Training / Workshop Provided to a Mayo Clinic Leadership Team

Understanding and Preventing Social Identity (Stereotype) Threat

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Partners in Equity & Inclusion
A non-profit organization founded and guided by diversity scientists who are passionate about translating the strongest and most current evidence into practical and effective approaches for achieving true equity, and deep diversity and inclusion.

Learn more at www.p-e-i.org.
References (sources of evidence) for this training session: http://bit.ly/sterotypeth

Learning Objectives

Participants will:

- Understand the **nature and impact** of social identity (stereotype) threat.

- Understand the way addressing social identity threat is responsive to **Mayo Clinic Values**.

- Understand the benefit of reducing social identity threat for **organizational objectives**.

- Have knowledge of **specific strategies** to protect themselves and the people around them from social identity threat.

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Mayo Clinic Values
The needs of the patient come first

RESPECT	**INTEGRITY**	**COMPASSION**	**HEALING**
TEAMWORK	**INNOVATION**	**EXCELLENCE**	**STEWARDSHIP**

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Social Identities

Culture
Subcultures
(e.g. org culture)
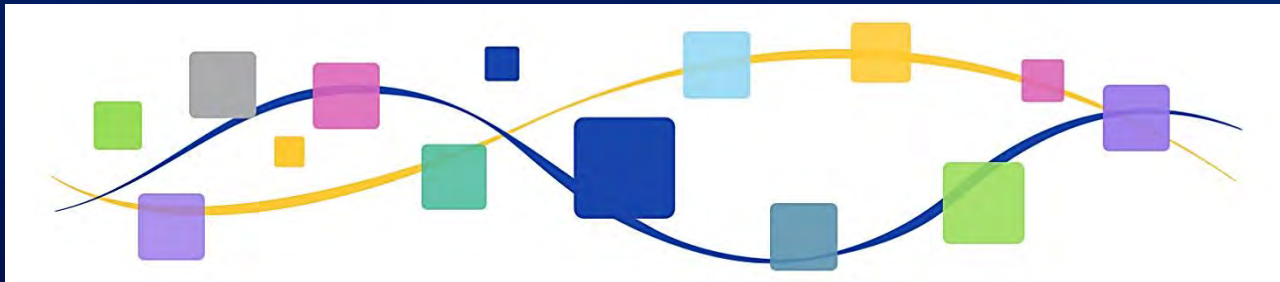
Our Sense of Self
How we see ourselves
How we think we are seen by others

Social Identity Threat

A (sometimes unconscious) response to a negative group stereotype or awareness of being devalued.

- Identities are central to our self-esteem so we are motivated to protect them

- The specific social identity that is pertinent (to others) is not always our choice. (Scholar, doctor, authority, leader, parent, patient, son, daughter, friend, woman, man, black, elderly, white, fat, poor, depressed, cancer survivor….

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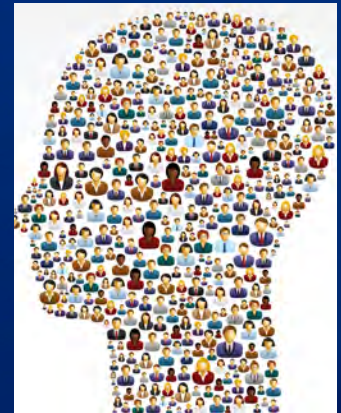
Social Identity Threat

When something in a situation cues a group identity (e.g. woman, black, elderly, white male etc.) and cues our awareness of group stereotype (e.g. bad at math, unintelligent, feeble, racially biased) we may experience the detrimental effects of identity threat.

Social Identity Threat

- Not the same as internalized stigma – you may be very aware the stereotype is false.

