

# Med EDI » Q1 2021



Welcome to the **fifth edition** of “*Med EDI*”. Our goal is to raise awareness of the importance of working in an environment that is Equitable, Diverse and Inclusive and giving each of us the opportunity to understand the benefits from both professional and personal points of view. Through our own growth the Faculty grows too. In this quarterly edition, we place the spotlight on unconscious bias.

We look forward to hearing from you so don't hesitate to contact us at [amessage@uottawa.ca](mailto:amessage@uottawa.ca) as we develop this new platform.

## What does Equity, Diversity and Inclusion mean?

**Equity** refers to the fair and respectful treatment of all people. This means that we do everything we can to identify and eliminate unfair biases, stereotypes or barriers.

**Diversity** in the workplace is having representation across our teams of people with a variety of thoughts, skills, world views, and experiences. **Inclusion** is making sure people are accepted as they are, appreciated for what they bring to the table and their differences are recognized as an advantage. Diversity without inclusion is worthless. You may have the most diverse workforce but lack the policies and/or practices to allow everyone to be included or lack the paths for all employees to grow to all levels of the organization.



## Unconscious Bias in the Workplace

### Introduction

Let's start first by defining what a bias is. A bias is a prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another usually in a way that's considered to be unfair. Biases may be held by an individual, group, or institution and can have negative or positive consequences. There are Conscious bias (also known as explicit bias) and Unconscious bias (also known as implicit bias).

It is important to note that biases, conscious or unconscious, are not limited to ethnicity and race. Though racial bias and discrimination are well documented, biases may exist toward any social group. One's age, gender, gender identity physical abilities, religion, sexual orientation, weight, and many other characteristics are subject to bias.

Unconscious biases are social stereotypes about certain groups of people that individuals form outside their own conscious awareness. Everyone holds unconscious beliefs about various social and identity groups, and these biases stem from one's tendency to organize social worlds by categorizing.

Unconscious bias is far more prevalent than conscious prejudice and often incompatible with one's conscious values. Certain scenarios can activate unconscious attitudes and beliefs. For example, biases may be more prevalent when multi-tasking or working under time pressure.

Why do we need to address it? Well unconscious bias has been proven to impact quite significantly Equity, Diversity and Inclusion thus allowing for less innovation and decrease in people's overall moral and productivity.

***“To know the true reality of yourself, you must be aware not only of your conscious thoughts, but also of your unconscious prejudices, bias and habits.”*** Anonymous



## Unconscious Bias in the Workplace

*“Me? Biased? Unconscious bias is like jealousy: nobody likes to admit it, and often we are unaware of it.”* Thais Compoint

### Implicit Association Test (IAT)

We all must recognize that we are all bias, it might not be easy to admit it but it is true. The important thing is what will we do about it. The first step is to take what is call an Implicit Association Test (IAT). They are several IAT available online, the most popular being the Harvard one known as Project Implicit:

<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/canada/takeatest.html>

Taking the IAT will help you understand some of your bias and you will then have to decide which action will you take to address them.

### Different types of bias

There are several types of bias – we have decided to introduce you to nine of the most common ones



Conformity bias



Beauty bias



Affinity bias



Horns effect



Halo effect



Gender bias



Contrast bias



Attribution bias



Confirmation bias

## Unconscious Bias in the Workplace

### Conformity bias

Conformity bias is the tendency people have to act similar to the people around them regardless of their own personal beliefs or idiosyncrasies — also known as peer pressure. Ways to avoid conformity bias: Before you get your hiring team together to review a candidate, have them all write down and submit their individual opinions separate from one another immediately after the interview ends. Then have your team come together and review what everyone wrote down so you can hear their impartial opinions.

### Beauty bias

Beauty bias is a social behavior where people believe that attractive people are more successful, competent and qualified.

Ways to avoid beauty bias: companies should create structured recruiting and interview processes so that your team will be able to compare applications and interviews equally and reduce the risk of bias. Having an initial phone screening rather than a video call or in-person interview can also help as well as utilizing unbiased technology to identify top candidates.

### Affinity bias

Affinity bias, also known as similarity bias, is the tendency people have to connect with others who share similar interests, experiences and backgrounds.

Ways to avoid affinity bias: Actively take note of the similarities you share with the candidate so that you can differentiate between attributes that may cloud your judgement and the concrete skills, experiences and unique qualities that would contribute to your team as a 'culture add' rather than 'culture fit.'

*"If you have a brain, you have a bias."* Anonymous



## Unconscious Bias in the Workplace

### The horns effect

The horns effect is the tendency people have to view another person negatively after learning something unpleasant or negative about them.

Ways to avoid the horns effect: If you have a negative feeling about a candidate, take the time to figure out exactly where that 'gut feeling' is coming from. It may be something superficial or insignificant that shouldn't affect their chance at the role. You may also want to check with the rest of the interviewing team to understand the root of their opinions and preferences about a candidate.

### The halo effect

The halo effect is the tendency people have to place another person on a pedestal after learning something impressive about them.

