

Headquarters U.S. Air Force

Integrity - Service - Excellence

Mitigating Unconscious Bias



21 June 19

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Say: The objective of this briefing is for each member to comprehend how unconscious bias may impact talent management decisions and performance evaluation and to hopefully gain some insight and goals for mitigating your biases.

Explain – Today's training will cover D&I strategic framework and Unconscious Bias through interactive activities. Before we get into Unconscious Bias I am going to briefly talk with you about Diversity and Inclusion and how D&I impacts our Airmen and our mission effectiveness. I hope to articulate to each of you the role that you play in creating an inclusive culture and that you will appreciate that D&I is all of our responsibility.



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WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THE PROGRAM:

This session is part of a series of Diversity and Inclusion training events that you will be attending over the next few months. Each sessions will include videos, discussion, and interactive activities. Each session contains a different set of topics, but many of them overlap and build upon each other.

GROUND RULES FOR THE SESSION:

- Share your experiences and perspectives – but stick with “I” statements instead of generalities.
- Be respectful to each other
- You don’t need to have all the answers but be open to learning about others perspectives.
- Look inward during this training

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Show Slide 2 – Expectations and Rules of Engagement

SAY: This session is part of a series of Diversity and Inclusion training events that I as the HRA can provide. Each session will include videos, discussion, and interactive activities. Each session contains a different set of topics, but many of them overlap and build upon each other.

(Click)

Say: Engage, share perspectives and concerns. Be respectful, be open to learning, look inward (This is about you). My goal as your HRA is to not only help each of you with D&I but to also, with your feedback and insight, determine if there are barriers within your organization, Wing or the ANG that impact D&I. Your observations shared in this environment are key to this barrier analysis process. So let’s start with a brief introduction to D&I.



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Operationalizing Diversity



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Recap if already briefed to this group:

Say: This class will provide you with the awareness and tools to better understand and apply behaviors that are inclusive by understanding exclusive behaviors and the impact they have on others.

Say: Today's training will focus on an example of an exclusive behavior, Unconscious Bias, specifically in the form of diagnosis bias.

Full explanation: (This is an example of the text, HRAs should put this in their own words, do not read this verbatim)

Say - I am going to talk with you about Diversity and Inclusion today and how D&I impacts our Airmen and our mission effectiveness. I hope to articulate to each of you the role that you play in creating an inclusive culture and that you will appreciate that D&I is all of our responsibility

Say - Operationalizing Diversity - How are we measured and held accountable? Readiness, SORTs/DRRS, UMD etc. Are we truly an effective force if we are green in all of these areas? Receive comments and feedback. Then contend "maybe not". Is there a human element that is behind that measurement that is not fully considered and factored in? We need to create an equitable environment where our Airmen can bring their full selves. They have a high sense of engagement, feel they belong, trust and are trusted and feel they play a key role in the mission so that they engage 100% when called on.

Say: Ask, How many of you know feel you understand what Diversity is? Take a

few comments and answers then further explain that there are 4 Major Components of Diversity. Reference the appendix.

Say: 20 to 30 years ago, this square would have been all the way to the right of this slide, it was the end state

Say: We at the ANG see Diversity as an opportunity, a beginning not an end. What each of us does with that Diversity we are provided determines if we succeed as leaders and as an organization. How we as leaders, Airmen and human beings choose to interact with this diversity is defined in our Actions. We can be exclusive, which I will argue is the default position for most of us. It's where we are most comfortable and most at ease. It's going to lunch with people you know, not talking to people you don't normally talk to, picking a team of Airmen you know and are comfortable with. As human beings, it's our default position. Other exclusive actions could be biases, Micro-Aggressions, something as simple as crossing your arms when talking to someone. Not intentional, not malicious, but excluding none the less.

Say: The other action is Inclusion. It's hard to be inclusive, it takes work and effort. It's as simple as including and being included. Being emotionally intelligent (EQ) Self and Social Awareness and Management. Getting out of your comfort zone and seeking out others perspectives and views.

Say: Our actions drive reactions, feelings form others. Let's look at what happens to others when we are exclusive. Explain each. People are not able to bring their whole selves, they don't feel they can make a mistake so they don't try, they don't feel valued or that they are a part of the organization. To us in the ANG, it's the start of an outstanding unique opportunity.

Say: Look at what the outcomes are when we are exclusive, explain each. Do any of these look like the strategic goals of the Air National Guard, No.

Say: Now let's look at what happens when we are inclusive, what reactions do we get.

