

UNDERSTANDING UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

Recognizing unconscious bias is an important step toward culturally safe and equitable healthcare.



WHAT IS UNCONSCIOUS BIAS?

Unconscious bias (or implicit bias) is defined as prejudice or unsupported judgements in favour of or against a person or group, often without conscious awareness, resulting in unfair treatment. Unconscious bias can cause serious harm towards people's lives and must be addressed on an individual and systemic level.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO ACKNOWLEDGE AND ADDRESS UNCONSCIOUS BIAS BECAUSE:



Healthcare providers, as much as anyone else, are susceptible to unconscious bias



Healthcare decisions can be influenced by who a patient is, just as much as by the symptoms they present.



Unconscious bias can lead to false assumptions, negative outcomes, and improper care for clients

UNCONSCIOUS BIAS IN HEALTHCARE CAN SHOW UP AS...

- ✓ Microaggressions
- ✓ Macroaggressions
- ✓ Reduced empathy and compassionate care
- ✓ Negative/false assumptions toward a patient

AND LEAD TO...

- ✗ Delayed or inappropriate care
- ✗ Misdiagnosis
- ✗ Trauma and mistrust of healthcare professionals and institutions



Unconscious bias is shaped by our experiences, environments, and the systems in which we live and work. Because it operates outside of conscious awareness, recognizing and reflecting on our biases is an important step toward culturally safe care.