Things to Remember

To have bias is to be human. Bias originates evolutionary inclination to distinguish “friend” (someone like me) from “foe” (someone different from me) in order to survive. It is a fundamental way that our minds process information, allowing us to both stay safe and navigate a cacophony of stimulus at a reasonable pace.

Our background and experience create the lenses through which we see, interpret, and judge the world. Our natural tendency is to see the world as we are, not as it is.

When we are busy and distracted, or feel guilty about our biases, it is more likely that we will act and make decisions from our unconscious. In order to make more objective decisions, we need to create the space to pause and analyze the nature and source of our unconscious judgments. By taking this on, we can create more conscious awareness both individually and organizationally.

6 Ways to Mitigate Unconscious Bias

• Recognize and accept that you have bias.
• Develop the capacity to use a flashlight on yourself.
• Practice “constructive” uncertainty.
• Explore awkwardness and discomfort.
• Engage with people you consider “others,” and expose yourself to positive role models in that group.
• Get feedback.

Questions to Ask Yourself to Check Your Decision-making

• What are my biases and blind spots?
• Do I have an automatic feeling or judgment about this person?
• Am I being reminded of someone?
• What is this person triggering in my background?
• Do I notice any patterns in my decision making that might be impacted by my biases?
• How might I consciously intervene to mitigate the impact of this bias?

About Cook Ross Inc.

Cook Ross has twenty five years of experience in providing an innovative approach to diversity, inclusion, cultural competency, and leadership development through training and consulting products and services. For more information, contact us at lookingforanswers@cookross.com.

Additional Resources

Everyday Bias: Further Explorations into How the Unconscious Mind Shapes our World at Work by Howard Ross, Founder, Cook Ross Inc.

Bias in Performance Management Review Process: Creating an Inclusive Talent Pipeline by Understanding Our Filters by Leslie Traub, Chief Consulting Officer, Cook Ross Inc.