Say: People feel (explain each).....and with those reactions here are our outcomes. Explain each. Key Comments: Innovation is not just a technical or scientific outcome, it can be as simple as making a 10 step process 9 steps. It's solving a problem. If our diverse force is afforded the opportunity to participate and provide their perspectives (Inclusion) we can achieve innovative ideas. Resiliency can also be enhanced by simply providing an environment where people feel they can reach out to others for help when needed. Inclusive leaders who engage with their team members will recognize when an airmen is having a bad day because they took the time and effort to know what that Airmen's good day looks like.

Say - So by each of capitalizing on the diversity we are provided and bring to the mission and being more inclusive, we can allow people to bring their full selves, engage, and meet the strategic goals of the ANG. Increase lethality.

Questions? Comments?

Say: My goal as the HRA is to help each and every one of you to understand those exclusive and inclusive actions that exist within each of you. We will do a series of interactive sessions and employ tools to help each of you to become a more inclusive Airman and leader.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rbe5D3Yh43o>

“What is Unconscious Bias?” Employee Network for Equity and Inclusion (ENEI)



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Unconscious Bias – Level Setting

- It is the judgment that human beings rely on to make snap decisions, our brain being efficient.
- Unconscious bias:
 - Operates beyond our control and awareness
 - Informs our perception of people and social groups
 - Can influence our decision-making and behavior
 - Shaped by background, cultural environment and personal experiences
- Bias is ever present, unavoidable and human



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Show Slide 5 –Level Setting

Say: The previous video offers a relevant overview and discussion on how bias may impact our behaviors and decisions.

Say: The psychology of bias is ever present and as human as the process of breathing. Our filters, mental models and “book of rules” are shaped and hard wired from our socialization process: Our paradigms and beliefs are enforced and reinforced by our parents, friends, education experience, etc.

Say: Ultimately, we use our experiences to fill in the blanks about a person who may be different than ourselves. Our experiences and knowledge about people that we label “like that” may influence our approach on how we’ll engage with that individual. Stereotyping is often a powerful and dangerous consequence if our biases are left unchecked.

Say: Bias affects performance and impacts an organization’s ability to fully leverage diversity

Bias influences the decision that leaders make, leading to inaccurate ratings of merit and thus to less than ideal talent management decisions

Bias creates expectations, and a leader’s expectations have a direct impact on performance

Bias, via stereotypes, can create lower performance among members of outsider groups, or among groups that have negative stereotypes associated with them



Common Cognitive Biases

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Diagnosis Bias – Our propensity to label people, ideas, or objects based on our initial opinions of them. 	Selective Attention – The process of focusing on or reacting to certain stimuli selectively when several occur simultaneously. 	Affinity Bias – The tendency to like people who are similar to us or remind us of someone we like. 
Choice-Supportive Bias – When you choose something, you tend to feel positive about it, even if that choice has flaws. 	Confirmation Bias – We tend to listen only to information that confirms our preconceptions. 	Halo Effect – Describes how judgements about some aspects of an object may influence how other aspects of an object are judged. 
Bandwagon Effect – The probability of one person adopting a belief increases based on the number of people who hold that belief. 	Value Attribution – Our tendency to imbue people or objects with certain qualities based on perceived value. 	Outcome Bias – Judging a decision based on the outcome rather than how the decision was made in the moment. 

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Show Slide 6 –Common Biases

Say: Unconscious bias presents itself in many different forms and configurations.

For example – Affinity Bias is the tendency to like people who are similar to us or remind us of someone we like. We often see this manifest in various situations especially upon first contact. Think about how new students in PME tend to gravitate toward others in the same AFSC, maybe gender, maybe race, etc.

Ask: Can anyone see and offer the danger in this type of Bias?

Say: What if we are on a hiring or promotion board and have this bias?

Say: How about Confirmation Bias – We look and listen to sources that confirm our beliefs. The news channel we watch or the person we go to for advice that we know thinks like us and will confirm our beliefs.

Ask: Can anyone see and care to offer what they see as the danger in this type of Bias?

Say: We never seek out and learn others perspectives, we stop growing.

Option: Instructor can draw the learning edge model and explain how we need to move outside of our comfort zone and into the learning zone.

Say: In addition, these common types of biases may be interconnected as well. For example, I may employ affinity bias in selecting a working group to solve a complex problem. My team may be dominated by those who I perceive as introverts. As an unintended consequence, the dynamics of that group may also contribute to another type of bias called the bandwagon effect (group think).

