



LEAN IN

50 WAYS TO FIGHT BIAS

An activity that helps you combat the biases women face at work

Bias fundamentals



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TO GET STARTED:

Download our [Moderator Guide & Speaker Notes](#) to prepare for your session, find links to necessary handouts, and learn what to say.

Use “Slide Show” mode to click on links in this presentation or right click to access the hyperlink when not in “Slide Show” mode.

PRESENTATION STARTS
ON THE NEXT SLIDE

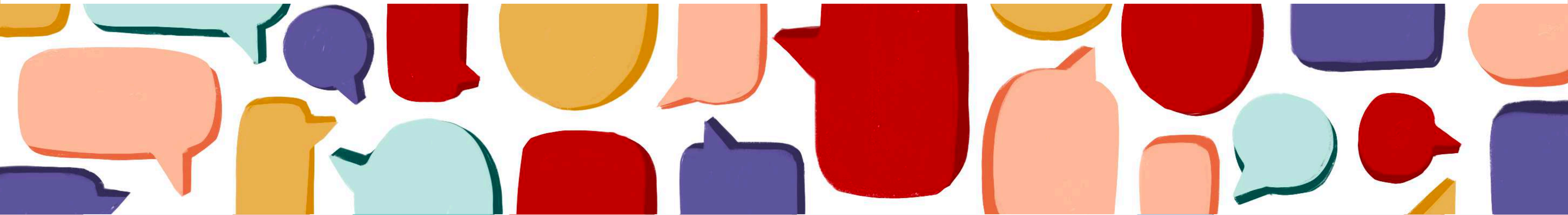


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Welcome

BROUGHT TO YOU BY

LEAN IN

LeanIn.Org helps women achieve their ambitions
and works to create an equal world.

LeanIn.Org thanks our partners for their valuable contributions to this program:



WHY WE ARE HERE

- ▶ Bias—whether deliberate or unconscious—is holding women back in the workplace.
- ▶ It makes it harder for women to get hired and promoted and negatively impacts their day-to-day work experiences.
- ▶ This hurts women and makes it hard for companies to level the playing field.
- ▶ Today, we'll learn concrete steps to address the biases women face head-on.

TODAY'S AGENDA

- 1 Set the tone
- 2 Learn about biases women face at work
- 3 Dive into specific situations and solutions
- 4 Finish with a closing activity

Setting the tone

- ➊ Women face biases due to their race, sexuality, and other aspects of their identity.
- ➋ Intersectionality can be at play in any situation.
- ➌ We all fall into bias traps.
- ➍ Knowing that bias exists isn't enough—commit to take action.

GROUND RULES FOR TODAY

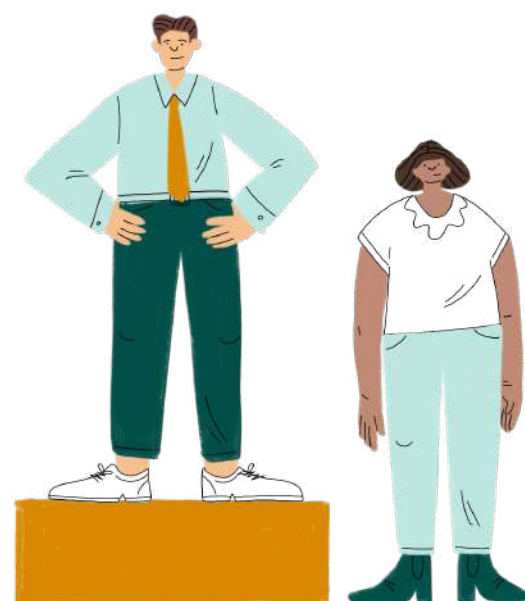
- ➊ Some situations may be difficult to hear.
- ➋ Stories should be anonymous.
- ➌ Give people the benefit of the doubt.

