NSU Florida
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NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

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DR KIRAN C. PATEL COLLEGE OF ALLOPATHIC MEDICINE

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"To know the true reality of yourself, you must be aware not only of your conscious thoughts, but also of your unconscious prejudices, bias and habits"

– Author Unknown

"Knowing that one may be subject to bias is one thing; being able to correct it is another"

– Jon Elster

Exploring our Biases

Literature offers several definitions of bias. When viewed from a very simple perspective, a bias can be defined as an inclination or propensity toward or against an individual or a particular thing. There are two types of biases. The first is explicit or conscious bias where an individual's feelings and attitudes and related behaviors are conducted with obvious intent and is easily identifiable.

The second is Implicit or unconscious bias where our unconscious associations cause us to act in a way that unfairly has a negative impact on another person or group. Because the origins and motivations of our actions are unknown to ourselves, we may not even realize that our actions, or in some cases our inactions, may cause harm to others.

An important question for us to ponder in the context of medical education is how and to what extent the presence of implicit biases impacts our interactions within the academic and clinical setting. Implicit biases can impact peer to peer interactions at the student, faculty, and staff level. Such interactions can negatively interfere with learning, open communication, clinical assessment, decision-making and ultimately educational, professional, health, and healthcare outcomes. So how might we take our first steps in exploring our implicit biases? It begins firstly with us recognizing and acknowledging that implicit biases do exists, and secondly expanding our knowledge and mindfully engaging in strategies to mitigate these biases. Several of these bias mitigating strategies are discussed below.

Strategies to Mitigate Implicit Biases

The following approaches are proposed by the Kirwan Institute as evidence-based bias mitigation strategies: fostering and increasing motivation toward unrestricted goals, perspective taking and empathy building, mindfulness, and building new relations[1,2]. These strategies can be employed at the individual and Institutional level. In her recent seminar to NSU MD, Dr. Julie Servoss grouped these strategies more broadly into three categories:
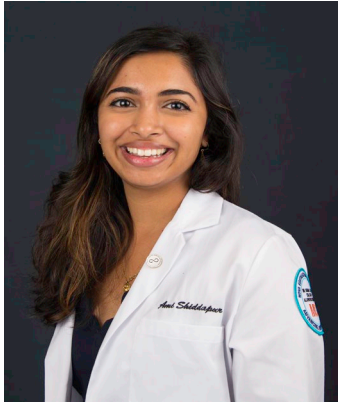
1. Deliberative processing and self-monitoring- where for example Implicit association tests (IATs) can be used by an individual to measure or identify certain attitudes and beliefs.
2. Individuating- where a conscious effort is made to see diverse others as individuals rather than as members of groups.
3. Perspective taking- where a conscious attempt is made to envision another person's viewpoint. CLICK HERE for Dr. Servoss' s full presentation

We are often unaware of our implicit biases; however, tracking data is a great way to start identifying trends and to establish that bias. This is crucial for informing how we should intervene. One of the most important predictors of unconscious bias are friends, family, and people we surround ourselves with. Therefore, it is important to also try to have meaningful intergroup contact.

1. http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/implicit-bias-training/
2. https://u.osu.edu/breakingbias/tools-for-mitigating-bias/

**Ami Shaddipur
NSU MD Class of 2023**

"If we want to be equitable physicians and citizens, we must tackle our unconscious biases. At first glance, unconscious bias may seem easily overcome. However, once we have to make snap judgments under pressure while multitasking, exhausted, or afraid- it's human instinct to stop screening. We've seen this time and time again with the racially charged snap judgments responsible for the murders of black women and men. We see it in healthcare as well, where black people are less likely to be administered pain medications, evidence-based care, or surgical procedures that are clearly indicated.

