

HOW TO COMBAT UNCONSCIOUS BIAS as an Individual

“We all have unconscious bias; it doesn’t make us bad, it makes us human.”
Rod Bolger
SVP Finance & Controller, RBC

QUESTION YOUR ASSUMPTIONS

Stop to ask yourself: Why am I thinking this way? Would I be drawing the same conclusions if this scenario involved someone of a different profile (e.g., a man instead of a woman, a person with no children instead of a mother)?

ANALYZE

Ask yourself if the forms of biases and covering (strategies people use to downplay a stigmatized identity) you are experiencing or enacting are consistent with your personal and organizational values. If they are not, identify opportunities to change.

TAKE A RISK

Put yourself outside your comfort zone. Find people such as your manager, mentors, and sponsors who will help you work through those risks to make them worthwhile.

DISRUPT THE DEFAULT

Challenge elements of the status quo that may perpetuate bias. For example, create connections across differences by finding a mentor or sponsor from a different demographic group than you, joining an ERG as an ally, or facilitating and/or participating in cross-group learning and engagement.

SPEAK OUT

Discuss issues in ways that are comfortable to you (e.g., private conversations with a mentor, anonymous feedback on employee surveys, discussion points in an ERG meeting). Share your experiences with others to find common ground and start a dialogue that will generate solutions.

HOLD YOURSELF AND OTHERS ACCOUNTABLE

Hold yourself accountable for self-reflection, learning, and continually analyzing your behaviors and experiences. At the same time, interrupt when you see others engaging in biased behaviors by politely calling out their misstep and suggesting constructive alternative ways of thinking.

GOLDEN RULE

SILVER RULE

PLATINUM RULE

“Do unto others as you would do unto yourself.”

“Don’t do unto others as you would not do unto yourself.”

“Treat others as they want to be treated.”