

WEEK 2

Understanding and Reflecting on Our Bias



“Worse than being less than you, is if you are perceived as a threat.”

JOHN A. POWELL

We all have bias. But often, we are not aware of the biases that we subconsciously hold. Research shows that years of structural and cultural constructs have deeply embedded stereotypes into our culture, and consequently into our own subconscious. Our experiences and learned stereotypes create shortcuts in your brain that cause you to make assumptions about people, actions, and communications. For example, **according to a recent study**, companies are more than twice as likely to call minoritized applicants for interviews if they submit whitened resumes than candidates who reveal their race.

But research also shows that we can actively rewire these neural associations by being more intentional about recognizing and acknowledging our biases. This week’s focus is on personal reflection—taking the time to uncover some of our own biases and reflecting on how we take control of these unconscious constructs.

Reflection on biases is not intended to impose guilt. Recognizing your own biases and understanding where those biases come from is part of your journey of self-discovery and learning. Feeling **guilt** could lead to defensiveness and it becomes very difficult to foster the kind of attitude and behavioral changes needed to address racism.

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Week 2 Challenge

Please **choose one or two** of the below activities to engage with for 15 minutes this week, and if you have time, we encourage you to complete more.



ACTIVITY A

Watch this PBS special on [how unconscious race bias affects millennials](#). This segment also discuss how race bias affects our actions and the development of a special race lab by psychology researchers at New York University to study implicit bias.



ACTIVITY B

Read University of Illinois News Bureau interview with Professor Travis Dixon, [“Is it possible to overcome our biases in a face of conflict?”](#)



ACTIVITY C

Go deeper and take [Project Implicit Hidden Bias tests](#), created by psychologists at top universities, to uncover some of your own unconscious biases. Remember, having biases doesn't make you a bad person—it only makes you human. TIP: Proceed as a guest to access their library of tests and find out your implicit associations about race, gender, sexual orientation, skin tone, and other topics.



ACTIVITY D

Read one or more of the compelling personal stories featured in the Speak Up Handbook by the Southern Poverty Law Center. We would like to point you to page 19 titled [“What Can I do About My Own Bias?”](#) but feel free to use the table of contents on page 2 to explore other topics that interest you. You can also check out the [nine tactics to ensure your actions line up with your intentions](#).

If you are struggling during this week's activities and activities in the upcoming weeks, reach out to trusted friend or counselor to work through your feelings so you can effectively move through your self-discovery.

Share your reflections and any resources that helps further the discussion on today's topic on social media using the hashtag [#UWIEquityChallenge](#).

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