Overview: Common types of biases women face at work

COMMON TYPES OF BIASES WOMEN FACE AT WORK



Likeability bias



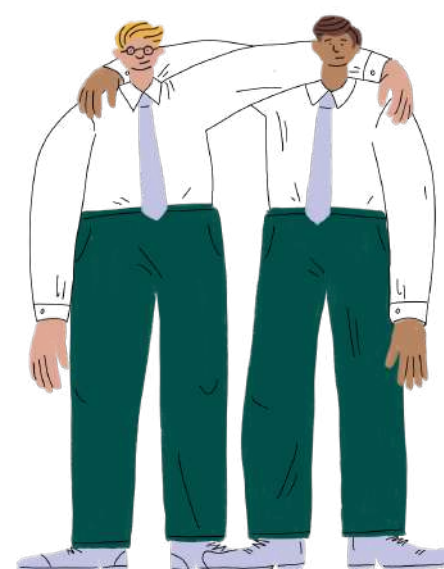
Performance bias



Maternal bias



Attribution bias



Affinity bias



Intersectionality



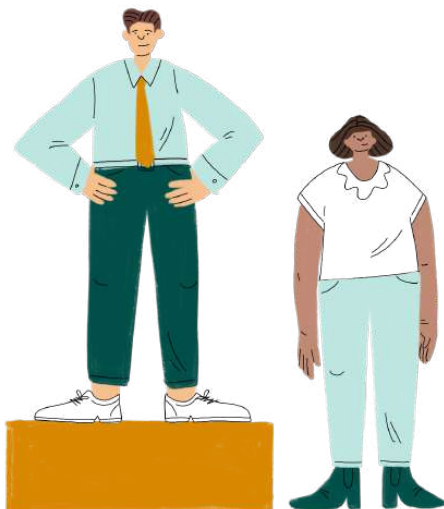
Watch the video:
"Introduction to the Common
Biases Women Experience"

COMMON TYPES OF BIASES WOMEN FACE AT WORK



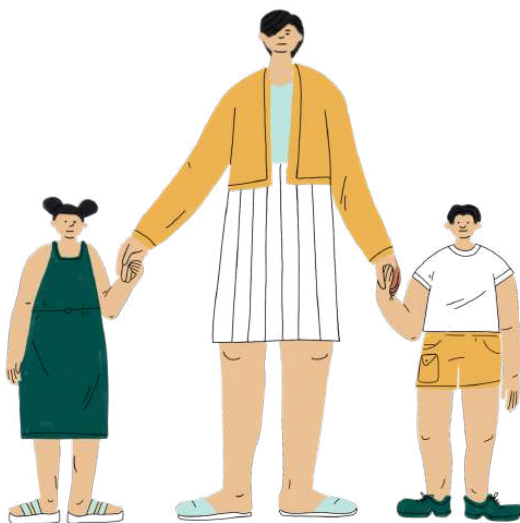
Likeability bias

Likeability bias is rooted in age-old expectations. We expect men to be assertive, so when they lead, it feels natural. We expect women to be kind and communal, so when they assert themselves, we like them less.¹¹



Performance bias

Performance bias is based on deep-rooted—and incorrect—assumptions about women’s and men’s abilities. We tend to underestimate women’s performance and overestimate men’s.⁹



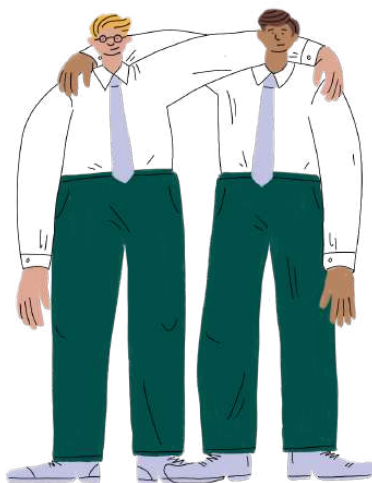
Maternal bias

Motherhood triggers false assumptions that women are less committed to their careers—and even less competent.¹²



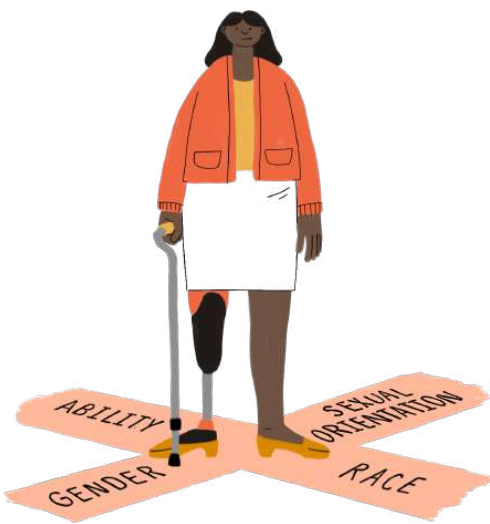
Attribution bias

Attribution bias is closely linked to performance bias. Because we see women as less competent than men, we tend to give them less credit for accomplishments and blame them more for mistakes.¹⁰



Affinity bias

Affinity bias is what it sounds like: we gravitate toward people like ourselves in appearance, beliefs, and background. And we may avoid or even dislike people who are different from us.¹³



Intersectionality

Bias isn’t limited to gender. Women can also experience biases due to their race, sexual orientation, a disability, or other aspects of their identity.

