

Presentation to the IHN-CCO DST

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Presented by

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# Implicit Bias in Health Organizations

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## Learning objectives:

- Explain what bias is and where it comes from
- Describe the impacts of biases
- Identify personal and organizational practices to reduce the impacts of bias



# What is Bias?

**Bias** – “prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair.”

(Google Dictionary)

**Explicit Bias** “refers to the attitudes and beliefs we have about a person or group on a **conscious level**”

(Perception Institute, n.d.)

**Implicit Bias** “refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an **unconscious manner**.”

(Kirwan Institute, 2015)

Bias-related  
terms  
include:

**Prejudice:** “a preconceived opinion that is not based on reason or actual experience” (Google Dictionary)

**Stereotypes:** “a fixed, overgeneralized belief about a particular group or class of people” (Cardwell, 1996)

**Discrimination:** “the practice of treating one person or group of people less fairly or less well than other people or groups.” (Collins Dictionary)

# Where do biases come from?

## Our predictive brains

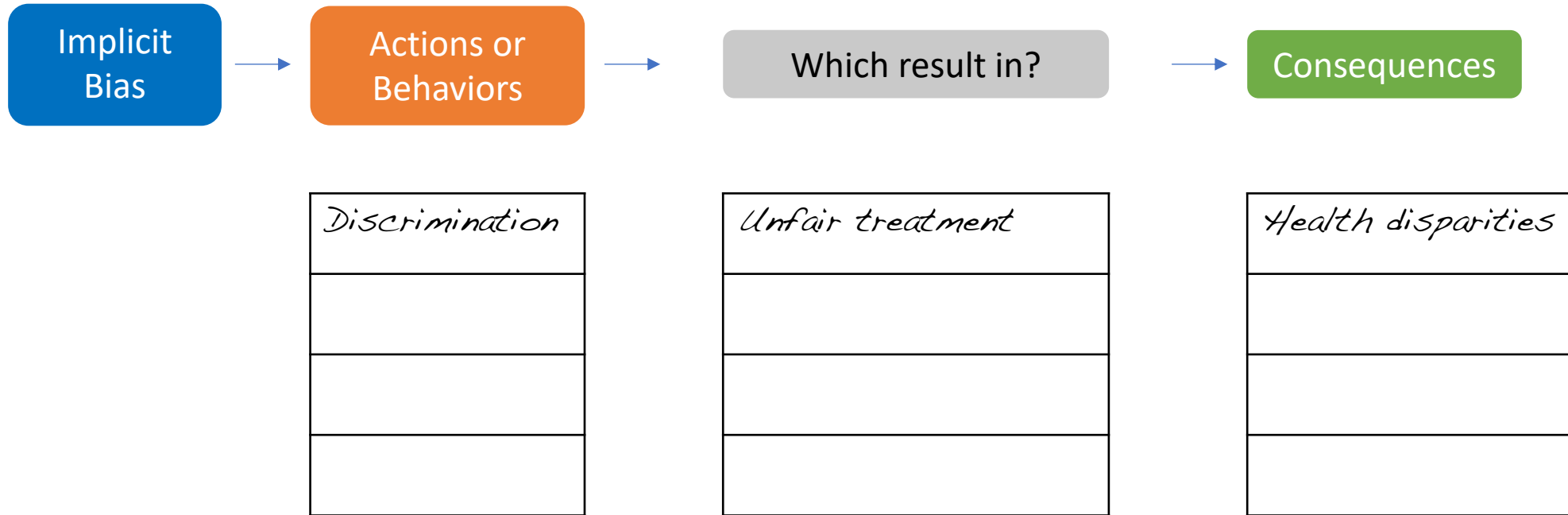
- Biases are present from a very young age  
(Perszyk et al., 2019)
- Stereotypes established during our cultural learning, reflect cultural beliefs (Hinton, 2017)
- Our brains are hardwired to categorize and predict (Axt et al., 2014: 1812)
- Thinking uses 2 systems: one fast, one slow  
(Kahneman, 2011)
  - System 1 is automatic and quick, often involuntary
  - System 2 requires more focus and effort, and is voluntary





# Why should we address bias?

1



2

Discuss: Why is it beneficial to our group to actively prevent bias from affecting decision-making? How does it benefit us, our members, and our partners?

# Personal Strategies for Decision-Making

## Self-check

- Take some implicit association tests
- Do an “audit”

## Quality time

- “Exposure to a positive exemplar”

## Practice individuation

- Focus on the individual attributes of a particular member or partner

## Increase “perspective taking”

- Make time to imagine yourself in another person's shoes
- (In medical professions, empathy can decrease over time)

## Manage stress

- Keep System 1 and System 2 in balance
- Mindfulness or meditation practice

## Slow down decisions

- Would this decision stand up to review?
- What objective criteria am I using to make this decision?



*Which of these strategies seem feasible? How could you implement them?*

# Organizational Strategies

- Make an organizational commitment**
- Conduct an organizational assessment**
- Audit and diversify recruitment strategies**
- Follow decision-making processes that are inclusive and representative**
- Increase tracking, transparency, and accountability through data/metrics**



*Which of these strategies seem feasible? How could you implement them?*



# Thank You!

Did this presentation bring something up for you? Ideas or feelings or something that I could do better? Please let me know! Cleveland.Phibbs@gmail.com

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