



LEAN IN

50 WAYS TO FIGHT BIAS

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

Virtual workplaces



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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

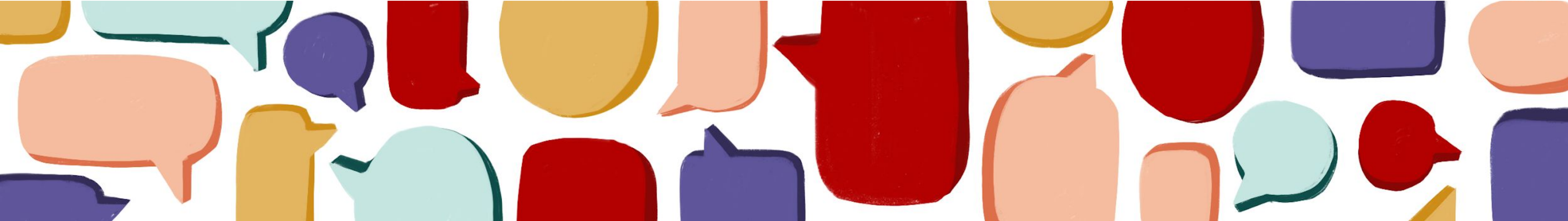


LEAN IN

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

- ▶ 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

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

- 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

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

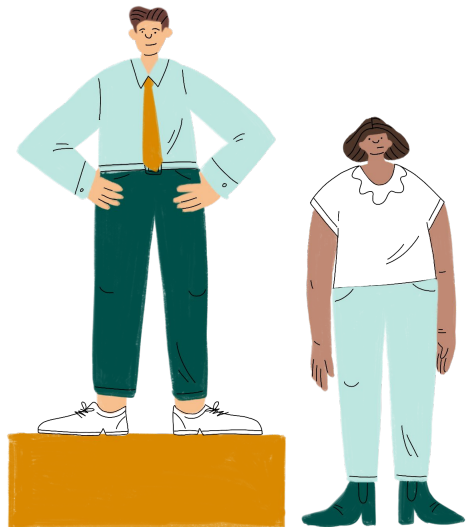
2

Overview: Common types of biases women face at work

COMMON TYPES OF BIASES WOMEN FACE AT WORK



Unconscious bias



Performance bias



Attribution bias

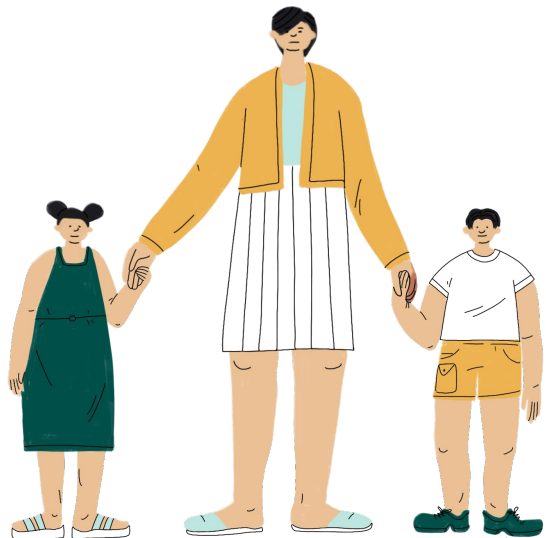


WATCH THE VIDEO:

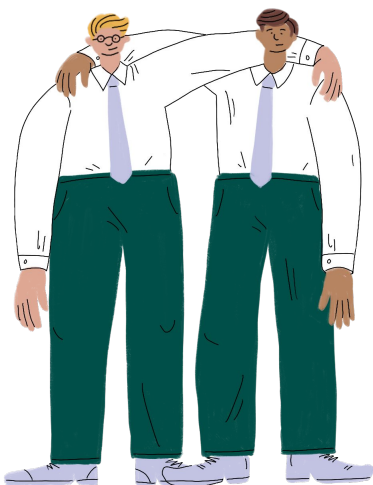
“Introduction to the Common Biases Women Experience”