OVERVIEW: MICROAGGRESSIONS

Microaggressions are comments and actions that demean or dismiss someone based on their gender, race, or other aspects of their identity.

Some groups of women experience them even more often:

- ▶ Black women are nearly 2.5x more likely than white women to hear someone at work express surprise about their language skills or other abilities
- ▶ Lesbian and bisexual women and women with disabilities are far more likely than other women to hear demeaning remarks about themselves or others like them



Icebreakers

How many times more often do men interrupt women than other men?

ICEBREAKER: DID YOU KNOW?

How many times more often
do men interrupt women
than other men?

ANSWER

Almost 3 times more often.⁴⁹

In a study of performance reviews, what % of women received negative feedback on their personal style such as “You can sometimes be abrasive”?

And what % of men received that same type of feedback?

ICEBREAKER: DID YOU KNOW?

In a study of performance reviews, what % of women received negative feedback on their personal style such as "You can sometimes be abrasive"?

And what % of men received that same type of feedback?

ANSWER

66% of women and 1% of men.⁵⁰

What % of Black women have *never* had an informal interaction with a senior leader at their company?

ICEBREAKER: DID YOU KNOW?

What % of Black women have *never* had an informal interaction with a senior leader at their company?

ANSWER

59%.⁵¹

Workplace situations

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Move into your small group or breakout room. Everyone should have a copy of the presentation you will use for discussion.
- 2 Select one person to read the situation and **WHY IT MATTERS**.
- 3 As a group, discuss what you would do in this situation.
- 4 After 3-5 minutes of discussion, read **WHAT TO DO** and **WHY IT HAPPENS**.
- 5 Continue through as many situations as you can in the time allotted.

REVIEWS & PROMOTIONS

You're on a team doing performance reviews and notice that a lot of women get feedback on their speaking style.

WHY IT MATTERS

Criticisms like this can prevent qualified women from advancing, which hurts both them and your company.

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You're on a team doing performance reviews and notice that a lot of women get feedback on their speaking style.

WHAT TO DO

When you notice this pattern, point it out. Explain this is a common bias against women and **WHY IT HAPPENS**. Suggest that the group focus on the substance of what people say, not their speaking style.

Longer term, recommend that your company use standardized criteria for performance reviews, which will reduce subjective opinions. Consider recommending anti-bias training for employees involved in the review process. When people understand how bias impacts their decision-making, they are able to make more objective decisions.

WHY IT HAPPENS

Studies show that women often get negative feedback on their speaking style, while men do not.⁵² If women are confident and assertive, they can be criticized for speaking too loudly or often. But if they are quieter, they are more likely to be told that they need to speak more confidently and assertively.⁵³ For some groups of women, no matter how they speak, people project stereotypes onto them: Asian women are more likely to be criticized for being too quiet, while Black women and Latinas are more often labeled angry or loud.⁵⁴

Rooted in likeability bias

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Rooted in likeability bias

You're on a hiring committee and a colleague rules out a woman of color because she's "not a good cultural fit."

WHY IT MATTERS

Evaluations of "culture fit" tend to be subjective. They can lead us to screen out people who aren't like us, which means we can miss qualified candidates and end up with less diverse teams. Plus, it can mean that talented job seekers lose out on opportunities.

You're on a hiring committee and a colleague rules out a woman of color because she's "not a good cultural fit."

Intersectional card

WHAT TO DO

When someone rules out a candidate because of fit, ask them to be more specific. If their thinking boils down to "she's different," point out that different can be good. Propose that you look for someone who adds to the team dynamic—a "culture add"—instead of someone who simply fits into it.

As a longer-term solution, ask that a set of standardized criteria be used for all hires. This reduces bias by minimizing subjective evaluations.⁵⁵

WHY IT HAPPENS

We tend to gravitate toward—and hire—people who remind us of ourselves, which can impact our ability to objectively evaluate who would bring the most to the job.⁵⁶

Rooted in affinity bias

You're in a meeting and a woman colleague is spoken over or interrupted.

