

# **Regional Scholarship Providers Network**

Implicit Bias  
Training

*Lillian Elliott*

*October 1, 2025*



**WOMEN'S**  
RESOURCE CENTER



**Lillian Elliott**  
**Director of Operations**  
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**Preferred Pronouns:**  
**She/her/hers**

[www.mywrc.org](http://www.mywrc.org)

- ❑ Established Lillian Elliott Consulting, Inc. after 35 Years With PepsiCo. Retired Director Supply Chain Quality & Organizational Capability.
- ❑ Experiences Include Frito-Lay & Tropicana Manufacturing Operations, Corporate Quality Systems Development, Training, Change Management & Community Affairs Executive Leadership Roles
- ❑ Diversity & Inclusion Champion. Recipient Of PepsiCo Chairman's Harvey Russell Inclusion Awards, 2011 & 2013
- ❑ Previously Served On Manatee County Foundation Board Of Directors, State College Of Florida Foundation Board Of Directors & The United Community Centers Board Of Directors. Alumnus Of Leadership Florida Class XXXII. Co-founder Palmetto High School Tropicana Mentoring Program.

# Training Objectives



Understand implicit bias and how it impacts decision making.



Share tools for mitigating implicit bias in our daily lives & the scholarship selection process.



Raise awareness of the lived experience of the student.



Discuss best practices to alleviate implicit bias when reviewing scholarship applications.

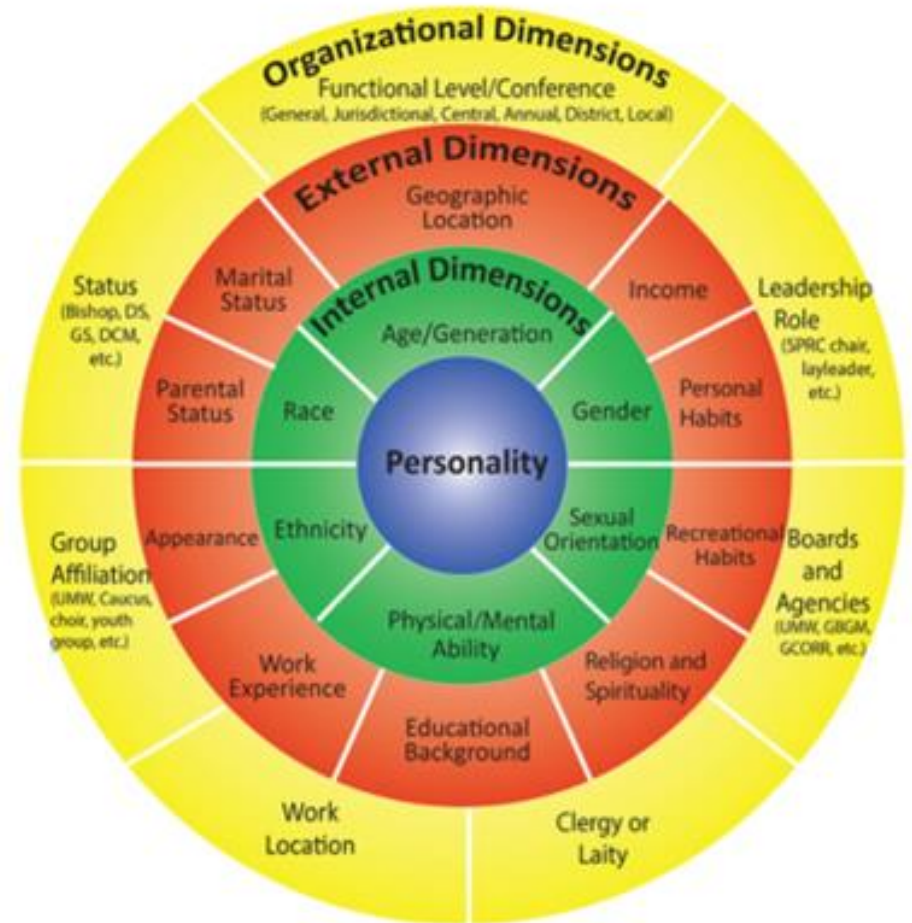
# Today's Agenda

- ❑ Understanding Implicit Bias – The Cause & Effects
- ❑ How Perceptions & Beliefs Create Stigmas, Implicit Bias & Micro Inequities
- ❑ Common Biases in the Scholarship Selection Processes & Mitigation Techniques
- ❑ Intentional Leadership: Building Self-Awareness & Holding Others accountable



If unchecked, **bias can prevent** deserving students from receiving **opportunities, perpetuate inequality,** and **reduce** the overall **effectiveness** of a scholarship program.

