

ServSafe Workplace

Understanding Unconscious Bias

MANAGER DISCUSSION GUIDE

Thank you for downloading these additional materials. You are on your way to creating a more inclusive environment and to shifting the way your employees think about others. Use this guide to lead short conversations with your team on different aspects of unconscious bias and the affects it has on everyone in your operation.

Each of the four lessons in this guide is designed to be completed in ten minutes or less. A pre-shift meeting is a great opportunity to present this content. Consider presenting one lesson per week. You may also choose to download and display the available posters to help keep the conversation going.

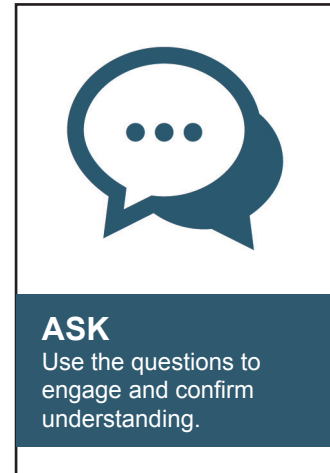
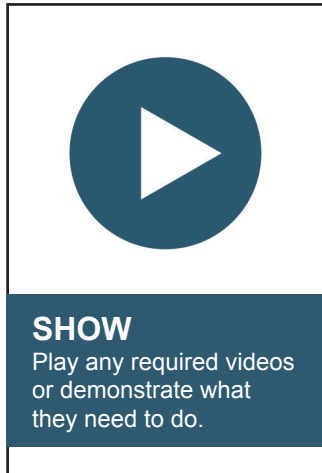
DISCUSSION GUIDE LAYOUT

The lessons are organized in a way to help you lead your discussion on unconscious bias effectively and smoothly. They provide direction around what you need to do, say, and ask to engage your teams. The structure for each lesson is broken down into the following sections.

AWARENESS	FAIRNESS	ACTION	DEBRIEF
The first step in understanding unconscious bias is recognizing that something happened and maybe it isn't quite right.	Share a different way to look at situations, and explore how your biases can affect fairness.	Things you can do to make a difference to address unconscious bias.	An opportunity to dive deeper and confirm what your team has learned.

ICONS

You will see these icons throughout this guide. Each icon indicates an action for you to take.



MATERIALS NEEDED

To present these lessons, make sure that you have the following items available:

- Device to download and show the related video (alternately, you can read the provided the script)
- Half sheets of paper
- Pens
- Handouts (if applicable)

MANAGER DISCUSSION GUIDE LESSON 1

DEFINING UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

CREATING AWARENESS



Show video: *What is Unconscious Bias?* This is done to define unconscious bias.



If the video is not available, read the following script.

Unconscious bias happens under the surface, and we don't even know that it's happening. And unfortunately, unconscious biases can cause us to treat people unfairly.

But should this even happen? After all, the world is filled with people who believe in fairness and in giving everyone an equal chance. And I'll bet that you're one of them.

Unconscious bias happens automatically, even to fair-minded people who want to do the right thing. Each day we make thousands of decisions, and our brains rely on unconscious bias much like a shortcut to allow us to make quick judgments based on our background and our past experiences.

That means that sometimes when we don't have all of the information, our brains will try to automatically fill in the blanks.

Because it happens without our even realizing it, this phenomenon is sometimes referred to as "unintentional bias." And, sad to say, it can lead us into premature judgments toward just about any group or individual, though biases tend to be exhibited more toward minority groups based on things like gender, race, class, age, weight, and that kind of thing.

The result? Well, unfortunately, whether bias is conscious or unconscious, intentional or unintentional, it can result in some prejudicial thoughts and behaviors. Basically, in treating people unfairly.

FAIRNESS IS IMPORTANT



Understanding unconscious bias takes some effort. Choosing to understand the perspective of others, especially in the workplace, and asking yourself, "Am I acting fairly?" is a great place to start. If your response is no, then maybe you should pause and think about it a little bit more before you act on it.



TAKE ACTION



Empathize with others. Put yourself in their shoes. This could be your coworkers, managers, and your guests. When you can see where they are coming from, it makes it easier to appreciate them more.

Assume good intent. We might be telling ourselves a story to fill in the blanks for information that is missing. Don't assume the worst when you may not have all of the information.

LETS PRACTICE!

Tell your team to grab a piece of paper and a pen. Ask them to write their names and three bullet points beneath the names.



It's easy for us to fill in the blanks about someone based on what we see on the outside. If you could share three things about yourself with your teammates, what would you want them to know?

EXAMPLE: Maybe you are a youth group art teacher, you play softball in a competitive league, and you take care of your younger brother who has Down syndrome.

Give them two minutes to write down their three items.



Why do you think it is important for your teammates to know this about you? How do you think they will see you differently with this information?

Invite one or two people on your team to share their answers. Be quick!

