



# DISRUPTING (IMPLICIT?!) BIAS ON THE GO NALP 2021



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<https://biasinterrupters.org/>

## Micro Triggers – Comments that Have a Big Impact

Micro Triggers are subtle issues that may seem insignificant to one person but matter a lot to someone else. They can negatively impact morale and productivity, ultimately harming the workplace. Micro Triggers can prevent the creation of engaged, well-functioning workplace and can lead to attrition.

Micro Triggers don't have to be words, they can also include tone, inflection, or body language. These are carried out from one person/or a group to another. They create a response, like a reaction or a feeling.

These are less discernible microaggressions and unconscious bias issues that can create damage to professional relationships and work cultures as a whole.

### Almost everyone has a Micro Trigger

Most of your colleagues have them. If you understand the impact of the Micro Trigger, you can create a more inclusive environment.

*Some Examples:*

"You don't talk like \_\_\_\_\_."

"You don't look like \_\_\_\_\_."

"You are so articulate."

". . . but you don't speak with an accent."

A manager walks in and greets employee number #1 and #3 but not #2. Employee #2 may feel like their contributions are not valued, even if the manager did this unintentionally.

### What can be done about this?

Understanding the impact of subtle behaviors on individual, team and business performance is an important first step. Slowing down, observing one's own behavior, and recognizing the roles and responsibilities associated with creating a diverse and inclusive work environment are some steps we can all take.

See "58 Little Things that Have a BIG impact: What is Your Micro Trigger?"

By Janet Crenshaw Smith

## Can you get rid of Grey Area Bias?

You can reduce grey area bias. Here are some ideas and training that you can bring to your office.

### Reverse Stereotype Training (aka “counter stereotypic imaging”)

One way to change people’s views on stereotypes is to have reverse training on it:

- Expose your team to people who contradict stereotypes.
- Use visuals or verbal cues to develop new associations around stereotypes.
- Journaling exercises: have your team write a list of people in their work and/or personal lives that represent the opposite of particular stereotypes. Have them write down three characteristics and/or qualities about people they know that are different from them that counter the stereotype about their group.
- What pictures, photos, or symbols can you hang on the wall in the common space or program space to counter negative stereotypes?

### Multigroup contact

- Work with others on associations, communities, and teams that are different than you who share equal status, common goals and are working a cooperative—not competitive—atmosphere.
- Create and/or join a dialogue group; organize a “lunch” series; ultimately, the goal is to create opportunities for diverse groups of people to engage in positive contact over an extended period of time.

### Education that Goes Beyond Implicit Bias Training

- Grey area bias includes Micro Triggers and Micro Aggressions. Hold trainings that include ways your team members can recognize this type of bias as well as work on themselves to eliminate it.

### Switch Perspectives

- When conflicts arise, use switching-perspectives practices to have each party view conflict from the other person’s vantage point. Design trainings to contrast viewpoints and recognize perspectives that are contrary. Find creative – and respectful -- ways to experience what it’s like to walk in the shoes of a member of a stereotyped or marginalized group.

### Mindfulness

- Several studies have shown that mindfulness can reduce prejudice and bias. Mindfulness teaches presence and can help people to view others without preconceived notions in a more fair and balanced way. See [https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/three\\_ways\\_mindfulness\\_can\\_make\\_you\\_less\\_biased](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/three_ways_mindfulness_can_make_you_less_biased)

# Different Types of Implicit Bias

## Hidden Bias – How Unconscious is it?

We all have unconscious biases. Our biases impact us and our decision-making processes in a number of different ways:

1. **Our Perception** – how we see people and perceive reality.
2. **Our Attitude** – how we react towards certain people.
3. **Our Behaviors** – how receptive/friendly we are towards certain people.
4. **Our Attention** – which aspects of a person we pay the most attention to.
5. **Our Listening Skills** – how much we actively listen to what certain people say.
6. **Our Micro-affirmations** – how much or how little we acknowledge certain people in certain situations.