# The Dimensions of Diversity



# Some Sectors of the Circle are Visible



*Dee 1*

## Visible Minorities

Navigate in A world that sees them and makes instant judgments

# Introducing David Arnold Augustine Jr.



*Dee 1*

- ❑ Graduate of Louisiana State University
- ❑ Former Middle School Teacher
- ❑ Currently Rapper, Educator, Motivational Speaker, Community Activist, Businessman
- ❑ 2022 Harvard Fellow

# Some Sectors of the Circle Are Invisible



## Invisible Minorities

Must determine if they want to disclose their diversity

# Intersectionality

Recognizes that people can be privileged in some ways and definitely not privileged in others.

For example...

- Citizenship
- Class
- Sexual Orientation
- Gender
- Ability

**“...Recognizing privilege doesn’t mean suffering guilt or shame for our lot in life.**

**It simply means being aware that some people have to work much harder just to experience the things we take for granted”**

The brain processes ~11 million bits of information per second

The conscious brain processes 40-50 bits of information per second



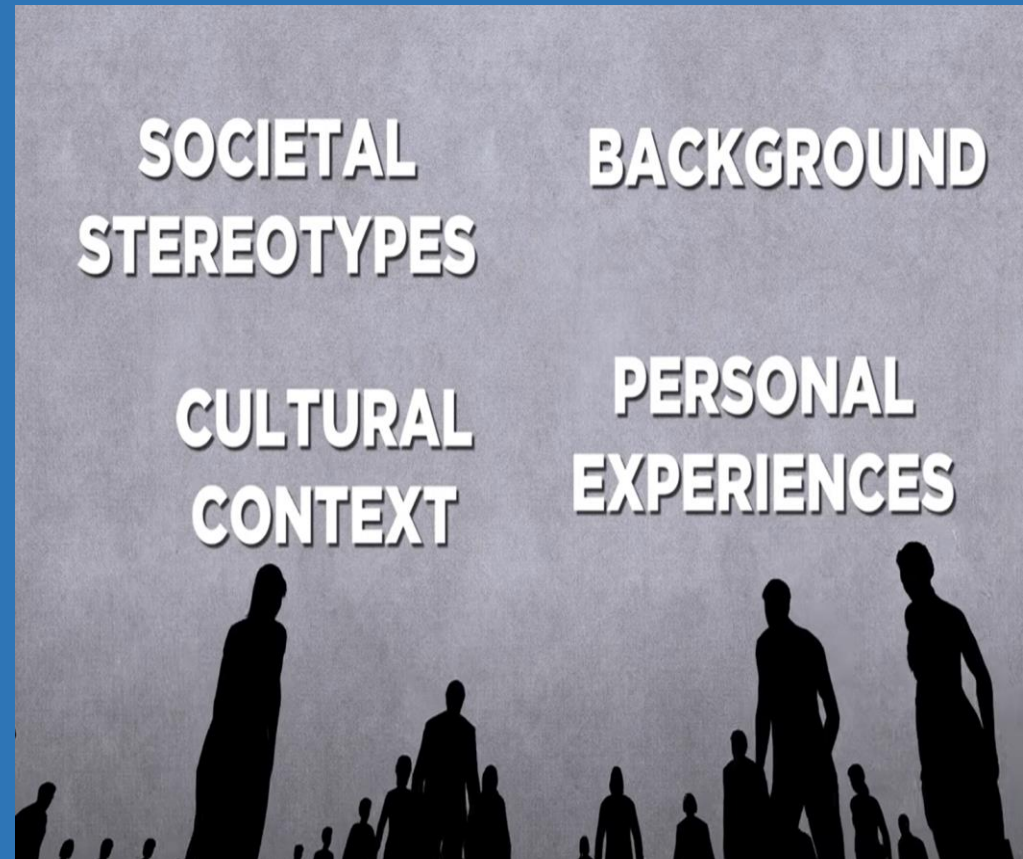
The brain receives information then filters & sorts it at a subconscious level

To access conscious processing, we must actively focus attention on specific information

The brain information and makes almost instantaneous decisions.

