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**Implicit bias** = the unconscious attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions.

These biases, which include both positive and negative assessments, are activated involuntarily and without an individual's awareness or intentional control. These biases are different from known biases that individuals may choose to conceal for social or political correctness.

The implicit associations we harbor in our subconscious cause us to have feelings and attitudes about other people based on characteristics such as race, ethnicity, age, and appearance. These associations develop over the course of a lifetime beginning at a very early age through exposure to direct and indirect messages. In addition to early life experiences, the media and news programming contribute to the development of implicit associations.

### A Few Key Characteristics of Implicit Biases

- Implicit biases are pervasive. Everyone possesses them, even people with avowed commitments to impartiality such as judges.
- The implicit associations we hold do not necessarily align with our stated beliefs or even reflect stances we would explicitly endorse.
- We generally tend to hold implicit biases that favor our ingroup, though research has shown that we can still hold implicit biases against our ingroup.
- Implicit biases are malleable. We can gradually change our unconscious beliefs. The first step is becoming aware of our implicit biases.



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