WHY IT MATTERS

If women's ideas aren't heard, it can make it harder for them to be perceived as key contributors, which can harm their career progression. When teams miss out on women's insights, it can also mean your company is missing out. Teams that foster diverse points of view often have better ideas and get more done.⁵⁷

You're in a meeting and a woman colleague is spoken over or interrupted.

WHAT TO DO

When a woman gets interrupted, speak up. You might say, "I'd like to hear the rest of [Name's] thoughts" or "[Name] raised an important point. I'd like to consider it further before we move on."

If you're leading a meeting, reduce interruptions by following an agenda and asking people to contribute in a structured way. You might say, "Let's go around the room and get everyone's ideas." You can also invite individual women in the room to contribute their opinions.

WHY IT HAPPENS

People tend to value women's contributions less than men's.⁵⁸ One way this plays out is in meetings, where women—and in particular, women of color—are interrupted more and get less time to speak than men do.⁵⁹

Rooted in attribution bias

At an all-staff meeting, your company's leaders share concrete goals for hiring, promoting, and retaining women, but it's clear they haven't set goals for women of color specifically.

WHY IT MATTERS

If companies don't set goals by gender and race combined, they are not explicitly prioritizing the advancement of women of color. That means women of color, who face a uniquely challenging combination of sexism and racism, are more likely to be overlooked.⁶⁰ It can also send the message that the company hasn't made the advancement of women of color a priority.

At an all-staff meeting, your company's leaders share concrete goals for hiring, promoting, and retaining women, but it's clear they haven't set goals for women of color specifically.

Intersectional card

WHAT TO DO

If you feel comfortable, you could raise the question directly in the meeting: "Do we set these goals for women of color?" You could also speak to your manager or HR team afterward about the importance of setting goals that combine gender and race.

WHY IT HAPPENS

Many corporate diversity efforts focus on either gender or race, but very few focus on the two together. In fact, only 7 percent of companies set representation targets for gender and race combined. This may happen because company leaders aren't aware of the importance of an intersectional approach to diversity efforts.

Situation adapted from *The Memo: What Women of Color Need to Know to Secure a Seat at the Table*, by Minda Harts

Someone suggests that a woman on your team be given a big, high-profile project, and a colleague says, “I don’t think this is a good time for her since she just had a baby.”

WHY IT MATTERS

Your company likely wants to retain and promote talented women. Sidelining them—even with good intentions—works against that goal by denying them opportunities that can lead to advancement.

Someone suggests that a woman on your team be given a big, high-profile project, and a colleague says, “I don’t think this is a good time for her since she just had a baby.”

WHAT TO DO

Remind your colleague that this could be a career-changing project for whoever gets it, so it’s better to let the new mom decide for herself whether or not she wants to take it on.

WHY IT HAPPENS

Motherhood triggers assumptions that women are less competent and less committed to their careers. As a result, they are held to higher standards and presented with fewer opportunities. Studies show that the “maternal wall” women face when they have kids is the strongest gender bias.⁶¹

Rooted in maternal bias

In a private conversation, a coworker expresses resentment about “special treatment” for a woman with a disability who is allowed to work flexible hours.

WHY IT MATTERS

People with disabilities may need flexibility for many reasons—for example, to manage pain or for medical treatment. When those needs are questioned, they may feel undermined, stigmatized, and unhappy at work.⁶² But when employees with disabilities are fully supported, they’re usually just as happy as their colleagues.⁶³ This has a big impact, since 1 in 6 working-age Americans has a visible or invisible disability.⁶⁴

In a private conversation, a coworker expresses resentment about “special treatment” for a woman with a disability who is allowed to work flexible hours.

Intersectional card

WHAT TO DO

Tell your coworker **WHY IT MATTERS**. You can also talk to HR and ask them to clarify your company’s general policies on flexible work, so that people are less likely to view specific situations as unfair.⁶⁵

WHY IT HAPPENS

This can happen when people don’t understand that accommodations like flexibility aren’t “nice to have” for employees with disabilities—they’re essential. Additionally, because people with disabilities tend to be seen as less valuable and competent, coworkers may question whether they really need or deserve extra support.⁶⁶ This is especially true for women with disabilities, who face more bias and disrespect at work than almost any other group.⁶⁷

Your team holds regular happy hours after work for networking and bonding at a local bar. You realize that one colleague, a Muslim woman, has never come.

