



# What is Unconscious Bias?

Everyone holds **unconscious** beliefs about various social and identity groups. These biases stem from the human tendency to organize our social world by categorizing. Unconscious bias (also called implicit bias) refers to the attitudes and beliefs that occur outside of our conscious awareness and control.

## What we know:

- Bias is a prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another usually in a way that's considered to be unfair. Biases may be held by an individual, group, or institution and can have negative or positive consequences.
- There are types of biases Conscious bias (also known as *explicit* bias) and Unconscious bias (also known as *implicit* bias)
- It is important to note that biases, conscious or unconscious, are not limited to ethnicity and race. Though racial bias and discrimination are well documented, biases may exist toward any social group. One's age, gender, gender identity physical abilities, religion, sexual orientation, weight, and many other characteristics are subject to bias.
- Unconscious biases develop at an early age: biases emerge during middle childhood and appear to develop across childhood (Dore, 2014).
- Unconscious biases have real world effects on behavior (Dasgupta, 2004).
- Unconscious biases are can be shaped - one can take steps to minimize the impact of unconscious bias (Dasgupta, 2013; Dasgupta & Greenwald, 2013).
- A substantial amount of research has been published demonstrating impact of unconscious bias in various domains including the criminal justice system, education, and health/health care (Kirwan Institute, 2014).
- Bias may have an impact on hiring, mentoring, and opportunities for minorities
- An implicit bias may run counter to a person's conscious beliefs without them realizing it. For example, it is possible to express explicit liking of a certain social group or approval of a certain action, while also being biased against that group or action on an unconscious level.
- It is important to understand that implicit biases can become an explicit bias. This occurs when you become consciously aware of the prejudices and beliefs you possess. That is, they surface in your conscious mind, leading you to choose whether to act on or against them.

Sources:

<https://www.simplypsychology.org/implicit-bias.html>

<https://diversity.ucsf.edu/resources/state-science-unconscious-bias>