Action: Now before we move on, take out your pens and paper, and write down one of these biases that you feel you might be unconsciously committing. Take your time, no rush.

Say: Let's explore one of the most common types of biases...



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***As you look at the
individual on the slide,
write down your immediate
feelings, judgments,
and reactions that emerge***

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SLIDE 7 – Diagnosis Bias

SAY: Let's try a brief activity. I'm going to show you a picture. As you view the photo, consider your own thinking and immediate assumptions about the individual pictured.

Think about your immediate feelings, reactions based on what you notice

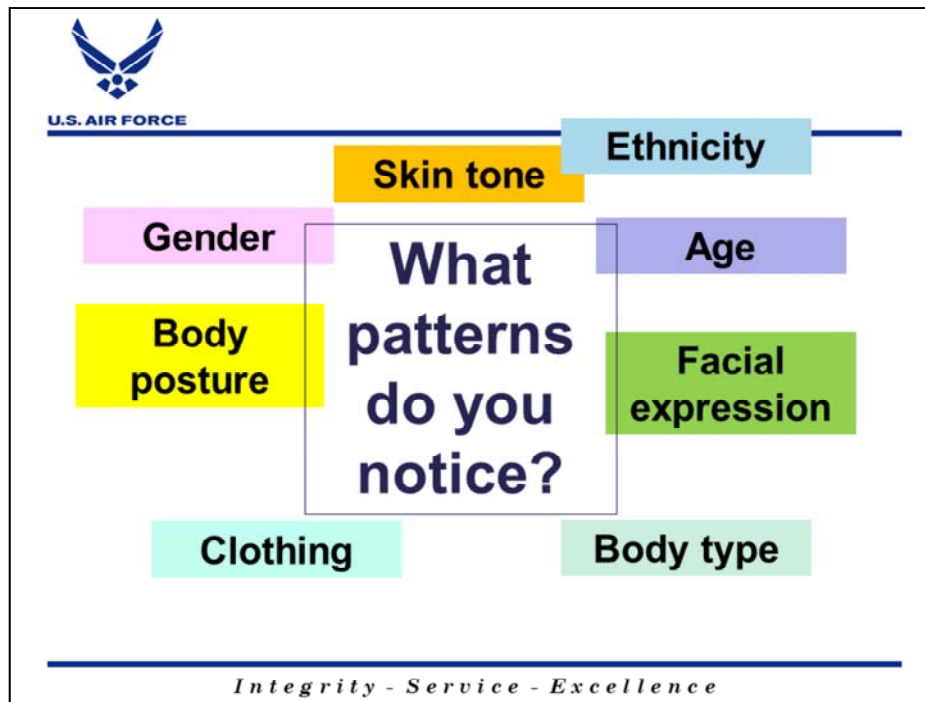
Consider a likely occupation or career that may be connected with the image in front of you **(Click)**



SLIDE 8 - Photo

Do: Allow the group to view the photo for no more than 30-45 seconds.

Say: “Notice what you notice”; “Look at the environment for additional context”, etc. Think about your immediate feelings, reactions based on what you notice. Consider a likely occupation or career that may be connected with the image in front of you.



SLIDE 9 – What patterns did you notice?

SAY: So let's take a moment to hear what you all noticed.

ASK: What were some patterns that you all noticed?

ANTICIPATED ANSWERS - He seemed unapproachable - Possible biker, ex-convict - and tattoo artist - His environment

ASK: Where did these assumptions come from?

ANTICIPATED ANSWER - Our past experiences - What we see on television - Society

ASK: 3-4 participants to share what they reacted to when they saw the pictures, and comment appropriately.

SAY: Now I'm going to share with you a little bit about who this individuals is.

Click



John Fetterman

- Mayor of Braddock, PA (suburb of Pittsburgh) – tattoo on his arm is the zip code
- Has a Master's degree in Public Policy from Harvard
- Served in the Americorps
- Received international media attention for his economic revitalization program

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SLIDE 10 – Photo

(Image only) - Have the group Share:

Say: “So what do you notice?” What assumptions do you make?”

Click

John Fetterman

Mayor of Braddock, PA (a suburb of Pittsburgh) – the tattoo on his arm is the zip code!

Has a Master’s degree in Public Policy from Harvard

Served in the Americorps

Received international media attention for the economic revitalization programming he started in his community

Currently, the Lt Gov of Pennsylvania (as of Jan 2019)

ASK: What are some of the key insights regarding how we “label” and judge others based on surface level inputs?



