



## Equality Diversity and Inclusion Toolkit

### **Module 1.4** Unconscious Bias

## REMINDER

### Theological reflections on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

*A Theological Reflections on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion* document is provided separately. All participants should have a copy of this when they attend their first session. It does not need to be considered in detail every time, but participants should be introduced to it at least once, and should be made aware that this is the starting point for all our work on EDI issues in the Methodist Church.

## Module 4

### Unconscious Bias

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## Opening worship

Jesu, Jesu, fill us with your love

*Singing the Faith 249*

Luke 10:25-37

The good Samaritan: who is my neighbour?

### Prayer

O God, Creator of all peoples,  
grant us your strength of love  
that we may live with a vulnerable openness to each other,  
which welcomes our diversity and difference  
as your gifts.

Amen.

(Will Morrey)

# EXPLORE

## 1 Context

### 1.1 Introduction

This module builds on the introductory module of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Toolkit, to help people develop an understanding and awareness of unconscious biases and affinities. Unconscious bias is a natural part of how people's brains work. From an early age, our minds learn to be comfortable with the familiar and to be sceptical of unfamiliarity. When human beings lived in nomadic tribal groups, this was an important part of keeping the group safe from potential danger, as anything or anyone unfamiliar could be a risk. However, the modern world is significantly more complex, and human societies are much more diverse and varied. Our modern human societies have a better understanding of how human diversity is beneficial, rather than threatening.

Unfortunately, unconscious biases can also lead to unintentional discrimination. The biases of human societies are subtly communicated from one generation to another, and societies continue to have strong biases and prejudices about people who look, sound or act different to the majority. However, if people are aware of their biases, they are better able to avoid unintentional discrimination. It is possible for people to 'unlearn' old habits and old biases, and learn how to be more inclusive and accepting of diversity.

### 1.2 A context for church life

Being aware of unconscious bias is particularly important when making decisions for the Church, especially when those decisions are about people. Examples of such occasions are: stationing and matching, local preacher assessment, appointing church officers, recruiting employees, or formal processes such as development reviews, sickness/absence management and/or disciplinary processes.

The *Theological Reflections on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion* (set out in Module 1.2 of the EDI Toolkit) state, at paragraph 16:

A Christian way of living in anticipation of the fullness of the kingdom of God remains difficult to sustain both for individuals and for the Church as an institution. We reflect the divine image in a broken way. This has been true from the beginning. The New Testament does not know of a perfect Christian community, and human sinfulness has not diminished with the passage of time. The life of the Church is eroded by it; its symptoms and results include fractured relationships, (both personal and communal), unwitting exclusivisms, and discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, disability, age, wealth or sexuality. The Church in the past has excluded many believing it was acting fairly and justly by adhering to its well-established boundaries. The Church is challenged to acknowledge the ways in which it fails to live up to its calling, and to continue to prayerfully reflect on the boundaries it establishes. Furthermore, we must always be alert to any inadvertent exclusion and prejudice through our ignorance rather than a conscious desire not to be a place of sanctuary, refuge, safety and love for the marginalised. The Church is reminded of its own need of forgiveness and grace, and turns to God to seek new life in Jesus Christ.

### 1.3 Introductory activity

See Appendix 2, the quiz on the PowerPoint presentation slides: "The Game".

## 2 Where do our unconscious biases come from?

2.1 Psychologists tell us that our unconscious biases are simply our natural people preferences. In workplace social psychology, the study of how people work together (eg in business or industry), it is becoming more common to talk about affinity bias, rather than unconscious bias. There are two reasons for this.

Firstly, there is a recognition that people's biases are often about affinity, rather than rejection. As human beings we have a better understanding of people who are like us, and situations that are familiar to our own. Consequently people who look like us, sound like us and share our interests are easier to understand, and therefore, easier for us to identify with.

Secondly, biases are not always unconscious. Sometimes people are conscious of our own biases, but still find it difficult to forget them.

Another theory about unconscious bias, is that from childhood people learn subtle messages from their family and social group about how things 'should be', according to the norms of the family and/or social group. As people socialise beyond what is familiar and comfortable, they become exposed to new experiences and ideas, diverse people, and different ways of expressing human emotions and thoughts. Sometimes our new social interactions help us to become familiar with difference, but sometimes those differences challenge us, and it can be difficult to accept difference.