WHY IT MATTERS

Some Muslims avoid alcohol and may therefore feel uncomfortable in a bar.⁶⁸ If most networking events are held in bars, it means they miss out on the team bonding that can lead to career opportunities.⁶⁹ It can also send a message that employees who don't drink—and other groups like caregivers who need to be home soon after work—are not considered when social events are planned.⁷⁰

Your team holds regular happy hours after work for networking and bonding at a local bar. You realize that one colleague, a Muslim woman, has never come.

Intersectional card

WHAT TO DO

Talk to your team leader and explain **WHY IT MATTERS**. Encourage them to plan a wide range of events that leave out as few people as possible. For example, if your team goes out every week to a bar, consider moving it to a restaurant sometimes. Move a few evening events to lunchtime so working parents can join. And make the changes with sensitivity, so no one gets blamed. If happy hours are simply canceled, it may create bad feelings among some employees.⁷¹

WHY IT HAPPENS

Many teams—and companies—don't realize how much thoughtfulness is needed to ensure that work events are inclusive to as many employees as possible. This might happen because teams fall into the habit of replicating bonding events that have been offered for decades—many of which were designed for less diverse and inclusive workplaces.

A manager describes a woman who reports to her as “overly ambitious” when she asks for a promotion.

WHY IT MATTERS

When a woman is criticized for competing for a promotion, it can have a negative impact on her and on the company as a whole. She may miss out on the chance to grow at work. Other women may hear the message that they shouldn't ask for promotions. And the company may miss an opportunity to advance a talented team member and make her feel valued.

A manager describes a woman who reports to her as “overly ambitious” when she asks for a promotion.

WHAT TO DO

Prompt your colleague to explain her thinking. For example, you can say, “Generally, I think we like ambition as a company. Why does it bother you in this case?” You can also suggest that there may be a double standard at work by saying something like, “How do you feel when a man on your team asks for a promotion?” And if you think that women at your workplace are often criticized when they seek promotions, this would be a good opportunity to say so.

WHY IT HAPPENS

Because of stereotypical expectations that women should be selfless and giving, they can face criticism when they appear to be “out for themselves”—for example, when they compete for a bigger job.⁷² By contrast, we expect men to be driven and ambitious, and we tend to think well of them when they show those qualities.⁷³

Rooted in likeability bias

The day after a high-profile killing of a Black person by the police, coworkers are discussing the news but nobody brings up this story.

WHY IT MATTERS

The silence suggests that non-Black colleagues are not outraged at the injustice or that they aren't aware of the Black community's grief and trauma.⁷⁴ Left unaddressed, these perceptions—accurate or not—can contribute to a workplace where Black employees feel like they don't belong.⁷⁵ When a Black person is killed by the police, it reminds all Black people of the violence that threatens their lives. It can make it hard to focus on work, and depression and anxiety can follow.⁷⁶

The day after a high-profile killing of a Black person by the police, coworkers are discussing the news but nobody brings up this story.

Intersectional card

WHAT TO DO

In the moment, say something. Mention the incident and how awful it was. Depending on your relationships with Black coworkers, let them know you are there to talk if they need to.⁷⁷ Be understanding if Black coworkers seem distracted or not themselves. In the longer term, you can further educate yourself on the incident by reading about it in a Black news outlet, such as *Blavity* or *Essence*. If you're a manager, check in with Black members of your team to see how they're doing and if they need any additional support.

WHY IT HAPPENS

Non-Black coworkers may believe it's insensitive to mention incidents of police violence toward Black people. But in fact, doing so conveys that they care.⁷⁸ They also may not realize how traumatic these events are to the entire Black community,⁷⁹ perhaps seeing them as isolated one-offs instead of ongoing systemic abuse.

A coworker says, “I don't see color.”

WHY IT MATTERS

This comment denies a fundamental part of people’s identities. It also suggests that if we choose to ignore racism, it will go away on its own. In fact, many studies show that when people or institutions claim to be “color-blind,” they often perpetuate racism by failing to take action against it.⁸⁰ To combat racism, you first have to face it head-on, then actively work to challenge racist stereotypes and behavior—both your own and those of others.⁸¹

A coworker says, "I don't see color."

Intersectional card

WHAT TO DO

You could ask a question to make your coworker reflect: "What's wrong with acknowledging someone's race? Everyone's identity is unique and should be appreciated."⁸² Explain that while you understand they think they're being fair and objective, "not seeing color" can make racism worse. Point out that this way of thinking signals that someone's not interested in challenging racist behavior, whether or not that was the intention.