**IMPLICIT BIAS  
COLORS OUR  
DECISIONS**

We make snap judgements of people we meet, things we see, read and hear.



# What is Bias?

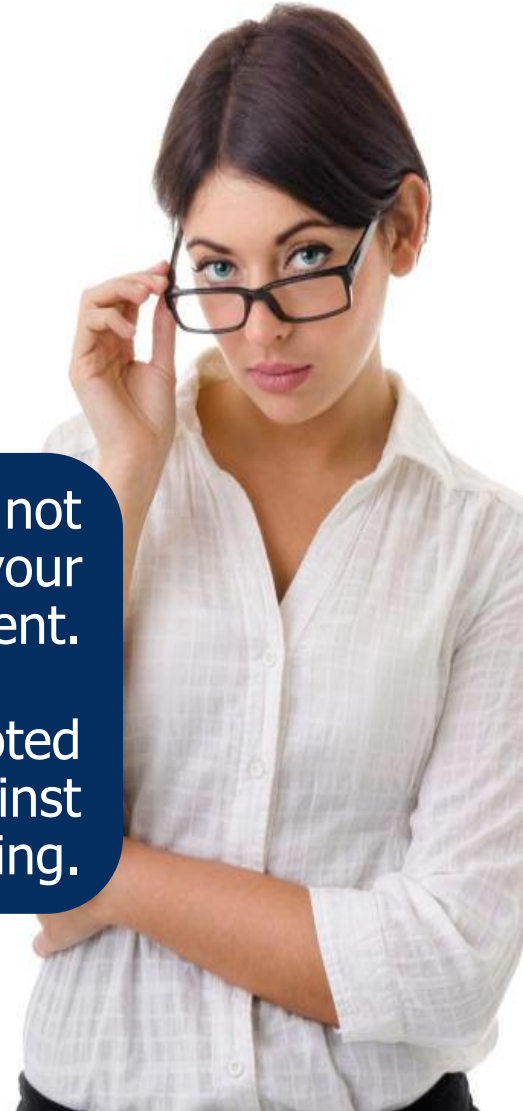
## Explicit/ Conscious Bias

A judgment made even with compelling data and information to the contrary

## Implicit/ Unconscious Bias

Thoughts or feelings, that you are not aware of that influence your Judgment.

These biases are rooted in your preferences for or against something.





## Explicit Bias

- ❑ Consciously Held, Deliberate
- ❑ Expressed Directly
- ❑ Easier To Measure
- ❑ Combated With Logic & Reasoning

## Implicit Bias

- ❑ Below Conscious Awareness
- ❑ Automatic, Involuntarily Activated
- ❑ Expressed Indirectly
- ❑ Difficult to Mitigate
- ❑ Causes Unintended Discrimination

### **affinity bias**

the tendency to like people like ourselves

## **Most Recognized Implicit Biases**

- gender
- racial
- age
- disability
- beauty

### **confirmation bias**

when someone looks for information to validate their existing belief or impression