## 2.2 Discussion activity

In pairs or small groups:

- Make a list of things that you think define British society.
- What things about Britain might surprise people from other countries?
- Are there regional differences in what people call things (for example: dinner, tea or supper; a bap, a bun or a roll; a sofa, a settee or a couch)?
- Why do these things matter to you personally?
- How much does it really matter if other people do things differently?

## 2.3 Learning points so far

- We learn from people around us, and usually, what we learn when we are children we think of as normal.
- The people we learn from (family, social group, teachers etc) have all been shaped by their experiences and their values, and we subtly learn from them.
- Our own experiences, our environment, how we are treated by others, how much opportunity we have to mix with other people, all have an impact on what we think and feel.
- Having a range of new experiences, and knowing a wider range of people, can make us more comfortable with difference, but it can also cause us to be cautious or nervous.

## 2.4 Deep-rooted unconscious bias

Sometimes our biases and affinities are deep-rooted in the subconscious mind: people make decisions that bypass our normal, rational and logical thinking. It happens when people are under stress or anxious, or if they need to make decisions instantly. Social psychologists call this phenomenon 'social categorisation', whereby we routinely and rapidly sort people into groups. People might call it 'intuition' but the categories we use to sort people are not logical, modern or perhaps even legal. Put simply, our neurology takes us to the very brink of bias and poor decision making.

In Appendix 1 of this module (and slides 22-28 on the PowerPoint presentation in Appendix 2), there is a little more information on unconscious bias and the human brain. This may be of particular interest to people who are interested in neuroscience. The appendix explains how the brain develops unconscious biases, but it is important to remember that our brains are constantly learning and adapting. Therefore, whilst deep-rooted biases (even prejudices) may still be somewhere in the back of our minds, we can learn to challenge those biases and prejudices.

## 2.5 Illusion exercises: can we really believe what we see?

Take a look at slides 14-21 in the presentation pack (Appendix 2): the Ponzo illusion, the Ebbinghaus illusion and the Bader-Meinhoff effect. These images are visual illustrations of some of the ways our minds work, sometimes 'filling in the gaps' according to our previous experience, and sometimes taking particular notice of new things. Such optical illusions help us to understand bias.

### **Ponzo**

The Ponzo illusion shows us that the human mind judges an object's size based on its background or the context in which it is shown. Even though we are presented with a flat, two-dimensional image our brains perceive the upper line as though it were farther away, so we see it as longer.

### **Ebbinghaus**

Even though both circles are the same size, we perceive the circle surrounded by smaller circles as bigger. Our brain makes a judgement before we are able to 'think it through'.

### **Bader-Meinhoff**

When we become aware of something we have not previously considered, we start to notice it everywhere. This can be negative or positive.

## 2.6 Learning points

The human brain has evolved to make rational sense of random or limited information (Ponzo/Ebbinghaus).

The brain processes information according to what we have previously experienced; unconsciously, the brain takes note of things that confirm our existing views (Ponzo/Ebbinghaus).

However, the brain also takes note of new information – and notices it everywhere (the Bader-Meinhoff effect).

We can consciously challenge and question assumptions by being **intentional** and **attentive** in our learning. Our environment, the diversity of our social group and our experiences in life all influence how we feel, think and make decisions in the future.

## 3 Types of unconscious bias

Consider a selection of the case studies in the 'Apply and reflect' section, and consider the questions and learning points. Notice that there are different ways in which unconscious bias affects people. These can be summarised as:

### **Conformity bias**

Conformity bias relates to bias caused by group peer pressure. In order to feel 'we belong', people can overlook their own rational views and observations, and comply with the 'strongest voices'.

**Beauty bias**

This is the view that comes from preconceived ideas of 'what good looks like'. In recruitment, it's common that recruiters will look to fill a role with someone who shares similar physical attributes to the person who held that role before, or who they believe looks like the kind of person who should have the role based on their preconceived bias.

**Affinity bias**

Affinity bias is where we feel we have an affinity to people because of shared interests, and/or because they have similarities to other people in our social, professional or church circles. In appointments and recruitment, this can lead to individuals and organisations making decisions that preserve the status quo, rather than being dynamic.

**Attribution/confirmation bias**

This is where we notice one outstanding achievement, and attribute success universally to someone because of it. Alternatively it can be when we see one bad thing about a person and we let it cloud our opinions of their other attributes. It is also the case that people can judge a whole group of people based on experience of just one individual – ie where we stereotype.