- Social identity threat can affect us outside of our awareness.
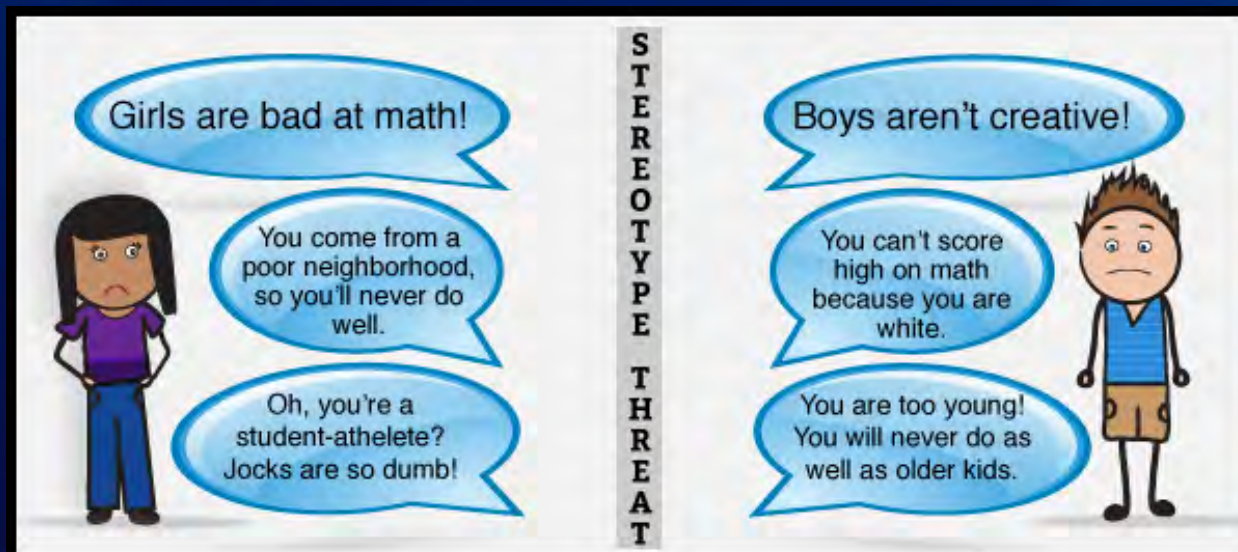
Social Identity (Stereotype) Threat Effects

not good at science

emotional

intellectual inferiority

violent

not good at math

Conscious and Unconscious Effects

Stress response

Emotion regulation

Thought suppression / cognitive load

Vigilance
Distraction

Pressure to represent social group

Anxiety

+

"De-skilling" often in stereotype consistent ways

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Performance & Achievement

"De-skilling"

Women/Girls & Math

Females do worse than males on math tests when the gender question comes first – but not when asked after the test.

Danaher & Crandall estimated 4700 more girls a year would receive AP calculus credit if the question that asks about the student's gender was moved to the back of the test.
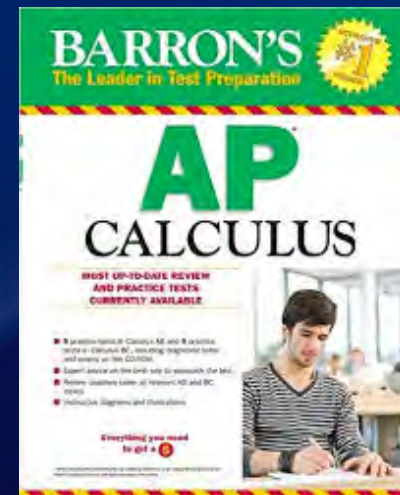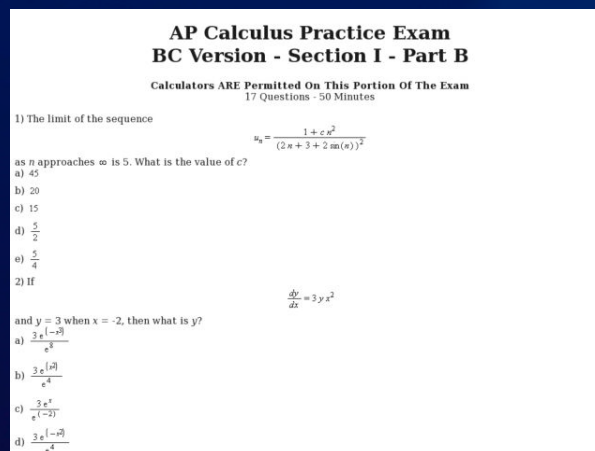
Men and "Social Sensitivity"

Men did worse on a test that assesses accuracy in interpreting others' non-verbal behavior when told it was it test of "social sensitivity" than when told it tested "information processing".

Girls & Chess

When female chess players believed their opponent was male they performed worse than male chess players. When they were told (falsely) they were playing against another female they performed as well as male players.