### **anchoring**

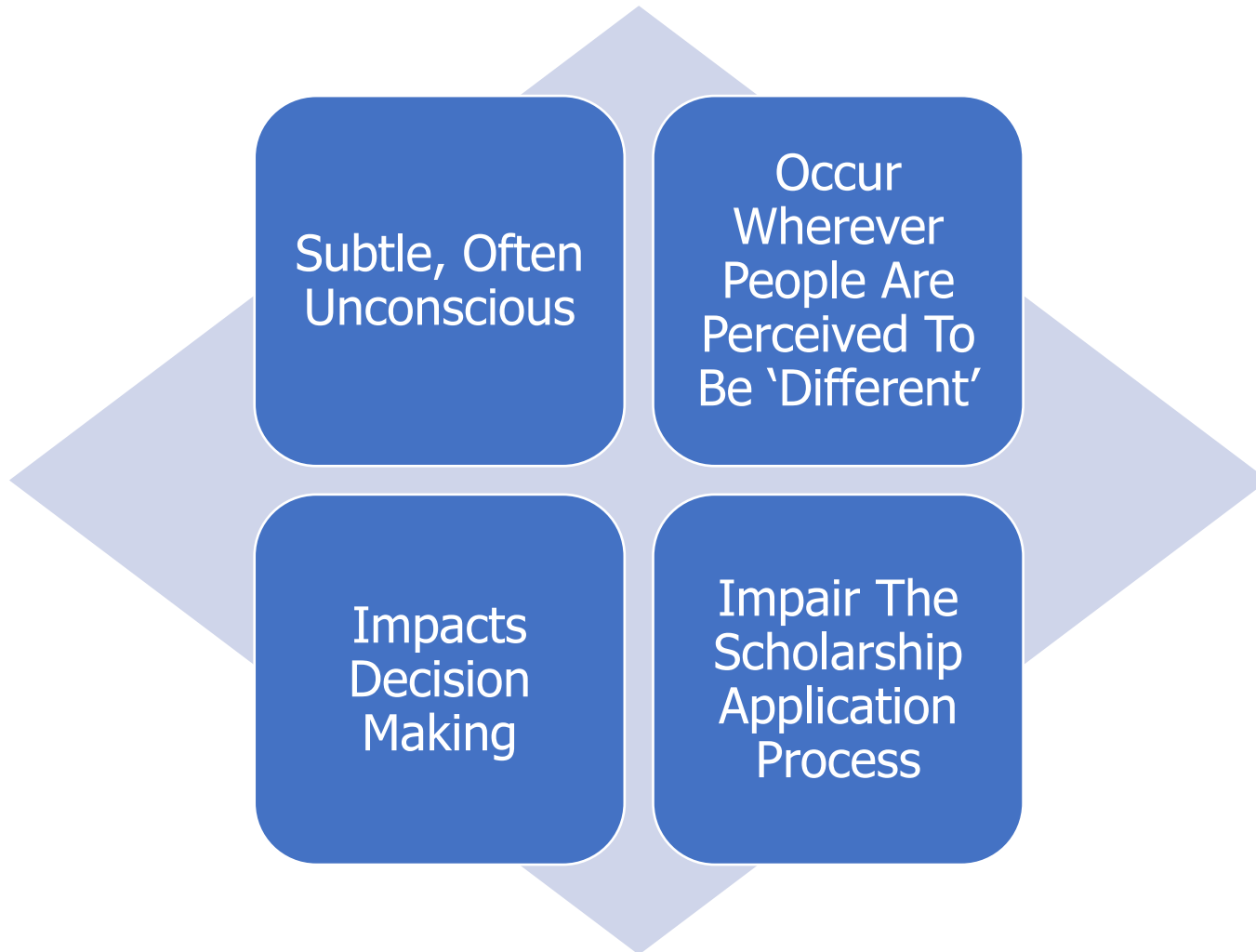
the tendency to base your final judgment on information gained early in the decision-making process.

### **in-group bias**

the tendency to favor one's own group

***...more than 150 types of biases have been named***

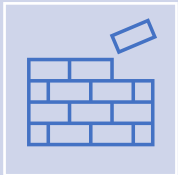
# Micro-Inequities







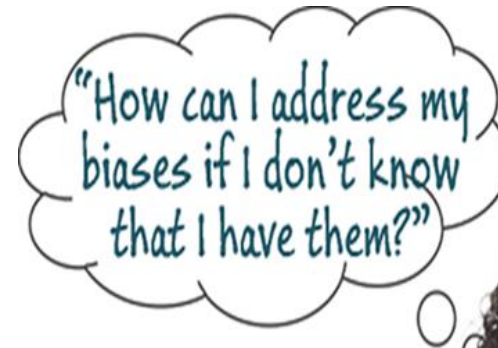
The link between implicit bias & behavior varies & is fairly small



However, small implicit bias effects can build into big differences



We can't cure unconscious bias but with self awareness, we can address it.