**Contrast effect**

This plays out regularly in appointments and recruitment where interviews and panels start comparing candidates to each other, rather than to the criteria against which their application is being judged.

#### 4 So what can we do?

##### 4.1 When is unconscious bias most active?

We have the capacity in our brains to control bias, but we do not have infinite energy or resilience. When we use up these resources, bias is more likely to break through into our behaviour. When we are stressed, frustrated, angry, or threatened these emotions overwhelm our resources and bias can be left unfettered.

##### 4.2 How does unconscious bias affect our behaviour?

Unconscious bias operates at a very subtle level, usually below our awareness. It results in almost unnoticeable behaviours (micro behaviours) such as paying a little less attention to what the other person says, addressing them less warmly or talking less to them. Without care and attention to how our own behaviours affect others, we tend to become less empathetic towards people who are not like us. These behaviours are small and not likely to lead to censure, but long-term exposure is corrosive.

##### 4.3 What can I do about my unconscious biases?

People are not automatons who cannot control their behaviour; we all have the ability to control our biases. The brain has a 'bias control mechanism' that prevents our biases becoming behaviour. To trigger this mechanism, our brain needs to see a mismatch between our instinctive people preferences and our wider goals (eg our values or our desire to be fair – or at least, to be seen as fair). Having personal goals that are fair, moral and value-driven helps trigger our natural bias defences.

Being aware of what biases we have and how strong they are equips us to better manage our unconscious biases. This is because we know which groups may trigger our unconscious categories and when we may need to be more vigilant.

Managing unconscious bias is not just of benefit to others. If we can control and manage our

unconscious biases, it releases cognitive and emotional resources. These resources lead to better/fairer decision-making and enhanced problem solving; increased ability to think in novel situations; better logical reasoning and more persistence.

**A test**

You can explore your own unconscious bias at [implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/](https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/). These tests are confidential and purely for your personal use and benefit.

#### 4.4 Reflection

Consider what, as Christians, we understand as humankind being made in the image of God. How can our values as Christians help us challenge unconscious biases?

## APPLY and REFLECT

### 1 Case studies

In small groups, consider the following case studies. Think about at least two of the stories, as many as time will allow.

Each of these is a true story, although names and some details have been changed to maintain anonymity.

There are questions to consider for each case study. Reflect also, as you read, on what the key words, emotions and issues are – for the person in the story and for you.

## Steven's story

Soon after being stationed to a new church, Steven noticed that some church members were openly racist to others who were from ethnic minorities, refusing to listen to anything he had to say and belittling his contribution to church life. Unfortunately, this group is over-represented in the leadership of the church, despite being a minority within the congregation itself.

Steven is appalled by this behaviour, but unsure as to what to do to change people's attitudes. When he spoke to others within the circuit about it, all he got in response were platitudes like "There's a lot of that around, isn't there?" Without any support from his colleagues (and for the sake of those affected by the racism) Steven has resorted to suggesting that the affected church members join a different church. The whole situation has led Steven to question his calling.

### Questions

#### Experience

- Who has failed Steven in this story, and how?

#### Learning

- What could have been done differently?

#### Action

- How does your church seek out a diverse range of people and talent in leadership roles?
- When new people take over roles, what support systems are in place in your church? Do the systems work? What could you do to make them work?

## Karen's story

Karen had been asked several times over a number of appointments to think about becoming a superintendent. She had thought long and hard about it, but each time she came back to the same old thoughts: that not only was the role male-dominated, but superintendents were expected to be domineering – which was just not her style. It was not until she was stationed with a woman superintendent that Karen felt she had finally found a role model who could help her rethink how she too could do the role. Her superintendent was supportive and persuasive, encouraging her to realise her potential. Karen is now an active and engaging superintendent, committed to her work and to ensuring that women have equal access to role models.

### Questions

#### Experience

- What were Karen's reasons, initially, for not wanting to be a superintendent?

#### Learning

- What were the traditional images of leadership in Karen's mind?
- What, if anything, do you think is different about Karen's leadership?

#### Action

- How would you and your church ensure that women are actively supported in their ministry?
- How would you support women or men to explore different styles of leadership?

## Harry's story

Harry is six years old and has Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). As a result, he lacks understanding and awareness of other people's emotions and feelings, and he finds it difficult to start conversations or take part in them properly. He also has a habit of tapping repetitively. Julie, his mother, has tried to explain Harry's ASD to the members of her local church, as he is regarded as strange because he "doesn't look disabled" (as one person put it).

