

CONFLICT OF INTEREST & BIAS

A Training for Title IX Personnel
July 2020

AGENDA

1. Conflict of Interest
2. Bias
3. Characteristics of Implicit Bias
4. Overcoming Bias

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

If a process administrator has a conflict of interest, it is important that it be discussed with the Title IX Coordinator. If a conflict of interest is left unchecked, it may result in a failed search later on.

- ▶ **Perceived conflict of interest-** If an administrator knows or is an acquaintance of a party, there may be a perceived conflict of interest. A perceived conflict of interest should be disclosed so that a review of the potential conflict can be determined.
- ▶ **Actual conflict of interest-** Occurs when an administrator is not able to be fair and impartial in evaluation of a particular party or incident. If an actual conflict of interest exists, it must be disclosed to the Title IX Coordinator as soon as possible.
- ▶ Some options for handling a conflict of interest are to excuse that administrator from that portion of the process, or to remove them from the process entirely.

BIAS

▸ Explicit Bias

- Explicit bias is the traditional conceptualization of bias. With explicit bias, individuals are aware of their prejudices and attitudes toward certain groups. Overt racism and racist comments are examples of explicit biases.

▸ Implicit Bias

- Implicit bias involves all of the subconscious feelings, perceptions, attitudes, and stereotypes that have developed as a result of prior influences and imprints. It is an automatic positive or negative preference for a group, based on one's subconscious thoughts.
- Implicit bias can be just as problematic as explicit bias, because both may produce discriminatory behavior. With implicit bias, the individual may be unaware that biases, rather than the facts of a situation, are driving his or her decision-making.

CHARACTERISTICS OF IMPLICIT BIAS

1. They are an unconscious collection of stereotypes and attitudes that we develop toward certain groups of people
2. They are often contrary to our stated beliefs
3. They are triggered rapidly with automatic associations

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT FOR US?

- ▶ Bias, Prejudices, and negative attitudes toward certain people or groups of people can compromise our efforts to ensure an equitable process.
- ▶ Think of our mission and values. We are not value neutral. Checking in on our conflicts of interest and biases is something we do so that we can better treat others with dignity and respect.
- ▶ In a process where it is required for us to remain neutral, we need to interrogate our biases, both explicit and implicit, and be aware of any potential conflicts of interest.

EXERCISE

Word Association

To demonstrate how quickly we react to certain topics, please listen to and see the following words and say the first word that comes to your mind. This will go fast!

REED

ROMANCE

MIDTERMS

EX

LUNCH

TAXES

ACCUSED

TRAINING

VICTIM

FRIENDS WITH BENEFITS

EXERCISE DISCUSSION

WHAT DO WE NEED TO CHECK IN ON?

Our thoughts and reactions to issues of:

**...RACE GENDER SEXUALITY RELIGION ABILITY IN-
GROUPS OUT-GROUPS PERSONAL BELIEFS
PERSONAL PREFERENCES MENTAL ILLNESS GENDER
EXPRESSION GENDER IDENTITY SOCIO-ECONOMIC
STATUS IRRELEVANT HISTORY PREGNANCY MARITAL
STATUS GENETIC INFORMATION AGE VETERAN
STATUS MILITARY STATUS COLOR NATIONAL ORIGIN
LANGUAGE MAKING COMPARISONS TO OUR OWN
EXPERIENCES...**

OVERCOMING BIAS

1. Discover your blind spots
2. Actively work to dismiss stereotypes and attitudes that affect your interactions
3. Work as part of an institution to eliminate systemic problems
4. Don't let things slide

OVERCOMING BIAS

Introspection

Mindfulness

Perspective-taking

Learn to slow down

Individuation

Check your messaging

Institutionalize Fairness

Take two

WHEN IN DOUBT...

Conflict of interest and bias are things that we need to be proactive about at work and in life.

If you suspect that conflict or bias might be at play in the Discrimination, Sexual Misconduct, and Retaliation process, contact the Equal Opportunity & Title IX Coordinator immediately.