

IMPLICIT BIAS BENCH CARD

MITIGATING BIAS IN DECISION MAKING

THE KIRWAN INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF RACE & ETHNICITY

Act Consciously and Deliberately

- Before beginning, remind yourself of your role; the values of the institution; and your commitment to mitigating bias in your decision making processes and outcomes.
- Before beginning, engage in a mindfulness meditation exercise in order to bring yourself into the present, ground yourself, clear your mind, and focus fully on the task at hand.
- Allow more time for cases in which implicit bias may be a concern.
- Avoid decisions under rushed, stressed, distracted or pressured circumstances.
- Engage in thoughtful information processing. Objectively and deliberately consider the facts at hand. Avoid low-effort decisions or decision made on auto-pilot.
- Take special care in situations when you must respond quickly to avoid making snap decisions.
- Articulate the reasoning behind your decision before committing to a decision to allow yourself to critically review your decision making process.

Be Self-Aware

- Analyze your physical state.
 - Are you hungry? Are you tired? Are you distracted? If so, what can you do to change these conditions? Eat a snack, rest, and/or reduce distractions.
- Analyze your emotional state.
 - Do any negative or positive emotions you are currently feeling pertain to the case? If so, what can you do to reduce your emotionality? Acknowledge your emotionality and its source, do a mindfulness meditation exercise, and/or ground yourself in the present.
 - Do you have emotionality unrelated to the case that you are nonetheless feeling? If so, what can you do to reduce your emotionality? Acknowledge your



emotionality and its source, do a mindfulness meditation exercise, and/or ground yourself in the present.

- Analyze the context of the situation and your surroundings.
 - Do you have adequate time to fully consider all factors before making the decision? If not, what can you do to decrease the time pressure? Ask for an extension, use your time as efficiently as possible, and/or focus most of the time you do have on the elements of the decision that have the most impact.
 - Do you have all the information that you need to make the decision? If not, what can you do to increase the amount of necessary information that you have? Ask additional questions, do additional research, and/or review existing information for any details you might have missed.
 - Is any of the information you have ambiguous? If so, what can you do to increase the clarity of the information? Ask clarifying questions and/or check other reliable sources.
- Consider whether you are requiring more or less from a person than you would from others.
- Ask yourself if your opinion of any of the people involved would be different if they belonged to a different identity group.
- Consider how any of the individual persons involved is different from other people in their same identity group.
- Be mindful of your decision making process, as well as the resulting decision.

Create Processes to Serve as a Check on Unintended Bias

- Take notes and rely on those notes over memory.
- Consider what evidence supports the conclusions you have drawn and how you have challenged unsupported assumptions.
- Seek feedback from others. Would others perceive or handle the situation differently?
- Track your decisions and periodically examine them for any pattern of bias.

Bench Card Model

The Committee for Equality and Justice of the Minnesota Judicial Branch (April 2015)