

Upcoming Events

[Click here](#) for an at-a-glance view of our upcoming events for the next 3 months

Implicit Bias

Implicit biases are the unconscious attitudes, reactions, stereotypes, and categories designed by humans that affect behavior and understanding. In an educational setting, implicit bias is often written about and discussed in terms of the impact of unconscious racial or socioeconomic bias towards students.¹ Implicit bias can come from the messages, behaviors, and stereotypical assumptions we pick up (on conscious and subconscious levels) from the society and culture we live in and/or are exposed to. This accumulation of information forms our thoughts and since thoughts often determine our actions, implicit bias can lead to discriminatory behaviors.

Ogunyemi (2021) suggests that intentionally addressing implicit bias through meaningful curricular experiences, and moving beyond interventions like the Implicit Association Test, could move us collectively closer to where we should strive to be as individuals and as a society in both perception and action.² The article provides a clear path for building such an experience and may be worth further exploration.

Implementing a 90-minute educational workshop into curriculum or a training schedule may not be always feasible. However, incorporating time within clinical and didactic settings by addressing, revealing, and discussing implicit bias, as well as the implications of acting from a place of bias, is certainly doable. Educators should also consider exploring how their own implicit biases may impact the learning environment, their response to students, and behaviors they model that may reflect implicit bias.

Here are some suggestions for beginning or continuing to reduce implicit bias:

On a personal level -

- Sign up for implicit bias training (Virginia Tech TLOS will be offering implicit bias training Fall 2021, [click here](#) for other relevant trainings they offer; The Ohio State University has Implicit Bias modules that can be accessed [here](#))
- Identify opportunities within your community for meaningful intergroup contact.
- Engage in practices like self-reflection.

As an educator –

- Actively prepare for reflective teaching and behavior modeling.
- Cultivate a culture of inclusivity within the learning environment.
- Incorporate diversity into the curriculum considering both the student population being taught and the patient population being served.
- Ask for student-teacher observation feedback from a trusted source who can point out areas where implicit bias may be surfacing within the learning environment.
- Solicit specific feedback regarding bias in educational interactions from students.

Remember, implicit bias permeates our own lived experiences on multiple levels. We can all benefit from reflective and consistent practice challenging our assumptions and thoughts and we all have work to do in this area. Connect with others and seek to understand who they are on an individual level. If you would like additional information or resources on understanding implicit bias, please reach out to a member of the VTCSOM Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion team.

- Sarah M. Umbarger-Wells, M.S. (Education & Faculty Development Manager)

¹Boysen G, Vogel D. Bias in the classroom: Types, frequencies, and responses. *Teaching of Psychology*. 2009; 36(1): 12-17.

²Ogunyemi, D. Defeating Unconscious Bias: The role of a structured, reflective, and interactive workshop. *Journal of Graduate Medical Education*. 2021, April; 13(2) 180-194.

“Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.”

- James Baldwin

Dean’s Corner

Last year, the Dean’s Corner focused on the principles of Health Systems Science. The focus for the remainder of this year will be Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and will be authored by Azziza ‘Kemi’ Bankole, MBBS, Carilion Clinic psychiatrist and VTCSOM associate professor of psychiatry and behavioral medicine and chief diversity officer. Dr. Bankole devotes this month to issues surrounding ageism.

Upcoming DEI Events

All events are continuously updated on the DEI calendar which can be found on the VTCSOM website: <https://medicine.vtc.vt.edu/diversity>.

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness”

We see this ideal declared often in speeches and texts. If we presuppose that the “men” mentioned above refers to all human beings, then this is indeed a lofty ideal, a worthy goal to strive for. Looking back at human history we can see that equality was not the starting point in our origin story.

Equality is the ideal is that every person has an equal opportunity to succeed, meaning that everyone gets the same resources regardless of need. Some would get more than they need, others would get less than they need, and some would get just the right amount. Equity, on the other hand, is the ideal that every person receives what they need to succeed. As described above, it is unlikely that the resources would be the same for everyone. With equity, the ability of everyone to reach a desired goal is fundamental. Thus, equal treatment may or may not lead to equitable outcomes while equitable outcomes may require additional or different resources.

Equality is frequently lauded as an answer to the problems we see in society. However, that also presupposes that everyone is starting out at the same point. The inequalities in our world and systems require more than this. In his presentation to the Virginia Tech community titled ‘Microaggressions and Microinterventions’, Dr. Derald Wing Sue stated, “Equal treatment can be discriminatory treatment.”

Germane to our purpose here at VTCSOM, equal treatment can lead to educational and health disparities. Equity in education means that we are able to provide our learners the support that they need to meet the goals and expectations we have set for them. The goals and expectations are the same for all but as a system, we provide the resources and accommodations each learner needs to reach said goals.

Health disparities can be defined as systematic, plausibly avoidable health differences adversely affecting socially disadvantaged groups; or as differences that are unnecessary, avoidable, and unfair (Whitehead 1991). They may reflect social disadvantage, but causality need not be established (Healthy People 2020).

Advancing equity requires us to recognize the barriers that undergird inequities such as discrimination based on race, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, income, zip code, etc. for our entire community. Advancing equity requires commitment and the deliberate attention to systemic and strategic priorities, resources, respect, and civility, with ongoing action and assessment of progress toward achieving specified goals (Tan T 2019).

In the long run, the goal of equity is to advance equality, to help society actually achieve justice for all so that we are able to realize our unalienable rights including life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

- Azziza ‘Kemi’ Bankole, M.B.B.S. (Chief Diversity Officer)

Office of Continuing Professional Development (OCPD)

Shari Whicker, EdD, MEd
 Senior Director, Office of Continuing Professional Development
 Assistant Dean, Faculty Development
 Director, TEACH (Teaching Excellence Academy for Collaborative Healthcare)
 Associate Professor, Departments of Pediatrics and Interprofessionalism
 Carilion Clinic
 Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine

Professional Development

Mariah Rudd, Manager
 Sarah Umbarger-Wells, MS, Manager
 Sandra DeHart, Curriculum and Media Coordinator
 Deborah Ferron, Secretary

Continuing Medical Education

Paul Dallas, MD, Medical Director
 Linda Wells, CHCP, Manager
 Paula Robertson, CHCP, Senior CME Program Specialist
 Carol Gibson, CME Program Specialist
 Susan Curtiss, Secretary

[OCPD Website](#)

Call Us at: 540-588-3103

Share this email:



[Manage](#) your preferences | [Opt out](#) using TrueRemove™

Got this as a forward? [Sign up](#) to receive our future emails.

View this email [online](#).

15 Old Woods Ave
 Roanoke, VA | 24016 US

This email was sent to .
 To continue receiving our emails, add us to your address book.

