**How Can We Dispel Bias that Prevents Diverse Hiring?**

Following this four-point system can help you reduce bias in the hiring / selection process.



1. **Acknowledging your biases**- This is the first step to addressing diversity in hiring. All individuals hold unconscious biases about certain groups of people based on race, socioeconomic group, gender identity, etc.



1. **Recognize when your biases are emerging**- This ensures that employees can actively work to mitigate these biases so that future procedures in the hiring process are free from them.



1. **Learn about others’ comfort zone**-Everyone has their own comfort zone. Consciously learning about other cultures and groups of people helps to avoid stereotypes that cause biases.



1. **Pause and check**-Check your assumptions and truths that you have about others and yourself before making decisions. Are you having feelings of discomfort? Are things awkward? Explore the reasoning behind these feelings and learn from them.

**What Should We Avoid When Conducting Interviews?**

The following characteristics and factors are **NOT** relevant skills for the job and should **NOT** be used to rate the candidate’s qualifications for the job. Opt for phone interviews in lieu of in person or video conferencing to avoid implicit bias based on some of the above factors.

* Vocal attractiveness
* Vocal accent
* Race
* Gender
* Age
* Physical attractiveness
* Environment/surroundings\*
* Personal items\*
* Background sounds\*
* Video visual and sound quality for devices\*

\* Applicable for virtual/video interviews

**How Can I Tell if My Implicit Bias is Emerging?**

There are certain **feelings** and **thoughts** that you should **pause and check** for during the interview process that can lead to **implicit bias**.

* “I feel like this person is very similar to me!” (Similar to Me Effect)
* “The candidate had a bad response to my first question, the responses to the other questions will be just as bad.” (Halo/Horns Effect)
* “Their first impression was great! They would be great for this position!” (First Impressions Effect)
* “This candidate’s response was terrible compared to the previous candidate we interviewed.” (Contrast Effect)
* “This candidate’s response to the previous questions was good, so I don’t need to listen to their responses for the rest of the interview!” (Primacy/Recency Effect)
* “I feel like I should ‘go easy’ on this person in the interview.” (Leniency/Strictness Effect)
* “I feel like these candidates are all ‘average’ for this position.” (Central Tendency Effect)

These are common thoughts and feelings that can affect how you rate a candidate for the job. If you have these thoughts and feelings during the interview process, make sure you pause and check that they have no effect on the overall rating of the candidate. The construction of an overall impression about the candidate should be done by using all interactions and responses during the interview process.

**Real Life Example: Medical School Implicit Association Test**

Some medical schools are having admission committee members take the Implicit Association Test (IAT)**1**, an online tool that measures unconscious bias. In a study published in 2017, researchers found that all admission groups at the Ohio State University College of Medicine displayed significant levels of implicit white preference. Following the IAT, 48% reported that they were conscious of their individual results when interviewing candidates in the next cycle and 21% reported knowledge that their IAT results impacted their admissions decisions in the subsequent cycle**2**. The class that matriculated following the IAT study was the most diverse class in Ohio State University College of Medicine’s history at that time (study was conducted in 2012 and 2013).

1. [Harvard Project Implicit Association Test- Implicit bias self-assessment for providers, nurses and staff](https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/)
2. Capers, Quinn IV MD; Clinchot, Daniel MD; McDougle, Leon MD; Greenwald, Anthony G. PhD Implicit Racial Bias in Medical School Admissions, Academic Medicine: March 2017 - Volume 92 - Issue 3 - p 365-369