Diagnosis Bias

Diagnosis Bias –
Our propensity to label people, ideas, or objects based on our initial opinions of them.



Selective Attention –
The process of focusing on or reacting to certain stimuli selectively when several occur simultaneously.

Affinity Bias –
The tendency to like people who are similar to us or remind us of someone we like.



Choice-Support Bias –
When you choose something, you tend to feel positive about it, even if it has flaws.



Diagnosis Bias –
Our propensity to label people, ideas, or objects based on our initial opinions of them.



Halo Effect –
Judgements about some object may influence how other objects are judged.



Bandwagon Bias –
The probability of one's belief increases based on the number of people who hold that belief.



Outcome Bias –
Judgement based on the outcome of a decision rather than the quality of the decision itself.



Recency Bias –
The tendency to rely too heavily on the most recent information available when making decisions.



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SLIDE 11 – Diagnosis Bias Breakdown

Say: This activity highlighted a form of bias referred to as Diagnosis Bias. We all are processing the information differently, and noticing different characteristics, unconsciously. We fill in the blanks with information from past experiences or hardwired information framed from our socialization. Understand this is a sterile activity where you have been primed that the topic is Unconscious Bias – however, in a spontaneous situations especially under the pressure of duress and/or TIME – bias manifests itself in **MILLISECONDS**. This process also takes place when we evaluate records and make interpretations based on our mental maps and filters.

SAY: So it's easy to see how we are all susceptible to diagnosis bias. It is important to remember that having bias is normal; however, if we fail to recognize and be conscious of our decisions, then it can result with a negative impact in both our personal and professional lives.

(Do some of these depending on Time)

ASK: Who can identify a time when you utilized diagnosis bias and what may have been the impact?

- My observations were wrong
- I overlooked someone's talent
- We selected personnel that were not the best qualified

ASK: How does diagnosis bias apply to the Air National Guard?

- May contribute to low retention

ASK: How does diagnosis bias impact your effectiveness

- I may lose the trust of my team
- I may make illogical decisions
- My own strengths might be overlooked by those who fail to recognize their own biases

Summary

Say: Bias translates into behavior that can result in exclusive behavior:

Say: Bias affects performance and impacts an organization's ability to fully leverage diversity

Say: Bias influences the decision that leaders make, leading to inaccurate ratings of merit and thus to less than ideal talent management decisions

Say: Bias, via stereotypes, can create lower performance among members of outsider groups, or among groups that have negative stereotypes associated with them

Click



SLIDE 12 – Iceberg Activity

Do/Ask: Using a blank butcher block paper, ask the class to provide aspects of diversity that they can clearly determine from seeing an individual? Write down what they share towards the top of the paper. Examples Race, Gender, Age, Ethnicity.

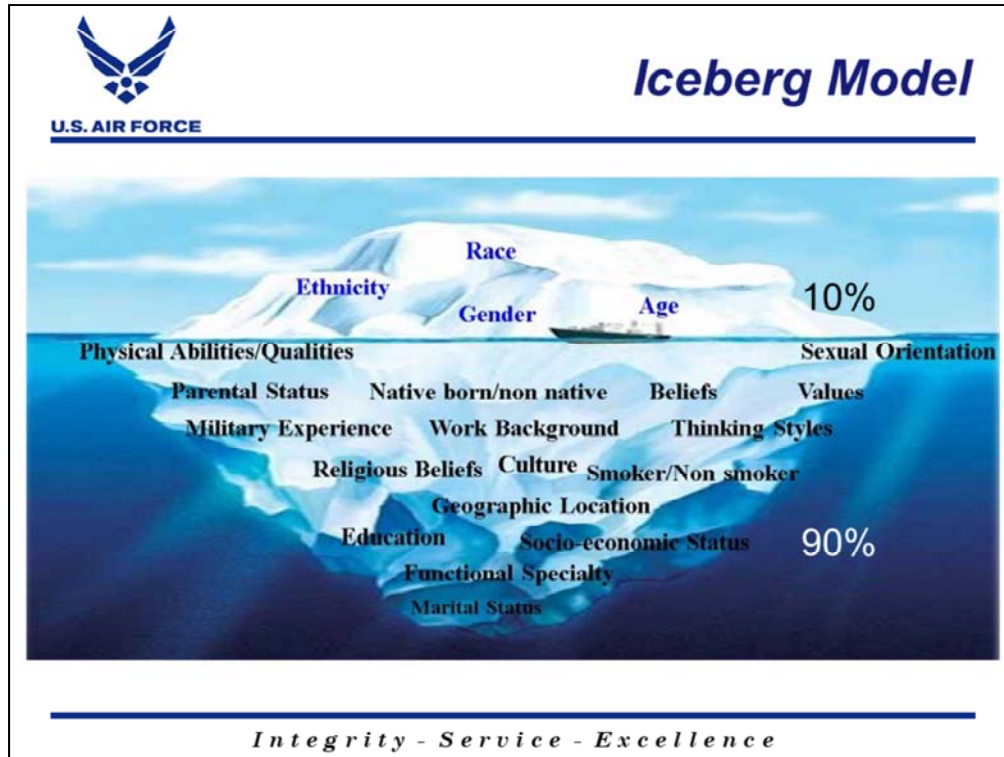
Ask: Ask the class to provide you with aspects of diversity they might not immediately see or know about someone just by looking at them. Examples Religion, Education, Socio-Economic status, parental status, married status etc. Write down what they share, placing them on the bottom 2/3rds of the paper.

