



Workshop Handouts

Unconscious Bias: Recognition and Mitigation Strategies for Treatment Court Professionals

HANDOUT 1: BIAS MITIGATION STRATEGIES REFERENCE SHEET

Individual Strategies

Awareness and Self-Reflection

- Maintain a bias journal noting patterns in reactions
- Practice mindfulness techniques before participant interactions
- Review decisions for potential bias influence
- Deliberately seek counterevidence to initial impressions

Implementation Example: Before each staffing meeting, take 2 minutes to review your notes and ask, "Am I applying consistent standards to all participants?"

Structured Decision-Making

- Use standardized assessment tools
- Apply the same criteria to all participants
- Document rationale for decisions
- Seek feedback on decision patterns

Implementation Example: Create a decision matrix for sanctions that must be completed for all participants with similar violations.

Deliberate Pause Practices

- Take 10 seconds before responding in challenging situations
- Ask clarifying questions rather than making assumptions
- Use a mental "bias check" before important decisions
- Practice replying "I'll need to consider that" rather than immediate judgments

Implementation Example: When feeling a strong reaction to a participant, pause and ask yourself, "Would I have the same reaction if this participant were different in some way?"



Team Strategies

Clear, Objective Criteria

- Establish written standards for common decisions
- Review criteria regularly for potential bias
- Apply criteria consistently across participants
- Document exceptions and rationales

Implementation Example: Develop a graduated sanctions matrix that specifies responses to common violations, applied equally to all participants.

Standardized Protocols

- Create standard interview protocols
- Use consistent reporting formats
- Implement blind review when possible
- Establish regular case review processes

Implementation Example: Institute a "blind" pre-review of cases before staffing where identifying information is temporarily removed.

Rotating Responsibilities

- Alternate who presents cases in staffing
- Rotate facilitation of team meetings
- Assign "devil's advocate" role regularly
- Change mentoring assignments periodically

Implementation Example: Assign a rotating "bias monitor" role in team meetings who has permission to call attention to potential bias.

Data Review by Demographics

- Regularly analyze outcomes by demographic factors
- Review program completion rates across groups
- Examine sanction patterns for disparities
- Analyze access to services and support

Implementation Example: Quarterly review of program data disaggregated by race, gender, age, and socioeconomic status to identify potential disparities.



Policy Interventions

Regular Equity Audits

- Annual review of policies and procedures
- Community feedback on perceived fairness
- External review of program data
- Adjustment of policies based on findings

Implementation Example: Annual policy review with specific attention to potential disparate impacts on vulnerable populations.

Language Access

- Professional interpretation services
- Translated materials
- Plain language documents
- Staff training on communication across differences

Implementation Example: Review all participant materials for reading level and cultural appropriateness.

Accommodations for Diverse Needs

- Flexible scheduling options
- Multiple modes of communication
- Varied service delivery methods
- Transportation solutions

Implementation Example: Create a formalized process for participants to request accommodations that is proactively shared with all participants.

Community Input Mechanisms

- Advisory board with diverse representation
- Graduate input on program design
- Community listening sessions
- Regular feedback opportunities

Implementation Example: Establish a graduate advisory council with diverse representation to provide regular feedback on program operations.



HANDOUT 2: ACTION PLANNING TEMPLATE

Individual Bias Mitigation Plan

Priority Bias to Address: _____

How this bias may affect my work: _____

Strategy 1: _____

- Implementation steps:

- _____
- _____
- _____

- Timeline: _____

- Resources needed: _____

- Success indicators: _____

Strategy 2: _____

- Implementation steps:

- _____
- _____
- _____

- Timeline: _____

- Resources needed: _____

- Success indicators: _____

Accountability Plan:

- Who will help hold me accountable? _____
- How will I track progress? _____
- When will I review and revise? _____

Team Strategy Implementation



Priority Bias to Address as a

Team: _____

Proposed Team Strategy: _____

Implementation Steps:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Team Members Involved: _____

Resources Required: _____

Timeline: _____

Success Indicators: _____

Challenges to Anticipate: _____

Strategies to Address Challenges: _____

COMMITMENT CARD

Today I commit to addressing unconscious bias by:

My first step will be:

I will take this step by: (date) _____

Name: _____

Keep this card as a reminder of your commitment.



HANDOUT 3: RESOURCE GUIDE

Assessment Tools

Harvard Implicit Association Test (IAT)

- Website: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>
- Description: Online assessments to identify potential implicit biases
- How to use: Take tests relevant to your work (race, gender, age, etc.) as a starting point for self-awareness

Decision Bias Audit Template

- Available in digital resource package
- Description: Worksheet to review past decisions for potential bias patterns
- How to use: Apply to recent participant cases to identify inconsistencies in decision-making

Team Equity Audit Guide

- Available in digital resource package
- Description: Structured process for reviewing team operations for bias
- How to use: Schedule quarterly team reviews using the provided format

Continuing Education Resources

National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP)

- Equity and Inclusion Resources: <https://www.nadcp.org/equity-inclusion/>
- Training opportunities: Annual conference, webinars, online courses
- Publications: Best practice standards with equity considerations

National Center for State Courts

- Implicit Bias Resources: <https://www.ncsc.org/topics/court-community/gender-racial-and-ethnic-fairness/resource-guide>
- Tools for judges and court personnel
- Research updates on bias in court settings

American Bar Association

- Implicit Bias Initiative:
<https://www.americanbar.org/groups/diversity/resources/implicit-bias/>
- Videos, toolkits, and training materials



- Professional responsibility considerations

Recommended Reading

Books:

- "Blindspot: Hidden Biases of Good People" by Mahzarin Banaji and Anthony Greenwald
- "Thinking, Fast and Slow" by Daniel Kahneman
- "Biased: Uncovering the Hidden Prejudice That Shapes What We See, Think, and Do" by Jennifer Eberhardt

Articles:

- "The Impact of Implicit Bias in Specialty Courts" (Journal of Drug Court Practice)
- "Achieving Racial and Ethnic Fairness in Drug Courts" (NADCP)
- "Strategies to Reduce the Influence of Implicit Bias" (National Center for State Courts)