

Facilitator Guide for Unconscious Bias: Its Effect on Healthcare and the Clinical Learning Environment

We developed this facilitator guide to help prompt discussion with your learners or colleagues about Dr. Emmanuel Mensah's presentation. If possible, prior to watching the video, ask viewers to take the implicit bias test <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>

1. Due to implicit bias, patients of color can be labeled as "aggressive," "angry," "non-compliant" or "drug-seeking." In pediatrics, we also see "difficult parents," or "assessment of parents" in the medical record. **How would the presence of such statements lead a clinical team to treat a patient differently? Have you experienced this situation? What strategies can health professionals do to prevent these labels from affecting the delivery of equitable healthcare?**
2. Well-intentioned providers are not immune to implicit bias that leads to inequitable health care delivery. This is especially true when clinical situations are complex, ambiguous, and health professionals are stressed, tired, and need to make decisions rapidly. It is clear there needs to be institutional-wide changes to mediate these conditions; however, those changes will take time. **What can you do today to teach your learners how to recognize when they are more likely to succumb to implicit bias? Is there a method, comparable to a surgical "time out," that other clinical disciplines can do to prevent healthcare inequality?**
3. Dr. Mensah describes his struggle of relaying the racialized history of medicine, and revisiting stories, pictures, and videos of Black people being traumatized. He states that on the one hand it can be distressing and exhausting for learners, especially Black learners, to witness the dehumanization of Black people. On the other hand, Dr. Mensah points to the fact when Emmett Till's mother showed the world the open casket of her brutally murdered son, the course of history changed. **1) What choice would you make when next teaching your learners about the history of clinical medicine? 2) Is there a place for a social justice topic discussion in an all clinically-related curriculum? If so, which ones and why?**
4. Dr. Mensah recommends health professionals learn how racism has shaped healthcare delivery today. As he notes, "It's important to call out racism and not hide it behind the veil of implicit bias." **What can you do as an educator do to lift the veil of implicit bias?**
5. If you observed one of your learners engaging in implicit thought process or unconscious (or conscious) prejudicial behavior when communicating with or treating a patient, **how would you address that behavior?**
6. Family members may refuse to receive care from a provider on the basis of their race, ethnicity, gender, religion, and other attributes. **If this happened to one of your learners, how might you intervene?**
7. In the words of Dr. Martin Luther King: "In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends." **How can you encourage your learners to speak up when they see unequal and discriminatory healthcare delivery?**