



LEAN IN

# 50 WAYS TO FIGHT BIAS

A program that equips all employees to identify and challenge the biases women face at work

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Mentorship and sponsorship



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## TO GET STARTED:

Download our [Moderator Guide & Speaker Notes](#) to prepare for your session, find links to necessary handouts, and learn what to say.

Use "Slide Show" mode to click on links in this presentation or right click to access the hyperlink when not in "Slide Show" mode.

Presentation starts  
on the next slide

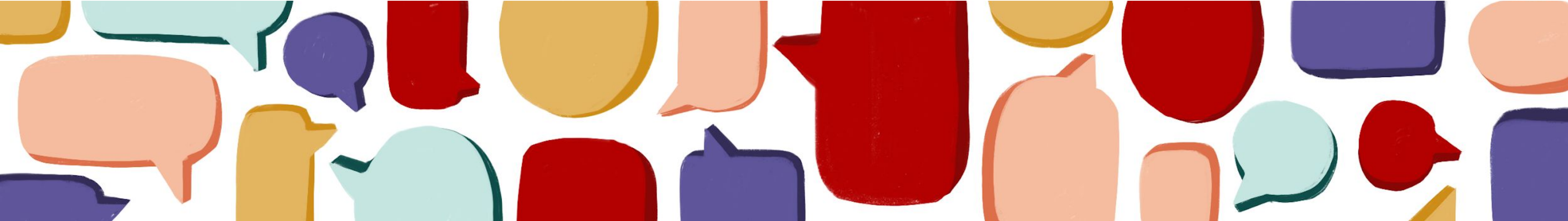


LEAN IN

# 50 WAYS TO FIGHT BIAS

A program that equips all employees to identify and challenge the biases women face at work

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Welcome

BROUGHT TO YOU BY

# LEAN IN

LeanIn.Org helps women achieve their ambitions and works to create an equal world.

LeanIn.Org thanks our partners for their valuable contributions to this program:



## WHY WE ARE HERE

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- ▶ Bias—whether deliberate or unconscious—is holding women back in the workplace.
- ▶ It makes it harder for women to get hired and promoted and negatively impacts their day-to-day work experiences.
- ▶ This hurts women and prevents companies from fully leveraging their talents.
- ▶ Today, we'll learn concrete steps to address the biases women face head-on.

## TODAY'S AGENDA

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1

Set the tone

2

Learn about  
biases women  
face at work

3

Dive into specific  
situations and  
solutions

4

Finish with a  
closing activity

1

# Setting the tone

## SETTING THE TONE

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- 1 Women can experience a broad range of biases that can undermine their capabilities or leave them feeling disrespected at work.
- 2 Multiple kinds of bias can be at play in any situation.
- 3 We all fall into bias traps.
- 4 Knowing that bias exists isn't enough — commit to take action.

## GROUND RULES FOR TODAY

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- 1 Some situations may be difficult to hear.
- 2 Stories should be anonymous.
- 3 Give people the benefit of the doubt.

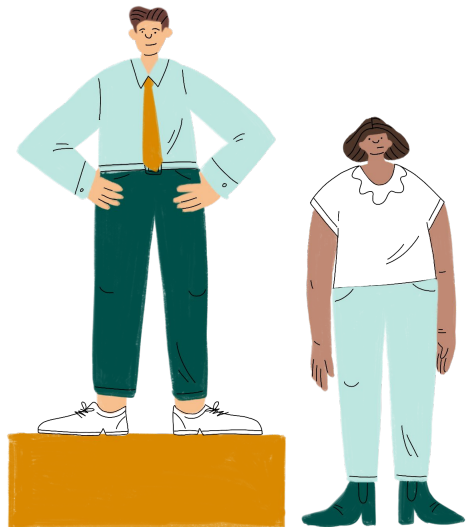
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# Overview: Common types of biases women face at work