DIAMOND
SHAKOOR
12 YEAR OLD
CHESS
PRODIGY
IG: @SANCOPHALEAGUE
ONE OF THE
BEST PLAYERS
IN THE
COUNTRY!
FACEBOOK.COM/
SANCOPHALEAGUE

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White vs Minority on Golf & other Athletics

White golfers did worse than black golfers when told they were taking a test of "natural athletic ability". Black golfers did worse than white golfers when told the test required "sport strategic intelligence".
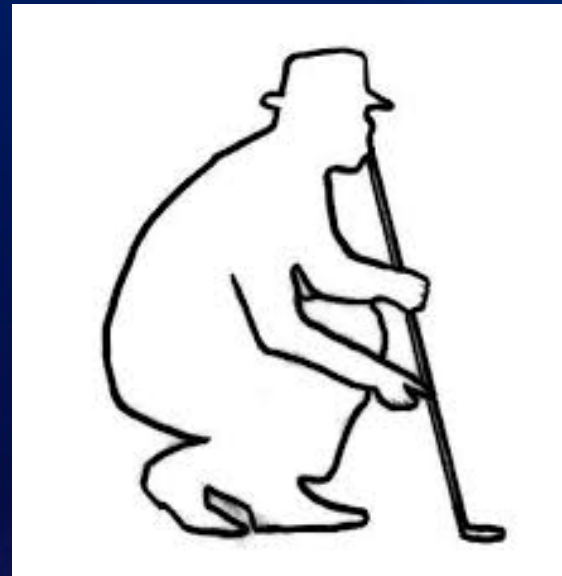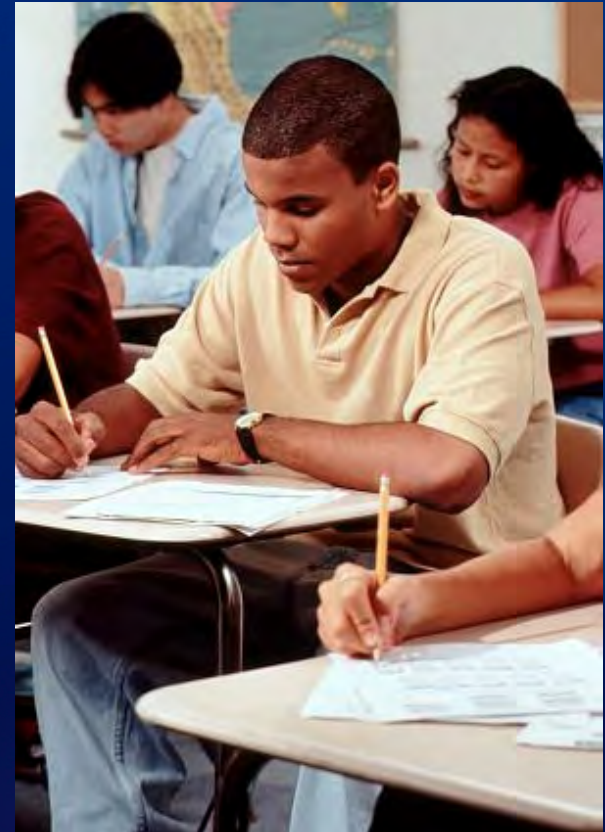
African Americans, Latinos & Low SES Students & Intelligence Tests

Black test takers performed worse than white test takers when told it was a test of intelligence.

When told test was a lab task that did not indicate intellectual ability, black and white test takers performed at same level.

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Whites & "Racist" Stereotype Threat

- Stereotype threat: "white racist", "male sexist"
  - The anxiety associated with this threat has negative cognitive and behavioral consequences including impairment of working memory caused by self-regulatory behaviors (e.g., monitoring or regulating ones behaviors to avoid appearing prejudiced),
  - Fidgeting, avoiding eye contact
  - Physically distancing.
  - Increases in implicit (unconscious) bias

  - **This effect is diminished when emphasis is on learning (including from mistakes) in interacting with people who are different than ourselves**

Additional Examples

- Women in negotiating ability.
- Whites compared with Asian men in mathematics
- Elderly & Women Safe driving
  - Statistically 65 and older safest drivers – except when reminded of stereotype
  - Women vs men told that study was investigating why men are better drivers than women. Half hit jaywalking pedestrian.
- Elderly in memory tasks
- Women in golf, but only in presence of male skill evaluator

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What does this mean for Mayo?

- People who experience threat in the workplace…
  - Anticipate poor performance
  - Have lower motivation
  - Lower sense of professional identity
  - Have lower career aspirations
  - Seek fewer leadership roles
  - Are less likely to speak up

What does this mean for Mayo?

- People who experience threat in the workplace…
  - Fear performance evaluation
  - Seek less feedback on performance
  - Have lowered job satisfaction
  - Are less likely to recommend others to work in that field

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Long-term effects

- Disengangement
- Disidentification

What does this mean for Mayo?

Long Term Effects: Employee & Patient Health-

Stress response

- Sympathetic nervous system activations

- Increased blood pressure

- Increased cardiac output and total peripheral resistance

- Inflammation processes associated with numerous disease processes.