DEBRIEF



Unconscious bias happens under the surface, and we don't even know that it's happening. And unfortunately, that can cause us to treat people unfairly. Now that you know more about unconscious bias, you can challenge yourself and ask, "Am I acting fairly in this situation? Am I assuming good intent before I react?"

Remember, it is our job to provide everyone with hospitality and make our guests feel welcome. Today you have learned a little bit more about unconscious bias. As you go into your next shift, think about your teammates and the guests we serve and how you can make better connections with all of them. Have a great shift!

MANAGER DISCUSSION GUIDE LESSON 2

WE ALL HAVE UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

CREATING AWARENESS



Show video: *Everyone Has Biases*. This is done to help recognize that all people have some form of unconscious bias.



If the video is not available, read the following script.

Everyone has biases: Nice people, not-so-nice people, and everybody in between. It's just a part of being a human being—almost an instinct.

Biases represent our beliefs about things. And where do they come from? Just about anywhere: The media, our families, our schooling, and from our past experiences. In short, they come from the same places we learn about everything in life.

And they actually exist for a reason. As a shortcut, they help us make rapid-fire decisions when we're faced with a barrage of information coming at us. In fact, we're most likely to fall back on our biases when emotions are high or we need to make an immediate choice. However, there's a potential that we will end up acting on incorrect or incomplete information.



Did You Know? This may sound crazy, but we can have biases against people within our own demographic! Women may have unconscious bias against other women. Latinos may have unconscious biases against other Latinos. Bias can also be favorable and unfavorable. Many people assume biases are usually negative in nature. For example, thinking that petite women shouldn't work in the kitchen because the job requires a lot of heavy lifting. But biases can also have an assumed positive intent. For example, many people assume that tall men have leadership capabilities and are good at sports.

FAIRNESS IS IMPORTANT



Recognizing that we can hold both positive and negative biases is important. Biases can result in unfair advantages for some, and unfair disadvantages for others. We want to treat everyone with fairness. That includes both our coworkers and our guests.



TAKE ACTION



Treat people well. We work in hospitality, so it is our pleasure to serve our guests and our coworkers.

Spend time getting to know people who are different from you. This could be as simple as asking fellow coworkers how long they've been with the company and what they love about their jobs.

LETS PRACTICE! DIVERSITY BINGO

Hand out the bingo cards upside-down.

Tell everyone to write an X on each item that is correct for them.

Let everyone know that they don't have to answer any questions if they don't want to.

Tell everyone to wait until you say, "Go," to begin.

This will be a very fast game and the first person to yell bingo wins a prize. (You determine the best prize.)

Have your team compare their cards with each other. Allow no more than three minutes.



How many connections were made?

What did you learn about each other? What did you have in common?

Ask your team if they learned something that may cause them to view their coworkers differently?

DEBRIEF



Each and every one of us has some sort of unconscious bias. They come from our history and beliefs, from school and the media, from our family and even our friends. We all do it and we do it all the time. It's simply how our brains work. And we actually use our biases to help us make decisions to filter through information, especially when our emotions are running high. Unfortunately, this could cause us to act on incorrect or incomplete information, miss opportunities to connect with others, and overlook the many things we may have in common.

Remember, it is our job to provide everyone with hospitality and make our guests feel welcome. Today, you have learned a little bit more about unconscious bias. As you go into your next shift, think about your teammates and the guests we serve and how you can make better connections with them. Have a great shift!

DIVERSITY BINGO

You have relatives living in another country	You prefer front of the house work	You have lived in a suburb	You are a millennial	You have lived in a state other than this one
You have worked in more than two industries	You play a musical instrument	You have unconscious bias	You have lived on a farm or ranch	You are an aunt or uncle
You prefer back of the house work	You have siblings	FREE	You were born outside of this state	You are a member of a club or fraternal organization
You are an only child	You speak more than one language	You played sports in high school	You know what Kwanzaa is	You are a vegan or vegetarian
You own a pet	You are a Gen X-er	You were born outside of the country	You are a parent	You don't like sweets

MANAGER DISCUSSION GUIDE LESSON 3

BIAS IN THE WORKPLACE

CREATING AWARENESS



Show video: *The Promotion*. This is done to illustrate the impact of bias on the workplace.



If the video is not available, read the following script. Explain that this quote is from a story that was told by a female.

“So almost four years ago, I was working as an assistant manager. I thought it was going pretty well. I knew what I was doing. I thought that I was ready for advancement, right? Well, my boss, he intentionally held back on promoting me to manager. Honestly, I think he probably thought he was doing me a favor. I had a lot going on at home with the kids... longer hours. But, come on! So, no promotion. A year later—no promotion. After he left, I did get promoted, within like a couple of months, which is great. But that’s time that I’m never going to get back that he basically parked my career. Two years of lower pay. Two years of no career advancement. It’s just gone.”