# COMMON TYPES OF BIASES WOMEN FACE AT WORK



Unconscious bias



Performance bias



Attribution bias

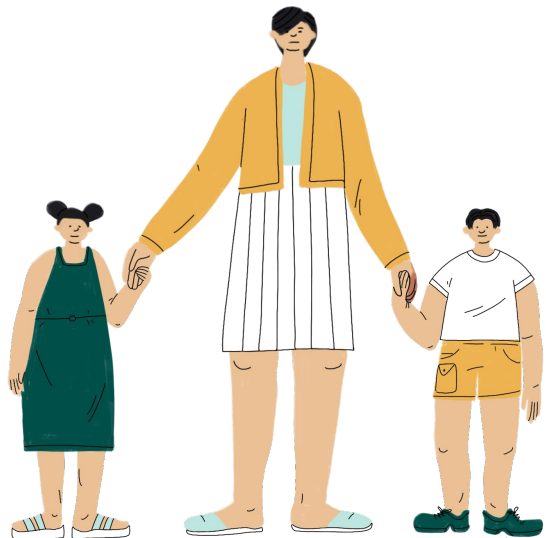


**WATCH THE VIDEO:**

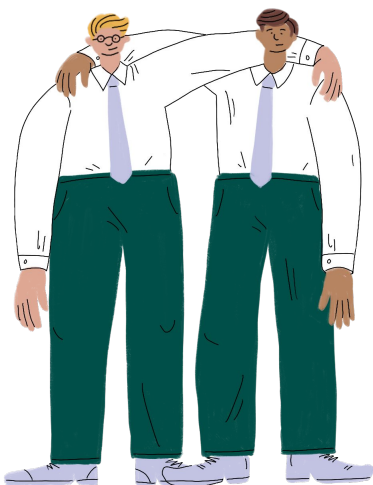
“Introduction to the Common Biases Women Experience”



Likeability bias



Maternal bias



Affinity Bias

# COMMON TYPES OF BIASES WOMEN FACE AT WORK

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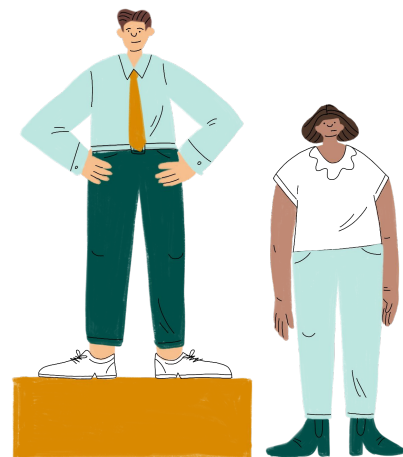
## Likeability bias

Likeability bias is rooted in age-old expectations. We expect men to be assertive, so when they lead, it feels natural. We expect women to be kind and communal, so when they assert themselves, we like them less.<sup>11</sup>



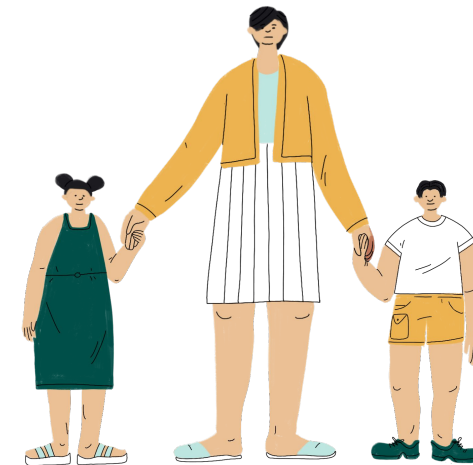
## Attribution bias

Attribution bias is closely linked to performance bias. Because we see women as less competent than men, we tend to give them less credit for accomplishments and blame them more for mistakes.<sup>10</sup>



## Performance bias

Performance bias is based on deep-rooted — and incorrect — assumptions about women's and men's abilities. We tend to underestimate women's performance and overestimate men's.<sup>9</sup>

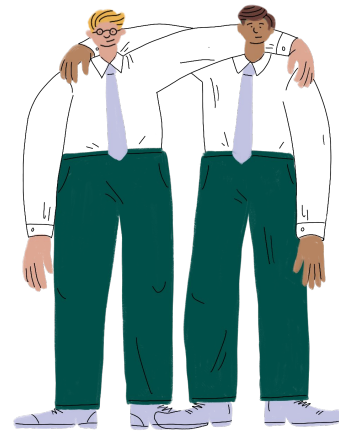


## Maternal bias

Motherhood triggers false assumptions that women are less committed to their careers — and even less competent.<sup>12</sup>