The Needs of the Patient Come First

What happens when a patient is aware they may be seen in terms of a stereotyped or undervalued social identity? ("Poor" or "obese" or "elderly" etc)

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"A threat in the air"

"Everyone is vulnerable to stereotype threat, everyone has at least one group identity that is stereotyped."   - *C. Steele*

"It is indiscriminate in cursing any group for which a negative stereotype applies, and it does so across a range of domains.
What is so striking and debilitating about the phenomenon is how easily stereotype threat can be activated."

- H. Rothgerber, & K. Wolsiefer

When are we at greatest risk?

- The task or situation is important to us.

- There are few others who are members of the same group (e.g. few women or minorities)

- When we are interacting with people who consciously or unconsciously endorse the negative stereotype.

  - People tend to be highly sensitive to cues indicating that one of their identities might be devalued - cues can be very subtle and still trigger stereotype threat.

Protect Yourself From Social Identity (Stereotype) Threat

- Identify your own stereotype threat triggers. What situations cause stereotype threat for you?

- Notice cues in environments that might subtly affect your self-concept

- Notice cues from others

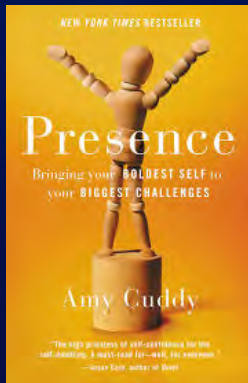- Pay attention to body sensation and subtle shifts in self-confidence.

Protect Yourself From Social Identity (Stereotype) Threat

- When faced with a situation with potential stereotype threat triggers:
  - Think about your personal unique characteristics, skills, values, or roles that you view as important
    - Things you value about yourself, that are important to you.
  - If possible jot them down & why they are important
  - Let your attention be filled with your core values.

Protect Yourself From Social Identity (Stereotype) Threat

- Body poses (feeling happy ↔ smiling)
  - Several studies show that carrying yourself confidently, and using postures that communicate confidence can improve confidence and performance.
  - Athletes know this well
  - Take up space

"High Power" body language (top row)
vs.
"Low Power" body language (bottom row)

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

Presence

Bringing your BOLDEST SELF to your BIGGEST CHALLENGES

Amy Cuddy

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Protect Yourself From Social Identity (Stereotype) Threat

- Activate "alternate identities"
  - Everyone has multiple identities
  - Doctor, scientist, athlete, woman, daughter, mother
  - Bring to mind and focus on an identity that does not have negative stereotypes relevant to the situation
- Bring to mind a time you felt competent, powerful, strong (whatever is relevant).
  - Focus on that identity – take on that identity in whatever way makes sense to you.

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Protect Yourself From Social Identity (Stereotype) Threat

Remember that even if you are triggered—you find yourself "de-skilled" - you can bring yourself back.

- Be aware its stereotype threat and not relevant to your actual abilities.

- Focus on your unique deep values

- Activate a different identity

- Recall a time you felt powerful and competent

Brief Small Group Exercise

- Describe a situation when, in reflecting back, you think you might have been experiencing social identity (stereotype) threat.

- What was the group identity? What was the trigger/cue? What would you do differently now? Which of the strategies might have been helpful?

Protecting Others from Social Identity (Stereotype) Threat

Creating Social Identity-Safety

- Ask about deep values.

- Facilitate self-affirmation (ask about or draw their attention to their: successes, accomplishments, things about themselves they are proud of, and/or values that define them.

Protect Others From Social Identity (Stereotype) Threat

- Frame things in a way that does not invoke stereotypes.

- Feedback: Communicate high standards but certainty person is capable of attaining them.

- Promote external or situational attribution for low performance

- Subtly remind them of their successes or any situation that may counter the negative stereotype.

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Protect Others From Social Identity (Stereotype) Threat

- When we focus on our common ground with others and see others' unique individual qualities (instead of in terms of their group identity) we reduce the likelihood that we might unintentionally trigger social identity.

- Interpersonal strategies:
  - Perspective taking
  - Affirm common core values.
  - Create a "common in-group identity" – partnership around common goals, hopes, struggles.

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# Protect Others From Social Identity (Stereotype) Threat

Perspective Taking

- Perspective-taking is the cognitive component of empathy.

- Perspective-taking and emotional empathy have has been shown inhibit the activation of unconscious stereotypes and prejudices.