Likeability bias



Maternal bias



Affinity Bias

COMMON TYPES OF BIASES WOMEN FACE AT WORK



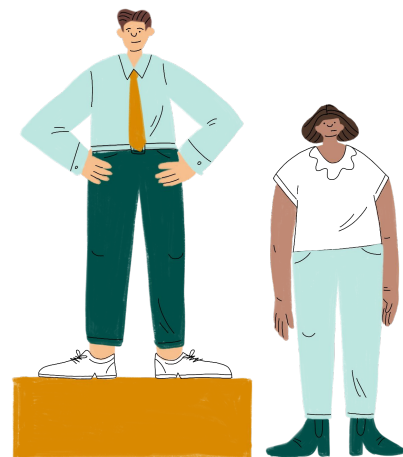
Likeability bias

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.¹¹



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.¹⁰



Performance bias

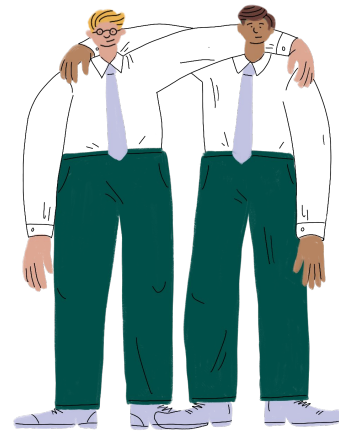
Performance bias is based on deep-rooted — and incorrect — assumptions about women's and men's abilities. We tend to underestimate women's performance and overestimate men's.⁹



Maternal bias

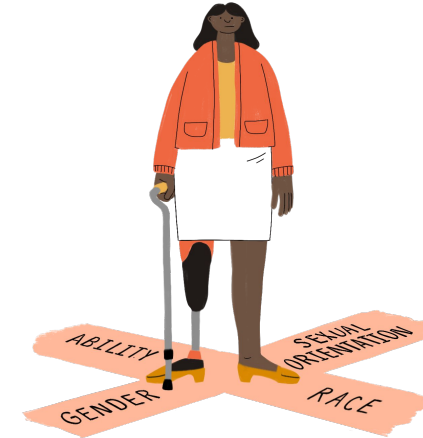
Motherhood triggers false assumptions that women are less committed to their careers — and even less competent.¹²

COMMON TYPES OF BIASES WOMEN FACE AT WORK



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.¹³



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

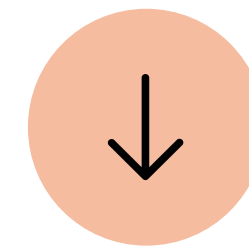
ICEBREAKER: DID YOU KNOW?

How many times more often do men interrupt women than other men?

Did you know?

Guess the answer as a group.

SEE THE ANSWER



ICEBREAKER: DID YOU KNOW?

How many times more often do men interrupt women than other men?

ANSWER:

Almost 3 times more often.⁴⁹

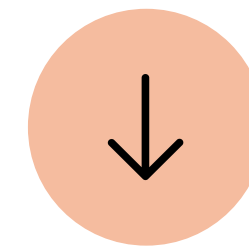
ICEBREAKER: DID YOU KNOW?

When parents work from home, how many times more likely are mothers to be interrupted by their children, compared to fathers?

Did you know?

Guess the answer as a group.

SEE THE ANSWER



ICEBREAKER: DID YOU KNOW?

When parents work from home, how many times more likely are mothers to be interrupted by their children, compared to fathers?

ANSWER:

More than 1.5 times more likely.³⁷⁸

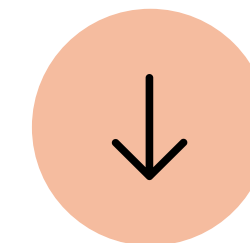
ICEBREAKER: DID YOU KNOW?

According to Harvard University's Implicit Association Test, what % of people more readily associate men with "career" and women with "family"?

Did you know?

Guess the answer as a group.

SEE THE ANSWER



ICEBREAKER: DID YOU KNOW?

According to Harvard University's Implicit Association Test, what % of people more readily associate men with "career" and women with "family"?