# Develop Awareness of Implicit Preferences & Serotypes

## Harvard Implicit Association Tests (IAT)



[Click to explore General Information about the IAT](https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html)



- Presidents IAT** *Presidents ('Presidential Popularity' IAT).* In this IAT, you will be asked to categorize photos of Donald Trump and one or more previous presidents as well as positive and negative words.
- Native IAT** *Native American ('Native - White American' IAT).* In this IAT, you will be asked to categorize last names that likely belong to Native Americans and last names that likely belong to White Americans as well as positive and negative words.
- Asian-Foreign IAT** *Asian American ('Asian - European American' IAT).* In this IAT, you will be asked to categorize White and Asian-American faces as well as images of places that are either American or Foreign in origin.
- Weight IAT** *Weight ('Fat - Thin' IAT).* In this IAT, you will be asked to categorize silhouettes of people who are fat and people who are thin as well as positive and negative words.
- Hispanic IAT** *Hispanic American ('Hispanic American - European American' IAT).* In this IAT, you will be asked to categorize typical Hispanic names and typical European American names as well as positive and negative words.
- Transgender IAT** *Transgender ('Transgender People - Cisgender People' IAT).* In this IAT, you will be asked to categorize photos of transgender celebrities and photos of cisgender celebrities as well as positive and negative words.
- Gender-Science IAT** *Gender - Science.* In this IAT, you will be asked to categorize male-associated words and female-associated words as well as words associated with liberal arts and science.
- Weapons IAT** *Weapons ('Weapons - Harmless Objects' IAT).* In this IAT, you will be asked to categorize White and Black faces as well as images of weapons and harmless objects.
- Gender-Career IAT** *Gender - Career.* In this IAT, you will be asked to categorize typical male names and typical female names as well as words associated with career and family.
- Asian IAT** *Asian American ('Asian - European American' IAT).* In this IAT, you will be asked to categorize White and Asian-American faces as well as positive and negative words.
- Race IAT** *Race ('Black - White' IAT).* In this IAT, you will be asked to categorize White and Black faces as well as positive and negative words.
- Religion IAT** *Religion ('Religions' IAT).* In this IAT, you will be asked to categorize images or words culturally associated with Jewish people, Christian people and Muslim people as well as positive and negative words.
- Disability IAT** *Disability ('Physically Disabled - Physically Able' IAT).* In this IAT, you will be asked to categorize figures representing physically disabled people and physically able people as well as positive and negative words.
- Jewish IAT** *Jewish ('Jewish People - Christian People' IAT).* In this IAT, you will be asked to categorize images culturally associated with Jewish people and Christian people as well as positive and negative words.
- Arab-Muslim IAT** *Arab-Muslim ('Arab Muslim - Other People' IAT).* In this IAT, you will be asked to categorize names that likely belong to Arab-Muslims and names that likely belong to other nationalities or religions as well as positive and negative words.
- Sexuality IAT** *Sexuality ('Gay - Straight' IAT).* In this IAT, you will be asked to categorize words and symbols representing gay and straight people as well as positive and negative words.
- Age IAT** *Age ('Young - Old' IAT).* In this IAT, you will be asked to categorize older and younger faces as well as positive and negative words.
- Skin-tone IAT** *Skin-tone ('Light Skin - Dark Skin' IAT).* In this IAT, you will be asked to categorize light-skinned faces and dark-skinned faces as well as positive and negative words.

## Implicit Association Test

Next, you will use the 'E' and 'I' computer keys to categorize items into groups as fast as you can. These are the four groups and the items that belong to each:

Category	Items
Good	Friend, Spectacular, Fantastic, Cheerful, Pleasure, Fabulous, Happy, Laughing
Bad	Abuse, Angry, Disgust, Awful, Gross, Tragic, Ugly, Disaster
Gay people	 Gay People, Homosexual, Gay, Gay Men
Straight people	 Straight, Straight People, Heterosexual

There are seven parts. The instructions change for each part. Pay attention!