- Practicing perspective taking with others will make them less likely to experience stereotype threat due to unintended biases.
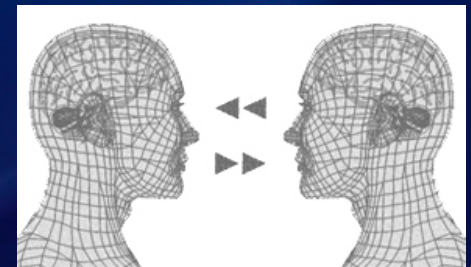
Practice Perspective-Taking
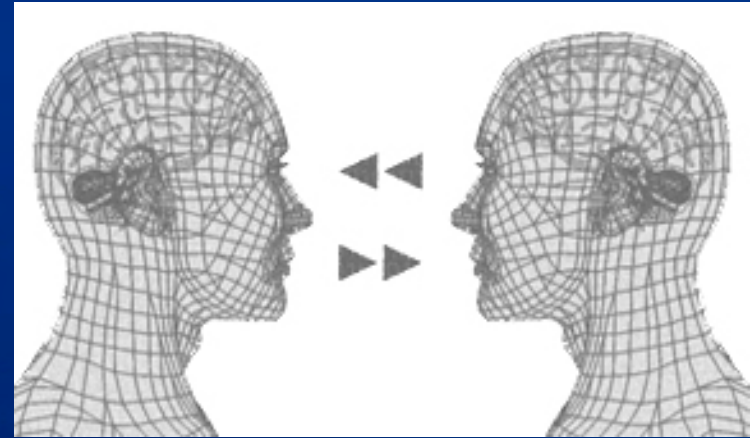
- *Imagine yourself in their shoes.*
- *If possible, check your perceptions.*
- "I am wondering how I might see it if I were looking through your eyes…"
- "I was imagining being in your shoes here and it occurred to me that I would (feel/think/be)….Am I close?"

Protect Others From Social Identity (Stereotype) Threat

Build a sense of partnership

- Feeling like a partner, part of a common "in group" lowers the likelihood of stereotype threat.

Protect Others From Social Identity (Stereotype) Threat

Protect and conserve your mental resources

- Mindfulness

- Emotional Regulation Skills
    - Positive emotions reduce stress, make us less likely to think of others as "outsiders"

- Emotion Shifting- Positive emotional states

- All the usual advice: sleep well, exercise, eat well, if possible reduce stressors

Protect Others From Social Identity (Stereotype) Threat

What am I? INVISIBLE?

Assess Group Processes

- **Time: Who has floor and for how long?**

- **Interruptions: How many? Who is interrupted? Who interrupts?**

- **Traction: Whose ideas, opinions, or thoughts get no response or follow-up? How often?**

- **Bring the conversation back around to those who were interrupted or ignored.**

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Protect Others From Social Identity (Stereotype) Threat

Change norms, set an example

Role-model learning and growth approach

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Small Group Discussion

- **Contemplate the conversations and meetings you have been in over the last month or two. Do you recall any times that another person's behavior, performance or general response might have been affected by social identity(stereotype) threat?**

- **Given what you now know, is there anything thing you would have done differently?**

Action Steps for Your Organization.

Handout

Action Steps: Create an Identity-Safe Organization

Creating Identity-Safety: Reducing Unconscious Bias & Eliminating Stereotype Threat Triggers

- Conduct an environmental audit for stereotype-consistent or reinforcing cues.

    - Images, artwork, educational materials, pamphlets, magazines, TV channels in waiting room.

- Physical space – is anyone excluded? How does the décor reflect the diversity of stakeholders?

- Ask teams of stakeholders representing relevant groups to conduct audit.

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Creating Identity-Safety: Reducing Unconscious Bias & Eliminating Stereotype Threat Triggers

Promote and Expose Yourself and Others to Counter-Stereotypic Images

Reducing Social Identity Threat in Feedback and Employee Evaluation

- Reduce evaluation criteria that depend on the feelings of the evaluator(s). specify measurable outcomes and specific behaviors This may reassure employees that they are less likely to be judged in terms of specific stereotypes.

- If possible, conduct evaluations in a way that allows the evaluators to be "blind" to employee group membership (age, race or ethnicity, gender etc).

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Disseminate an All-Inclusive Multicultural Diversity Philosophy

- Explicitly recognizes and values contributions from all groups, majority and minority.

- Ensurs all employees (minority and majority group members) report feeling included when they read/hear the philosophy.

- In many cases, organizations will have to help employees understand why the organization is moving away from a color-blind philosophy.

- Many have been taught that a color-blind philosophy is needed to promote group equality and may be initially confused by the an all-inclusive multicultural philosophy.

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References can be found at
http://bit.ly/sterotypeth

contact@p-e-i.org
www.p-e-i.org or
www.equityandinclusion.com

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