It's our responsibility to address these biases before it comes time for those quick judgments- during our training as physicians. NSU MD is well on its way to doing so by increasing representation and voices of underrepresented minorities in our latest MS1 class. Two of our MS2s, Heidi and Seema, created an amazing open dialogue book club to explore health disparities and racism. I'm happy that NSU MD is increasing awareness of implicit bias; we will carry those lessons in our lives and our practice of medicine"

NSU MD Bias Curriculum

NSU aims to maintain an institutional culture where biases do not compromise diversity and inclusion efforts in admissions, curriculum development, counseling, hiring, promotions, faculty advising and other activities. Our bias curriculum consists of activities to help us meet these goals. During the month of September, we hosted several events:

- Dr Julie Servoss delivered an interactive seminar on unconscious bias and microaggressions
- We provided LGBTQ proficiency training for our faculty and staff
- We delivered a case-based implicit bias session to the combined M1/M2 class
- The student led Open Dialogue Book club hosted its second meeting, which focused on microaggressions
- We will continue to roll-out activities throughout the academic year

Diversity Logo Competition

In August, the NSU MD Diversity Committee in collaboration with the Office of Admissions and Student Affairs hosted a logo competition where NSU MD students created an original design for the staging of our first annual Virtual Dash for Diversity 5K. The goal of the logo was a representation of our college's commitment to promoting and maintaining a culture of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in Medicine. The winning design by Ami Shiddapur (M2) and runner up Jacob Oster (M3), were selected by members of the Diversity Committee and received a $100 and $50 gift card, respectively.

Winning logo by Ami:

Ami's logo description: A school of sharks, despite the diversity in characteristics and color, are "dashing" towards a common goal. The waves in the water are an EKG pattern to represent the MD program. The sun in the background is a representation of the NSU sun logo with all colors utilized in alignment with official NSU colors.

Runner up logo by Jacob:

Jacob's logo description: My image is a circular navy blue logo with the fists of a diverse group of people in solidarity with each other. All of the fists used are the hands of actual NSU MD students or significant others.

Jacob Oster
NSU MD Class of 2022

"I think that unconscious bias is at the root of many problems we face here in the US and especially in medicine. It can be difficult for people to grasp that their impact matters more than their intentions, and so they are often willing to write off their own biased decisions as being well-intentioned, even if they caused actual harm. The solution is for people to recognize that these biases exist and make an effort to overcome them, but the trouble lies in convincing people of their impact"

NSU MD Virtual 5K DASH for Diversity

NSU MD will host its inaugural Virtual Dash for Diversity 5K from November 24th-30th 2020. Participants will come together virtually to raise funds in support of our pipeline programs with community middle and high schools. Funds raised from registration fees, donors, and race sponsorships will go directly towards the development and support of our **Journey into Medicine Mentorship Program** and the **NSU MD Excel Program.**

Participation in the race is done through three simple steps:

1. **REGISTER** : **Click** HERE **to register**

2. **COMPLETE YOUR RUN/ WALK** anytime between 11/24-11-30.

3. **UPLOAD** a screenshot of your completion time (and selfie!) onto the results webpage. Awards will be given to the top three female, male, and non-binary finishers in a student and non-student category. Gift cards will be awarded in the amount of $50 for first place, $30 for second place, and $20 for third place.

All registrants will receive a white dry-fit T-shirt with race logo and swag items from our corporate sponsors mailed to you. We hope to achieve 100% college participation from our students, administrators, and faculty! Everyone is invited!!!

Please help us spread the word to our NSU community and your family and friends near and far to participate in the race to benefit our college's mission towards diversity in medicine.

Faculty Development

Below please find some useful resources on biases including a link to the Harvard implicit association tests:

1. Biased: Uncovering the Hidden Prejudice That Shapes What We See, Think, and Do by Jennifer L. Eberhardt (2019): https://www.amazon.com/Biased-Uncovering-Hidden-Prejudice-Shapes-ebook/dp/B07DH89ZDY

2. Sway: Unravelling Unconscious Bias by Pragya Agarwal (2020): https://www.amazon.com/Sway-Unravelling-Unconscious-Pragya-Agarwal/dp/1472971353

3. Harvard implicit bias association tests: https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html

4. Ted talk on bias :
    Are you biased? With Kristen Pressner: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bq_xYSOZrgU

5. Journal article by A. Greenwald and L. Krieger (2006). Implicit Bias: Scientific Foundations. California Law Review. V. 94: 945-967 [https://faculty.washington.edu/agg/pdf/Gwald&Krieger.CLR.2006.pdf]