Though most of the parents within the church are supportive of Julie and Harry, they feel uncomfortable with Harry playing with their children. Harry tends to give the children nicknames which are "not always kind", and to shout these out at them. Harry also finds it very difficult to sit still in church, and though Julie brings a box of small toys to keep him occupied, he sometimes gets very angry or noisy. Julie regularly has to explain that he is not being naughty. She is finding coming to church very stressful.

### Questions

#### Experience

- How do people's attitudes towards Harry affect Julie? How might they affect Harry?

#### Learning

- What could have been done differently in this story?

#### Action

- What could you and your church do to make it a more inclusive place, where people like Harry and Julie can be heard and all feel welcomed?
- What could you do?

## Francesca's story

Francesca has recently moved to a new area, having started her first job after leaving university. The church she has joined does not have many young members, although the leadership is keen to change this. As soon as Francesca was accepted into the church community, members and stewards started coming up to her and asking if she was interested in working with the children and young people. Francesca has been politely refusing, as she doesn't believe that is where her talents lie. Despite mentioning to the minister and members of the church that she has a passion for outreach and that she would be very happy to be involved in this area of the church's ministry, people continue only to consider her for children and youth work.

Recently, Francesca has started to hear comments about how young people are selfish and won't give their time to the church. This has left her frustrated and hurt, and she is considering moving to another church.

### Questions

#### Experience

- What assumptions have been made about Francesca?
- Why do you think people have those assumptions?
- Have you noticed or experienced people making similar assumptions?

#### Learning

- What could be the consequences of Francesca's experience – both for her and for the local church?
- What structural, cultural, institutional or personal assumptions have people in this story made?

#### Action

- What could the people in this story have done differently?
- Now thinking about the situations you experienced or noticed personally, what would you do differently?
- Who is responsible for making those kinds of changes in your church, or others that you know, and who can help them? Consider what you will do.

## Peter's story

Peter was born into a very large family, as the oldest boy with five sisters; he had throughout his life been not just a brother, but a mother, father and friend. With such a large family, it went without question that he helped out his mother and sisters. From an early age Peter would set up Sunday school in the kitchen and read from the children's Bible, then get his sisters to draw pictures which they all loved. This pattern continued until all the children became adults.

At church, Peter decided to put himself forward to teach Sunday school, as this is where he saw his calling. He approached the minister to discuss this, but was told that for safeguarding reasons, the church had decided that only women could be Sunday school teachers, as parents were uncomfortable with men in this role. The minister suggested that Peter should work in the youth club with the football team instead. Peter was quite upset by this response. He felt saddened that the minister's decision was wrong, but decided not to challenge it as he had already been made to feel bad for suggesting working at the Sunday school in the first place.

### Questions

#### Experience

- What assumptions were made about Peter because he is a man?
- If you were told that you couldn't do something "for safeguarding reasons", how would you feel?
- Have similar assumptions been made in your church?

#### Learning

- What could have been done differently in this story?

#### Action

- How would you and your church ensure that it could use the skills and expertise of someone, regardless of their gender?
- How would you inform people about gender equality?

## Jim's story

Jim works full-time and has two children. Having recently gone through a divorce, Jim is greatly thankful to his church and its members, and feels that he wants to give something back and help the church. The church recently established a 'mission committee' to try to help the church be more of a presence in the community and attract a broader demographic of people. Jim saw this as the perfect opportunity and was gratefully accepted into the group. However, when Jim received the notice of the first meeting, he saw that he would be unable to attend as it was scheduled for during the working day.

When Jim pointed this out to the chair of the group, he was told that almost everyone who volunteers to be on committees is retired, and that they do not like to be out in the evenings. When Jim raised the problem with the minister, she was sympathetic but said that church meetings had always been held during the day, and she couldn't afford to lose the support of the older members. Jim was forced to withdraw from the committee and now gives his time volunteering with a local charity.

### Questions

#### Experience

- What assumptions have been made in this story, and about whom?
- Has anything similar happened in your experience?

#### Learning

- What structural, cultural, institutional or personal assumptions were made by people in this story?
- How could a situation like this, or others that you can think of, impact people like Jim?
- How would this impact on the mission of the church (eg what has the church lost by not having Jim involved)?

