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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
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A minute for IDEA: Bias

NSD IDEA Council:

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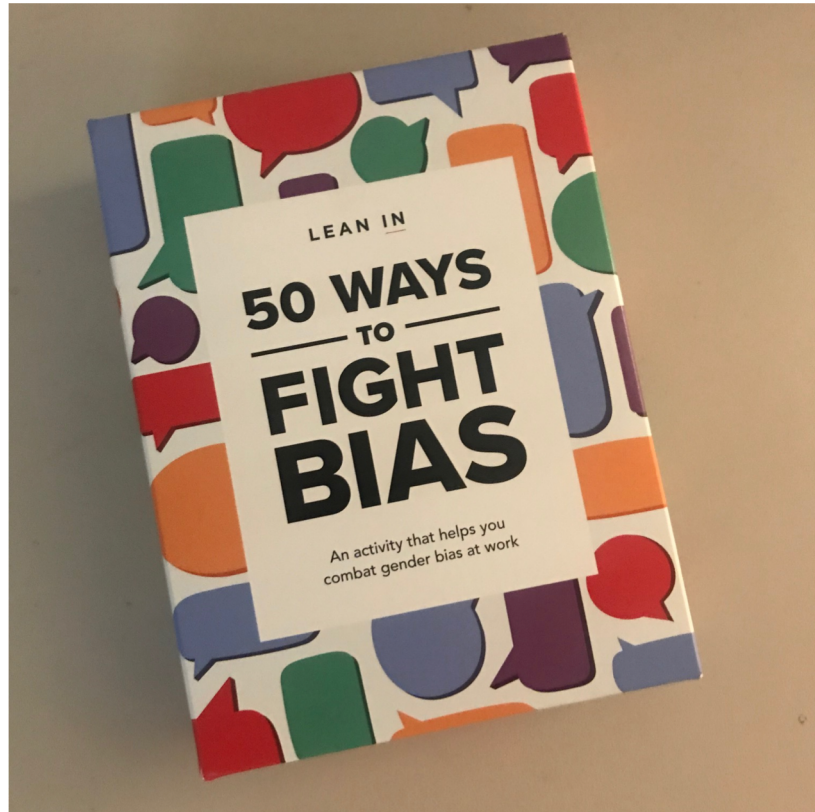
Ernst Sichtermann (he/him)

NSD All Hands Staff Meeting

July 13, 2021

A brief reminder

One of the Division's Resources:



50 practical examples, for common situations, including searches and hiring.

Each Program has this kit,

Reach out to your Program Head.

Developed by Lean In; leanin.org has a wealth of resources.

Lean In: is/appears focused on women

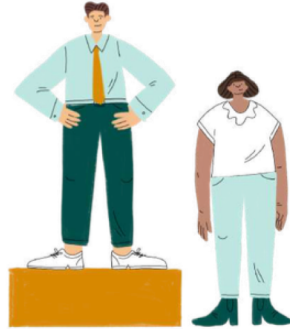
- Indeed,
- If you are unfamiliar with the [fire-house analogy](#), consider looking it up,
- Women face biases because of many aspects of their identity,
- Intersectionality can be at play in any situation,
- Bias exists, also in NSD – recall IDEA [minutes](#) related to [Project Implicit](#)
- Knowing that bias exists is not enough – commit to take action.

Lean In on bias in the work place



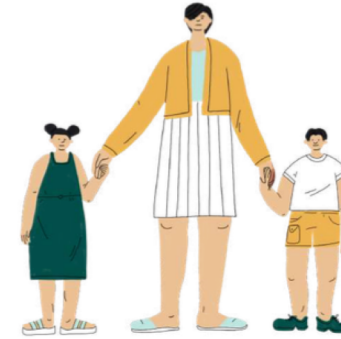
Likeability bias

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



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



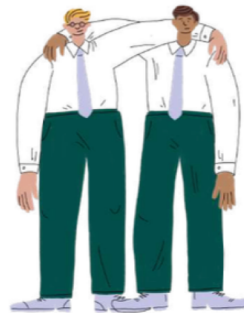
Maternal bias

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



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



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



Intersectionality

Bias isn’t limited to gender. Women can also experience biases due to their race, sexual orientation, a disability, or other aspects of their identity.

Lean In Cards

WHAT MAKES 50 WAYS TO FIGHT BIAS EFFECTIVE



Likeability bias



Performance bias



Maternal bias



Attribution bias



Affinity bias



Double discrimination
& intersectionality

✓ **Specific and solutions-oriented**
Highlights 50 specific examples of gender bias with clear recommendations for what to do—because research shows bias training is more effective when it's tied to realistic and familiar situations.¹

✓ **Designed to engage men**
Many gender bias trainings leave men feeling attacked or alienated.² 50 Ways is designed to help men play a meaningful role in identifying and combating bias.

