

A Study on Reducing Implicit Bias

The following is an excerpt from:

Devine, P. G., Forscher, P. S., Austin, J. A. & Cox, W. (2012). Long term reduction in implicit race bias: A prejudice habit-breaking intervention. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 48, (6) 1267-1278.

* Retrieved from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3603687/>

Note: This study exposed participants to an intervention that used all five strategies listed below. Their scores on implicit bias were assessed before the intervention, and 12 weeks after. As you read about these think about:

* • How do these relate to our course topics in HRL 250?

- The brain and learning
- Emotional intelligence
- Learning from experience
- Reflective practice
- Transformative learning
- Coaching and mentoring

• And, which ones could be used in the workplace?

1 PAGE

Strategies for reducing implicit race bias

The training section provided participants with a list of five strategies culled from the literature and adapted for the intervention (see Figure 1). The program explained the strategies in straightforward language with concrete examples of everyday situations in which they could be used. Participants were then asked to generate situations in which they could use each strategy. Participants were told that although none of the strategies are difficult to implement, each requires some effort. In addition, the program emphasized how the strategies (explained below) are mutually reinforcing. For example, contact with counter-stereotypic others provides grist for counter-stereotypic imaging as well as providing opportunities for individuation, perspective taking and stereotype replacement. Similarly, perspective taking can enhance stereotype replacement and individuation by encouraging people to see the world from the eyes of a stigmatized other. As a set, the strategies were offered as a powerful toolkit for breaking the prejudice habit. The program also stressed that practicing the strategies would help them to reduce implicit bias and, hence, break the prejudice habit. Following the education and training sessions, participants were reminded that they would return to the lab for two subsequent sessions and would receive questionnaires to complete between the lab sessions. Participants were then dismissed.

* HOW DO THESE RELATES (front) How related to class
TO HRL-250 TOPICS
1. PAGE

1 Stereotype replacement

This strategy involves replacing stereotypical responses for non-stereotypical responses. Using this strategy to address personal stereotyping involves recognizing that a response is based on stereotypes, labeling the response as stereotypical, and reflecting on why the response occurred. Next one considers how the biased response could be avoided in the future and replaces it with an unbiased response (Monteith, 1993). A parallel process can be applied to societal (e.g., media) stereotyping.

2 Counter-stereotypic imaging

This strategy involves imagining in detail counter-stereotypic others (Blair et al., 2001). These others can be abstract (e.g., smart Black people), famous (e.g., Barack Obama), or non-famous (e.g., a personal friend). The strategy makes positive exemplars salient and accessible when challenging a stereotype's validity.

3 Individuation

This strategy relies on preventing stereotypic inferences by obtaining specific information about group members (Brewer, 1988; Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). Using this strategy helps people evaluate members of the target group based on personal, rather than group-based, attributes.

4 Perspective taking

This strategy involves taking the perspective in the first person of a member of a stereotyped group. Perspective taking increases psychological closeness to the stigmatized group, which ameliorates automatic group-based evaluations (Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000).

5 Increasing opportunities for contact

This strategy involves seeking opportunities to encounter and engage in positive interactions with out-group members. Increased contact can ameliorate implicit bias through a wide variety of mechanisms, including altering the cognitive representations of the group or by directly improving evaluations of the group (Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).

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