#### Action

- What could have been done differently?
- Who is responsible for making those kinds of changes in your church, or others that you know, and who can help them? Consider what you will do.

## 2 Summary and learning points

- Unconscious bias is a natural part of how the human brain works.
- It comes from a mixture of learnt behaviours, experiences and assumptions.
- It is not intentional, but can have discriminatory effects on people.
- By being intentional and attentive in our thinking and learning, we can challenge our own assumptions and biases.

Thinking about your answers to the questions and issues raised in the case studies, reflect on:

- **what you have learnt**
- **what the stories might mean in your church**
- **what you will do.**

## Closing worship

Matthew 16:13-20

Who do you say that I am?

### Prayer

Loving God, give us richness of imagination  
to see you in the faces of everyone we meet,  
so that we may adore and worship you unceasingly  
and enjoy you as we enjoy other people;  
through Jesus, lover of all.

Amen.

(Donald Frith)

Thanks for friends who keep on loving  
*Singing the Faith* 619

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1 The science bit: unconscious bias and the human brain

2.1 This section explores where our unconscious biases come from. It is important to remember that these:

- are natural (part of how our brains work)
- are unintended (not deliberate)
- are impactful (ie they affect the decisions we make)
- can be mitigated (we can do something about them).

Psychologists tell us that our unconscious biases are simply our natural people preferences. Our life experiences, socialisation and cultural values subtly shape how we think and feel. Some things and some people are, therefore, more familiar to us – which leads us to prefer people who look like us, sound like us and share our interests. Social psychologists call this phenomenon ‘social categorisation’, whereby we routinely and rapidly sort people into groups. This preference bypasses our normal, rational and logical thinking. We use these processes very effectively (we call it intuition) but the categories we use to sort people are not logical, modern or perhaps even legal. Put simply, our neurology takes us to the very brink of bias and poor decision-making.

#### Just how hard-wired is unconscious bias?

On one hand, neuropsychologists tell us it is built into the very structure of the brain’s neurons. Our unconscious brain processes and sifts vast amounts of information looking for patterns (200,000 times more information than the conscious mind). When the unconscious brain sees two things occurring together (eg many male senior managers) it begins to expect them to be seen together and begins to wire them together. Brain imaging scans have demonstrated that when people are shown images of faces that differ to themselves, it activates an irrational prejudice in the brain’s alert system for danger: the amygdalae. This happens in less than a tenth of a second. Our associations and biases are likely to be activated every time we encounter a group member, even if we consciously think that we reject a group stereotype.

However, on the other hand, social scientists and educators point out that our brains are constantly learning new experiences, and we are capable of challenging our assumptions, biases and prejudices. Even in terms of the neuroscience, the brain has a ‘safety gateway’ where unconscious instincts can be passed to the brain’s social processing areas, which enables our actions to become empathetic. People can make active choices about whether to act on instinct or empathy; the more often we act empathetically, the more we naturally behave empathetically.

2.2 Take a look at slides 14-21 in the presentation pack: the Ponzo illusion, the Ebbinghaus illusion and the Bader-Meinhoff effect. Now consider the following questions and learning points:

#### **Ponzo – can we really believe what we see?**

The Ponzo Illusion shows us that the human mind judges an object’s size based on its background or the context in which it is shown. Even though we are presented with a flat, two-dimensional image, our brains perceive the upper line as though it were farther away, so we see it as longer.

#### **Ebbinghaus**

Even though both circles are the same size, we perceive the circle surrounded by smaller circles as bigger. Our brain makes a judgement before we are able to ‘think it through’.

### **Bader-Meinhoff**

When we become aware of something we have not previously considered, we start to notice it everywhere. This can be negative or positive.

### Learning points

The human brain has evolved to make rational sense of random or limited information (Ponzo/Ebbinghaus).

The brain processes information according to what we have previously experienced; unconsciously, the brain takes note of things that confirm our existing views (Ponzo/Ebbinghaus).

However, the brain also takes note of new information – and notices it everywhere (the Bader-Meinhoff effect).

We can consciously challenge and question assumptions by being **intentional** and **attentive** in our learning. Our environment, the diversity of our social group and our life's experiences all influence how we feel, think and make decisions in the future.

