Everyday Bias (HS)

Student Learning

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Everyday Bias

In these activities you will learn the difference between implicit and explicit bias. Then, explore and reflect on examples of everyday bias you have seen in the news and in your life.

Grade Level: High School

View Complete: Lesson Plan

Watch And Learn
With implicit bias, the aggressor is usually (1) unaware of what they are doing (2) not conscious of their bias and (3) not acting with intent.

Is it Implicit or Explicit Bias?

Quiz

With implicit bias, the aggressor is usually (1) unaware of what they are doing (2) not conscious of their bias and (3) not acting with intent.

- true
- false

Check Your Understanding

Watch this short video and reflect on the following questions:

- What is implicit bias?
- How is implicit bias different from racism?
- Does the difference matter?

Watch in Times Video »

2:27

Peanut Butter, Jelly and Racism

Implicit Bias

This type of bias involves the aggressor being aware of what they are doing and their actions are (1) voluntary, (2) on purpose, and (3) with intent.

The unconscious
A college student says, "I do not want to take a class with that professor because women teachers are overly emotional and terrible professors."

- Explicit
- Implicit

Is it Implicit or Explicit Bias?

Students were asked to rate teachers of an online course and they never saw the teachers. In the study, some male teachers claimed to be female and vice versa. When students took a class from someone they believed to be male, they rated the teacher significantly higher than the very same teacher, when believed to be female.

- Explicit
- Implicit

Have you considered...?

From the target’s point of view, does it matter whether the bias is implicit or explicit? For the person targeted, the impact of the biased action is what really matters, not necessarily the intent of the aggressor.

For example, if a white store clerk calls the police because she feels (unreasonably) that an African American man is “acting suspiciously,” no one except the clerk knows what sort of bias might be implicated. But in cases of bias, the impact on that African-American man can range from embarrassment to anger to potentially serious consequences like an arrest, even though he is innocent.

Sometimes we focus on distinguishing between implicit and explicit bias, which is helpful in understanding how our minds work and in challenging one’s own biases. At the same time, if
you are the target of bias, you have no way of knowing what is in the aggressor’s mind or whether their actions were intentional or not. Therefore, while it is important to understand the many complexities of bias, it is more important to consider the impacts of bias, whether implicit or explicit, on targets or others in that identity group.

Everyday Bias Around You

Examples of Everyday Bias
- An Asian woman was harassed by a man who cursed at her and told her, “You’re the one who brought the (corona) virus here.” After the woman attempted to record him on her cellphone, he slapped her phone away.
- In a restaurant in New York City, a man berated customers and employees for speaking Spanish and then threatened to call immigration officials.
- When an African American woman attempts to board a plane during first class seating, several passengers also boarding look at her suspiciously. The airline attendant asks, “Are you sure you’re in this section?” and then upon seeing the ticket says there must be some mistake and calls her supervisor.

In the News
- Have you heard about incidents of bias in the news lately?
- What happened and what do you know?
- Do you know what the outcome was and what are your thoughts about that outcome?

Talk about Bias
Think about if you have ever experienced (as a target or witness) everyday bias in a public space.
- What did you do or what did you wish you could have done?
Share one idea on what people do about everyday bias.

Additional Related Reading
- “4 ways you might be displaying hidden bias in everyday life” (CNN, November 25, 2015)
- “Being Black in Public” (Slate, April 19, 2018)
- Discrimination and Prejudice (Pew Research Center)
- Understanding Implicit Bias (Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity)
- Widespread Discrimination Continues to Shape LGBT People’s Lives in Both Subtle and Significant Ways (Center for American Progress, May 2, 2017)
On Social Media

As a result of the everyday bias people experience, several related hashtags have been created to amplify them on social media. Some specific hashtags such as #DrivingWhileBlack, #ShoppingWhileBlack and #LivingWhileBlack. These hashtags have helped people share their own experiences and learn about others' experiences with everyday racism.

• Have you seen a hashtag like this?
• What did you learn by exploring the hashtags?
• Have you ever used a hashtag to express how you felt about everyday bias? If so, what happened?

Learn more at adl.org.