Know Your Biases To Avoid Activating Them

This activity can be played in groups or individually as you practice these skills to differentiate between biases or heuristics used.

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| Anchoring Bias | Confirmation Bias | Band Wagon Bias | Availability Bias |
| Egocentric Bias | Implicit (also known as unconscious bias) | Cognitive Dissonance | Experience Bias |
| Similarity Bias | Halo Bias  | Horn Bias  | Overconfidence Bias |

* Have another person tell a story or express a concern to the listener. Have the group share which bias they might understand to have been shared.

The statements correspond to different squares on the grid. Read over these to understand how to recognize, acknowledge and learn to intentionally use your communication skills to counter when you encounter your biases.[[1]](#footnote-1)

**Anchoring “**If they are starting at $15K, then we must react to and counter that”

Defined: Allows one to internalize decision making on a particular piece of information that appears to match or amplify one’s subjective arbitrary reference point.

**Availability Bias “**No way am I taking that drug—it gave my friend a blood clot”

Defined: The tendency to overestimate the likelihood of events with greater “availability” in memory.

**Band Wagon Bias:** “That case lot sale of chicken thighs is amazing, look at the crowd of people swarming for their 4 cases. I better get in there.”

Defined: The tendency for the brain to conclude that something must be desirable because other people desire it.

**Cognitive Dissonance**

“I’m going to run a marathon and training. I am committed to healthy eating…Eh, it's only two doughnuts.”

Defined: A type of bias where discomfort is caused by holding conflicting elements of knowledge. The discomfort is usually resolved by devaluing and discarding a conflicting piece of knowledge.

**Confirmation Bias “**I wouldn’t have seen it if I didn’t believe it”

Defined: The tendency to search for, interpret, focus-on and remember in a way that confirms one’s preconceptions.

**Egocentric Bias** “I am really good with math, I do not understand why Kyle is not. I must be smarter than Kyle.”

Defined: A cognitive bias that causes people to rely too heavily on their own point of view when they examine events in their life or when they try to see things from other people’s perspective.

**Experience Bias** “I have 20 years of experience in this role. I know if the proposal is completed with the input I have already given, we will have a great product and there is no requirement to consult further.”

Defined: Can occur when we forget that our truth is not always the only option. During a time of instant and constant collaboration, whether it’s email, text or web conference, it is vital to understand that each individual contributes their own value to a decision.

**Halo Effect Bias** “Juanita is from the East Coast, she is a rock star.”

Defined: When one’s positive opinion influences your opinion of someone.

**Horn Effect Bias** “Susan is not a good candidate for our position. She interviewed with

Steve last week for a different role, yet she was unable to share what the company is all about. She was unprepared.”

Defined: When one’s negative opinion influences your opinion of someone.

**Implicit Bias** “I had supper in a famous chain restaurant downtown the other day, all of the staff were female, slim and looked like models.”

Defined: Also known as implicit social cognition, implicit bias refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. A form of bias that occurs automatically and unintentionally, that nevertheless affects judgments, decisions, and behaviors. Judgements based on assumptions, rather than indisputable facts and data.

**Over Confidence Bias** “I don’t need a map when I’m visiting your city. I have an excellent sense of direction.”

 Defined: Person overestimates their skills and abilities.

**Similarity Bias** “I am promoting Manguel to the role of Director, he thinks a lot like I do and I can see his career trajectory as very successful.”

Defined: A bias that shows we often prefer things that are like us over things that are different than us.

1. Facilitator could take the corresponding words out for participants to guess what bias they are reading. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)