WHY IT HAPPENS

Your coworker may wish to deny that racism still exists.⁸³ Or they may be falling into the trap of thinking that "not seeing color" is a way of avoiding racism, when in fact it perpetuates racism.⁸⁴

During lunch a client asks your colleague, “What does your husband do?” Your colleague is a lesbian and has a wife.

WHY IT MATTERS

The question assumes your colleague is straight and married, which puts lesbians, bisexual women, and single women in an awkward situation. Your lesbian colleague now has to correct a client and come out to them at the same time. The question could also make your lesbian colleague feel at least somewhat uncomfortable or marginalized.

During lunch a client asks your colleague, “What does your husband do?” Your colleague is a lesbian and has a wife.

Intersectional card

WHAT TO DO

If your colleague answers that she has a wife, not a husband, you can support her by responding warmly and asking questions, as you would when someone straight talks about their family. This signals your support, and it’s also helpful because people often experience distressing, awkward silences when they refer to their same-sex partners at work. However she responds, do your best to be a good listener, ask questions, and fill the silence.

WHY IT HAPPENS

Often straight people, even those who mean well, can assume that others around them are also straight. But the comment could have a darker motive and reflect prejudice against gay people. Either way, questions like this are far too common. More than 60% of LGBTQ+ people say they’ve had to correct colleagues’ assumptions about their personal lives, and nearly half say that in the past month, they’ve had to come out at work at least once a week.⁸⁵

After interviewing a Black woman, a coworker expresses surprise over “how articulate she sounded.”

WHY IT MATTERS

Comments like these may sound like compliments, but they definitely are not. They are microaggressions that perpetuate a stereotype that Black people aren't articulate or educated, which is not only insulting but can also lead to fewer career opportunities.⁸⁶

After interviewing a Black woman, a coworker expresses surprise over “how articulate she sounded.”

Intersectional card

WHAT TO DO

Asking a probing question can prompt your coworker to examine their assumptions. You might ask, “Why wouldn’t you expect her to be articulate?” You can also talk to the hiring manager responsible for making sure job candidates are evaluated fairly and explain that comments like these undermine that process.

WHY IT HAPPENS

This type of statement is fueled by a centuries-old racist belief that Black people have worse language skills than whites.⁸⁷ It also reflects a narrow view of what “articulate speech” sounds like by reinforcing the idea that to be considered smart or have your words valued, your speech must sound “white.”⁸⁸ This assumption is all too common: compared to any other racial or ethnic group, Black women are the most likely to have others express surprise over their language skills or other abilities.⁸⁹

Rooted in performance bias

Your manager suggests having a “powwow.”

WHY IT MATTERS

This is a misuse of the word “powwow,” a social gathering that often holds spiritual significance for Native American people. Misusing words and phrases like “powwow,” “spirit animal,” and “low man on the totem pole” may feel harmless to non–Native Americans. But to Native Americans, it can seem mocking and derogatory.

Your manager suggests having a “powwow.”

Intersectional card

WHAT TO DO

Speak up in the moment by saying, "I'm happy to have a meeting, but I want to mention one thing. You might not know this, but the word 'powwow' has real meaning to Native Americans. It doesn't simply mean a meeting." You can also explain **WHY IT MATTERS**. Or you could ask, "Are you trying to say you want to have a meeting?" This can prompt your manager to reflect on their language choice.

WHY IT HAPPENS

This type of cultural appropriation occurs when there is a power imbalance between cultures. People from a dominant culture feel able to use parts of a marginalized culture in any way they choose, including in ways that rob it of its original meaning.⁹⁰

MEETING DYNAMICS

In a meeting, a woman strongly disagrees with a man about how to approach a problem. He says, "We can't talk about this anymore. She's getting too emotional."

WHY IT MATTERS

In a healthy workplace, debates happen all the time—and often result in better ideas, clearer strategies, and stronger teams. Shutting down debate can be counterproductive to your company's goals. Plus, being tagged as overly emotional can diminish a woman's standing at work—and send a message to other women that they shouldn't speak freely.

In a meeting, a woman strongly disagrees with a man about how to approach a problem. He says, "We can't talk about this anymore. She's getting too emotional."

