

PERSONAL BIAS WORKSHEET

List some of your personal biases: What are some beliefs that you hold about different groups?

Having trouble getting started? Try carrying a notebook with you for a few days and watch the first thought that comes into your mind when encountering a member of another group (e.g., deaf, Asian). Be honest and ask yourself, would I feel the same way about this encounter if this person were just like me?

Impact of Bias: Select three of the above biases that you feel are the most damaging. *What impact could these biases have in your workplace?*

Bias is not always a negative belief. Bias can be a positive assumption about a group as well. Positive stereotypes can be just as damaging. For example, the belief that a younger individual is better suited for a technology related promotion might lead you to give more opportunity or attention to a younger candidate and ignore a more qualified older worker.

Analyze the Foundation: Determine where these biases came from?

Think about the three biases you chose above. Where might you have learned or developed those biases? How many people do you know that actually conform to the bias?

Learn: What assumptions might be impacting your workplace?

List the different groups you have in your organization. Speak to employees from those groups and learn as much as you can about the individual employees who are members of these groups.

Promote Awareness: List some things you can do to help fight bias in your organization and promote awareness of cultural differences in your workplace.

For ideas on cultural awareness activities see pg 27 of the Toolkit.

EXAMPLES OF SOME SOURCES OF CULTURAL DIFFERENCES AND MISUNDERSTANDINGS:

Body Language

Body language can be interpreted differently in different cultures. For example, in Canada eye contact is associated with honest communication and when it does not happen it can be taken as a sign of evasiveness. In some Latin and Asian countries, however, averted eyes are a sign of respect. Similarly, people from some cultures do not feel comfortable shaking hands. A Canadian worker or manager may view this as lack of respect or ignorance.

Religion

In many cultures, religion is a more dominant part of life than it is in Canadian culture. For example, workers from some Muslim cultures may want to pray multiple times a day in accordance with their beliefs. There may also be religious holidays where people of certain religions need to follow certain customs. These differences need to be respected, where possible, and not ignored.

Personal Appearance

Hygiene and grooming, eating habits, and attire can vary from country to country and culture to culture. For example, some people may wear attire such as a headdress as part of their custom and beliefs. To remain true to their beliefs, some workers may want to wear this dress in their workplace.