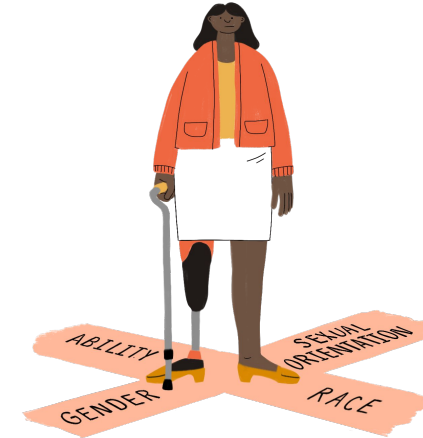
## COMMON TYPES OF BIASES WOMEN FACE AT WORK

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### Affinity bias

Affinity bias is what it sounds like: we gravitate toward people like ourselves in appearance, beliefs, and background. And we may avoid or even dislike people who are different from us.<sup>13</sup>



### Compounding bias

Bias isn't limited to gender. Women can also experience biases due to their race, a disability, or other aspects of their identity.



### Unconscious bias

Unconscious biases are mental “shortcuts” that our brains use to make sense of the world around us. We all have unconscious biases, but by slowing down and becoming aware of them, we can reduce their impact on our decisions.

# Icebreakers

## ICEBREAKER: DID YOU KNOW?

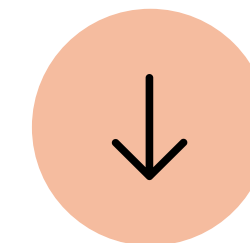
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Compared to straight men, how much more likely are lesbian and bisexual women to feel like they can't talk to colleagues about their lives outside of work?

## Did you know?

Guess the answer as a group.

**SEE THE ANSWER**



## ICEBREAKER: DID YOU KNOW?

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Compared to straight men, how much more likely are lesbian and bisexual women to feel like they can't talk to colleagues about their lives outside of work?

### **ANSWER:**

Around four times more likely.<sup>175</sup>

## ICEBREAKER: DID YOU KNOW?

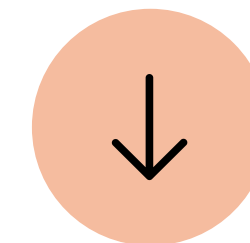
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What % of Black women have *never* had an informal interaction with a senior leader at their company?

## Did you know?

Guess the answer as a group.

**SEE THE ANSWER**



## ICEBREAKER: DID YOU KNOW?

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What % of Black women have *never* had an informal interaction with a senior leader at their company?

**ANSWER:**

59%.<sup>392</sup>

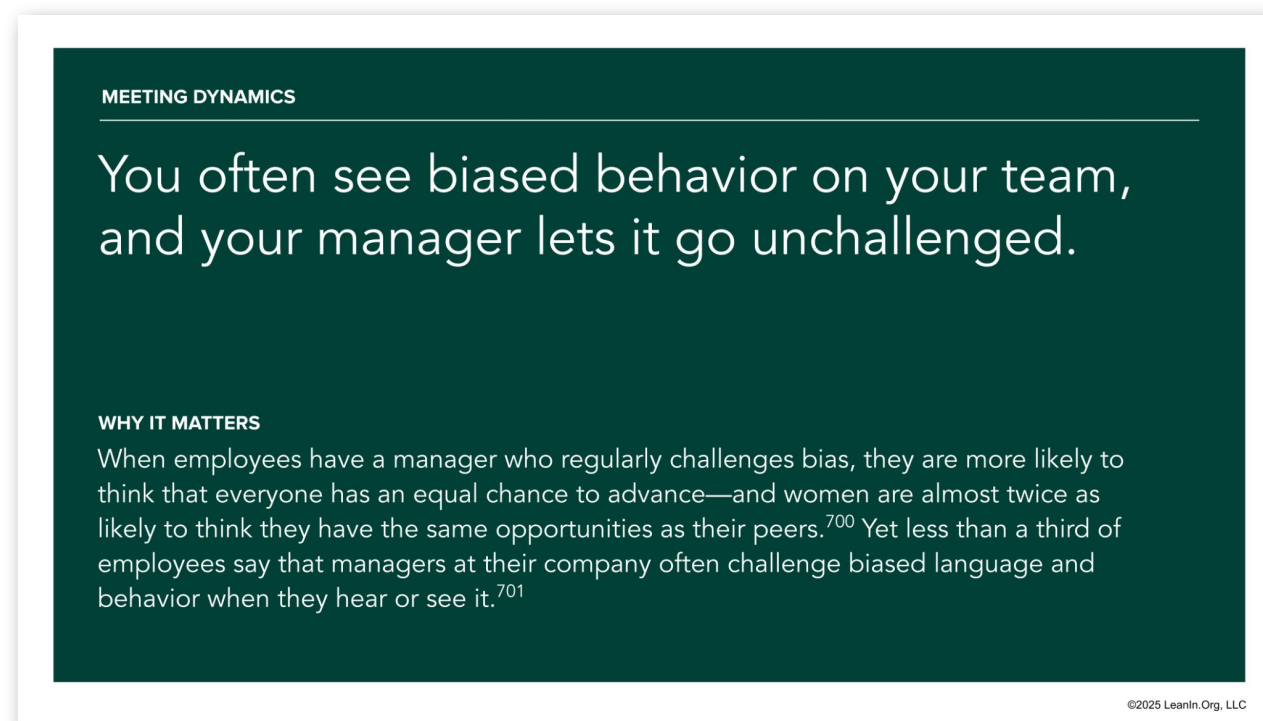
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# Workplace situations

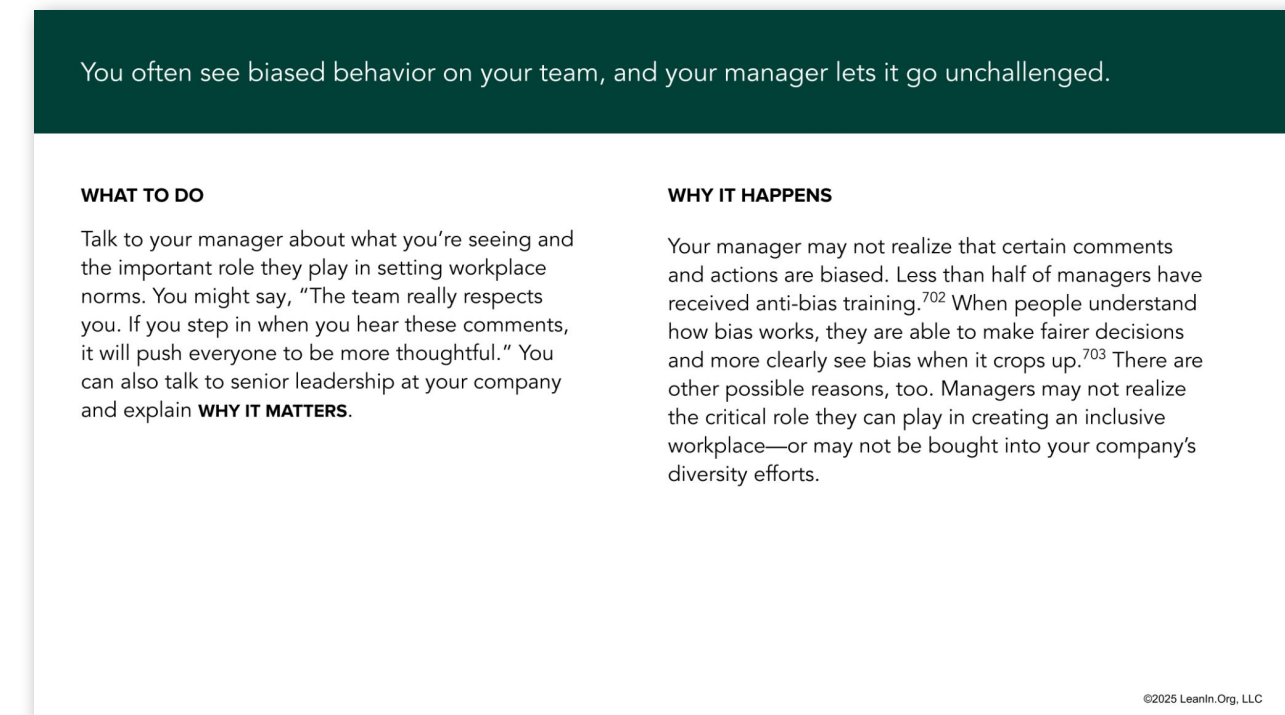
## INSTRUCTIONS

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- 1 Move into your small group or breakout room. Everyone should have a copy of the presentation you will use for discussion.
- 2 Select one person to read the situation and **WHY IT MATTERS**.



