

Implicit Bias and Care

Andrea Hermosura, PhD

Rebecca Delafield, PhD

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Trauma Informed Care
Task Force

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Our focus

- Health disparities research
- Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander populations
- Implicit racial bias

Objectives

- Develop a better understanding of implicit bias and how it intersects with trauma.
- Explore the role of implicit bias in health care
- Identify individual and organizational strategies to challenge implicit bias and minimize trauma.

Keala

Keala moved from Washington to Hawai'i in her 14th week of pregnancy to be closer to family. It took 2 weeks to get insurance coverage because her partner just started his new job.

She goes to her first prenatal care since moving to the state and the clinic staff **immediately ask what Med-Quest plan she is on.** Keala says, "I have private insurance." Clinic staff breathes a sigh of relief and says, "Oh good. Health care is not free."

When she turns in her paperwork, clinic staff says, "You are now registered, but, sorry, **our system cannot take your full name** so it is just under Keala."

Keala also overhears nurses talking about a patient. One of the nurses say, "Did you hear she has to be delivered early because baby is so big? **Why can't Hawaiian women manage their weight,** at least when they are pregnant?"



“The single story creates stereotypes and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete.

They make one story become the only story.”

—Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
The Danger of a Single Story
TED Talk, July 2009

Racism

A system of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on the social interpretation of how one looks (“race”) that:

- Unfairly disadvantages some individuals and communities
- Unfairly advantages other individuals and communities
- That saps the strength of the whole society through a waste of human resources

Racism and discrimination are fundamental determinants of health and illness.

(Jones CP. Confronting Institutionalized racism. *Phylon* 2003;50(1-2):7-22.)

Definitions of bias

Explicit Bias

Positive or negative attitudes or stereotypes towards a person, thing, or group that a person is aware of and is under conscious control.

Implicit Bias

Positive or negative attitudes or stereotypes towards a person, thing, or group that are **outside our conscious awareness.**

(Association of American Medical Colleges, The Kirwan Institute. 2017)

Implicit biases

- Implicit biases are a part of natural brain processing
- They are learned from our context and environment
- Racial biases are not inherent
- Exposure to stereotypes can contribute to the formation of biases
- Implicit biases can influence behaviors and decisions
- These can result in real world effects, e.g. discrimination
- You may have biases that don't align with your individual values or beliefs or with your institutional mission and goals.

Implicit biases impact every sector...

Justice
Education
Law Enforcement

Housing
Transportation
Child welfare

Health
Mental health
Substance use

Bias in health care

- Multiple studies examine Black vs White implicit preference
- Implicit racial bias among healthcare professionals is similar to bias found in the wider population
- May contribute to the health disparities in healthcare quality and outcomes
 - Implicit bias negatively impacts patient-provider communication and relationships
 - Verbal dominance
 - Negative affect
 - Slower dialogue
 - Less patient centeredness
 - May influence diagnosis and treatment decisions

Revisit Keala's story

Keala's wants

Compassionate/respectful care
To feel welcomed

Keala's experience

Microaggression
Patient blaming/stigmatization
Devaluing cultural values
Unwelcoming setting

What is the relationship between

Experiences of trauma

Historical trauma
Present day & interpersonal
trauma

Implicit Bias

Established stereotypes
Activation of stereotypes
Biases are strengthened
Groups or individuals being a
target of biases &
discrimination

Management of bias

Institutional/Policy-related strategies

- Educate and raise awareness about bias, inequality and diversity, equity and inclusion
- Build organizational knowledge of racism and trauma
- Define what a racial equity focus in trauma-informed care looks like
- Establish accountability metrics to track progress over time
- Elevate patient and community voices to disrupt existing power structures
- Support staff of color

Management of bias

Individual strategies

- Reflection and self-analysis
- **Mindfulness**
- **Counter-stereotypic imaging**
- **Individuation**
- Perspective taking
- Stereotype replacement
- **Increasing opportunities for contact**

How could this apply to your work?

1. What does trauma look like in the community you serve?
2. Where are the community-identified problems in the delivery of services?
3. How have you as an organization/state agency been complicit in compounding this trauma?
4. What would racial equity look like at your organization? How does this relate to trauma informed care?

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Mahalo

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