WHAT TO DO

Speak up. You can say something to support the woman's point of view: "I think [Name] is making a good point. We should consider it." You can also push back on the "too emotional" comment directly: "She doesn't seem too emotional to me. Let's keep talking."

Or you can help your team get back to basics: "We're all just trying to come up with the best approach. Let's continue this conversation so we can land on the right solution together."

WHY IT HAPPENS

Women tend to be stereotyped as overly emotional, while men tend to be viewed as rational—and therefore more professional and better suited to lead.⁹¹ This dynamic can cause people to see a woman with an opinion—especially if she expresses it with conviction—as being overly emotional, while the same view voiced by a man is considered reasonable.⁹² Women of color can face different and more acute variations of this bias, with Black women often labeled as "angry" and Latinas as "fiery."⁹³

In a meeting about promotions, someone questions whether a Latina candidate has the skills for a manager role.

WHY IT MATTERS

If your Latina colleague is in fact qualified for the promotion, this comment is a problem. It could lead to her being ruled out unfairly, which would be a loss for her and the company. Moments like this contribute to a bigger problem: For every 100 men promoted into manager roles, only 71 Latinas are.⁹⁴ This “broken rung” on the ladder to leadership means there are too few Latina managers to promote into senior roles.

In a meeting about promotions, someone questions whether a Latina candidate has the skills for a manager role.

Intersectional card

WHAT TO DO

Ask your colleague for concrete examples of why they think she lacks the required skills. If he doesn't offer much evidence, say so: "I don't see a problem with her skills." You can also check her skill set against the list of criteria for the role. If she meets all or most of the criteria, that can help settle the matter. Establishing clear criteria for performance reviews and promotions can help minimize biased decision making.

WHY IT HAPPENS

Latinas face several layers of bias regarding their skills. As women, they are often stereotyped as less competent than men. As Latinx Americans, they tend to be stereotyped as less intelligent than white people.⁹⁵ And as Latinas, they tend to be stereotyped as very family-oriented and more suited to supporting roles, even if they are qualified for more senior positions.⁹⁶

Rooted in performance bias

A newly hired trans woman asks where the restroom is and a colleague says, “They’re over there—I’m not sure which one you want to use.”

WHY IT MATTERS

The second part of the comment is disrespectful. It implies that a trans woman’s restroom choice is OK to comment on publicly and that her gender is somehow in question. Unfortunately, trans women often face complaints or comments about their choice of bathroom, which can make them feel uncomfortable and judged.⁹⁷

A newly hired trans woman asks where the restroom is and a colleague says, “They’re over there—I’m not sure which one you want to use.”

Intersectional card

WHAT TO DO

Some microaggressions are best addressed in the moment. In this case, it may be more respectful to say something supportive to your new colleague in private, such as, “Please feel free to use any restroom you want, and if you ever feel uncomfortable, I’m here to help.” Later, explain to your colleague who made the comment that it’s best not to speculate on which restroom someone uses, because you may be wrong. Experts say that the best approach is to tell everyone where every restroom is—women’s, men’s, and all-gender.

WHY IT HAPPENS

Your colleague may have made this comment to intentionally cause discomfort because they are prejudiced against trans women.⁹⁸ But more likely, they were expressing an unconscious bias that trans women are different and that this is somehow OK to comment on.⁹⁹ In addition, they may have been genuinely confused because they are not informed about these issues.

You're on a review committee and several members argue against a woman's promotion because she is not "seen as a leader," even though her team delivers outstanding results.

WHY IT MATTERS

The review committee may be making incorrect—and unfair—assumptions about the woman's abilities. Additionally, if the review committee uses a narrow definition of leadership, they may unfairly exclude a lot of people, like this woman.

You're on a review committee and several members argue against a woman's promotion because she is not "seen as a leader," even though her team delivers outstanding results.

WHAT TO DO

Point out that the woman's team delivers superb results, and suggest that their performance speaks to her leadership. You can also ask them to explain the attributes she lacks. When people are asked to justify their thinking, it can help reduce bias in decision-making.¹⁰⁰

As a longer-term solution, suggest creating detailed metrics for performance reviews, including clear expectations for leaders. This way, all employees will be evaluated based on a more complete definition of good leadership and using the same standards, which reduces bias in the review process.¹⁰¹

WHY IT HAPPENS

Both women and men more readily associate men with leadership.¹⁰² This bias is so strong that when women work on teams, their contributions are often attributed to the team as a whole. In contrast, when men work on teams, they are more likely to be seen as taking a leadership role.¹⁰³ The bias affects different groups of women in different ways: Asian women often aren't seen as assertive enough to be leaders, while Black women and Latinas can be stereotyped as not talented enough for leadership roles, and Native American women contend with both these stereotypes.¹⁰⁴

Rooted in performance bias & attribution bias

You hear a white coworker say they aren't privileged because they grew up poor.

