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**Implicit Bias and Microaggressions:
How unchecked realities threaten the
helping relationship**


Presentation by Laura Hinds MSW,
LCSW

 **SOME REQUESTS**


Discussing our "blind-spots", our implicit biases, and privilege can be a very painful. As we support each other in this important exploration, I would ask that we offer each other the following:

- An assumption of good intent (we are the choir!!)
- Respect for differences in our comfort level and learning
- Positive support and responses to all questions
- Thoughtful consideration of our wording and language

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 **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- To define and provide examples of Implicit Bias in our personal experiences and within the context of helping returning citizens
- To empower us to mitigate the impact of our own biases while striving to avoid microaggressing in our work with vulnerable populations.
- To highlight the impact of microaggressions and the steps to move past them toward repaired and strengthened relationships.

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EXAMPLES OF MICROAGGRESSIONS

- Often associated with language and comments, microaggressions can also take other forms: Subtle actions, staring, "lumping", "otherizing", mimicking

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IMPACT OF MICROAGGRESSIONS


- Mosquito Bites:
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hDd3bzA7450>
- Other examples:
 - <https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=microaggressions+&&view=detail&mid=E613FD2814C624D6F2CDE613FD2814C624D6F2CD&&FORM=VDRVRV>


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WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

- Unacknowledged Privilege
- Segregation
- A desire to connect, but a lack of clarity/information about how to do so
- Stereotypes
- Diversity


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
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 **IMPLICIT BIAS**

What is it?

"Unlike explicit bias (which reflects the attitudes or beliefs that one endorses at a conscious level), **implicit bias** is the bias in judgment and/or behavior that results from subtle cognitive processes (e.g., **implicit attitudes** and **implicit stereotypes**) that often operate at a level below conscious awareness and without intentional control."


- <http://www.ncsc.org/~media/Files/PDF/Topics/Gender%20and%20Racial%20Fairness/kangIBprimer.ashx>

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 **HOW DOES IT WORK?**

- Harvard University's Implicit Association Test
- <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>

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 **HOW DOES IMPLICIT BIAS FLOURISH:**

- Our earliest learning goes unchallenged
- Our pain/shame results in denial
- Once realized, we avoid scenarios where it is recognized/addressed
- Unchecked, we pass it on to our children

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HOW FAR DOES IT REACH?

- Unfortunately, Implicit Bias exists wherever human nature is at play-everywhere.
- Consequently, it affects us all, in every setting.
- The most dangerous aspect is when it is used to limit the rights/freedoms of others.
 - (Kang, Bennett, Carbado, & Casey, 2011)

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HOW DOES IT RELATE WITH THE MENTOR PROGRAM?

- Results in poor engagement with your mentee.
- Results in missed opportunities to advocate against discriminative and oppressive practices
- Increases the likelihood of Microaggressions against our mentees and other colleagues and friends
- Damages relationships and efforts at social justice.

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MICROAGGRESSIONS

- What is it?
 - A collection of social snubs, statements, actions that occur in daily life and common interaction with individuals of minority status. Often these instances are considered "mild", "minor", and appear innocuous, but are experienced as chronic, unrelenting, and emotionally dangerous.
 - Generally they include:
 - Being surprised by someone's achievement
 - Reducing someone to a racial trait
 - Assuming a stereotype is accurate
 - Demanding someone justify/explain themselves in a way you would not be expected to due to your majority status



An explanation of Hx of Microaggression

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EXAMPLES OF MICROAGGRESSIONS

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The first image shows a woman holding a sign with the hashtag #100anHarvard. The second image shows a person in a field holding a sign that says 'I AM A PERSON'. The third image shows a woman holding a sign that says 'SO... WHO'S THE MAN IN THE RELATIONSHIP?'.

IMPACT OF MICROAGGRESSIONS

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PRIVILEGE

Privilege is the collection of invisible social traits and status that insulate us from negative outcomes in our professional, social, and emotional life.

- Often it is "invisible" to us
- It is not something we can easily control
- Acknowledgment can be painful
- It is especially hard to address

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WHAT COUNTS AS PRIVILEGE?


Things you may never have considered- as it is hard to know what you don't know you don't know.

Examples: Not considering that others have different experiences than you might

Not having to consider that your race may be a factor to your level of attractiveness

This conversation being "new information"

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LET'S LOOK A LITTLE DEEPER

"Buzzfeed" is an online community committed to addressing the experience of racism and racial privilege.

- Please review their 100 question survey
- You are not expected to complete it
- We will watch what it was like for others to complete it:

• https://www.buzzfeed.com/regajha/how-privileged-are-you?utm_term=.uePkZ76PL#.ddYMyL1Ga


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UNCHECKED PRIVILEGE CAN . . .

- Lead to the lack of awareness that can result in microaggression
- Deepen our blind-spots to our mentee's experiences, vulnerabilities, and challenges
- Make us "emotionally exhausting" or potentially dangerous to those we are committed to supporting


INSTEAD OF BEHAVING AS GROUP 11



WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE WORK?

- Returning citizens/inmates already have a lot of "shame" and judgment on their plates.
- Often they carry concerns re: ability to "connect" with people on the "outside"
- We don't want to contribute to their burden, nor the challenges they face


INSTEAD OF BEHAVING AS GROUP 11




CAN WE PREVENT THEM?!?


- Sometimes.
 - By being aware
 - Thinking before we speak
- Recognizing that we are all capable of them
- Taking action to address them
- Supporting each other while navigating
- <https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=microaggressions+&&view=detail&mid=E613FD2814C624D6F2CDE613FD2814C624D6F2CD&&FORM=VDRVRV>

INSTEAD OF BEHAVING AS GROUP 11


 **AND YET, THEY WILL HAPPEN . . .**


- Then what?!?
 - As scary as it may be- we must face them
 - Strong connections mitigate the impact
 - We must abandon defensiveness
 - Intention is both everything- and nothing
 - We should address the pain/trust
- We must forgive- ourselves and others

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 **SOME HELPFUL STEPS:**


- Apologize
 - For the pain
 - For the hurtful message, remember the "Intention Equation"-and be slow to argue the miscommunication or misunderstanding
- Do the work
 - Reflect on where it came from
 - Acknowledge what needs to be the "next step" in your personal process
- Don't stop the conversation- and not just with "the choir"
- Let's talk about the "Cape" Article . . .

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 **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/RESOURCES**

- How the Concept of Implicit Bias Came Into Being (NPR):
 - <http://www.npr.org/2016/10/17/498219482/how-the-concept-of-implicit-bias-came-into-being>
- Implicit Bias: A primer for Courts:
 - <http://www.ncsc.org/~media/Files/PDF/Topics/Gender%20and%20Racial%20Fairness/kanjIBprimer.ashx>


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WE ARE ALL ON THIS PATH TOGETHER . . .

- Being here today is the first step . . .

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REFERENCES:

Kang, J., Bennett, M., Carbado, D., & Casey, P. (2011). Implicit bias in the courtroom. *UCLa L. rev.*, 59, 1124.

All other resources are labelled.

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CLOSING CONSIDERATIONS

- Remember, our returning citizens are vulnerable (despite the crime/demeanor)
- You hold more power than you think
- You may be perceived as "threatening"
 - You are telling them what to do, and critiquing how well they do it
 - You may be deciding what is "important"- which disempowers their will/desire
 - You might be perceived as "part of an unjust system"

Your recognition of privilege, microaggressions and the experience of your mentees and JLWOPs can make a significant impact on the success of your participants!!

Thank you for your every effort!

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