## Appendix 2 - Presentation pack (PowerPoint)

<p>The Methodist Church</p> <h3>Unconscious Bias</h3>	<p>The Methodist Church</p> <h3>The Game!</h3> <p>In groups answer the following questions:</p> <p><b>Beauty bias</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What percentage of workers have experienced some sort of appearance-based discrimination?           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6%-8%</li> <li>• 9%-11%</li> <li>• 12%-14%</li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p>(USA, 2015)</p>	<p>The Methodist Church</p> <h3>Battle of the sexes</h3> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Researchers sent out 127 fake job applications; 63 professors received applications from the 'ghost' applicant John and 64 received applications from the 'ghost' Jennifer. All applications were identical.</li> </ol> <p>On average what was the difference in offers for John and Jennifer?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £1,500</li> <li>• £2,000</li> <li>• £2,500</li> </ul> <p>(Princeton researchers, 2015)</p>
<p>The Methodist Church</p> <h3>Higher or lower</h3> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Less than 15% of American men are over 6 ft (1.82 m) tall. What percentage of corporate chief executives are over 6 ft (1.82 m) tall?           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20%</li> <li>• 40%</li> <li>• 60%</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Less than 4% of American men are over 6 ft 2 in (1.87 m) tall. What percentage of corporate chief executives are over 6 ft 2 in (1.87 m) tall?           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 16%</li> <li>• 26%</li> <li>• 36%</li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p>(Princeton researchers, 2015)</p>	<p>The Methodist Church</p> <h3>Race to the top</h3> <p>Women make up 51% of the UK population; BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) groups make up 14%.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. What is the overall proportion of women who are directors in the FTSE 100?           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 23.5%</li> <li>• 30.5%</li> <li>• 48.9%</li> </ul> </li> <li>6. What is the overall proportion of BME people who are directors in the FTSE 100?           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5.3%</li> <li>• 8.2%</li> <li>• 14.9%</li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p>(ONS 2017)</p>	<p>The Methodist Church</p> <h3>Race to the top (continued)</h3> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. What percentage of members of Parliament are women?           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 23%</li> <li>• 33%</li> <li>• 43%</li> </ul> </li> <li>8. What percentage of members of Parliament are BME?           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5%</li> <li>• 8%</li> <li>• 14%</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
<p>The Methodist Church</p> <h3>Race to the top (continued)</h3> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. What percentage of members of Parliament have self-identified as disabled?           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0.07%</li> <li>• 0.70%</li> <li>• 7.07%</li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p>(the Guardian, 2017)</p>	<p>The Methodist Church</p> <h3>The age gap</h3> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. What percentage of workers thought that having a 70-year-old boss would be unacceptable?           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5%</li> <li>• 10%</li> <li>• 15%</li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p>(UK, 2016)</p>	<p>The Methodist Church</p> <h3>The Game - ANSWERS</h3> <p>In groups answer the following questions:</p> <p><b>Beauty bias</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What percentage of workers have experienced some sort of appearance-based discrimination?           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6%-8%</li> <li>• 9%-11%</li> <li>• <b>12%-14%</b></li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p>(USA, 2015)</p>
<p>The Methodist Church</p> <h3>Battle of the sexes</h3> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Researchers sent out 127 fake job applications; 63 professors received applications from the 'ghost' applicant John and 64 received applications from the 'ghost' Jennifer. All applications were identical.</li> </ol> <p>On average what was the difference in offers for John and Jennifer?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £1,500</li> <li>• £2,000</li> <li>• <b>£2,500</b></li> </ul> <p>(Princeton researchers, 2015)</p>	<p>The Methodist Church</p> <h3>Higher or lower</h3> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Less than 15% of American men are over 6 ft (1.82 m) tall. What percentage of corporate chief executives are over 6 ft (1.82 m) tall?           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20%</li> <li>• 40%</li> <li>• <b>60%</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Less than 4% of American men are over 6 ft 2 in (1.87 m) tall. What percentage of corporate chief executives are over 6 ft 2 in (1.87 m) tall?           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 16%</li> <li>• 26%</li> <li>• <b>36%</b></li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p>(Princeton researchers, 2015)</p>	<p>The Methodist Church</p> <h3>Race to the top</h3> <p>Women make up 51% of the UK population, BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) groups make up 14%.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. What is the overall proportion of women who are directors in the FTSE 100?           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>23.5%</b></li> <li>• 30.5%</li> <li>• 48.9%</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
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### The age gap

10. What percentage of workers thought that having a 70-year-old boss would be unacceptable?

- 5%
- 10%
- **15%**

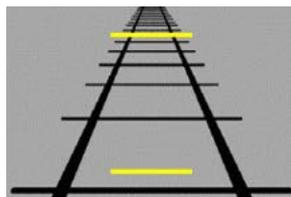
(UK, 2016)

### Seeing is believing?

Can we really believe what we see?

