

Addressing your Bias

Adapted from: <http://www.aperianglobal.com/3-steps-address-unconscious-bias/>

There are many ways that we as PSAC Stewards, Local Officers and Union Representatives can work towards a better understanding of what our biases might be and how to address them. Please click the arrows on the left to expand the text and learn more.

1. Understand that unconscious bias is normal but should never be left unchecked

Until recently, there was a tendency to think that having biases made us bad people. However, neuroscience research has demonstrated that human beings are hardwired to prefer those who resemble us and have similar characteristics. These tendencies are propped-up by negative messaging, media images, explicit and implicit stereotyping, and socially constructed norms. Therefore, we all need to start understanding that unconscious bias is normal. What makes biases harmful is a lack of awareness or disregard for how they influence our decisions and impact others. And so unconscious bias should never be left unchecked.

2. Identify your biases and their potential impact

It is important for you to become aware of the biases that you may have and to understand the impact of unconscious bias on your role as a union leader. Take the [Implicit Association Test \(IAT\)](#) to identify your own potential biases and decision-making patterns. After you identify your own implicit biases, consider how these may play out in the union and in your workplace. How does unconscious bias affect who gets invited to meetings, who you speak with more easily, and whose opinions influence your decisions?

3. Find concrete ways to eliminate the impact of unconscious bias on your union work

Now that you know more about how your unconscious bias might impact your work, it's time to start thinking strategically. This includes:



- When identifying a negative bias that you may have, make a conscious effort to learn more about that idea, individual, or group to understand how and why it makes you uncomfortable.
- When making critical decisions, ensure you invite others who can broaden your viewpoint and may balance out any biases you may have.
- Ask peers representing other viewpoints for feedback on potential preference patterns you may have and actively listen to their feedback.
- Ensure criteria and measures are put in place for decision-making, with specific attention paid to being inclusive and bias-free.

4. Broaden your viewpoint

Eliminating unconscious bias starts with understanding that predispositions are always present and only those with a negative impact need to be addressed. By improving one's awareness and understanding of unconscious bias, individuals can begin to change the way they think about and engage with diverse groups of people, and diversity issues.

Be sure to step back and ask, "What biases do I have?" "What impact does this have on my role as a union leader and in our workplaces?" and "What will I do about this?"