- 3 As a group, discuss what you would do in this situation.
- 4 After 3–5 minutes of discussion, read **WHAT TO DO** and **WHY IT HAPPENS**.



- 5 Continue through as many situations as you can in the time allotted.

You realize that a colleague who is a man only mentors other men.

### WHY IT MATTERS

Mentorship can be critical to success.<sup>239</sup> We all benefit when a colleague shows us the ropes or sponsors us for new opportunities—particularly when that colleague is more senior.<sup>240</sup> If your coworker only mentors men, the women he works with are missing out on his advice and, potentially, on opportunities to advance. He is also missing out on their best thinking.

You realize that a colleague who is a man only mentors other men.

## WHAT TO DO

Talk to your colleague. Explain why mentoring is so valuable and share your observation that he only mentors men. Recommend he mentor at least one woman, and offer to help him identify a few promising candidates. If he confides he's uncomfortable being alone with women, point out that there are plenty of public places to meet—and remind him that mentorship really matters.

## WHY IT HAPPENS

We're often drawn to people from similar backgrounds. The problem is that this can disadvantage people who aren't like us—and this is especially true when we're in positions of power.<sup>197</sup> Additionally, some men are anxious about mentoring women for fear of seeming inappropriate. Almost half of men in management are uncomfortable participating in a common work activity with a woman, such as mentoring or working alone together.<sup>198</sup>

*Rooted in affinity bias*

Your manager, who is a man, often meets the men on his team for dinner or drinks—but rarely meets with the women outside of work.

### WHY IT MATTERS

Friendships at work are valuable. Important relationship building and information sharing can happen over coffee or pizza. When people are routinely excluded from outings like these, they can miss out. If it's a manager making arrangements, it's especially problematic—part of their responsibility is to make sure the whole team has equal access to networking opportunities.

Your manager, who is a man, often meets the men on his team for dinner or drinks—but rarely meets with the women outside of work.

## WHAT TO DO

This is your manager, so you have standing to raise this with him. Say that you've noticed he goes for drinks with men on the team more than women. Explain **WHY IT MATTERS**. You can also offer solutions: if he's uncomfortable going to dinner with women, suggest that he meet everyone for breakfast or lunch.

## WHY IT HAPPENS

Your manager may feel more comfortable with men because of affinity bias, which draws us toward people like ourselves.<sup>114</sup> Or he may be nervous for other reasons: some men are wary of spending time with women colleagues outside of work for fear of seeming inappropriate.

*Rooted in affinity bias*

You decide to mentor someone because they remind you of yourself.

### WHY IT MATTERS

Good mentors can make a big difference. Employees with mentors are more likely to get raises and promotions.<sup>657</sup> But because managers and senior leaders are more likely to be men, and because people tend to gravitate toward mentoring others like themselves, women often miss out on that support.<sup>658</sup> That also means your company could miss out on fostering talented employees.

You decide to mentor someone because they remind you of yourself.

## WHAT TO DO

Be aware of this dynamic and let it inform your choices. If you're a man, you're more likely to be in a position of authority someday.<sup>659</sup> You can make the workplace fairer by being thoughtful about whom you mentor. Consider proactively reaching out to mentor someone from a different background. If you're a woman, a person of color, or an LGBTQ person, you might decide instead to mentor someone like yourself—especially if you remember struggling to find mentors when you were coming up through the ranks. In your case, mentoring people like yourself supports diversity and belonging.

