

I Love the Kids; It's The Parents...

Multicultural Competence in Working with Families

What Do You See?

Write a list of
all of the
descriptive
words and
phrases that
come to mind
when you look
at this photo



Biases Influence Our Perceptions.

- We sometimes assume the motives of another's actions based on their physical appearance or other irrelevant information about which we harbor unconscious biases.

Associated Press AP - Tue Aug 30, 11:31 AM ET

A young man walks through chest deep flood water after looting a grocery store in New Orleans on Tuesday, Aug. 30, 2005. Flood waters continue to rise in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina did extensive damage when it

Email Photo Print Photo

RECOMMEND THIS PHOTO » Recommended Photos
Recommend It: Average (138 votes)
☆☆☆☆☆ ★★★★★

AFP 3:47 AM ET

Two residents wade through chest-deep water after finding bread and soda from a local grocery store after Hurricane Katrina came through the area in New Orleans, Louisiana. (AFP/Getty Images/Chris Graythen)

Email Photo Print Photo

RECOMMEND THIS PHOTO » Recommended Photos
Recommend It: Average (211 votes)
☆☆☆☆☆ ★★★★★

RELATED

- Katrina's Effects, at a Glance AP - Tue Aug 30, 1:26 PM ET

Hurricanes & Tropical Storms

So How Do We Know If/How We're Biased?

- While conscious introspection helps with the development of multicultural competence, there are limits to our conscious abilities to identify unconsciously held biases.
- What to do? Take the Test of Implicit Associations and look at Project Implicit's data on trends around commonly held biases.

Source: <http://projectimplicit.net/generalinfo.php>

Project Implicit Core Findings

- “Implicit biases are pervasive.”
 - Most individuals' results indicate implicit bias'
 - Biases toward some groups run deep
 - Average implicit negative attitudes toward the elderly compared to the young: 80%
 - Average preference for racial whites relative to blacks reported by whites & Asians: 75-80%

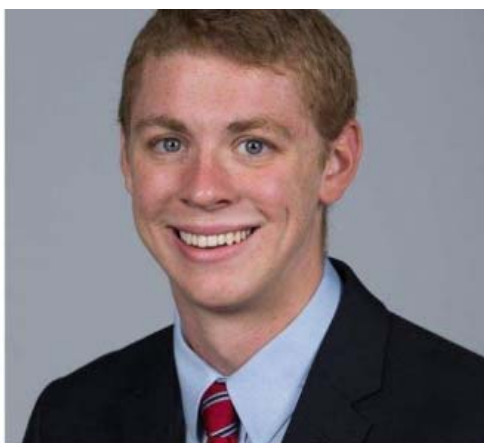
Core Findings Continued

- People differ in their levels of implicit biases.
- Individual variance is a function of:
 - Dominance of a person's membership group
 - Consciously held attitudes
 - Messages about groups present in the environment (example: TV representations)





Black woman let her child play in the park next to where she worked. This is the image the media circulated, her mug shot.



White man raped an unconscious woman in an alley behind a dumpster. This is the image the media is circulating, his Stanford yearbook picture.

Core Findings cont.

- “People are often unaware of their biases.”
 - I.A.T. results often vary significantly from honest self-report of individuals.
- **“Implicit biases predict behavior.”**
 - Studies demonstrate that practitioners treatment recommendations are influenced by race when race does not inform such decisions.

Source: <http://projectimplicit.net/generalinfo.php>

Biases Influence our Judgments

- Studies of diagnoses and clinical decision-making have uncovered a broad spectrum of mental/health care disparities resulting in inferior/damaging treatment of members of marginalized populations.

“Mental health problems are more frequently misdiagnosed among patients from ethnic minority, immigrant, and refugee groups than among native-born patients who are not from minority groups .”

Source: Using the Cultural Formulation to Resolve Uncertainty in Diagnoses of Psychosis Among Ethnoculturally Diverse Patients **Ademola B. Adeponle, M.D., M.Sc.**; **Brett D. Thombs, Ph.D.**; **Danielle Groleau, Ph.D.**; **Eric Jarvis, M.D., M.Sc.**; **Laurence J. Kirmayer, M.D.**
Psychiatric Services 2012; doi: 10.1176/appi.ps.201100280

How can We Learn to Recognize Our Unconscious Biases?

- “our unconscious reactions come out of a locked room, and we can't look inside that room. but with experience we become expert at using our behavior and our training to interpret - and decode - what lies behind our snap judgments and first impressions.”

— [Malcolm Gladwell, *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking* \(2005\)](#)

Let's Practice.

You are working with a 7 year old boy who was placed in foster care following traumatic abuse by his biological mother and father. His behaviors have improved tremendously, to the point that he is participating in the class play; so you decide it would be OK to expand boundaries by accepting a friend request from his foster parent who wants you to see their proud posts from the play. You log in and see.....

OK F.C. IF WE DO NOT BAN TOGETHER AND STOP THIS B.S. THE NEXT THING YOU KNOW THEY WILL HAVE F.I.M.A. (FUTURE ISIS MEMBERS of AMERICA) #PUTGODINSCHOOLSPLEASE



Questions to Consider:

- What gender is the person on whose Facebook page this was displayed?
- What is their level of educational attainment?
- What is their income range?
- Marital status?
- Regional affiliation: Northeast, Midwest, etc.
- Race/ethnicity?
- Religious affiliation if any?
- What was their motivation for posting this?

What Do We Do With All This?

- Beware of stereotype threat (on your part or theirs)
- Factor your identified blind spots into your clinical judgments. Example: discrimination is greater in higher-paid professional settings.
- Consult with trusted colleagues to discover possible bias-intrusions.
- Braddock & McPartland, 1987, Morrison & vonGlinow, 1990, Oakley, 2000 as cited in Milkman, Akinola and Church, 2014? What Happens Before?

A Few Examples

- Caregivers who Stutter or Have Speech Disorders: (V.U. Biomedical Engineering students developed a subtest of the IAT for stutterers vs. non-stutterers.)
- Less Verbal Caregivers: (Doesn't indicate less interested but may trigger our biases in an extrovert-preferring culture)
- Caregivers with disabilities
- Others?

Practice Multicultural Humility

- Treat impressions (even those supported by research evidence) as hypotheses.
- Practice the awkward but necessary ask.
- Consider using Cultural Formulation Interview Tools developed for use with DSM 5
- Be Aware that microaggressions lead to stereotype-threat which in turn leads to increased cognitive load which then often leads to decreased performance. (Bandy presentation, March, 2016)