Do: Now draw an iceberg around all words and then a waterline between the 2 groups. Draw a reference to 10% above the water and 90% below.

Ask: What does this tell you about what we truly know about someone based on what we see? Answers: We may tend to judge someone without getting to know someone if we base 90% of our opinion of them on the only the 10% we see.

Military Caveat/Connection: Imagine the impact militarily if we use this process for picking teams or selecting for promotion or hiring process.

Click

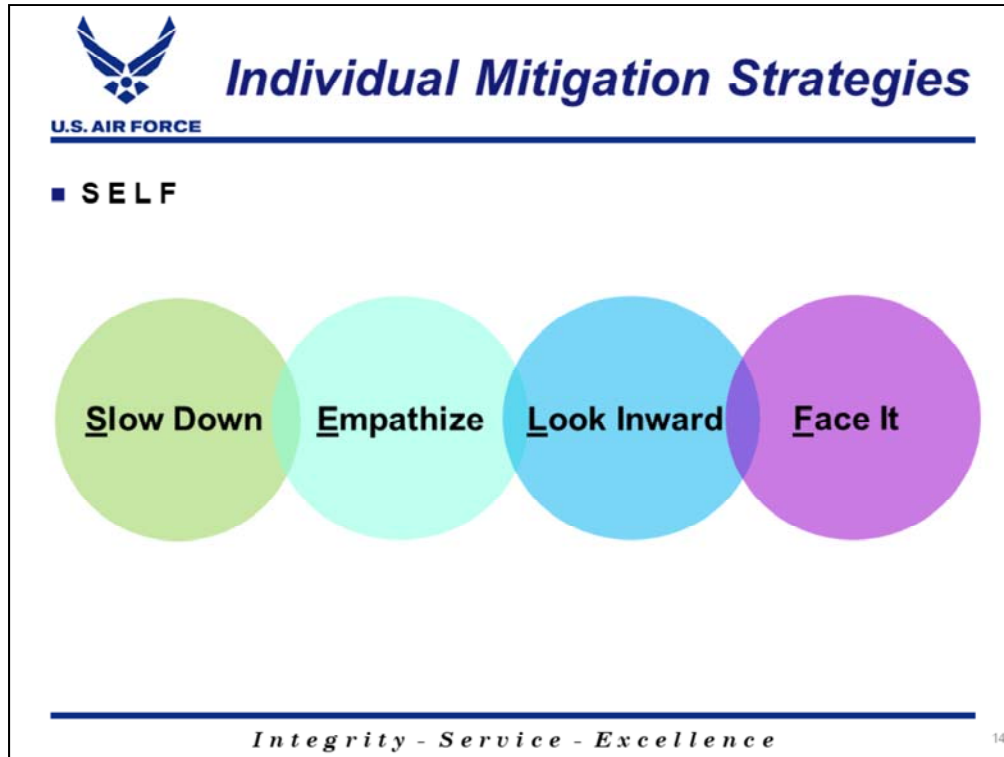


SLIDE 13 – Iceberg Activity

Say: Only 10% of a person's diversity is above the water/visible and the other 90%, the majority, is below the water/not visible. So when we make quick judgements or assumptions about someone based off of our biases, we are missing the big picture

Say: So now we know what biases are and what biases we might have, but what are we going to do about it? So many times in D&I we are shown the problem, described the problem, signed a roster and left the session. It's my hope to move you beyond the awareness of biases and provide you with some mitigation strategies and goals to start moving the needle in a more inclusive direction.