Ways to avoid the halo effect: The halo effect can be dangerously blinding when it comes to reviewing candidates. When reviewing a stack of applications, you are probably looking for something unique that makes a candidate stand out from the rest. When you do this, also consider the candidate without that one gleaming attribute and see how their experiences, skills and personalities compare to other candidates who may not have had the same privileges or opportunities.

### Gender bias

Gender bias is the tendency to prefer one gender over another gender.

Ways to avoid gender bias: Conduct blind screenings of applications that exclude aspects of a candidate that may reveal their assumed gender, like name and interests. Set diversity hiring goals to ensure your company holds itself accountable to equitable hiring practices. And again, make sure to compare candidates based on skill and merit rather than traits that can cloud your judgement of them.

## Unconscious Bias in the Workplace

### **The contrast effect**

The contrast effect is when you compare two or more things that you have come into contact with — either simultaneously or one-after-another — causing you to exaggerate the performance of one in contrast to the other.

Ways to avoid the contrast effect: Create a structured applicant review and interview process so that your team will be able to compare applications and interview answers as apples-to-apples rather than apples-to-pears. This also goes for performance reviews and rewards for individual employees.

### **Attribution bias**

Attribution bias is a phenomenon where you try to make sense of or judge a person's behavior based on prior observations and interactions you've had with that individual that make up your perception of them.

Ways to avoid attribution bias: Rather than assume (because we all know what they say about assuming) a candidate is unfit for a job because they were late to the interview, ask them what happened — it could be totally innocent and unprecedented. If there is something on their resume or something they said during the interview that caused you to draw conclusions about the candidate, ask them further clarifying questions. Don't forget that interviewees are often nervous and may misspeak or stumble. Give them a chance to share their full story with you before you judge.

### **Confirmation bias**

Confirmation bias is the inclination to draw conclusions about a situation or person based on your personal desires, beliefs and prejudices rather than on unbiased merit.

Ways to avoid confirmation bias: While every interview will lend itself to a unique conversation based on the individual's background, it's important to ask standardized, skills-based questions that provide each candidate with a fair chance to stand out. This will help prevent your team from asking too many off-the-cuff questions that may lead to confirmation bias.

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## Unconscious Bias in the Workplace

Finally, we invite you to look at the video call “The Look” at <https://us.pg.com/talkaboutbias/>



## What can YOU do?

-  Talk about unconscious bias around you
-  Talk about cultural and generational differences
-  Get to know people around you (background, culture, values, etc...)
-  Don't assume and communicate clearly
-  Reflect on how you recruit team members
-  Have inclusive language and images in communications and websites
-  **SPEAK UP if you observe bias or discrimination**

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## Upcoming Observances: **March 2021**

**March is Women's History Month. Started in 1987, Women's History Month recognizes all women for their valuable contributions to history and society.**

**March 1:** St. David's Day, the feast day of St. David, the patron saint of Wales.

**March 7:** *Meatfare Sunday (The Sunday of the Last Judgment), traditionally the last day of eating meat before Easter for Orthodox Christians.*

**March 8:** International Women's Day. First observed in 1911 in Germany, it has now become a major global celebration honoring women's economic, political and social achievements.

**March 11:** Maha Shivarati, Hindu festival celebrated each year to honor Lord Shiva. It is celebrated just before the arrival of spring.

**March 11:** Lailat al Miraj, a Muslim holiday that commemorates the prophet Muhammad's nighttime journey from Mecca to the "Farthest Mosque" in Jerusalem, where he ascended to heaven, was purified, and given the instruction for Muslims to pray five times daily.

**March 13-April 15:** Deaf History Month. This observance celebrates key events in deaf history, including the founding of Gallaudet University and the American School for the Deaf.

**March 14:** Cheesefare Sunday or Forgiveness Sunday, the last Sunday prior to the commencement of Great Lent for Orthodox Christians.

**March 15-May 1:** Beginning of Great Lent in the Orthodox Christian faith. March 15, the day Great Lent begins this year, is also known as Clean Monday.

**March 17:** St. Patrick's Day, a holiday started in Ireland to recognize St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland who brought Christianity to the country in the early days of the faith.

**March 19:** St. Joseph's Day, in Western Christianity the principal feast of St. Joseph, the husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

**March 19-20:** Naw-Rúz, the Bahá'í New Year is a holiday celebrated on the vernal equinox. It is one of the nine Bahá'í holy days on which work is suspended.

**March 20:** Ostara, a celebration of the spring equinox commemorated by Pagans and Wiccans. It is observed as a time to mark the coming of spring and the fertility of the land.

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## Upcoming Observances: March 2021

**March 21-22:** Nowruz/Norooz, Persian New Year, a day of joy, celebration and renewal. It is held annually on the spring equinox.

**March 21:** International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, observed annually in the wake of the 1960 killing of 69 people at a demonstration against apartheid pass laws in South Africa.

**March 21:** Orthodox Sunday, celebrated on the first Sunday of Great Lent. It is the celebration of the victory of the iconodules over the iconoclasts by the decision of the Seventh Ecumenical Council.

**March 25:** International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade is a United Nations international observation that offers the opportunity to honour and remember those who suffered and died at the hands of the brutal slavery system.