WHY IT MATTERS

This kind of thinking is fairly common, as 63 percent of white Americans say they don't benefit much or at all from being white.¹⁰⁵ When white people don't accept that there are benefits to being white, they cast doubt on the idea that racial inequality exists at all.¹⁰⁶ The comment also invalidates the lived experiences of nonwhite coworkers, who deal with racial inequality as a part of their daily lives.¹⁰⁷

You hear a white coworker say they aren't privileged because they grew up poor.

Intersectional card

WHAT TO DO

You can tell your coworker you know they've worked hard to get where they are.¹⁰⁸ Then explain that benefiting from white privilege doesn't mean they haven't struggled. Their challenges may be economic, health related, or derive from another source, but racism has not been one of their burdens. Put another way, they haven't struggled because they are white.

WHY IT HAPPENS

Even though it hugely benefits them, white privilege can be invisible to those who have it.¹⁰⁹ It's the privilege of not being treated with suspicion by store clerks or regularly pulled over by police. It can mean being hired over a Black candidate with similar experience¹¹⁰ or getting a mortgage when a Latino in the same financial situation is denied one.¹¹¹ Even when people know white privilege exists, they can be reluctant to admit it applies to them.¹¹² It can make them feel defensive and as if their own hard work is invalidated.¹¹³

Your manager, who is a man, often meets the men on his team for dinner or drinks—but rarely meets with the women outside of work.

WHY IT MATTERS

Friendships at work are valuable. Important relationship building and information sharing can happen over coffee or pizza. When people are routinely excluded from outings like these, they can miss out. If it's a manager making arrangements, it's especially problematic—part of their responsibility is to make sure the whole team has equal access to networking opportunities.

Your manager, who is a man, often meets the men on his team for dinner or drinks—but rarely meets with the women outside of work.

WHAT TO DO

This is your manager, so you have standing to raise this with him. Say that you've noticed he goes for drinks with men on the team more than women. Explain **WHY IT MATTERS**. You can also offer solutions: if he's uncomfortable going to dinner with women, suggest that he meet everyone for breakfast or lunch.

WHY IT HAPPENS

Your manager may feel more comfortable with men because of affinity bias, which draws us toward people like ourselves.¹¹⁴ Or he may be nervous for other reasons: some men are wary of spending time with women colleagues outside of work for fear of seeming inappropriate.

Rooted in affinity bias

HIRING

You're on a hiring committee and you notice that your colleagues prefer candidates who are men over women with very similar experience.

WHY IT MATTERS

This could be a sign of bias in your hiring process—and may unfairly disadvantage women. When qualified women are overlooked, your company misses out on their talents and on the chance to build more diverse teams.

You're on a hiring committee and you notice that your colleagues prefer candidates who are men over women with very similar experience.

WHAT TO DO

Mention to the hiring committee that you've noticed they tend to select men over women with similar abilities. You can also explain **WHY IT HAPPENS**. Then suggest a solution. Research shows that when teams agree on a set of clear criteria and use it consistently for all candidates, the hiring process is fairer and the most qualified women and men can rise to the top.¹¹⁵

WHY IT HAPPENS

We tend to rate women lower than men, even if they have similar qualifications.¹¹⁶ This can make a real difference in hiring. In one study, replacing a woman's name with a man's name on a résumé increased the likelihood of being hired by more than 60%.¹¹⁷ The impact can be even worse for some groups—including Black women, Latinas, Native American women, and women with disabilities—whose competence is questioned both because they're women and because of stereotypes about their race or ability.¹¹⁸

Rooted in performance bias

Closing activity

SUMMARY: STRATEGIES TO COMBAT BIAS

When bias occurs, there are a number of ways to respond, some of which you discussed today. Below is a summary of the strategies you can use to combat bias.

- ▶ Speak up for someone in the moment
- ▶ Ask a probing question
- ▶ Stick to the facts
- ▶ Explain how bias is in play
- ▶ Advocate for policy or process change

“My One Action to address bias against women in the workplace is...”