

Addressing Bias in STEM with Bystander Intervention

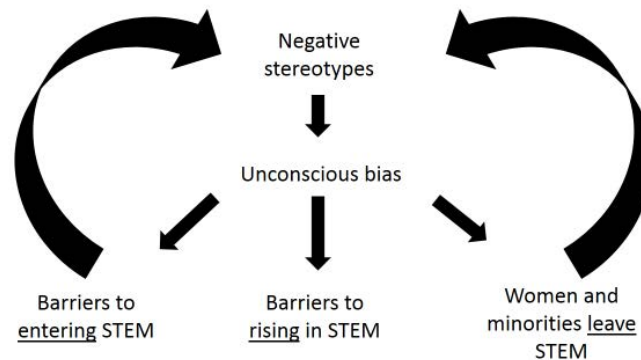


Handy Definitions

Stereotype: a widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing.




Unconscious Bias: unconscious prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair. Also called **implicit bias**. Can occur even when the person consciously thinks that prejudice is wrong.

Explicit Bias: a conscious, deliberate prejudice.



Active Bystander: An individual who witnesses an incident or behavior and decides to take action and intervene to reduce the chance of someone being harmed.

Bystander Intervention Basics

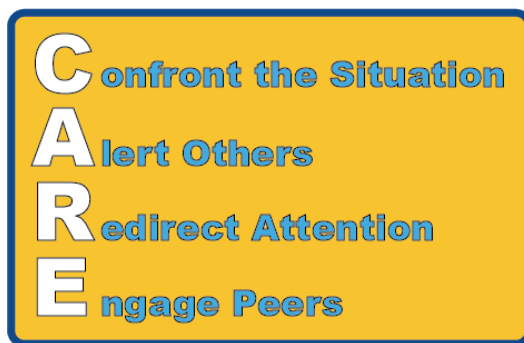
1. Recognize the situation 
2. Decide to take action 
3. Intervene effectively & safely; follow up as appropriate 

Putting Bystander Intervention into Practice

Common Cognitive Obstacles to Taking Action:

1. **Diffusion of responsibility:** We are more likely to intervene if we are by ourselves. The more people that are present, the less we feel individually responsible to act.
2. **Cause of misfortune:** We are less likely to help if we perceive the person to be responsible for their own misfortune, ie – victim blaming, bias (unconscious or overt).
3. **Evaluation apprehension:** We are concerned about being negatively evaluated or judged by our peers, particularly if we are in any way unclear about the situation at hand.

Strategies for Taking Action:



Addressing Spoken Bias:



Guy 2 could say:

“Ouch. That’s reinforcing a hurtful stereotype.”

“You’re really dense, and I wish you weren’t so oppressive.”

“How come you never call guys bossy?”

“She’s not bossy; she’s a leader!”



If you were sitting at the table and overheard this exchange, how would you respond?

Case Study #1

You and a fellow GSI in your department are grading papers at a coffee shop when you hear them say, "I have so many Asians in my section. I really wish they would learn how to write articulately in English. Reading their papers is painful." You are uncomfortable with this comment. What action will you take?

Case Study # 2

You overhear this interaction in your lab. What action will you take?



Case Study #3

You have a great relationship with your faculty advisor, Dr. Hughes. Another PhD student in your lab, Jamie, shared with you that Dr. Hughes recently made comments that made them extremely uncomfortable, including commenting on Jamie's physical appearance and suggesting they should both stay late at the lab to "get to know each other better." One day, you walk into the lab and see Jamie busy at work when Dr. Hughes walks in, puts their hands on Jamie's shoulders, and starts rubbing Jamie's shoulders. Dr. Hughes says, "No need to stress out. Let me help you relax." Jamie is visibly uncomfortable. No one else is around. What action will you take?

Case Study #4

You are in the elevator. A female Latina grad student steps into the elevator with an older white male professor. The door closes. The professor says "I didn't know the Zang lab had a new dishwasher!" What action will you take?