Strategies for Addressing the Impact of Implicit Bias at the Interpersonal and Institutional Level

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About the Kirwan Institute

We work to create a just and inclusive society where **ALL** people and communities have the opportunity to succeed.
How Kirwan Approaches Our Work

**RACE & COGNITION**

The role of individual-level thoughts and actions in maintaining discrimination.

**STRUCTURAL RACIALIZATION**

The influence of our country’s racial history on policies, practices and values that perpetuate racial inequity.
Defining Implicit Bias

- Attitudes or stereotypes that **affect our understanding, actions, and decisions** in an unconscious manner.
Characteristics

- Automatically activated
- Associative in nature
- NOT always based on accurate or objective information
- Formed through repeated exposure
- Does not always align with explicit intentions
Susceptibility at Key Decision-Making Moments

- Time Constraints
- Compromised Cognitive Control
- High Ambiguity
- Overconfidence in Objectivity
STEREOTYPICAL ASSUMPTIONS

- Immutable Characteristics
- Race/Color
- National origin
- Sex/Gender
- Disability – Physical or Mental
- Age
- Cultural
Workplace Disputes & Mediation

- People use stereotypes to make decisions about coworkers
- Managers use of stereotypes in decision making
- A stereotyped person is not seen for what she can contribute
- A stereotyped person is not seen for who she is
Housing Disputes & Mediation

- Affects our Housing choices
- Affects where we choose to live
- Bias of the Landlord
- Disability – Reasonable Accommodation
- Sexual Harassment
Stereotyping and Implicit Bias Effects on a Mediation

• Mediators’ specific gender, race, and or ethnicity can have an impact on a mediation

• Co-mediation with different genders or races

• Social Status of the Parties

• Economic Status of Parties

• Cultural and generational differences can lead to discrimination.
Race & Neighborhood Perceptions

- Housing Costs
- Safety
- School Quality
- Economic Opportunities
- Property Values
Race & Neighborhood Perceptions

How does the racial composition of a neighborhood impact how individuals perceive it?
Race & Neighborhood Perceptions

For **White participants**, simply seeing **Black residents** in a neighborhood elicited more negative evaluations of the neighborhood conditions – even when all aspects except race were comparable between neighborhoods.
Implicit Bias is only Part of the Story of Inequity

- Disparate Outcomes
- Biased Racial Perceptions
- Structural Inequity
- Differential experiences & access
“Segregation never comes about because it ‘just is,’ as the term ‘de facto’ might also suggest. The bottom line is this: segregation has always involved some form of institutionally organized human intentionality, just as those institutions have always depended on more broadly held beliefs, ideas, and customs to sustain their power.”

Carl H. Nightingale
Segregation: A Global History of Divided Cities
Drivers of Racial Segregation and Opportunity Isolation for Communities of Color

- Redlining & Investment Practices
- Urban Renewal, Public Housing & Federal Highway Policies
- Zoning & Land Use Practices
- Explicit Racial Discrimination & Intimidation Practices
- Racial Segregation & Opportunity Isolation
Long-term impacts of discriminatory laws and policies

Redlining

- Crime & Safety, Health Problems
- Foreclosure & Vacancy
- Asset Wealth Loss, Dwindling Tax Base

Disinvestment
- Housing Decline
- Predatory Lending
- Property Value Loss

"Million Dollar Blocks"
- Infant Mortality, LBW
- Asthma
- Lead
- Diabetes

Racial Wealth Gap
City Services and Maintenance
Infant Deaths, 2007-2011

Life Expectancy
How do we build more equitable communities?

• Understand the role of systems and policy

• Promote policies that address structural drivers of inequality

• Be both holistic & strategic (Identifying strategic points of change)

• Focus on engagement & local capacity
Creating a Cycle of Equity

- Equitable Outcomes
- Racial Healing & Reconciliation
- Equitable & Inclusive Structures
- Agency & Empowerment
“Competence” vs. “Humility”

- A cultural **competence** framework calls for expert knowledge about and familiarity with cultural differences.

- A cultural **humility** perspective challenges us to learn from the people with whom we interact, reserve judgment, and actively bridge the cultural divide between our perspectives.

Cultural Humility “Toolkit”

1) Lifelong Learning & Critical Self Reflection

2) Understand and Mitigate Power Imbalances in Community Dynamics

3) Model Cultural Humility in Institutional Norms and Culture
Mitigating Power Imbalances

✓ Be Honest About the Elephant In the Room
✓ Use Everyday Language and Explain ‘Wonky’ Terms
✓ Identify By Sharing Experience of Power Imbalances
✓ Open to Shared Agenda Setting
✓ No Pressure To Share
✓ Start With What’s Important to Them
Equitable Civic Engagement Principles

Recognizing Race, Power, and Injustice
- Recognizing the Historical Inequities in Our Communities
- Awareness of Racial Bias in Community Dialogue
- Awareness of Structural Power Imbalances
- Understanding that Power Sharing Involves Conflict

Hospitality: Invitation & Listening
- Meeting People ‘Where They Are’
- Active and Intentional Listening to Others and Ourselves
- Engaging through Frames of Shared Opportunity
- Building A Sense of Deep Belongingness

Trust-Building & Commitment
- Making and Keeping Promises
- Building Trust by Building Empowerment
- Building Trust Through A Willingness to Learn
Practicing Cultural Humility (ASSESS)

A-Ask a question in a humble, safe manner
S-Seek self awareness
S-Suspend judgment
E-Express kindness and compassion
S-Support a safe and welcoming environment
S-Start where the other person is at
Equity & Justice

**DIVERSITY ASKS...**

“Who’s in the room?”

**EQUITY RESPONDS...**

“Who is trying to get in the room but can’t? Whose presence in the room is under constant threat of erasure?”

**INCLUSION ASKS...**

“Has everyone’s ideas been heard?”

**JUSTICE RESPONDS...**

“Whose ideas won’t be taken as seriously because they aren’t in the majority?”
THANK YOU!
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