Continue

Press "E" for

Good

or

Gay people

Press "I" for

Bad

or

Straight people

Part 4 of 7

This is the same as the previous part.  
Use the **E** key for **Gay people** and for **Good**.  
Use the **I** key for **Straight people** and for **Bad**.  
Each item belongs to only one category.

Go as fast as you can while being accurate.

Press the **space bar** when you are ready to start.

Press "E" for

Straight people

Press "I" for

Gay people

Part 5 of 7

**Watch out, the labels have changed position!**  
Use the left finger on the **E** key for **Straight people**.  
Use the right finger on the **I** key for **Gay people**.

Go as fast as you can while being accurate.

Press the **space bar** when you are ready to start.

# Harvard Implicit Association Tests (IAT)

## *Benefits & Watchouts*



IAT measures implicit preferences and stereotypes. It can not indicate whether a person is or is not prejudiced



The IAT measures attitudes and beliefs that people may be unwilling or unable to report. It is an educational experience and opportunity for reflection.

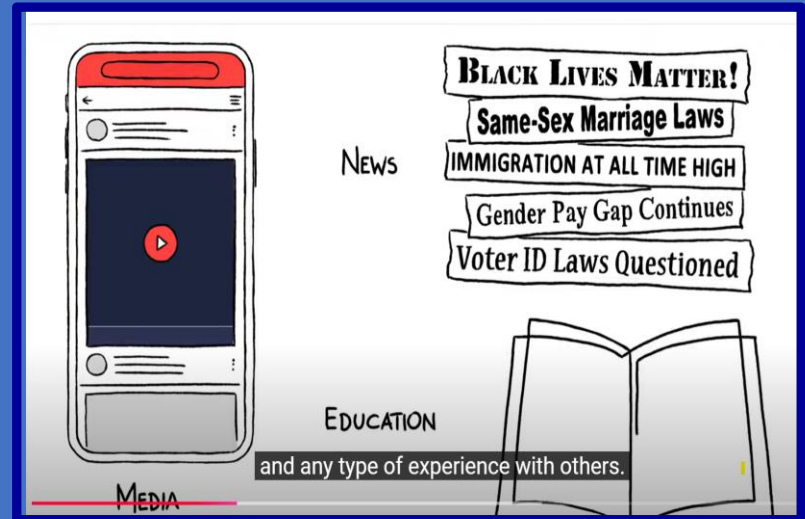


Don't take any individual IAT to mean something permanent about yourself, or others.



IAT cannot equip us to meaningfully interrupt bias in our daily work and decision-making

# Our Perceptions & Beliefs Create Stigmas & Implicit Bias



- Create new associations & challenge biases
- Be selective about the types of information you consume

# Building Self-Awareness

- ❑ Value diversity by accepting & respecting differences between and within cultures
- ❑ Acknowledge, value & validate diverse people
- ❑ Start the dialogue on difficult topics
- ❑ Identify personal strengths and development opportunities & commit to learning.

**“New behaviors that last come from new ways of seeing, from new awareness and sensibilities.”**

**...William Isaacs, Author, Dialogue & the Art of Thinking Together**



# Addressing Implicit Bias In Ourselves And Others

Accept that everyone has biases

Encourage honesty about biases and commit to working on them

Recognize & avoid situations where your biases may appear

Look for positive things associated with groups against whom you hold a bias

# Bias Mitigation Best Practices

- **Define Clear Criteria:** Establish evaluation criteria & process before reviewing applications.
- **Use Standardized Rubrics:** Develop and use a detailed scoring rubric to ensure consistent evaluation across all applicants.
- **Anonymize Applications:** Redact personal identifiers (names, photos, schools) to minimize unconscious bias.
- **Avoid Stereotyping:** Give no consideration to an applicant's race, color, creed, religion, national origin, citizenship, sex, pregnancy, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, genetic information, disability, or veteran status
- **Conduct Reviewer Training:** Provide mandatory training on bias awareness for all committee members.
- **Diversify the Committee:** Ensure the selection committee represents a diverse range of backgrounds.
- **Calibrate Scoring:** Hold calibration sessions where reviewers discuss and align on scoring standards using a few sample applications.
- **Normalize Results:** Implement statistical techniques to account for individual reviewers who consistently score higher or lower than the average.