## WHY IT HAPPENS

Because of this bias, we tend to prefer the company of others who are like us.<sup>660</sup> This can lead us to invest more in people who remind us of ourselves, perhaps because we assume these relationships will feel more comfortable.<sup>661</sup>

*Rooted in affinity bias*

## EVERYDAY INTERACTIONS

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A colleague doesn't invite a woman on your team to an evening work event, explaining that they assume the woman prefers to be home for dinner with her family.

### WHY IT MATTERS

When women with kids are excluded from activities, it can limit their career growth. It can also make them feel isolated from the rest of their team. For companies that care about retaining women, that's a problem.

A colleague doesn't invite a woman on your team to an evening work event, explaining that they assume the woman prefers to be home for dinner with her family.

## WHAT TO DO

Say, "We don't actually know what [Name] wants. How about we offer her the opportunity and let her decide for herself?" Consider pointing out the difference in how mothers and fathers are often treated: "Do we assume fathers aren't interested in evening events?" You can also remind them of the bigger picture: "Let's make sure we give the moms on our team the same chances as everyone else—sometimes they get sidelined."

## WHY IT HAPPENS

People often assume that once a woman starts a family, she stops being as committed to her job and career.<sup>449</sup> This can lead to generalizations—for example, that moms will say no to stretch assignments, business travel, or invitations to work events after hours.

*Rooted in maternal bias*

## EVERYDAY INTERACTIONS

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Your team holds regular happy hours after work for networking and bonding at a local bar. You realize that one colleague, a Muslim woman, has never come.

### WHY IT MATTERS

Some Muslims avoid alcohol and may therefore feel uncomfortable in a bar.<sup>68</sup> If most networking events are held in bars, it means they miss out on the team bonding that can lead to career opportunities.<sup>69</sup> It can also send a message that employees who don't drink—and other groups like caregivers who need to be home soon after work—are not considered when social events are planned.<sup>70</sup>

Your team holds regular happy hours after work for networking and bonding at a local bar. You realize that one colleague, a Muslim woman, has never come.

## WHAT TO DO

Talk to your team leader and explain **WHY IT MATTERS**. Encourage them to plan a wide range of events that leave out as few people as possible. For example, if your team goes out every week to a bar, consider moving it to a restaurant sometimes. Move a few evening events to lunchtime so working parents can join. And make the changes with sensitivity, so no one gets blamed. If happy hours are simply canceled, it may create bad feelings among some employees.<sup>71</sup>

## WHY IT HAPPENS

Many teams—and companies—don't realize how much thoughtfulness is needed to ensure that work events are welcoming to as many employees as possible. This might happen because teams fall into the habit of replicating bonding events that have been offered for decades—many of which were designed for less diverse workplaces.

## REVIEWS & PROMOTIONS

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You're on a review committee and a woman with an excellent track record is up for promotion. But the group is nervous about giving her the opportunity, since no one feels like they know her well personally.

### WHY IT MATTERS

When you rely on personal relationships to decide who gets promoted, you may overlook the most qualified candidates.

You're on a review committee and a woman with an excellent track record is up for promotion. But the group is nervous about giving her the opportunity, since no one feels like they know her well personally.

## WHAT TO DO

Encourage the group to consider the woman's full profile, such as her business results and her effectiveness as a manager. Ask why knowing someone personally is important for promotion. When people are asked to clarify the evaluation criteria they're using, they tend to make fairer decisions. If they push back, remind them that her personal relationships probably don't have anything to do with how well she does her job.

## WHY IT HAPPENS

Research shows that we tend to gravitate toward others like us and may even avoid others who are different. Because most leaders are men, this dynamic can benefit white men and disadvantage women, particularly women of color.<sup>434</sup> In addition, social outings can sometimes exclude women, which makes it harder for them to network with colleagues and senior leaders. For example, evening events may be difficult for parents to attend. On other occasions, women might not be invited at all.

*Rooted in affinity bias*

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# Closing Activity

## SUMMARY: STRATEGIES TO COMBAT BIAS

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When bias occurs, there are a number of ways to respond, some of which you discussed today. Below is a summary of the strategies you can use to combat bias:

- ▶ Speak up for someone in the moment
- ▶ Ask a probing question
- ▶ Stick to the facts
- ▶ Explain how bias is in play
- ▶ Advocate for policy or process change

“My One Action to address bias against women in the workplace is...”