

HERITAGE TODAY VIDEO SERIES

“Unconscious Bias” Discussion Guide (2 pages)

Purpose

Provide a guide for Department of the Air Force leaders at all levels, to initiate critical thinking and group discussion / interaction before and after reviewing the Heritage Today video.

Description

Heritage Today video series inspire and challenge Department of the Air Force personnel with stories of heritage and emphasize the Core Values by using enabler characteristics of character, judgment, and commitment as the building blocks of professionalism.

Unconscious Bias research indicates that it happens in our brains, but not in our conscious awareness. This type of bias is usually learned and becomes mostly automatic. It’s a “short-cut,” to automate our thinking, useful at times, detrimental at other times. Unconscious Bias can become so ingrained that our behaviors, decisions, and interactions can be influenced. Bottom line is that it’s up to each one of us to identify our Unconscious Biases and learn to combat our unhealthy ways of thinking.

Execution

BEFORE VIEWING the “Unconscious Bias” video, lead the following discussion:

- What does Unconscious Bias mean to you?
- Where could Unconscious Biases come from?
(beliefs, lifetime of observations, experiences, social culture, social / news media)
- What are some types of Unconscious Bias that occur?
(age, gender, race, ethnicity, physically / mentally challenged people, lifestyles, looks / beauty, neighborhoods, conformity, past achievements, past shortfalls)
- What situations have you seen, or heard, or read about, where Unconscious Bias occurred in the military / Profession of Arms?
- Do you believe you can overcome Unconscious Bias? If not, why not? If so, how?

AFTER VIEWING the “Unconscious Bias” video, lead the following discussion:

- Has anyone changed their view of what Unconscious Bias means to you now? If so, how has it changed?
- Because having biases is human, and we all have Unconscious Biases, please share a story about how you or someone else allowed an Unconscious Bias to *impact* a person or a group of people.
- Your actions, based on Unconscious Biases, could have unintended negative consequences for others. As such, which of the Core Values and associated Virtues would these actions not be in line with?
*(INTEGRITY FIRST because it’s not the right path I should be on when faced with ethical challenges; Accountability because I’m not taking ownership of the outcomes of my actions / behaviors and it could discredit me or the service).
(SERVICE BEFORE SELF because I’m not embracing expectations and requirements with a heart and mindset for service; Duty because I could be causing someone else to question his / her obligation to perform, or exclude someone from performing what’s required for the mission; Loyalty because I’m not displaying it to the men and women I serve with; and Respect because I’m not treating others with dignity and value).
(EXCELLENCE IN ALL WE DO because I’m not including everyone so we’re not advancing our craft and increasing our knowledge; Mission because some people get left out of contributing their expertise and my work area isn’t undeniably professional and positive; Discipline because I’m not accepting that each Airman represents the entire Force and I’m making decisions that aren’t, and showing my actions and words aren’t, shaping the culture of professionalism; and Teamwork because I’m not ensuring every member’s potential contributions count and I’m not challenging and motivating others to give our personal best and I’m definitely not being a wingman for all).*

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- How could your Unconscious Biases affect the way other unit members view your professionalism?
 - What are some things you can do to help overcome some of your Unconscious Biases?
(Acknowledge my biases; talk to other people about their feelings / experiences; listen to others; enhance all my relationships; do things to change my way of thinking; don't judge based on first impressions; seek feedback about the way I treat / interact with others; promote teamwork; build trust with others).

NOTE:

The words in italics and parentheses are potential responses to the questions. Use them as a guide to help participants focus their thoughts if they're off track, confused, or stuck on coming up with responses.

For questions with no potential responses listed, then participants' responses may, and most likely will vary. Just ensure the responses are focused on the topic / subject of the question.

When you see the word "impact" in a question, you'll be actively listening for responses focused on one or more of the three sets: effective / ineffective, positive / negative, and appropriate / inappropriate examples from the participants. If they're not, then ask the participants to provide responses focused on one of the three sets.

You'll see the questions use the term "you" so that participants are actively engaged. As the facilitator, help participants use "I", "me", and "my" statements when responding. This way the participants are applying self-reflection and critical thinking. Persuade them away from using "they", "we", "them", "us" by saying, "OK, and how / why would *you*?"

References Heritage Today Video Link: [Unconscious Bias](#)

Links to Air Force Foundational Competencies

- Developing Self: Accountability, Communication, Information Seeking, Self-Control
- Developing Others: Teamwork; Service Mindset, Leadership, Fosters Inclusion
- Developing Ideas: Influence

Contact Us
Phone: 344-953-5865 (DSN 493)
E-Mail: AETC.PACE.SchedulingWorkflow@us.af.mil
Website: www.airman.af.mil