ANSWER:

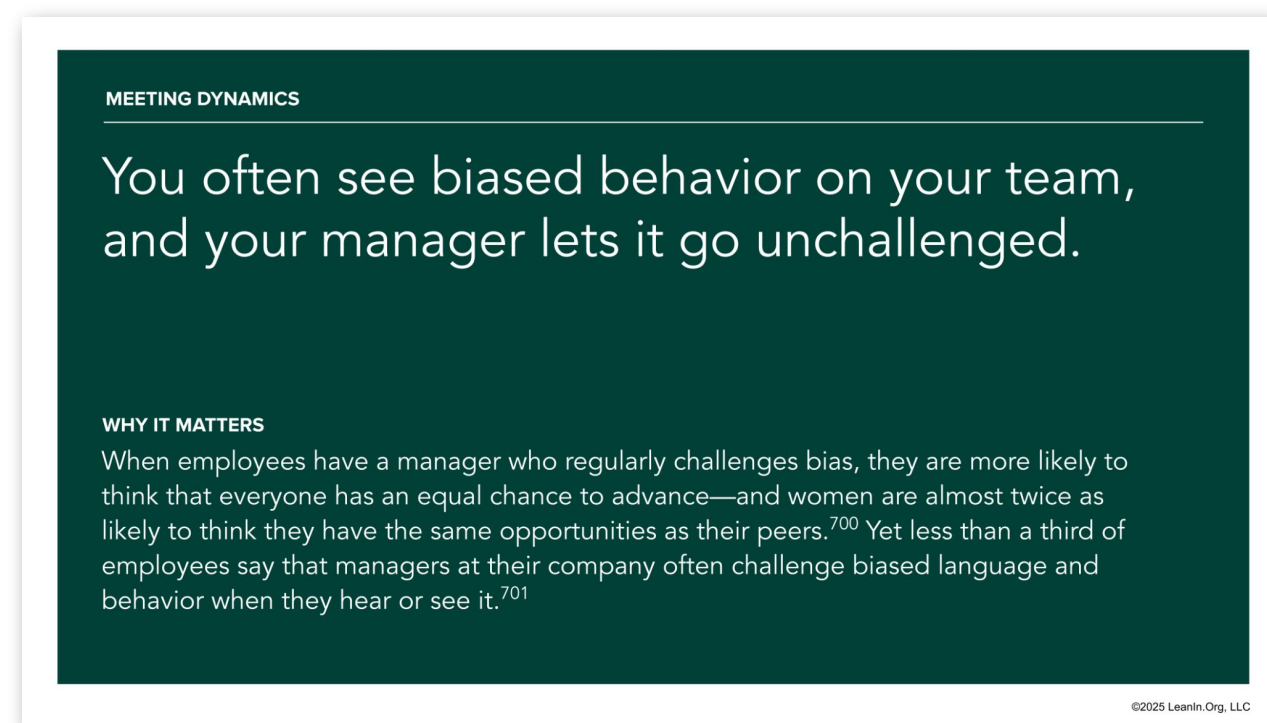
76%.³⁹⁴

3

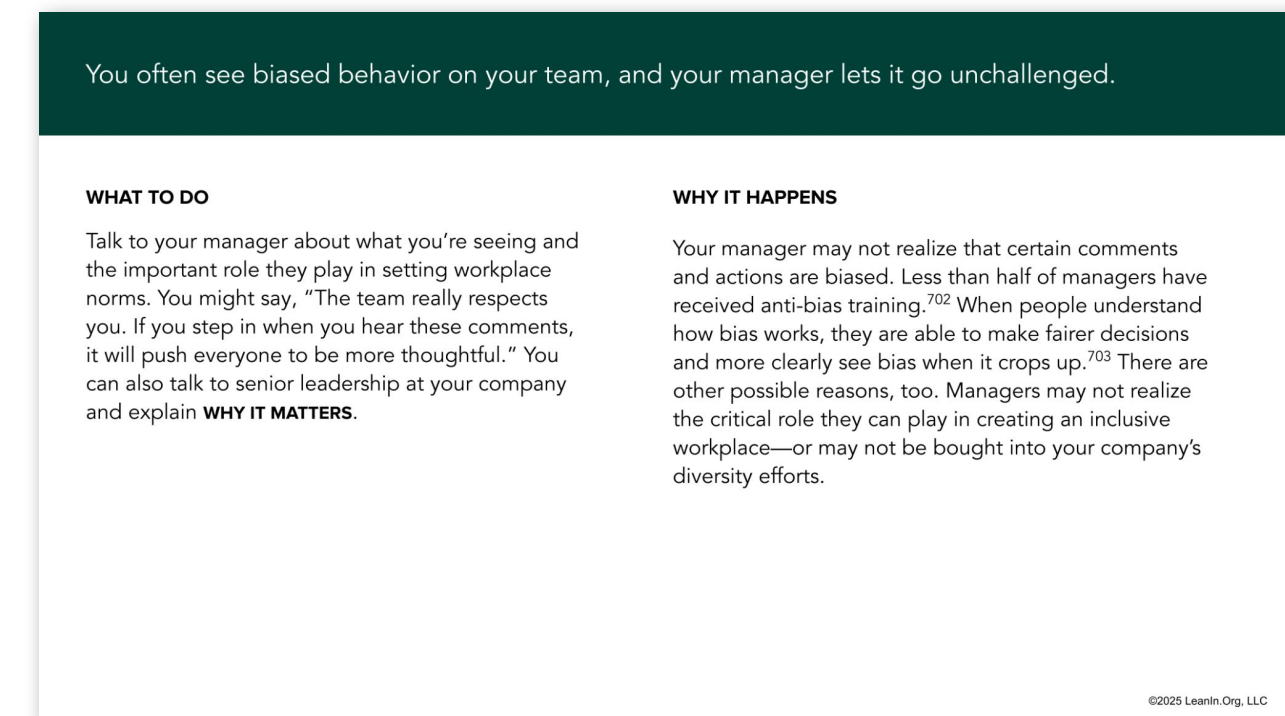
Workplace situations

INSTRUCTIONS

- 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.

MEETING DYNAMICS

You notice that your colleague, who is a woman, gets spoken over and interrupted more often than others during virtual team meetings.

WHY IT MATTERS

It's undermining to be repeatedly interrupted. It means that the team loses out on the woman's ideas and insights. Plus, in a virtual context, meetings can carry more weight than they otherwise might. Without informal interactions in the office, virtual meetings become the central avenue for information sharing, brainstorming, and reputation building.

You notice that your colleague, who is a woman, gets spoken over and interrupted more often than others during virtual team meetings.

WHAT TO DO

In the moment, you can use the chat feature to write something like, “Can we circle back to [Name]?” In the long run, encourage norms that promote equal participation, like everyone using the chat feature when they want to chime in. If you’re brainstorming, have people take turns and mute everyone except the speaker,⁷⁴⁰ or use a virtual brainstorming tool. You can also use breakout rooms to create smaller groups: one study found that women get similar amounts of airtime as men in groups of six or fewer, but less than men when in groups of seven or more.⁷⁴¹

WHY IT HAPPENS

In general, women are interrupted far more often than men. Researchers believe that this happens just as often in virtual settings, if not more.⁷⁴²

This may be rooted in a common form of bias: people often value women’s contributions less highly than men’s.⁷⁴³

Rooted in performance bias

Your manager calls out a team member during a virtual meeting for not turning on her video when she seems reluctant to do so.

WHY IT MATTERS

Being put on the spot like this can trigger anxiety and stress. If the employee has her children with her, she may fear being judged as unprofessional—a bias that can affect all parents but impacts women more than men, as women are more likely to be interrupted by their children.⁷⁴⁴ Women are also penalized more than men for not looking well-groomed or put together.⁷⁴⁵ This creates a particular burden for Black women, who have to spend a lot more time than other women on their hair to avoid negative judgments. This is because of biased beliefs that their natural hair is “unprofessional.”⁷⁴⁶

Your manager calls out a team member during a virtual meeting for not turning on her video when she seems reluctant to do so.