FAIRNESS IS IMPORTANT



Sometimes the spirit of “good intentions” can open the door for your unconscious biases to create a very negative situation. In the video, the woman missed out on career advancement because her boss thought he was doing something good for her. Maybe he thought that she would have more time for her kids. Maybe he thought she wouldn’t have the time to dedicate to the job. That was not fair to her, her career development, or her finances.

TAKE ACTION



Speak up. If you see a problem or opportunity for improvement, look for a constructive solution with that person. That could be as simple as expressing your point of view. Sometimes people don’t know how their behavior or words made you feel or that their action had a negative impact. So it’s important to talk about it.

LETS PRACTICE!

Using a pen and paper, have your team write down one example of a bias or stereotype they have experienced or observed from someone else—maybe a coworker or a guest. Do not write anyone’s name(s). Let your team know that you won’t collect their responses.

EXAMPLE: I am one of the only black sales managers at my hotel. On multiple occasions when working with clients, I’ve been told how well I speak and how articulate I am. I am sure they meant it as a compliment, but it makes me wonder, what did they expect? What am I supposed to sound like?



Invite anyone in the group—only if they are comfortable—to share their experience. Remind them to not use names.

How did the experience make you feel?

What did you do about it at the time?

Is there anything you’d like your team know about you?

DEBRIEF



We spend a lot of time at work, and it doesn’t have to be unpleasant. But, it can be challenging because we all carry our own baggage full of our biases every single day. And that affects how we treat each other. We work in the restaurant and hospitality industry. And just like us, our guests also carry their bags full of biases into our operation. We have to be careful not to let our biases cause us to treat someone unfairly, even if we are trying to be nice.

As you go into your next shift, think about your teammates and the guests we serve, and how you will make a better connection with them today. Have a great shift!

MANAGER DISCUSSION GUIDE LESSON 4

DEALING WITH UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

CREATING AWARENESS



Show video: *The Automatic Gratuity*. This is done to illustrate an example of unfair treatment.



If the video is not available, read the following script. Explain that this is a quote from a story that was told by a younger, African-American man.

“I was meeting up with two clients at a restaurant in one of the places I was staying at. They called it a bistro. And everything went good. You know, it was a regular meeting. Things went how they were supposed to, until I got that bill. I look down, and I see that they added a 20% gratuity charge. So I looked at the menu, and the menu said there’s only a gratuity charge for parties of six or more. And it was just me and my two clients.

And I know why they did it, you know. I’m looking around at all the other tables and I see a lot of white people, you know, leaving tips on their tables. And it didn’t look like they got hit with a gratuity charge. So I figured that it was because my waiter thought I wouldn’t tip. Which is stupid, you know? It’s just dumb.

I’m there with two clients trying to keep a lid on everything. Trying to handle this situation calmly. And, you know, they’re looking at me like what am I going to do about it? So they can definitely tell something was up.

And it was just...it made me feel really bad, you know? I handled everything well. I said goodbye to my clients. I gave them a smile, we shook hands or whatever and everything was good. But that feeling of being... I don’t know. It was an embarrassment, really, you know? And for what? A thirty dollar tip. It’s ridiculous.”

LETS PRACTICE! FIRST THOUGHTS

Have your teammates write each of the words below on a piece of paper. Tip: You can prepare this ahead of time and make your own signs to hold up!

NEW YORKER

OLDER PEOPLE

OBESE MAN

Next, ask everyone to write down the first two or three adjectives that come to mind.

EXAMPLE: Vegan—healthy, fit, difficult, hippie

EXAMPLE: Californians—Laid back, surfers, well-off, insincere



Did you have positive adjectives or just negative?

Why is that?

If this person was your guest, could these thoughts affect the service you provide?

FAIRNESS IS IMPORTANT



The example in the video has happened, unfortunately, many times. Perhaps you have even witnessed this. Maybe you or someone you know has considered adding a gratuity to a table to ensure you got the tip you think you deserved. Put the shoe on the other foot, and imagine if you were dining out and had this same experience. Think about how it would feel to be judged unfairly by someone in our industry, whether for the color of your skin, your accent, your education level, or for any other reason. Consider the impact this could have on a guest.

TAKE ACTION



Don't judge a book by its cover. This could get you in trouble, because unconscious bias may be taking a shortcut when you don't have all of the information.

Check yourself. Ask yourself if you are being fair. If the behavior was directed at you, would you be okay with it? Go one step further and ask someone who you trust for honest feedback.

DEBRIEF



Delivering great service to all guests is important and, well, it's our job. But, it can be challenging because we all arrive with our own biases every single day. And that can have an impact on how we treat each other, and our guests.

We have to be careful not to let bias cause us to treat someone unfairly. Today, you have learned a little bit more about unconscious bias. As you go into your next shift, think about your teammates and the guests we serve and how you can make better connections with them. Have a great shift!