Click



SLIDE 14 – Mitigation Strategies

Say: When you are trying to become aware of your biases or know of a bias you are trying to work through, I would offer to you there are 4 proven strategies for helping you through this effort.

Say: Individual Mitigation Strategies- Consider the Acronym - S-E-L-F

Say: Slow Down- Instead of judging and filling in the blanks with perceptions, take a moment to engage and fully understand the person or situation before allowing your bias to kick in. Its human nature and our system defaults to the perceived knowns based on our value system and experiences long before we are able to stop and rationalize, educate, communicate, empathize and articulate a non-biased comment or action. Just stop, breathe, pause, consider alternatives beyond your knowns and be mindful in crafting the appropriate response or thought. After you have done so, consider how that engagement might have gone if you had stayed with your original thought.

Say: Empathize- You must be empathetic. Put yourself in the other person's shoes. For those of you that have had Four Lenses, "See through their color of lens". Imagine the thoughts and feelings of others. Consider the impact of how your comments and actions are being received. How would you feel if you were the recipient of the bias?

Say: Look inward, be self-aware of your beliefs and what you value. Ask, "Why am I thinking this way?" This can help regulate your biases by helping you manage

acceptable and unacceptable actions and biases as you interact with others. Self-awareness forces you to look inward and consider how your actions can be received by others.

Say: Face it- Accept that you have biases, it's OK, we all do. To have bias is to be human. It is a primal survival instinct, combined with social conditioning (social messages) about different groups of people, behaviors, values, etc. We have to become aware of them in order to anticipate their impact on ourselves and others, and be able to intervene when we recognize the potential negative impact. When we realize where our biases come from, we might realize how they are not based in a rational reality, but rather a social or emotional construction created somewhere in your past and may not be valid so it's worth exploring them. When you start to own and accept it, it means you are taking accountability for your thoughts and actions. When you own it, consider the impact and take accountability, you will elicit more positive behaviors.

Say: Now What?

Pick a bias that you might have

Set a Goal to use one of the mitigation strategies i.e. I want to Face it/Own it and then focus on one of the strategies for dealing with it.

Think of someone that can support you with this goal, someone you know well and trust to confide in.

Now "Pay it Forward", take out your cell phones and text that person that will be supporting you and say only the following: Help me with something (example) ... I want to learn to "Look Inward", Everything is OK, Don't ask, I'll explain it to you later.

After this session, seek out that person and explain your goal, what you are working on, why you are working on it and that you would like their help achieving this goal.

Do: Give the class time to complete this text. **(Click)**



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See it in Action

- Does anyone in the class wish to share their Bias and talk about the mitigation strategy and goal they have chosen?

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SLIDE 15 – See it in Action

Ask the class if anyone would like to share their bias and their mitigation strategy with the class. (Click)

Note to instructor: Have a bias and mitigation strategy that you would like to work on hand so that you can start the activity and hopefully stimulate more interaction from the class. Explain the Bias, explain what mitigation strategy you are working on and then talk about an example of what that looked like before the strategy and how you manage it now that you use the mitigation strategy.

Do: If a class member offers to share theirs, walk them through this same process you just did on yourself: Explain the Bias, explain what mitigation strategy they are working on and then talk about an example of what that could look like before the strategy and how it might look after using a mitigation strategy.

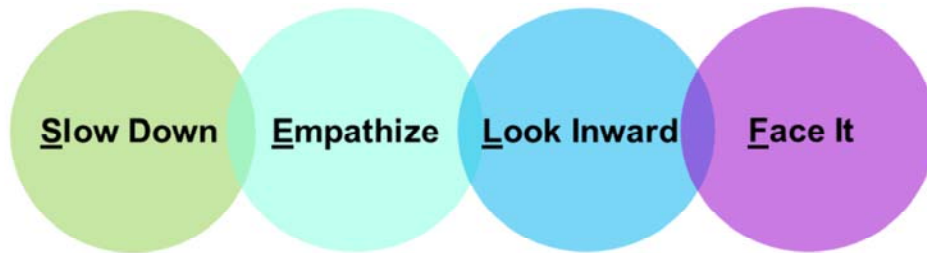
Do: Once you feel there is no one else willing to share on this activity, move to close the session



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Individual Mitigation Strategies

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For Activity



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Questions?

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SLIDE 17 – Questions

Thank the class for their engagement. Re-inforce for them to follow-up with their support member on the goal they have assigned themselves.

Ask if any have any questions?