Overcoming Implicit Bias When Working with Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Communities

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Our work is committed to building the leadership of Trans women of color, sex workers, immigrants, and incarcerated peoples as experts in creating a more just world.

- Workshops, training, organizational development, conflict mediation, speaking, conference & convening planning
AGENDA

• Objectives
• Organization and Project Overview
• What is Implicit Bias?
• Why is this important?
• How do we combat it?

Image Credit: Manny Francisco
This webinar will serve as a technical assistance resource for the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program and the broader public health community. The specific objectives of this webinar are to:

- Discuss implicit bias and how it shows up.
- Develop a shared understanding about the harmful impacts of implicit bias.
- Explore ways to combat implicit bias.
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PROJECT OVERVIEW
NASTAD

**WHO:** A national non-profit representing public health officials who administer HIV and viral hepatitis programs funded by state and federal governments.

**WHERE:** All 50 U.S. states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, seven local jurisdictions receiving direct funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the U.S. Pacific Islands.

**HOW:** Interpret and influence policies, conduct trainings, offer technical assistance, and provide advocacy mobilization for U.S. health departments.
Project Overview
Special Project of National Significance – Part F

- **Funder:** HRSA HAB
- **Goal:** Identify, catalog, disseminate, and support the replication of evidence-informed approaches and interventions to engage people living with HIV (PLWH) who are not receiving, or who are at risk of not continuing to receive HIV healthcare.
- **Partnerships:** NASTAD, Northwestern University’s Center for Prevention Implementation Methodology, and Howard Brown Health Center
- **Three-year project:** September 1, 2018 – August 31, 2021
  - Extended through August 2022
Center for Innovation and Engagement Overview

CIE’s goal is to:

- Identify
- Catalog
- Disseminate

innovative, evidence-informed models of HIV care.
CIE Resources

Key Features:

• Implementation Guides
• Provider Tools
• Videos
• Key Info Presented Up-Front
• Cost Calculator & How-to Video
• Listserv
• Webinars, TA Request System, Population-Specific Tip Sheets, and more!

Implementation Guides
SETTING THE STAGE
What is Implicit Bias?

- **Implicit bias** refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner.
- Subtle, unintentional, and unconscious forms of bias
- Activated quickly and unknowingly by situational cues (e.g., a person’s skin color or gender expression)
Implicit Bias and Stigma

- **Stigma** refers to the social devaluation of people who are perceived to be different than the majority (e.g., based on race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, health conditions)
- Implicit bias reinforces prejudices and stereotypes, thereby *perpetuating* stigma
- Implicit bias influences conscious evaluations of others and subsequently impact health outcomes (e.g., client-provider interactions and clinical decision making)
Implicit Bias and HIV

• Implicit bias can exacerbate HIV stigma
• **HIV stigma** which refers to irrational or negative attitudes, behaviors, and judgments towards people with or impacted by HIV
• Clients may be less likely to go through the HIV care cascade
• Legacy of discrimination toward transgender and gender nonconforming populations (TGNC)
• Lack of awareness and knowledge about the health and social needs of TGNC clients
• We cannot end the HIV epidemic without addressing the negative impact of stigma on HIV care efforts and health outcomes.
When she is filling out the new patient questionnaire, she sees a section that says “For Women Only:” and a list of questions about menstrual and pregnancy history.
Case Study: Natalia

We see a lot of biases in Natalia’s experience with the clinic.

○ When the receptionist hears a lower voice and automatically tells Natalia where the men’s room is, instead of asking Natalia for her pronouns and telling her where the women's restroom is.

○ In the new patient paperwork that had a women's section that assumed all women experience pregnancy, and menstruation. Or that ONLY women experience these things.

○ When the provider states he is not familiar with trans healthcare and does not think he can treat Natalia.

○ When she says she has the flu, the provider assumes it must be HIV related.
In a survey of 27,715 trans and nonbinary individuals in 2015:

- **30 percent** reported being fired, denied a promotion, or experiencing some other form of mistreatment related to their gender identity or expression.

- **More than 26 percent** of those who experienced housing instability avoided staying in a shelter because they feared being mistreated as a transgender person.

- **20 percent** have participated in the underground economies.
In a study based on the 2008 National Transgender Discrimination Survey (NTDS):

- **70 percent** of respondents experienced discrimination when accessing healthcare.
- Transwomen and transmen reported delaying accessing care due to fears of discrimination.
- Nonbinary individuals reported delaying accessing care due to cost.
INTERVIEW
Implicit Bias
It’s not just what you say

- Implicit bias does not only refer to how you behave outwardly towards someone.
- Internalized biases toward TGNC populations can mean using the wrong pronoun for them when thinking about them. Other examples include:
  - Referring to them by a different name than the one they have expressed a desire to be referred to as.
  - Directing someone to a specific bathroom based off assumptions you have made about their gender.
  - Referring individuals to gendered groups again based off assumptions.

In a survey by the National Center for Transgender Equity, one third of respondents reported having negative experiences with healthcare providers when seeking care.

- 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey Report
VIDEO
Myth of “realness”

- With an influx of trans visibility in mainstream media, there has been an increase in the belief that there is a “right” way to transition or to look.
- However, we know that gender is a spectrum and that visibility does not equate to safety.
- The number of transwomen of color murdered continues to increase each year.
- The life expectancy of transwomen of color is 35 years.
PROMISING STRATEGIES
Confronting Your Own Implicit Bias

- For most people in the public health community and other professions it might feel threatening to acknowledge that they have implicit bias.
- It takes courage to acknowledge that prejudicial thoughts enter our heads sometimes
  - It is only through a fearless inventory of those thoughts and taking the time to deconstruct them that we can truly change how we feel (and treat people)!

ASK YOURSELF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- How do my current beliefs serve me?
- What might I lose if I change my beliefs?
- What are the costs of maintaining my current perspective?
- How might it benefit me to change?
Combating Implicit Bias

Know yourself

Combating implicit bias requires self examination and exploration. We are all inundated with stereotypes and stories. It is our responsibility to upend those stereotypes and unlearn our biases.

• Slow Down
• Ask yourself: Are you making generalizations?
• Reframe
• Interrupt

Photo Credit: Equinox Gender Clinic
Reprime yourself
Stay curious

Natalia
She/her
RESOURCES

Trans Equity:
Trans and Nonbinary People Navigating Healthcare Video

Trans Equity:
Respecting Trans and Nonbinary Pronouns Video
REFERENCES

2. HIV.gov – Standing Up to Stigma: https://www.hiv.gov/hiv-basics/overview/making-a-difference/standing-up-to-stigma
Thank You!

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