# Halo and Horns Effect



## ❑ Single Impressions Can Skew an Entire Application:

- ❑ **Halo effect:** A single positive trait (e.g., attending a prestigious high school, impressive extracurricular activity) leads a reviewer to have an overly positive impression of the entire application.
- ❑ **Horns effect:** A single negative detail (e.g., poor grammar, a lower-than-expected test score) leads a reviewer to form an overly negative view of the applicant.

## ❑ Mitigation strategies:

- ❑ Use a standardized rubric to score each criterion independently.
- ❑ Ensure reviewers weight each section according to its pre-defined importance.
- ❑ Require reviewers to write notes justifying scores based on specific evidence in the application.

# Language and Systemic Bias



## Leveling the Playing Field:

**Language bias:** Over-reliance on flawless grammar and mechanics in essays can disadvantage applicants who are English language learners, even if their ideas are strong.

**Systemic bias:** The selection criteria itself may inadvertently favor students from more privileged backgrounds (e.g., emphasizing expensive extracurriculars or standardized test scores).



## Mitigation strategies:

For essays, focus on content and alignment with criteria over mechanics, unless writing skill is a specific requirement.

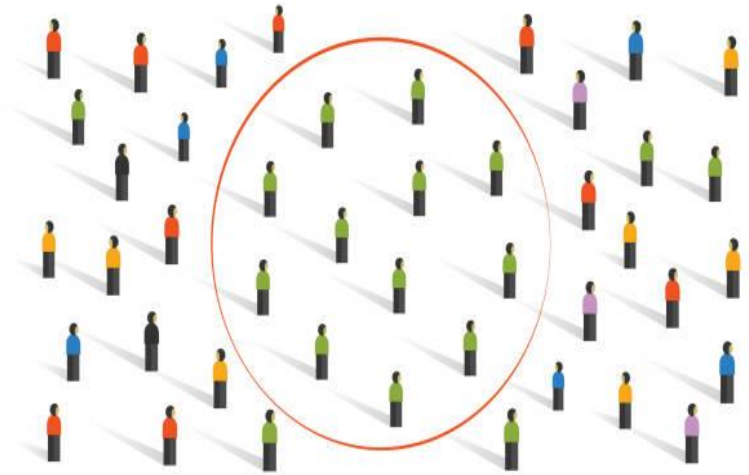
Critically evaluate scholarship criteria to ensure they are not creating barriers for specific student populations.

Provide transparent guidance to applicants and letter writers on the expectations of the review.

# Similar-to-Me Bias (Affinity Bias)

The Familiar is Often Favorited

- Reviewers unknowingly favor candidates with:
  - similar interest
  - experiences
  - backgrounds



## Mitigation strategies:

- **Redact personal identifiers** like name, gender, and school.
- **Train reviewers** to recognize evaluate **evidence vs. their assumptions.**
- **Avoid stereotyping.** Give no consideration to an applicant's race, color, creed, religion, national origin, citizenship, sex, pregnancy, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, genetic information, disability, or veteran status.

# Gut Feeling and Noise Bias



## **Focus on Evidence, Not Emotion**

- Gut feeling:** Relying on intuition rather than applicant's qualifications vs. the specific selection criteria.
- Noise bias:** Allowing personal, emotional, or irrelevant information to distract from the actual criteria.

## **Mitigation strategies:**

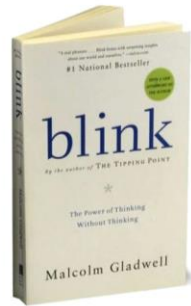
- Anchor all scoring to the specific review rubric and documents.
- Take careful, specific notes to support every score awarded.
- Rescore any application if the score doesn't align with the evidence.