✓ **Rooted in research**
The advice on the cards is based on **research from leading experts** on gender, diversity, and inclusion. And every situation has been reviewed by experts to ensure that the program addresses the most common and impactful types of bias women face.

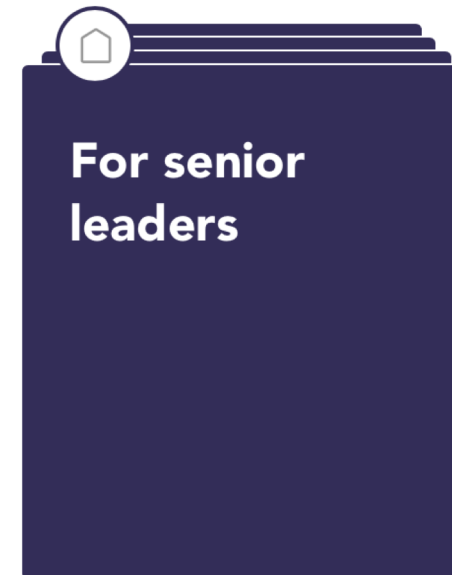
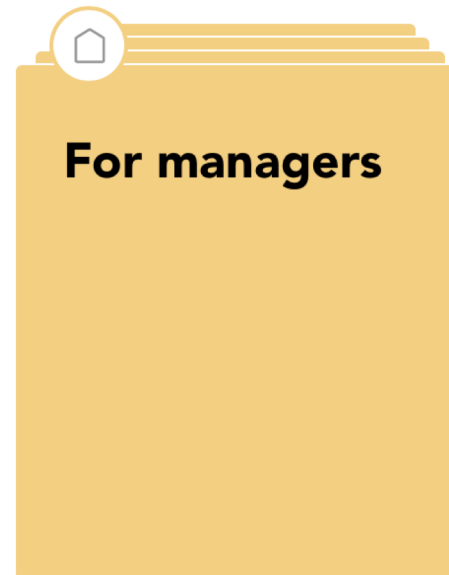
The Lean In website, leanin.org, has evolved to become even more of a resource.

Lean In Website

Choose a set

You can choose from one of 12 sets of digital cards curated for different audiences and workplace interactions. Each set includes icebreakers highlighting research on the biases women face, followed by 15 to 20 specific examples of how it shows up in the workplace. If you're not sure which set to use, choose the Bias fundamentals set to run an introductory workshop.

Need some direction? [Get the moderator guide](#)



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You're on a team doing performance reviews and notice that a lot of women get feedback on their speaking style.

WHY IT MATTERS

Criticisms like this can prevent qualified women from advancing, which hurts both them and your company.

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WHAT TO DO

When you notice this pattern, point it out. Explain this is a common bias against women and **WHY IT HAPPENS**. Suggest that the group focus on the substance of what people say, not their speaking style.

Longer term, recommend that your company use standardized criteria for performance reviews, which will reduce subjective opinions. Consider recommending anti-bias training for employees involved in the review process. When people understand how bias impacts their decision-making, they are able to make more objective decisions.

WHY IT HAPPENS

Studies show that women often get negative feedback on their speaking style, while men do not.³⁹⁴ If women are confident and assertive, they can be criticized for speaking too loudly or often. But if they are quieter, they are more likely to be told that they need to speak more confidently and assertively.³⁹⁵ For some groups of women, no matter how they speak, people project stereotypes onto them: Asian women are more likely to be criticized for being too quiet, while Black women and Latinas are more often labeled angry or loud.³⁹⁶

Rooted in likeability bias

You're in a meeting to discuss performance reviews and notice that men are described as "strategic" and "visionary," while women are "hard workers" or "good team players."

WHY IT MATTERS

How we describe people matters—and can unfairly influence performance reviews.³⁹⁷ In this situation, it's not hard to imagine men getting the inside track on promotions and raises.

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WHAT TO DO

Point out the pattern and explain **WHY IT MATTERS**. You can also talk to HR about creating a broad checklist of leadership attributes with concrete examples of what they look like in practice. Expanding the definition of a good leader will help with inclusivity, and using a standardized checklist to evaluate candidates can help remove bias from the review process.³⁹⁸

WHY IT HAPPENS

Gender stereotypes influence the words we use. Even when women and men produce similar results, we often talk about them differently. We tend to use words associated with leadership like "driven," "big thinker," and "visionary" to describe men. In contrast, we often describe women with communal language like "team player," "friendly," and "committed," not words that speak to skill or impact.³⁹⁹

A few take-aways

- Indeed, it is PMP time,
- Bias can have very adverse effects on the individual and organization,
- Consider how bias is at play,
- Ask a probing question,
- Stick to the facts,
- leanin.org and ideas-in-action.lbl.gov are great resources.

The NSD IDEA Council welcomes your comments, suggestions for IDEA topics, and other feedback,

You can reach us at: NSD-IDEA-Council@lbl.gov