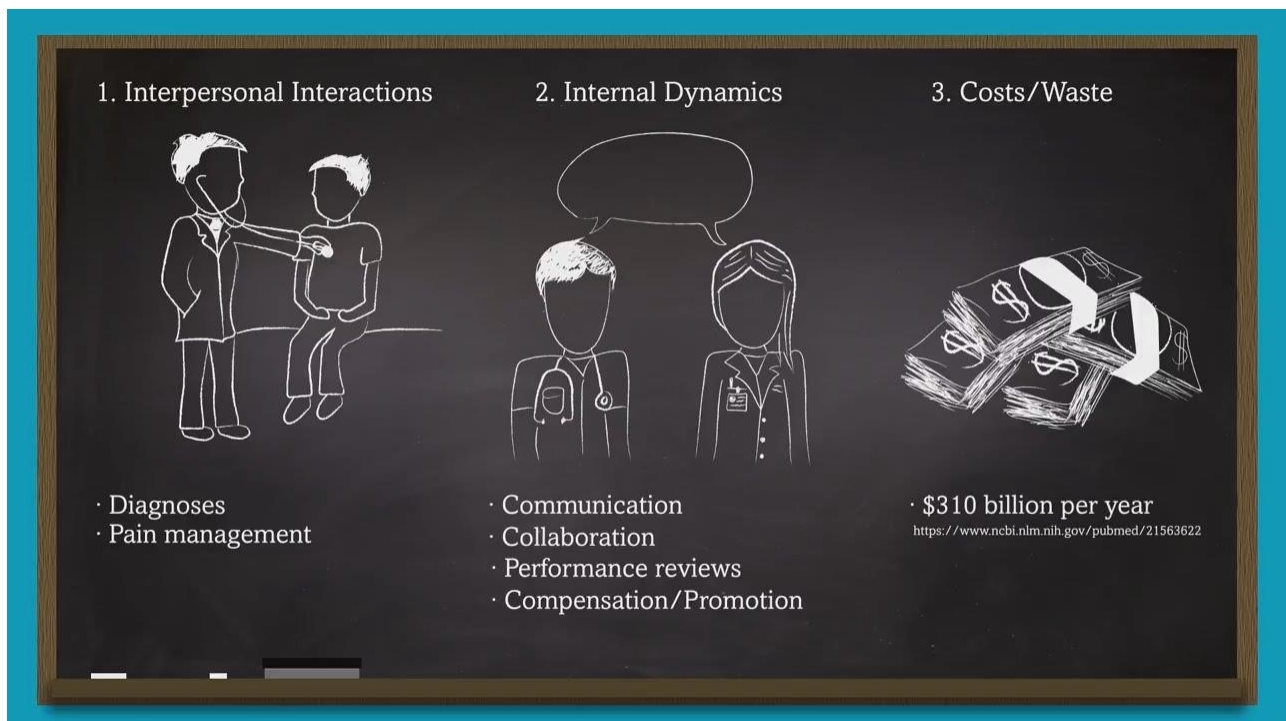
Laura Madigan-McCown, DBE, HEC-C

What is implicit bias?

Implicit bias is a form of bias that occurs automatically and unintentionally, that nevertheless affects judgments, decisions, and behaviors. Research has shown implicit bias can pose a barrier to recruiting and retaining a diverse healthcare workforce, and may negatively affect health outcomes and equity in care.

The 2 minute video below from The Institute of Healthcare Improvement describes three areas of implicit bias in health care:

How Does Implicit Bias Affect Health Care?



Implicit bias mitigation strategies

- Identify your personal implicit biases
- Identify how your implicit biases are manifested with others
- Reflect on how implicit biases impact your interactions with patients, families, students, colleagues
- Use a technique such as imagination (Blair et al., 2001) or cognitive reframing (Carnes et al., 2015) which requires intentional effort to recognize and shift the automatic thought patterns that lead to implicit bias

As we learned last month, microaggressions are manifestations of implicit biases. It is important to recognize the biases each of us holds and the ways we personally manifest these biases with others. Then we can work to unlearn those that are harmful to others.

Remember – we all have biases because we are all human.

References

Blair IV, Ma JE, Lenton AP. Imagining stereotypes away: the moderation of implicit stereotypes through mental imagery. *J Pers Soc Psychol.* 2001 Nov;81(5):828-41. doi: 10.1037//0022-3514.81.5.828. PMID: 11708560.

Carnes M, Devine PG, Baier Manwell L, Byars-Winston A, Fine E, Ford CE, Forscher P, Isaac C, Kaatz A, Magua W, Palta M, Sheridan J. The effect of an intervention to break the gender bias habit for faculty at one institution: a cluster randomized, controlled trial. *Acad Med.* 2015 Feb;90(2):221-30. doi: 10.1097/ACM.0000000000000552. PMID: 25374039; PMCID: PMC4310758.

Galinsky AD, Moskowitz GB. Perspective-taking: decreasing stereotype expression, stereotype accessibility, and in-group favoritism. *J Pers Soc Psychol.* 2000 Apr;78(4):708-24. doi: 10.1037//0022-3514.78.4.708. PMID: 10794375.

Magrane D, Helitzer D, Morahan P, Chang S, Gleason K, Cardinali G, Wu CC. Systems of career influences: a conceptual model for evaluating the professional development of women in academic medicine. *J Womens Health (Larchmt).* 2012 Dec;21(12):1244-51. doi: 10.1089/jwh.2012.3638. Epub 2012 Oct 26. PMID: 23101486; PMCID: PMC3518539.

Stewart BD, Payne BK. Bringing automatic stereotyping under control: implementation intentions as efficient means of thought control. *Pers Soc Psychol Bull.* 2008 Oct;34(10):1332-45. doi: 10.1177/0146167208321269. Epub 2008 Jul 25. PMID: 18660384.

Westring AF, Speck RM, Sammel MD, Scott P, Tuton LW, Grisso JA, Abbuhl S. A culture conducive to women's academic success: development of a measure. *Acad Med.* 2012

Nov;87(11):1622-31. doi: 10.1097/ACM.0b013e31826dbfd1. PMID: 23018337; PMCID: PMC3485424.

NIH Diversity Website: <https://diversity.nih.gov/sociocultural-factors/implicit-bias#:~:text=Implicit%20bias%20is%20a%20form,retaining%20a%20diverse%20scientific%20workforce.>