Samaritan Health Services has created the following training to meet the training requirement for education related to promoting equity and inclusion in the workplace.

Assignment of this training has been approved by Gail Worden-Acree, VP SHS Human Resources.
OBJECTIVES

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- Define implicit bias
- Describe what causes it
- Explain why it matters in the workplace
- Take steps to minimize your own unconscious biases

WHAT IS IMPLICIT BIAS?

- We have a bias when we have a preference for or aversion to a person or group.
- Thoughts and feelings are implicit if we are UNAWARE of them or are mistaken about their nature.
- Implicit bias is used to describe when we have attitudes towards people or associate stereotypes with them without our conscious knowledge.
Key Concept...

- Scientists have learned that we only have conscious access to 5% of our brains. Much of the work our brain does occurs on the UNCONSCIOUS level.

- Implicit bias doesn't mean people are hiding their prejudices rather they literally don't know that they have them. You are UNWITTINGLY hiding them from yourself.

WHAT CAUSES IMPLICIT BIAS?

- While people might like to believe they are not susceptible to these biases and STEREOTYPES, the reality is that EVERYONE engages in them whether they like it or not.

- This doesn't necessarily mean that you are prejudiced or inclined to discriminate against other people, it simply means that your brain is working the way it should.

- It is the NATURAL tendency of the brain to sift, sort, and categorize information about the world that leads to the formation of these implicit biases.
Key Characteristics of Implicit Biases

- *They are PERVERSIVE.* Everyone possesses them even people with avowed commitments to impartiality such as judges and doctors.

- The implicit associations we hold do not necessarily align with our declared beliefs or even reflect stances we would explicitly endorse.

**WE ARE SUSCEPTIBLE TO IMPLICIT BIAS BECAUSE...**

Click on each subtitle to read about causes of implicit bias in the workplace.

- We Seek Out Patterns
- We Like Shortcuts
- We Experience Conditioning
We Seek Out Patterns:

Implicit bias occurs because of the brain’s natural tendency to look for patterns and associations. Our ability to store, process, and apply information about people in social situations is dependent on this ability to form associations about the world.

We Like Shortcuts:

Implicit bias is a result of the brain’s tendency to try to simplify the world. Because the brain is constantly inundated with more information than it could conceivably process, mental shortcuts make it faster and easier for the brain to sort through all of this data.

We Experience Conditioning:

Implicit biases are influenced by experiences, although these attitudes may not be the result of direct personal experience. Cultural conditioning, media portrayals, and upbringing can all contribute to the implicit associations that people form about the members of other social groups.

What’s Beneath the Tip of the Iceberg?

- Implicit bias occurs when someone consciously and explicitly rejects stereotypes and supports anti-discrimination efforts BUT ALSO holds negative associations in their mind unconsciously.

- More than 85% of all Americans consider themselves to be unprejudiced yet researchers have concluded that the majority of people in the U.S. hold SOME DEGREE of implicit bias.

- Implicit bias sets us up to OVERGENERALIZE which can lead to discrimination even when we feel we’re being fair.
Implicit Bias vs. Racism

- Implicit bias and racism are related but do not mean the same.
- Implicit bias is an unconsciously held set of associations about a particular group.
- Racism is prejudice AGAINST people from a specific racial group.
- Racism can be either implicit or EXPLICIT.
- Implicit bias can lead to implicitly racist behavior but many people have implicit biases without ever displaying overt racism.
- By becoming aware of our own implicit biases, and actively resisting them, we can avoid perpetuating harmful racist stereotypes and prejudices.

Let's Recap...

Implicit bias:

- Is activated involuntarily without our awareness or intent.
- Is developed over a lifetime through exposure to direct and indirect messages.
- Is the product of learned associations and social conditioning.
- Affects our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner.
WHY DOES IT MATTER?

- The most famous implicit bias test is the Implicit Association Test (IAT). A MAJORITY of people taking this test show evidence of implicit bias, suggesting that MOST people are implicitly biased even if they do not think of themselves as prejudiced.

- Field experiments demonstrate that real-world DISCRIMINATION continues and is widespread. For example, white physicians with implicit racial bias are less likely to recommend black patients to specialists or may recommend surgery rather than a less invasive treatment.

Implicit Bias Matters Because It...

- *Contributes to SOCIAL INEQUALITIES* and reinforces barriers to opportunity.
- Predicts how we'll BEHAVE more accurately than our conscious values.
- Affects how people ACT with people of another race, gender, religion, etc.
- Affects human behavior throughout society, including WORKPLACES.
- Helps explain and mitigate DIFFERENTIAL TREATMENT in health care.
It Matters Because...

- One reason we might be skeptical of implicit bias is really pretty simple:
  
  It isn’t nice to think that we aren’t very nice.

- When we don’t CONSCIOUSLY entertain impure intentions it would be comforting to conclude that all our intentions are pure. Unfortunately, we can’t conclude that.

- Many of us are MORE BIASED THAN WE REALIZE and that is an important cause of injustice—whether we know and accept it or not.

WHAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT IT?

OUR CHALLENGES:

- We know that people are less implicitly biased if they are exposed to “counter-stereotypical” individuals, but most people lead very segregated lives.

- The levels of implicit bias are very high, and the research is far more developed in measuring bias than effectively changing it.
RISKS:
Identify risk areas where your implicit biases may affect your behaviors and judgments. Being mindful of the risks of implicit bias can help us avoid acting contrary to our conscious values and beliefs.

One of the benefits of being aware of the potential impact of implicit social biases is that you can take a more active role in overcoming social stereotypes, discrimination, and prejudice.

Avoiding biases entirely can be difficult but being aware of their existence can help minimize them.

WAYS TO DEBIAS
Click on the headings below to learn more

- RISKS: Identify risk areas where your implicit biases may affect your behaviors and judgments. Being mindful of the risks of implicit bias can help us avoid acting according to biases that are contrary to our conscious values and beliefs.

- PEOPLE: Focus on seeing people as individuals. Rather than focusing on stereotypes to define people, spend time considering them on a more personal, individual level.

- STEREOTYPES: Work on consciously changing your stereotypes. If you do recognize that your response to a person might be rooted in biases or stereotypes make an effort to consciously adjust your response.

- PERSPECTIVE: Adjust your perspective. Try seeing things from another person’s point of view. How would you act/respond/feel if you were in their same position?
Adopting New Attitudes

- Implicit biases can be troubling, but they are also a pervasive part of life.
- The good news is that these implicit biases are not set in stone.
- Even if you do hold unconscious biases against other groups of people, it is possible to adopt new attitudes, even on the unconscious level.
- This process is not necessarily quick or easy but being AWARE of the existence of these biases is a good place to start.