

# Decreasing Implicit Bias: Putting Interventions into Actions

Adapted from Kite & Whitley, 2016

## Reflect on your thoughts and behaviors:

- Understand your social identities (gender, race, ethnicity, SES, sexual orientation, able bodied status).
- Acknowledge you have prejudices. Prejudice and implicit bias are a natural by-product of being enculturated by the environment you were raised in.
- Think about the nature of your prejudices. Where did they come from?
- For every negative belief you have, search for examples that contradict that belief. Repeat every time a negative thought comes to mind.
- If someone suggests you acted in a biased way, rather than defending yourself immediately, ask why your behavior gave that impression.
- If you think a member of a group is "acting like a typical X". Stop and think about what other factors may be leading to the person's behavior.
- Resist the tendency, present in all people, to judge a group by the actions of one or a few of its members.

## Put Intergroup Contact Theory into Practice:

- Seek out contact with members of groups other than your own. Volunteer to work on projects with members of groups different than your own.
- Anticipate some anxiety when first interacting with members of a group you have not interacted with previously.
- When interacting with members of a different group, personalize them. Go beyond their race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, etc. (e.g., common interests).
- Invite other members of the group to social events you host and attend those you are invited to by other group members.
- Be persistent, don't let one bad experience discourage you.
- Be willing to discuss intergroup issues to hear their perspectives. Compare those perspectives with your own and think about the reasons for any differences that exist. Be careful to not invalidate the experiences of others.
- Join and be active in organizations that work to improve intergroup relations.

## Influencing Other People's Attitudes:

- Tactfully let others know if their behaviors appear to reflect bias and give your reasons for why you believe it does.
- If a person's behavior is blatantly racist, sexist, or reflect heterosexism, speak out against it. This can be hard, especially with family or friends, but you may have significant influence with them.
- If someone presents negative information about a group, ask about the reliability of the source of information, how likely it is that the information is correct. Provide counter examples to help the person see the group in more accurate terms.
- Challenge the status quo by asking pertinent questions.
- Be a role model for children
  - Encourage children to increase intergroup contact.
  - Let children see you interact in friendly ways with members of other groups
  - Talk about prejudice and discrimination and why they are wrong.
  - Discuss negative portrayals of groups in the media to discourage acquiring stereotypical beliefs.
  - Let children see you in alliance with other groups, acting against social justice.