WHAT TO DO

In the moment, you can speak up and point out that she's present and participating, even if the team can't see her. If you, too, like to leave your video off from time to time, perhaps point this out. That sends the message that she isn't an outlier. Later, you could talk to your manager about it and explain **WHY IT HAPPENS**.

WHY IT HAPPENS

Managers may insist on video because they want their team members to feel connected, especially if they cannot be together in person. Or they may ask employees to turn on video to ensure that everyone is productive and engaged. But this doesn't take into account everything an employee may be balancing while working from home, including childcare and housework. And it doesn't make allowances for the anxiety employees may feel about how they look or their home looks on a busy or chaotic day.

Your manager schedules a virtual team meeting at an hour when your coworker has blocked off time on her calendar to care for her young children.

WHY IT MATTERS

This can seriously interfere with your coworker's ability to balance work and life. Many people plan ahead with partners or caregivers, and last-minute changes can be disruptive or impossible. It can also contribute to a feeling of being "always on"—which more than 30 percent of employees name as one of the biggest downsides to remote work in 2020.¹⁸⁷ And if situations like this happen often, they can lead to stress or burnout.¹⁸⁸

Your manager schedules a virtual team meeting at an hour when your coworker has blocked off time on her calendar to care for her young children.

WHAT TO DO

Remind your manager of your coworker's schedule constraint and suggest an alternate time. You could also mention how blocking time like this is vital for maintaining work-life balance and explain that practices like these can help employees be more productive and feel more committed to the company.¹⁸⁹

WHY IT HAPPENS

This reflects the norm that the "ideal worker" is always available and doesn't need to take time away from work to care for family, pursue personal interests, or simply recharge.¹⁹⁰ Decades of research on the ideal worker show that this norm can harm mothers more than fathers, since mothers often do more caregiving.¹⁹¹

Your manager complains to you after a woman on your team was interrupted by her children during a client call, saying, “That was really unprofessional.”

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Your manager complains to you after a woman on your team was interrupted by her children during a client call, saying, “That was really unprofessional.”

WHAT TO DO

Remind your manager that your colleague is talented, accomplished, and doing her job well. You could also explain that children are far more likely to interrupt mothers than fathers. Knowing this can help your manager effectively support the mothers on their team.

WHY IT HAPPENS

Your manager’s judgment is likely based on norms of what it means to be an “ideal worker.” In the United States, the ideal worker is expected to keep work and family separate and prevent their family from interfering with work.¹⁶⁵ The comment may also be fueled by maternal bias, the false belief that mothers are less committed and competent than fathers and non-mothers.¹⁷² Virtual work can make a woman more likely to be affected by maternal bias because her children may be more visible to her employer.

Rooted in maternal bias

On a business call, your colleague who is working from home seems distracted. Afterward, your manager says, "Gosh, was she washing dishes or something in the background?"

WHY IT MATTERS

The comment is disrespectful and may undermine the woman's reputation with colleagues who hear it. It can also reinforce a damaging stereotype that women can't be fully committed to work and also be focused on home and family.⁷⁵⁵ That stereotype can have real consequences, impacting women's chances of promotion and other opportunities.¹⁵

On a business call, your colleague who is working from home seems distracted. Afterward, your manager says, “Gosh, was she washing dishes or something in the background?”

WHAT TO DO

You could try redirecting your manager—for example, by saying, “It didn’t sound like that to me. I could hear her perfectly.” You could treat the moment lightly: “Maybe her husband was!” You could also privately explain to your manager **WHY IT MATTERS**.

WHY IT HAPPENS

People of all genders have off days or moments when they're distracted. For women, those moments are more likely to get chalked up to splitting attention between work and domestic duties. That’s because women tend to be stereotyped as more committed to—and more distracted by—family and household duties than men are. This bias may be even stronger when they are working at home.⁴⁰²

4

Closing Activity

SUMMARY: STRATEGIES TO COMBAT BIAS

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...”