## What is implicit bias?

Implicit bias operates at an unconscious level. It falls under the umbrella of unconscious bias with slight differences. It is a belief, an association or an attitude towards a social group. One may attribute certain qualities, characteristics or stereotypes to members of a particular group.

## What are some types of bias that we don't always think about?

How many choices, agreements or decisions did you make today? 10, 15 or more? Can you make a definite calculation? We make countless decisions daily without even realizing it. You are making a decision right now to keep reading this handout.

The answers to most of the questions you contemplate each day are influenced by unconscious bias. One of the most prominent areas that bias comes up in is the workplace. The following are the most common types of bias that come up in recruitment. Think about how they have come up in your workplace. How would you interrupt them?

**Conformity Effect:** Bias caused by group peer pressure. If a person feels that the majority is leaning a certain way, they tend to go along with what the group thinks rather than voice their own opinions. Think of how this would impact candidate selections.

**Confirmation Bias:** When we make a judgement about a candidate, we look for evidence to back up that judgement and our assumptions about the candidate. We want to believe that we are right about the person and made the correct assessment.

**Affinity Effect:** We are drawn to those we have something in common with. E.g., they went to the same college as we did, grew up in the same town or in a similar family. You may smile more with this person or offer them encouragement more than you would with someone you do not have an affinity with.

**Beauty Effect:** Success is affiliated with people who are perceived as handsome or beautiful. Good looking people receive better grades in school, get better care from doctors, and earn more money. From a recruitment perspective, it is common to look for physical attributes of the person who held the position before.

**Halo --and its opposite, Horn-- Effect:** The halo effect is when we see one great thing we like about someone and we discount everything that may not be so great. We push the negative into the background. We give them a halo. The horn effect is the opposite of halo. We focus on the one bad trait to the detriment of their other attributes.

**Similarity Bias:** We want to surround ourselves with people like us. We like to make friends with people or hang out at work with co-workers who are similar to us. In a recruitment setting we tend to seek out candidates that fit our sense of likeability.

**Contrast Effect:** This shows up when we review hiring documents. When reviewing a number of resumes together, we tend to compare the resume before us to the one that came just before it.

**Attribution Effect:** This bias affects how we assess other people. When we do something well, we might attribute that to our own hard work and personality. However, when we do something badly, we might believe that we failed because other people prevented us from doing our best. And, we may think the opposite when it comes to other people. If someone else has done something well, we might attribute it to luck. If they do something badly, we might think it's due to their bad behavior, poor skills or personality traits.

*Excerpts taken from [socialtalent.com](#) [9 Types of Unconscious Bias and the Shocking Ways They Affect Your Recruiting Efforts](#)*

### Why do unconscious bias training?

Organizations and hiring partners cannot design programs that combat bias if they are not aware of the types of biases that come into play. If biases are coming into hiring decisions, then an organization will not only have difficulty recruiting a diverse and inclusive workforce but also have difficulty *retaining* a diverse and inclusive workforce.

### What can be done about this?

Implicit bias stems from our brain making assumptions and feeding stereotypes. We can't stop our brains from making those assumptions (though over time we can change these automatic assumptions through "de-biasing" practices), but we can build in awareness that implicit bias is part of our unconscious decision-making process. This unconscious bias can be interrupted.

## Bias Interrupter Toolkits

Please use the bias interrupter toolkits, Tools for Your Organization, Tools for Your Team and Tools for You. This is open-source material that you can access at <https://biasinterrupters.org/>

### Toolkits

Bias interrupters are tweaks to basic business systems (hiring, performance evaluations, assignments, promotions, and compensation) that interrupt implicit bias in the workplace, often without ever talking about bias. We offer menus of bias interrupters that organizations can implement into their business systems, as well as steps that individuals can take to help level the playing field in their workplace.

 <b>Tools for Your Organization</b> view toolkit →	 <b>Tools for Your Team</b> view toolkit →	 <b>Tools for You</b> view toolkit →
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