



Unconscious Bias

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What is
Unconscious
Bias?



- We are often aware of our biases – our use of stereotypes and prejudices which lead to discrimination.
- Unconscious bias is usually quick and automatic. You will have little awareness that you are making assumptions or discriminating against a person because of your prejudices.



How the brain works

- Human brains process huge amounts of information, we all use categories and stereotypes in our thinking, we need short cuts.
- These short cuts begin to create neural pathways which, if we remain unaware of what we are doing, will get stronger every time we make the same connection.
- Our brains also collect information that confirms our bias.

No shame or blame

- Do not feel shame or guilt about biases, we all have them.
- But they can be dangerous, especially when we are in a position to influence what happens in a person's life or make decisions about others.



Where do
these biases
come from?

- What we experience as children
- Life experiences
- Prevailing cultural norms
- Friendship norms
- Media representation
- Work or social culture

How can unconscious bias affect our safeguarding work?

- Not trying to understand a person's actual circumstances, their unique situation.
- Making assumptions about their situation, feelings, trauma, relationships etc.
- Not making genuine and respectful relationships.

How can unconscious bias affect our safeguarding work?

- Deciding a person's circumstances or needs 'do not fit the criteria.'
- Ideas such as 'lifestyle choice.'
- Ignoring a person's human rights.
- Who we recruit to our staff, what service we give to others.
- What kind of partnerships we make.

How can we tackle our own unconscious bias(es)?

- Be kind to yourself, everyone has biases, it is how your brain works.
- Notice your biases, take time to think about your actions and decisions.
- Go out and spend time with people you may have a bias toward.
- Be conscious of what sense your brain is making of things you read in the media.

How can we tackle our own unconscious bias(es)?

- Read about others' experiences and perspectives – how does it make you feel?
- If you have diversity training – great! But it isn't a one-off tick box exercise, keep talking about the themes, look at how your organisation is embracing diversity, how you respond to diversity.
- Keep promoting your own affinity bias – to embrace all humans.