How optical illusions help us to understand bias:

#### The Ponzo illusion

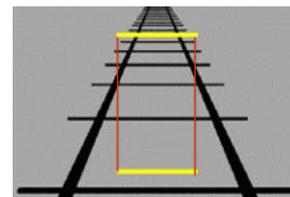


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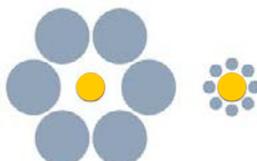
Can we really believe what we see?

How optical illusions help us to understand bias:

The Ponzo illusion shows us that the human mind judges an object's size based on its background or the context in which it is shown. Even though we are presented with a flat, two-dimensional image our brains perceive the upper line as though it were farther away, so we see it as longer.

### Seeing is believing?

#### Ebbinghaus illusion



#### Ebbinghaus illusion



In the Ebbinghaus illusion, even though both circles are the same size, we perceive the circle surrounded by smaller circles as bigger. Our brain makes a judgement before we are able to 'think it through'.

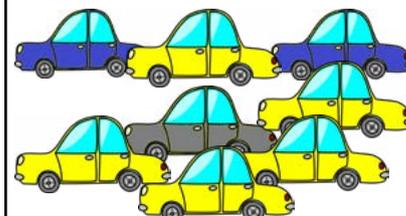
### Bader-Meinhoff Effect



Imagine you want a new car.



And you want a yellow one, because you haven't seen many.



And once you buy it, suddenly you see yellow cars everywhere.

### How the brain manages information

The human brain has evolved to make rational sense of random or limited information (Ponzo/Ebbinghaus).

The brain processes information according to what we have previously experienced. Unconsciously, the brain takes note of things that confirm our existing views (Ponzo/Ebbinghaus).

However, the brain also takes note of new information – and notices it everywhere (the Bader-Meinhoff Effect).

We can consciously challenge and question assumptions by being **intentional** and **attentive** in our learning.

### What is unconscious bias?

- Psychologists tell us that our unconscious biases are simply our natural people preferences.
- Biologically, we are hard-wired to prefer people who look like us, sound like us and share our interests.
- This preference bypasses our normal, rational and logical thinking. When we use these processes effectively we call it *intuition*.
- But the categories we use to sort people are not logical, modern or perhaps even legal.
- Simply put, our neurology takes us to the very brink of bias and poor decision-making.

### Just how hard-wired is unconscious bias?

- Our unconscious brain processes and sifts vast amounts of information looking for patterns (200,000 times more information than the conscious mind).
- When the unconscious brain sees two things occurring together (**eg many male senior managers**), it begins to expect them to be seen together, and begins to wire them together.
- Brain imaging scans show that when people see images of faces that are different, it activates an irrational prejudice in the brain's alert system for danger: the amygdalae. This happens in less than a tenth of a second.

### How does unconscious bias affect our behaviour?

- Unconscious bias operates at a very subtle level, below our awareness.
- It results in almost unnoticeable behaviours (micro behaviours) such as paying a little less attention to what the other person says, addressing them less warmly or talking less to them.
- We tend to be less empathetic towards people who are not like us.

### What can I do about my unconscious biases?

- We have a bias control mechanism in the brain that prevents our biases becoming behaviour.
- To trigger this mechanism, our brain needs to see a mis-match between our wider goals (eg our desire to be or to be seen as fair) and our instinctive people preferences.
- Because it is a moral position, having a personal goal that is fair helps trigger our natural bias defences.
- Being aware of what biases we have (and how strong they are) equips us to better manage our unconscious biases, because we know which groups may trigger our unconscious biases, and so we can be more vigilant.

### The benefits

- Managing unconscious bias is not just of benefit to others.
- If we can control and manage our unconscious biases, it releases cognitive and emotional resources.
- These resources lead to better/fairer decision-making and enhanced problem solving, increased ability to think in novel situations, better logical reasoning and more persistence.

### The test

To explore your own unconscious bias, go to: [implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/](http://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/). These tests are confidential and purely for your benefit.

### Reflection

How does the notion of being neurologically hard-wired to unconsciously prefer the familiar relate to our notions about the image of God?

