

Implicit Bias Training

Tacoma City Council: Committee of the Whole Monday, March 29th, 2020

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Purpose

- * First Goal of Tacoma's Equity and Empowerment Framework: The City of Tacoma Workforce Reflects the Community We Serve
- * Resolution 40622 affirms the City Council's dedication and commitment to comprehensive and sustained transformation of all of the institutions, systems, policies, practices, and contracts impacted by systemic racism
- * This training is designed for members of City Council as the decision makers on who joins our Committees, Boards, and Commissions (CBCs)

Objectives

- * Provide an overview of implicit bias
- * Offer strategies for increasing self-awareness and addressing implicit bias

Overview

- * Public policy and practices are influenced by implicit/unconscious bias on both an individual and systemic scale
- * By building a deeper awareness of how these forms of bias might play out in city government, and in our larger society, we can interrupt many of the harmful impacts of bias and center future decisions on positive and lasting solutions

Introductions and Check-In Questions

- * What is your name, pronoun, and council position?
- * What are you hoping to take away from this training?

Implicit Bias

- * Implicit Bias refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner
- * We all carry implicit bias. By its very definition, we are unaware of its impact on our understanding, actions, and decisions
- * Through conscious engagement and reflection, we can mitigate some of its impacts
- * Societal stereotypes, left unchecked, often inform and amplify our implicit biases

Explicit bias

Expressed directly

Aware of bias / operates consciously

Example – Sign in the window of an apartment building – “whites only”

Implicit bias

Expressed indirectly

Unaware of bias / operates sub-consciously

Example – a property manager unknowingly performing more criminal background checks on African Americans than whites.

Examples of Implicit Bias

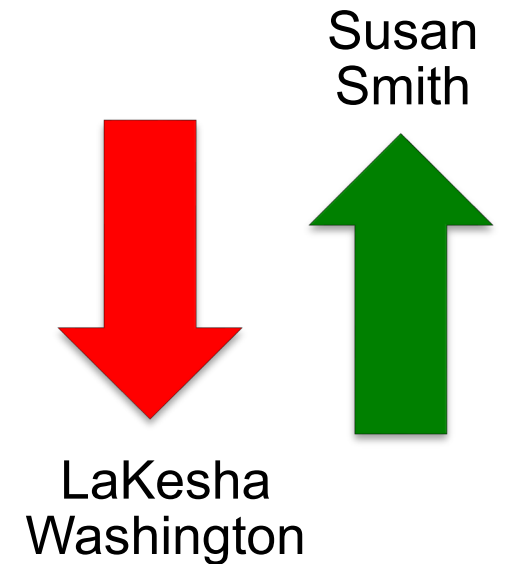
- * Implicit bias can show up for a surprising number of categories:
 - * Race
 - * Age
 - * Weight
 - * Nationality
 - * Skin tone
 - * Disability
 - * Gender identity
 - * Sexual orientation

Examples of Implicit Bias

Screened (“blind”) auditions account for up to 46% of the increase in the percentage of women in symphony orchestras since 1970.

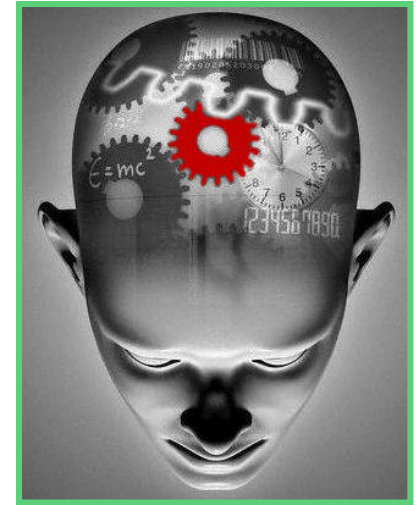


Research on call-back rates for identical resumes with white-sounding names vs. Black-sounding names reveals 50% higher call-back rates for white-sounding names.



The Human Brain

- * Receives roughly 11 million pieces of information per second
- * Can process, at most, 40 of those pieces of information
- * Racial bias tends to reside in our unconscious brain
- * We unconsciously think about race even when we do not discuss it



What color are the following lines of text?

- **Cvur zxyq brmm**
- **Xoc jbní oew mne**
- **Vqeb peow ytro**
- **Vqeb peow ytro**

What color are the following lines of text?

- **Black**
- **Red**
- **Blue**
- **Green**

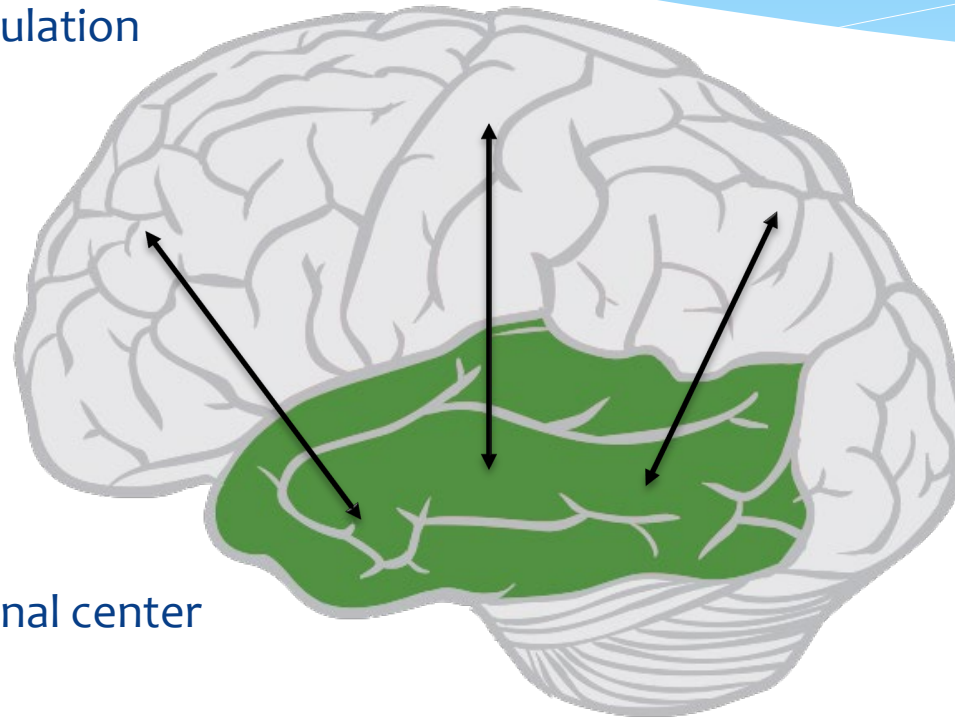
What color are the following lines of text?

- **Green**
- **Black**
- **Yellow**
- **Blue**

Neuroscience of Race Prejudice

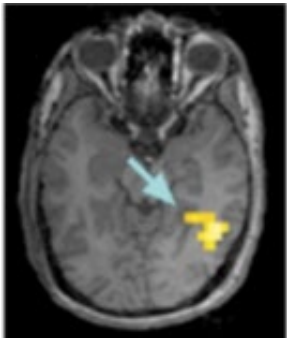
Executive function
& self-regulation

Emotional center

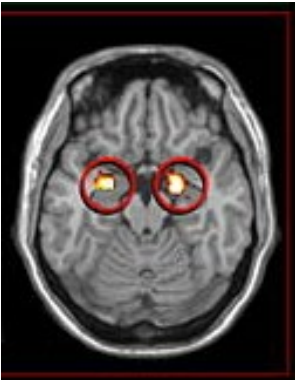


Automatic functions
(breathing, heartbeat,
etc)

Neuroscience of Race Prejudice



Fusiform gyrus: facial recognition center



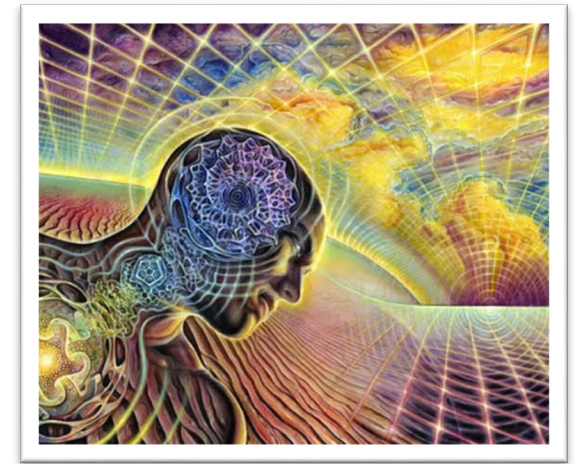
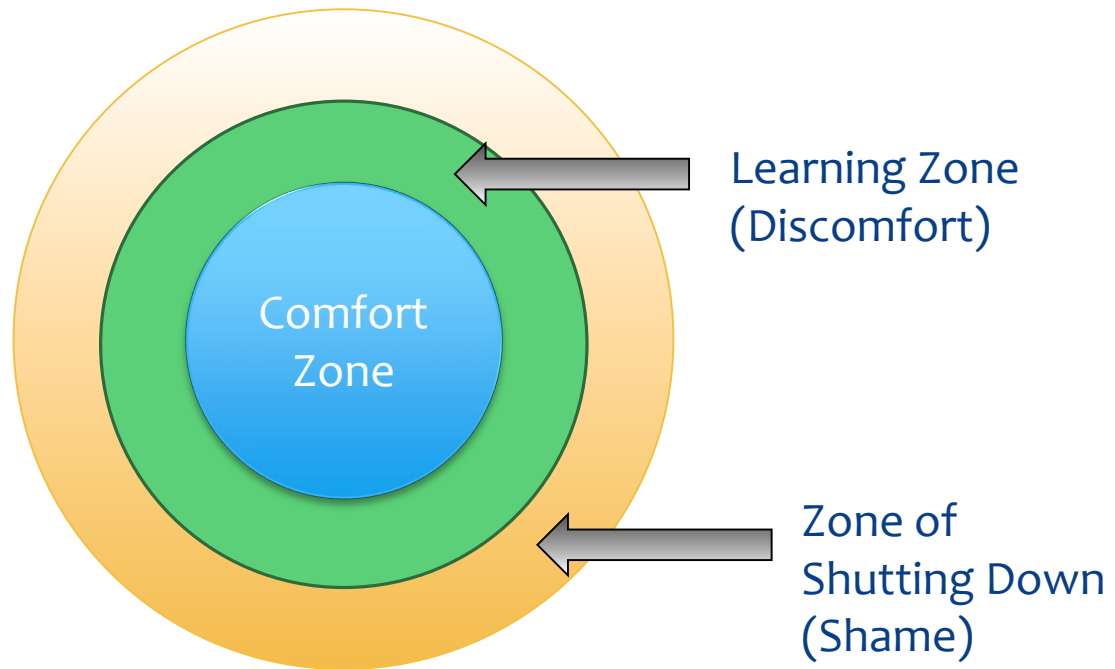
Amygdala: threat perception, fear response

What Can We Do About Implicit Bias?

- Openly acknowledging and challenging biases allows us to develop strategic interventions
- Suppressing or denying biased thoughts can actually increase prejudice rather than eradicate it



What Can We Do About Implicit Bias?



What Can We Do About Implicit Bias?

- * **Practice mindfulness.** High levels of pressure and stress amplify our implicit biases and weaken our ability to counteract them. Meditation and deep breathing exercises are two ways to counteract stress prior to engaging in important decision making.
- * **Ongoing learning and reflection.** The more we understand about the experiences and perspectives of others, the more conscious we will become of our internal programming. Examples of this include attending meetings focused on particular experiences and identities, reading books by people of other identities and backgrounds, and developing relationships with people of different identities and backgrounds.
- * **Take [implicit bias tests](#).** Implicit bias tests can help us monitor our implicit biases in different categories.



Ongoing Introspection



Final Discussion & Reflection

- * What are you taking away from this training?
- * What do you still have questions about?

Resources and Sources Used

Recommended Resources

- [Harvard Implicit Bias Test](#)
- [“We all have implicit biases. So what can we do about it?”](#)
TEDx, Dushaw Hockett
- [Kirwan Institute’s Implicit Bias Module Series](#)
- [An Introduction to Unconscious Bias](#) by Robbie Short Illustration

Sources

- * Golby, Alexandra, et al., *Differential responses in the fusiform region to same-race and other-race faces*, Nature Neuroscience, 2001, p. 845-850
- * Phelps, E.A. et al., *Performance on indirect measures of race evaluation predicts amygdala activation*, Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience, 2000, p. 729-738
- * Claudia Goldin, Cecilia Rouse, “The Impact of ‘Blind’ Auditions on Female Musicians,” 1997

Supplementary Information: Neuroscience of Race Prejudice

- * The fusiform gyrus is the brain's facial recognition center. It activates when we recognize a face as a face.
- * Research has demonstrated that the brain's threat response center, the amygdala, often activates instead when people are presented with faces of other racial identities.
- * This releases cortisol into the bloodstream and decreases blood flow to the brain, which decreases our ability to override our unconscious bias
- * The amygdala response can be mitigated with small amounts of pre-existing knowledge about the person
- * Repetition—in the form of deep, continuous, long-lasting relationships with people of other backgrounds and identities—strengthens our ability to override some of our implicit biases