# Common Biases in Scholarship Selection Processes

Types of Bias	Mitigation Strategies
<b>Language</b>	If English is a second language, <b>focus on content vs. criteria.</b> Ignore spelling & grammar unless part of selection criteria.
Halo Effect /Horn Effect	<b>Rely on the rubric</b> & ensure you apply appropriate weight.
<b>Extracurricular</b>	Are activities shared <b>relevant to criteria?</b> What has the applicant shared vs. your own feelings.
Average/Central Tendency	<b>Use the full range of scoring. Take careful notes</b> to clarify/confirm that the hairs you are splitting stay aligned with the selection criteria.
Contrast	If one applicant is particularly weak, others may appear to be more qualified than they really are. <b>Evaluate each applicant on the content and quality</b> of their individual application.
<b>Noise</b>	When applicant provides unrelated information, for example personal traumatic details <b>may be compelling but not connected</b> to the selection criteria.
<b>First Impression</b>	Happens regularly <b>when short on time</b> and reviewing quickly. Consider the entirety of materials presented by the applicant. <b>Consider revisiting applications more than once.</b>
Leniency/Severity	<b>Take breaks and review</b> applications scored early or at the end to minimize the impact of stress, interruptions, fatigue, etc.
<b>Negative Emphasis</b>	Avoid a small amount of negative information outweighing positive information. Diligently <b>note positive connections along with the negative</b> information. Ex: Over-relying on GPA.
Recency	Common when reading many applications over a long period. More weight is given to most recent. <b>Consider revisiting applications in small batches</b> and taking thorough, consistent notes.
Similar-to-Me/Gut Feeling	What has the applicant actually shared vs. your own knowledge/feelings about it? How does that <b>connect with the selection criteria?</b> Use the rubric. <b>Take specific notes.</b>
Stereotyping	What was <b>actually shared vs. your assumptions. Give no consideration to</b> an applicant's race, color, creed, religion, national origin, citizenship, sex, pregnancy, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, genetic information, disability, or veteran status.

# Conclusion: The Path to Fairer Outcomes

- **Bias is a natural human tendency**, but we can actively work to minimize its effects.
- Fair and equitable selection processes require **intentional design and continuous self-reflection**.
- By implementing these strategies, we can **ensure that scholarships are awarded based on merit and potential**, creating a more just and inclusive educational landscape.



“There are many things in life we can’t control, our biases are not one of them.”

- Malcom Gladwell, *Blink*

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

Please view the links below if you are interested in learning more about implicit bias.

Below is a definition of implicit bias.

<https://www.apa.org/topics/implicit-bias>

Here is a brief video on implicit bias.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dVp9Z5k0dEE>

Take the Harvard Bias test if you are interested in learning more about bias.

<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>

# What Questions Do You Have?



# Training Objectives



Understand what implicit bias is and how it impacts decision making.



Share tools for mitigating implicit bias in the scholarship selection process.



Raise awareness of the lived experience of the student.



Discuss ideas and strategies to alleviate bias when reviewing scholarship applications.

I'VE LEARNED THAT  
PEOPLE WILL FORGET  
WHAT YOU *said*,  
PEOPLE WILL FORGET  
WHAT YOU *did*, BUT  
PEOPLE WILL *never*  
*forget* HOW YOU  
MADE THEM *feel*.

— MAYA ANGELOU



# To help improve the quality of today's training, please provide your gift of feedback!

1. Please rate if the Training Objectives were met using the following scale:  
*1=Strongly Disagree. 2=Disagree. 3=Neither Agree nor Disagree. 4=Agree. 5=Strongly Agree*
  - A. Understand what Implicit Bias is and how it impacts decision making.
  - B. Share tools for mitigating Implicit Bias in the scholarship selection process.
  - C. Raise awareness of the lived experience of the student.
  - D. Discuss ideas and strategies to alleviate bias when reviewing scholarship applications.
2. What would you recommend changing about the course?
3. What additional training (if any) would be helpful?
4. What is one thing that you will change, omit, or add into your selection process routine as a result of this training?
5. Other comments, observations, suggestions?

*Thank you!*