**March 25:** Annunciation of the Virgin Mary, a Christian celebration of the announcement by the angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary that she would conceive and become the mother of Jesus.

**March 26:** Khordad Sal (Birth of prophet Zoroaster), birth anniversary (or birthdate) of Zoroaster, a spiritual leader and ethical philosopher who taught a spiritual philosophy of self-realization and realization of the divine. Zoroastrians celebrate this day with prayer and feasting.

**March 27-April 4:** Passover, an eight-day Jewish holiday and festival in commemoration of the emancipation of the Israelites from slavery in ancient Egypt.

**March 27:** Lord's Evening Meal, Jehovah's Witnesses commemorate an event believed to have occurred on the first night of Passover in approximately 33 CE, the Last Supper, known as the Lord's Evening Meal.

**March 28:** Palm Sunday, a Christian holiday commemorating the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. It is the last Sunday of Lent and the beginning of the Holy Week.

**March 28-29:** Holi, the annual Hindu and Sikh spring religious festival observed in India, Nepal and Sri Lanka, along with other countries with large Hindu and Sikh populations.

**March 28-29:** Lailat al Bara'a, also known as Lailat Al Baraah, Barat, or popularly as Shab-e-Bara or Night of Forgiveness. It is an Islamic holiday during which practitioners of the faith seek forgiveness for sins.

**March 31:** International Transgender Day of Visibility, celebrated to bring awareness to transgender people and their identities as well as recognize those who helped fight for rights for transgender people.

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## Upcoming Observances: April 2021

**April is Celebrate Diversity Month, started in 2004 to recognize and honor the diversity surrounding us all. By celebrating differences and similarities during this month, organizers hope that people will get a deeper understanding of each other.**

**April is Autism Awareness Month, established to raise awareness about the developmental disorder that affects an individual's normal development of social and communication skills.**

**April 1:** Holy Thursday (Maundy Thursday), the Christian holiday commemorating the Last Supper, at which Jesus and the Apostles were together for the last time before the Crucifixion. It is celebrated on the Thursday before Easter.

**April 2:** Good Friday, a day celebrated by Christians to commemorate the execution of Jesus by crucifixion. It is recognized on the Friday before Easter.

**April 2:** World Autism Awareness Day, created to raise awareness of the developmental disorder around the globe.

**April 4:** Easter, a holiday celebrated by Christians to recognize Jesus' return from death after the Crucifixion.

**April 7-8:** Yom HaShoah, Israel's day of remembrance for the approximately 6 million Jews who perished in the Holocaust.

**April 12-May 11 (sundown to sundown):** Ramadan, an Islamic holiday marked by fasting, praise, prayer and devotion to Islam.

**April 12:** Hindi New Year.

**April 13:** Equal Pay Day, an attempt to raise awareness about the raw wage gap, the figure that shows that women, on average, earn about 80 cents for every dollar men earn. The date moves earlier each year as the wage gap closes. Equal Pay Day began in 1996 by the National Committee on Pay Equity as a public awareness event to illustrate the gender pay gap.

**April 14:** Vaisakhi (also known as Baisakhi), the celebration of the founding of the Sikh community as the Khalsa (community of the initiated) and the birth of the Khalsa.

**April 16-17 (sundown to sundown):** Yom Ha'Atzmaut, national Independence Day in Israel.

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## Upcoming Observances: April 2021

**April 20-May 1:** The Festival of Ridvan, a holiday celebrated by those of the Bahá'í faith, commemorating the 12 days when Bahá'u'lláh, the prophet-founder, resided in a garden called Ridvan (paradise) and publicly proclaimed his mission as God's messenger for this age.

**April 21:** Ram Navami, a Hindu day of worship and celebration of the seventh avatar of Vishnu (Lord Rama). Devotees typically wear red and place extravagant flowers on the shrine of the God.

**April 22:** Earth Day promotes world peace and sustainability of the planet. Events are held globally to show support of environmental protection of the Earth.

**April 23:** St. George's Day, the feast day of St. George celebrated by various Christian churches.

**April 23:** The Day of Silence, during which students take a daylong vow of silence to protest the actual silencing of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) students and their straight allies due to bias and harassment.

**April 24:** Lazarus Saturday, a day celebrated by the Eastern Orthodox Church and Oriental Orthodoxy to commemorate the raising of Lazarus of Bethany.

**April 24:** Armenian Martyrs' Day recognizes the genocide of approximately 1.5 million Armenians between 1915 and 1923 in Turkey.

**April 25:** Mahavir Jayanti, a holiday celebrated by the Jains commemorating the birth of Lord Mahavira. It is one of the most important religious festivals for Jains.

**April 28:** Ninth Day of Ridvan, a festival of joy and unity in the Bahá'í faith to commemorate the reunification of Bahá'u'lláh's family, and by extension the unity of the entire human family the Bahá'í faith calls for. It permeates the symbolic meaning of the Ninth Day of Ridvan.

**April 29-30 (sundown to sundown):** Lag BaOmer, a Jewish holiday marking the day of hillula of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai.