

Turning Barriers into Bridges by Disrupting Bias

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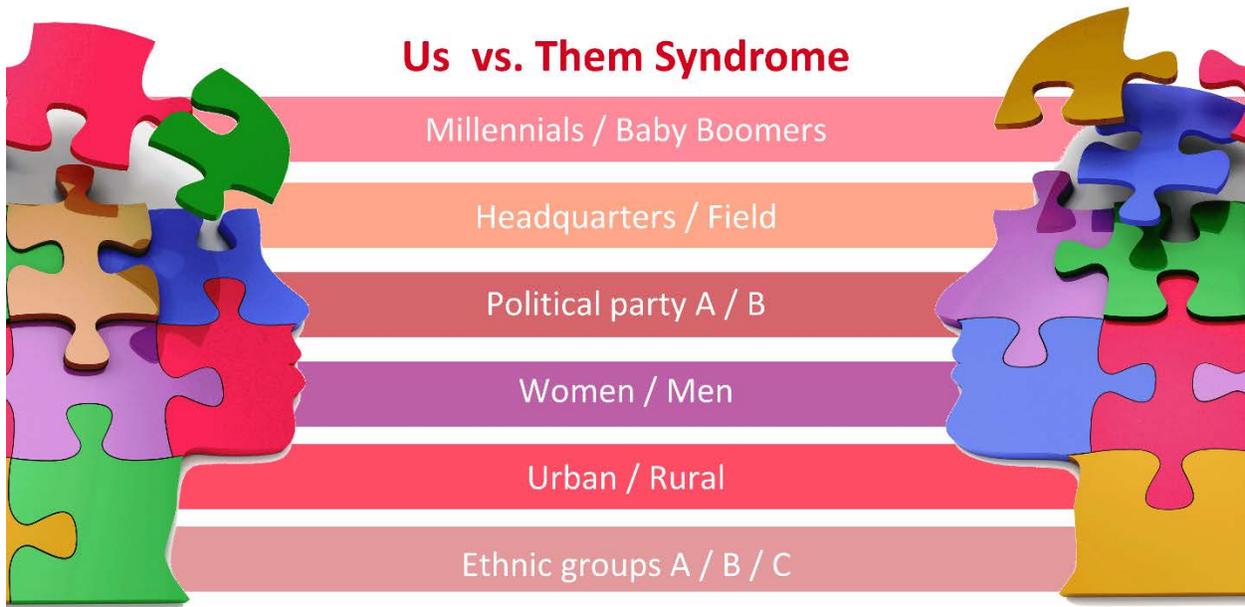
Lenora Billings-Harris, CSP (Certified Speaking Professional) is a CPAE (Council of Peers Award of Excellence) Hall of Fame speaker and an internationally recognized authority in the areas of inclusion, diversity and bias. She has been included as one of the 100 Global Thought Leaders on Diversity and Inclusion by The Society of Human Resource Management and was named by Diversity Woman Magazine as one of the twenty top influential diversity leaders in the US. Her award-winning diversity leadership research is recognized in academic journals internationally. Additionally, she serves on the Advisory Council of the Nido Qubein School of Communication, High Point University, as well as being on the adjunct business faculty of two other universities.

Diversity, inclusion and disrupting bias is a full-time focus for Lenora. She partners with clients to help them leverage their diversity of thought which impacts employee engagement and retention, customer acquisition and sales, community and corporate relations. Her powerful yet engaging style inspires audience members to take personal and organizational actions that disrupt bias and accelerate bottom-line business results.

She has presented to audiences in over 41 countries and six continents, including such places as Dubai, Israel, South Africa and Malaysia.

Billings-Harris co-authored *TRAILBLAZERS: How Top Business Leaders are Accelerating Results through Inclusion and Diversity*, and is the author of *The Diversity Advantage: A Guide to Making Diversity Work*, 3rd Ed. Most recently, she was the cover story for *Inclusion Magazine*, 2019 winter edition.

In addition to management positions held with two Fortune 100 companies plus the Business School at The University of Michigan, Billings-Harris has held leadership positions with several non-profit organizations. She is a past president of Win-Win Resolutions with a mission to reduce bullying, violence and prejudice in schools and communities, and was a founding charter member of the Maricopa County Black Chamber of Commerce. She is a past president of the National Speakers Association, and past president of the Global Speakers Federation. In 2016 she was the Cavett Award recipient, the highest honor bestowed upon professional speakers in the USA. In 2018 she was inducted into the Speaker Hall of Fame.

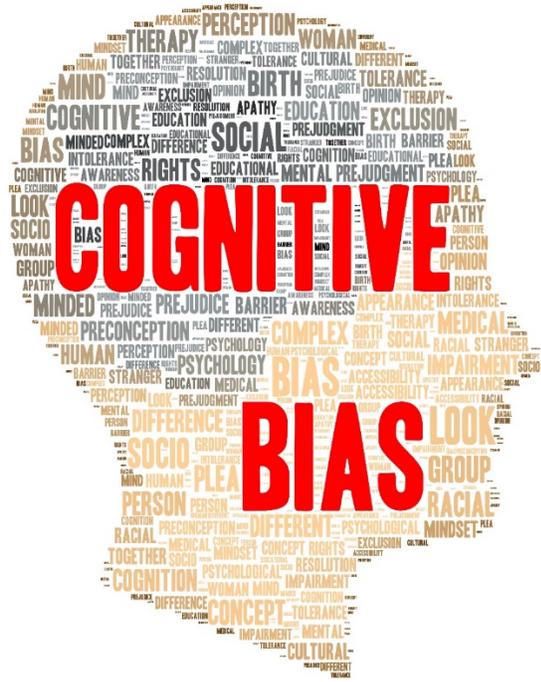


What silos are present in your organization?

Blank response area for silos.

What biased/stereotypical comments do you hear most often at work?

Blank response area for biased/stereotypical comments.



We all have it.
It's NORMAL.
COGNITIVE BIAS:
Attitudes beliefs and mental associations that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions sometimes unconsciously and unintentionally.

List ten examples of biased thinking that you would like to disrupt.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

A large, empty light gray rectangular area intended for writing the ten examples of biased thinking.

What biases/habits do you have that serve you well?

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Neuroscience of Bias

*Fast
Brain*

Emotions
Biases
Fear/Fun
Old Messages



*Slow
Brain*

Cognition
Analytical
Right/Wrong
Morality

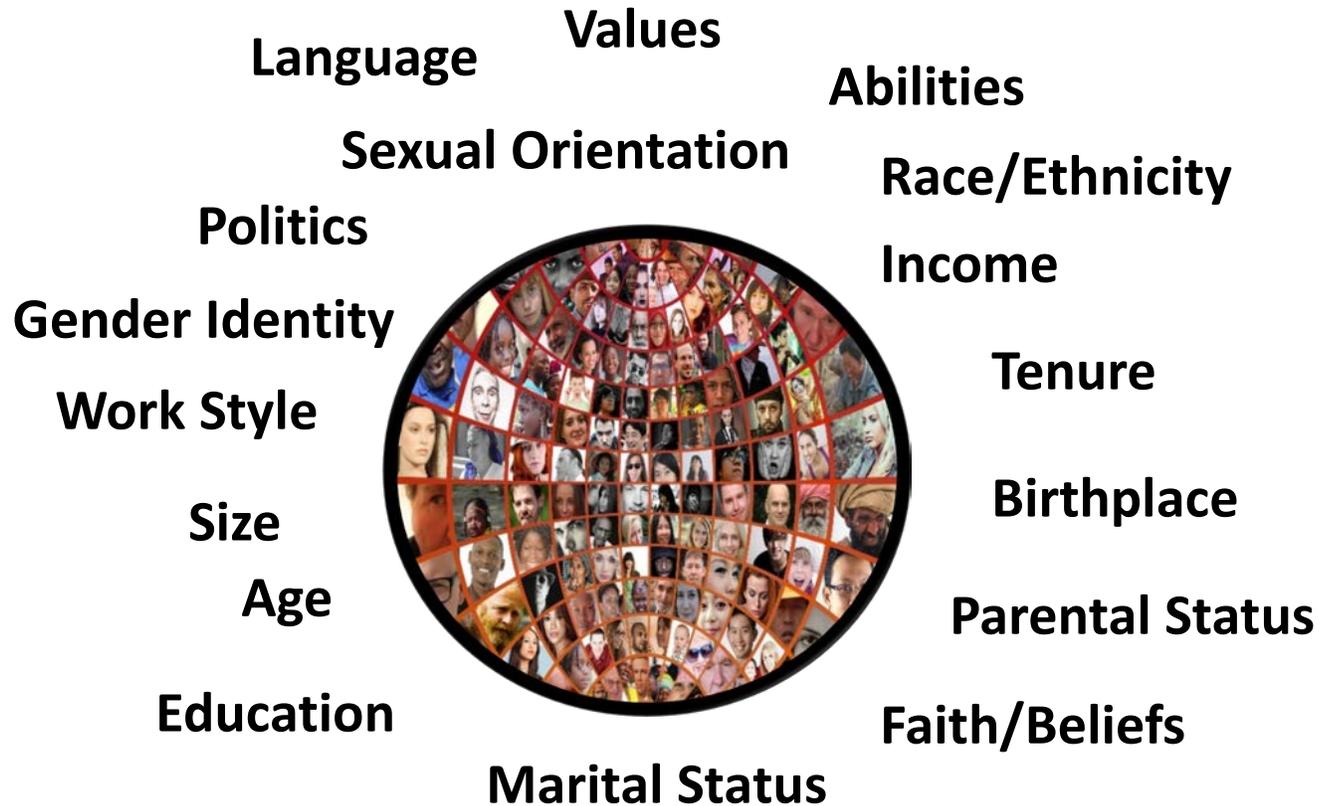
What old messages do you need to reframe within your own thinking?

Blank response area for the question: "What old messages do you need to reframe within your own thinking?"

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A Culture of ONE

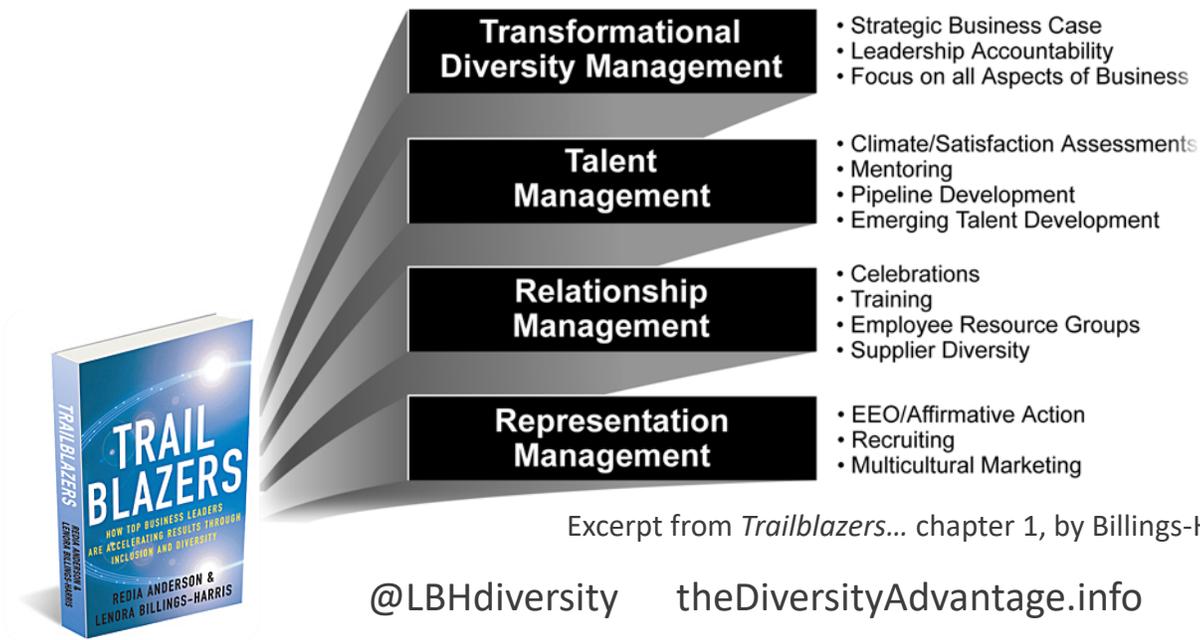


With your team, complete this exercise:

1. Select a diversity dimension.
2. Determine your position in it (e.g. Age: Millennial; Birthplace: New Jersey)
3. Share why you are proud to be within that group.
4. Share a bias or stereotypical comment you wish others would stop saying.

LD & I Model™

Leveraging Diversity and Inclusion



Excerpt from *Trailblazers...* chapter 1, by Billings-Harris

@LBHdiversity theDiversityAdvantage.info

Which diversity and inclusion components does your organization support?

Blank area for response to the question: Which diversity and inclusion components does your organization support?

Which diversity and inclusion components should they initiate?

Blank area for response to the question: Which diversity and inclusion components should they initiate?

Recognize and Uncover Bias and Blindspots



With your team, discuss the ways that the dynamics of unconscious bias might impact different areas of your organization. This can be in terms of micro-behaviors, as well as decision-making processes, systems, and structures. (e.g. only recruiting at the same institutions; mentoring some but not other team members; calling on the same people in meetings)

Cultural Intelligence

The ability to read and adapt to the cultural values of others in order to produce a mutually acceptable outcome.

Effective leaders leverage:



Knowledge

Study books, videos, research, etc. to ascertain accurate information regarding the experience of groups of people.

Identify a group of people or topic area about which you need to deepen knowledge: (e.g. racism, LGBTQIA)

Conduct a search and then list the books, videos, audiobooks, or other resources you will use to expand your knowledge.

Understanding

Visit places of faith, attend food festivals, explore museums, and study language and the arts. These personal experiences add context to your knowledge.

List the steps you will take to expand your understanding.

Acceptance

Deepen empathy through relationship – building and mentoring.
Find a success partner. Release judgement and stereotypes.

Who will you get to know?

What will you talk about?

Record your Ahas! here.

Behavior

Listen, dialogue, ask questions, and actively view situations from a different “viewing point.” Become an ally and an advocate.

LET'S STAY CONNECTED



News Brief

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Appendix

Diversity Inclusion Quotient

What is your current level of cultural competency? Complete the following assessment as honestly as possible. Respond based on how you behave, not how you wish to behave. Use the results to develop your own DIQ action plan. **(You will not be asked to share your responses.)**

| | Almost Always | Generally | Sometimes | Almost Never |
|---|---------------|-----------|-----------|--------------|
| 1 I am aware of the main characteristics of my own cultural groups (e.g. age, gender, education). | | | | |
| 2 I adapt my style to reflect my awareness of the diversity of my team and colleagues. | | | | |
| 3 I educate myself regarding the characteristics of different cultures within my organization. | | | | |
| 4 I intentionally include diverse people in my circles and encourage diversity of thought. | | | | |
| 5 I am aware of my biases and stereotypes and I am implementing specific actions to address them. | | | | |
| 6 I am aware of my own micro-messaging habits. | | | | |
| 7 I encourage my friends and colleagues to call out biased behavior in a constructive way. | | | | |
| 8 I continuously identify systematic bias within talent management practices and work with my organization to address it. | | | | |
| 9 I intentionally surround myself with people different from me to better understand their perspectives. | | | | |
| 10 I take my own biases into consideration before making important decisions or shoring my opinion about others. | | | | |

More than Just Talk - a Forum on Racism

This document of suggestions, tips and resources is just a start. Erasing racism is not a quick fix. There are many ways to make a commitment for sustainable change.

To view the recording from which this document emerged click here:

<https://bit.ly/30jQjmP>

As an Individual:

- Do your personal education work regarding racism including systematic racism. (See the resources that follow, as a start.)
- LISTEN! Listen to understand rather than to respond. Don't start the interaction with a plan to challenge their point of view. Look for opportunities to gain knowledge and insight.
- Balance honesty with tact. There will be times when you need to be more direct and times when you need to figure out how to tactfully share. You'll always need both skills in some proportion.
- When people tell you what they mean, believe them.
- Respect that people choose how they want to express their concerns.
- Use African American voices when you use quotations. This includes speeches, wall hangings, and memes on social media.
- Be a "safe space" – in your office, in your community groups, on social media
 - * Safe for African Americans and other people of color to vent or talk or just be.
 - * Safe for White folks to ask questions, listen and share.
- Be conscious of broad generalizations. *We each are a Culture of One.* Race is only one aspect of who we are. When you generalize (whether it is about African Americans, police officers or any other group), you minimize people as humans. The more you widen your awareness (and your circle), the less likely this will be an issue.
- Language matters. Sometimes in trying to be empathetic, we unintentionally show disrespect. The words "I understand how you feel" or "I've been there" are usually not appropriate when a White person says it to a Black person. You probably don't know exactly how they feel. You have not been there in the way they have. But you CAN ask how they feel.

- When someone says, “They all ...” when referring to Black people or the protests, ask what they mean by “they”. We tend to overgeneralize when referring to races and ethnic groups as though all in the group are the same.
- Learn how to say a person’s name correctly. Don’t create nicknames for others to make it easier on yourself.
- Attend Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) events and celebrations. Be willing to be “the one who is the other.”
- Speak out. Speak up. Use empathy, tact, humility, and passion as you journey through these times.
- Breathe. Forgive yourself when you make a mistake. Don’t aim for perfection. Own your error and ask for guidance. Apologize sincerely. Do not say, “I offended...” say, “I know I offended some people, ...”

As a colleague: All of the above plus...

- Include all voices in meetings; if a person is ignored, invite them into the discussion. You do not need to be a leader to do this.
- Speak up when racist comments are made even if the comment is not directed at you. It is often too risky for a Black person to always be the only voice that speaks against racist remarks and actions.
- Ask questions. Don’t assume any one African American can speak for all. Ask an individual if you can ask a question because you really want to learn and understand. Be aware that not everyone will want to answer questions, because they are tired of doing so. Respect their position. When you are too afraid to ask, you only have assumptions upon which to rely.
- Invite Black people into your social space, e.g. lunch; after work gatherings; weekend events.

As an executive: All of the above plus...

- Speak to your staff NOW. The longer you wait the longer it will be assumed that you do not care about racism in general and Black people within your organization specifically. Don’t just talk about the business case for diversity right now. Be specific about what you believe and what your expectations are of your work culture.
- Model the behavior you expect of others.
- Support safe spaces for Black and White people to discuss their feelings, and air their questions and concerns.

- If you do not have a diversity council now is the time to create one to develop a strategy for inclusion. If you have one, engage them at all levels to help facilitate strategies related to recruitment, acquisition, development, succession planning, marketing, advertising, and suppliers. Identify specific inclusive leadership behaviors and habits.
- Create a task force to uncover the processes and systems that create racial barriers within the organization and develop actions to disrupt and re-frame those processes and systems.
- Hold leaders accountable for behaviors including but beyond the numbers for diversity.
- Present progress reports to your board of directors regularly.

RESOURCES

Books:

How to be an Antiracist <https://amzn.to/2XBE6U>

So You Want to Talk about Race <https://amzn.to/2MxpUKc>

White Fragility- Why it's so hard for White People to talk about Race
<https://amzn.to/3dA4xDU>

Me and White Supremacy <https://amzn.to/3h7gdAr>

The Diversity Advantage: A Guide to Making Diversity Work
<https://amzn.to/3eOVzD4>

White Trash: The 400 year Untold History of Class in America
<https://amzn.to/2AKPatX>

Trailblazers: How Top Business Executives are Accelerating Results through Inclusion and Diversity <https://amzn.to/2Y6UL5M>

[1619](#) – the New York Times podcast

Webcasts, Websites and Articles:

- What Black Lives Matter Means (and Why It's Problematic to Say "All Lives Matter") <https://bit.ly/376XcJt>
- More than Just Talk- a Forum on Racism <https://bit.ly/3dA3HqK>

- Race: The Power of an Illusion - http://www.pbs.org/race/000_General/000_00-Home.htm
- Center for Policing Equity - <https://policingequity.org/>
- It Isn't a Black & White Issue: Racial Bias in the U.S. – <https://www.spectradiversity.com/about-us/diversity-resources-white-papers/>
- What are the Habits of Managers Who Create and Sustain an Environment That Supports Diversity? <https://bit.ly/2UiflJL>

Feel free to share additional resources on [Facebook Diversity Coach](#). Together we can make a difference.

Mitigating Bias Tip Sheet

Sourcing:

- Identify routine sourcing funnels and evaluate why they are used--- convenient? Alma mater? Strength of education or experience of candidates?
- Identify non-traditional sourcing to find the same/similar transferable skills and abilities. Look for talent that adds to diversity of thought and skills instead of just maintaining the status quo.

Interviews:

- Review and define the job and skills required to do the job.
- Be consistent - ask all candidates the same questions, in the same order. Measure candidates against the job requirements and not one another.
- Prime yourself before the interview- Remind yourself of your own possible biases e.g. height/handshake/accent/name/educational level/university/likability/common interests/age/gender identity/sexual orientation/size/personality styles etc.
- Identify assumptions you might be making about this person? Gather additional information to test my assumptions.
- Hiring teams should meet live after interviews to discuss the candidates and come to a group decision. Do not simply accept rating numbers. Ask interviewers why candidates were given the rating they received.

Teamwork: (Encourage diversity of thought)

- Encourage all members to share their thoughts.
- Assume there are questions- Ask, "What questions do you have?" Do not share your ideas first.
- Allow others to lead the discussion.
- Be a mentor/coach for people different than yourself.
- Consider who beyond your favorites could be a best fit for the project or task at hand.

Evaluations and Calibrations:

- Provide feedback frequently and consistently.
- Discuss with raters the meanings of the metrics. Require written narratives & dialogues. Prime yourself against recency bias.
- Look for and question statements that potentially reflect biased attitudes or beliefs about the ratee.
- