



Center For
POLICING EQUITY
LEADERSHIP IN EQUITY THROUGH EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

Preventing Unintentional Harm: Understanding Implicit Bias in Juvenile Justice

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Factors contributing to the school-to-prison pipeline

Consequences of discipline and contact with law enforcement

- Youth who receive out-of-school suspensions are:
 - more likely to have contact with the juvenile or criminal justice systems.
 - more susceptible to school-based arrests for violation of code of conduct, civil, or criminal code violations.
- Students who are arrested are less likely than their peers to complete high school and enroll in college.

(Kirk and Sampson, 2013; Vanderhaar, et. al., 2014)

Racial disproportionality exists EVEN THOUGH

- Black students do not have higher rates of misconduct in school than students of other races.
- Black students are not referred for discipline for more serious infractions than White students.

Racial disproportionality in school discipline

- Black preschool children are 3.6 times more likely to receive one or more out-of-school suspensions than White preschool children.
- Black K-12 students are 3.8 times more likely to receive one or more out-of-school suspensions than White students.
- Black students are 1.9 times more likely to be expelled from school without educational services than White students.
- Black students are 2.2 times more likely to receive a referral to law enforcement or be subject to a school-related arrest than White students.
- Black students are more likely to receive harsher punishments (e.g., school arrests; out-of-school suspension) for less serious behavior than other students.

(Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2016; Fabelo, et. al., 2011; McFadden, et. al., 1992; Shaw & Bradden, 1990; Skiba, et. al., 2002)

Important Definitions

Processes contributing to racial disparities

Differential Selection: the selection of students of color, particularly Black students, for wrong-doing, more so than their counterparts

Differential Processing: the sanctioning of students of color, particularly Black students, with disparate and harsher punishments (often for the same offense) than their counterparts

Understanding Implicit Bias

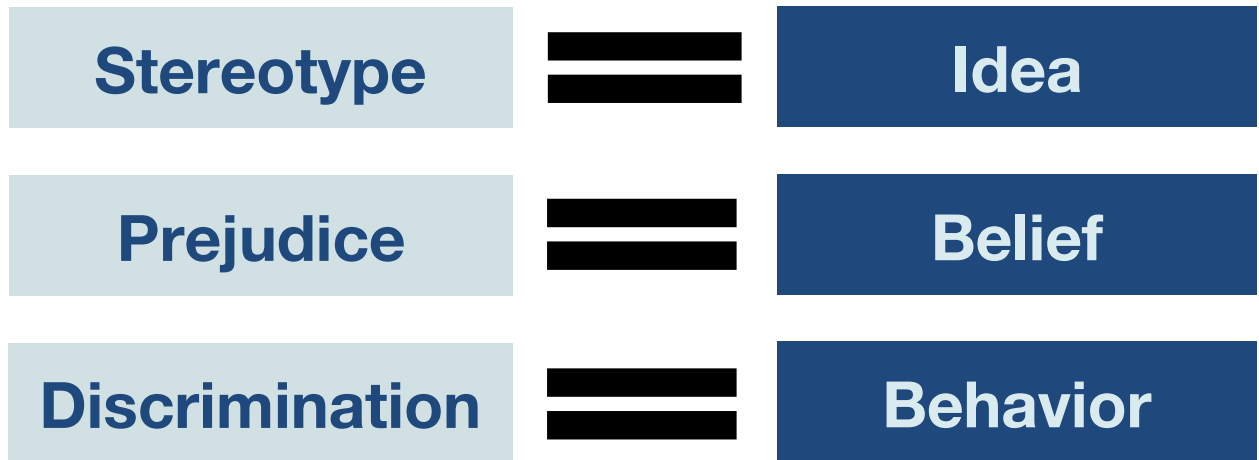
Implicit Bias: unconscious mental shortcuts, automatic associations, based on stereotypes that are taken by the brain to interpret people, things, and situations. These stereotypes can cause us to behave in ways that sometimes go against our conscious values

Stereotypes: overgeneralizations that connect group membership to specific characteristics

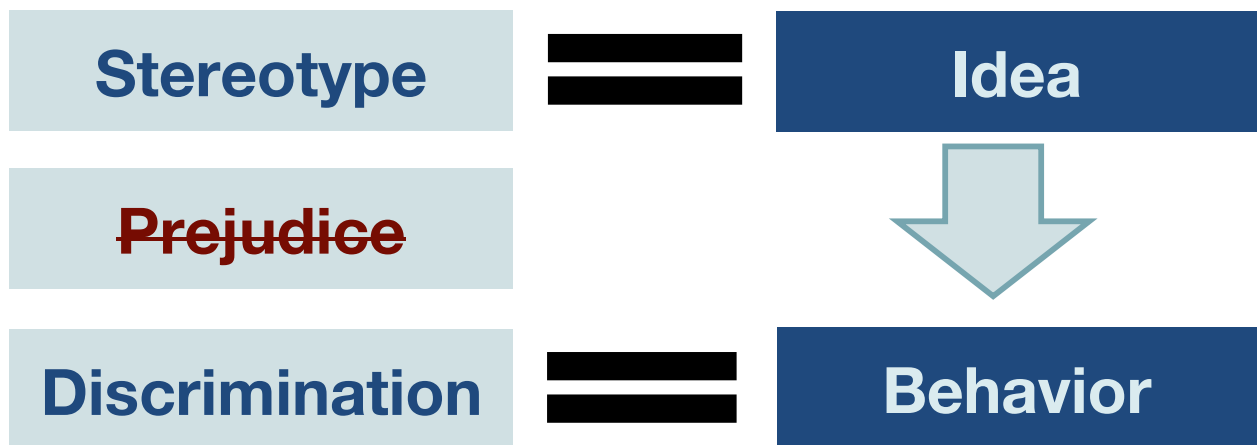
Prejudice: the belief that a stereotype or overgeneralization is true

Discrimination: the behavior in line with the stereotype or prejudice; differential treatment that is objectionable based on group membership

Stereotypes ⇔ Behavior



IMPLICIT BIAS





Exercise #1: Question call-out

Answer the following questions as quickly as possible as we call them out:

Q: What kind of music do Peter, Paul and Mary sing?_____

Q: Comedians tell a_____.

Q: If you have no money, you are _____.

Q: The wire in a wheel is a _____.

Q: What comes out of a lit cigarette? _____

Q: The white part of the egg is the _____.

Exercise #2: Story time

“A father and son were involved in a car accident in which the father was killed and the son was seriously injured. The father was pronounced dead at the scene of the accident and his body was taken to a local morgue. The son was taken by ambulance to a nearby hospital and was immediately wheeled into an emergency operating room. A surgeon was called. Upon arrival and seeing the patient, the attending surgeon exclaimed “Oh my God, it’s my son!””

How stereotypes influence educators and law enforcement

Black-Criminality Stereotype

Large-scale studies show:

- An association between criminality and Blackness; Whites characterize Blacks as more likely to engage in crime, and to be violent and aggressive more than any other racial group.
- Stereotype still largely accepted

(Sniderman & Piazza, 1993; Sigelman & Tuch, 1996)

This stereotype unconsciously influences educators and law enforcement

- When prompted to monitor a preschool class for disruptive behavior, teachers gazed longer at Black children, especially Black boys. When debriefed about the study, the teacher participants were shocked to learn the results, as their behavior did not match their values.
- When provided with identical discipline scenarios, one featuring a Black student and one a White student, teachers opted to levy more severe sanctions for Black students.
- When provided with identical crime scenarios, one featuring a Black juvenile and one a White juvenile, police and juvenile probation officers endorsed harsher punishments for Black juveniles, and considered them to be more culpable and vulnerable to recidivism than their White counterparts.

(Gilliam et. al., 2016; Okonofua & Eberhardt, 2015; Graham & Lowry, 2004)

Conditions that make us vulnerable to implicit bias

These include:

- Ambiguous facts, directives, and expectations
- Being mentally taxed
- Being in a bad mood
- Feeling physically threatened
- Being a novice
- Making quick decisions
- Multitasking
- Lack of accountability (having to justify decisions to another party)



Exercise #3: Examples of implicit bias: vulnerable conditions

Goal: Come up with your own example of a situation where one might be more likely to rely on implicit bias. Try and make it relevant to a situation where you would be interacting with youth in your professional life, as it is important for you to understand how implicit bias can affect you in your work environment. It can be a scenario you make up, or it could be a situation you were actually in or witnessed.

Directions: In your small groups, come up with at least one scenario. If you have time, try to come up with more. On the large piece of paper, identify the *stereotypes at play* in the scenario, the *vulnerable conditions* at play, and the *consequences* to the person or people in the scenario. You will have about 7-10 minutes to work on this. Each group will then come up to the front of the classroom and share with the class (you do not have to write the full scenario on the piece of paper, you can verbally share it).

Review:

- Provide the scenario
- Identify the stereotype(s) at play
- Identify the vulnerable conditions at play
 - (e.g., mentally taxed; bad mood; physically threatened; novice; quick decision-making; multitasking)
- Identify how the stereotypes and vulnerable conditions led to behavior that is inconsistent with one's values

Example:

- **Scenario:** You're a teacher and you see two students fighting. Before you can arrive at the scene on time, one of the students has fled. You attempt to find the other student and assume it's a boy who is walking quickly away from the area in which the fight began. You yell at the boy, and take him to the principal's office. You later find out that real offender was actually a girl who had ducked into a nearby classroom.
- **Stereotype:** Girls fight less than boys.
- **Vulnerable Conditions:** Time-pressure, quick decision, mentally taxed, bad mood, etc.
- **Consequence:** You wrongfully accuse an innocent student.



Interventions for relying on implicit bias

- Become aware of how stereotypes function around you (e.g., media, curriculum, common dialogue, etc.) and challenge them.
 - Actively listen to people talk about their experiences of being stereotyped in relation to race, gender, sexuality, etc., and consider their perspective
 - Actively seek out counter-stereotypes
 - Ask yourself: what groups are you least exposed to? And how can you find ways to meaningfully interact with those groups?
 - Humanize people on an individual level rather than as part of a group
- Engage in self-reflection and self-awareness
- Change the vulnerable conditions: figure out what chronic conditions you can positively change (e.g., mood, energy level, time pressure, multitasking, etc.).
- Get help from outside the situation / call for support from a colleague.

Practice procedural justice: generally, practicing procedural justice can help improve any situation where you might be susceptible to relying on implicit bias. Research shows that people will generally support the action and decision-making of authority figures when they feel that the process is procedurally just. There are four tenets of procedural justice:

1. **Voice:** Actively listen to others and allow them to share their voice.
2. **Neutrality:** Make sure you are not leaning in favor of one side or another.
3. **Respect:** Treat each person like they matter and are important.
4. **Trustworthiness:** Be open and transparent about how you are applying policies and procedures.



Exercise #4: Interventions for relying on implicit bias

Goal: To come up with ways to interrupt implicitly biased decision-making in situations where youth might be at risk.

Directions: Select an example of situation where you might be vulnerable to relying implicit bias that might negatively impact youth (you can use the examples we came up with earlier or come up with new scenarios). We will assign whether this is a situation where you could interrupt the situation for either yourself *or* for a co-worker. On the large piece of paper, summarize the *scenario* (one sentence is fine), the *vulnerable conditions* at play, and the *intervention or possible solution*. You will have about 10 minutes to work on this together.

Review:

- Provide the scenario
- Identify the vulnerable conditions at play
 - (e.g., mentally taxed; bad mood; physically threatened; novice; quick decision-making; multitasking)
- Intervention or Solution

Example 1: Defusing the situation for yourself

- **Scenario:** You're a teacher and you see two students fighting. Before you can arrive at the scene on time, one of the students has fled. You attempt to find the other student and assume it's a boy who is walking quickly away from the area in which the fight began. You yell at the boy, and take him to the principal's office. You later find out that real offender was actually a girl who had ducked into a nearby classroom.
- **Vulnerable Conditions:** time-pressure, quick decision, mentally taxed, bad mood, etc.
- **Intervention(s):** Practice procedural justice by asking the innocent bystander if they were involved before accusing them; call for support from a colleague so the situation is more manageable

Example 2: Defusing the situation for a co-worker

- **Scenario:** You're a patrol officer responding to a radio call about vandalism on a school campus with your partner. You come across a group of students walking close to campus, and as you approach them, they begin to quicken their pace. Your partner gets out of the car because they automatically assume the students may be the culprits of the vandalism incident, because they are behaving "suspiciously."
- **Vulnerable Conditions:** time-pressure, quick decision, mentally taxed, bad mood, etc.
- **Intervention(s):** Model procedural justice for your partner when engaging with the suspects.



Exercise #5: Professional Goals

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Thank you!

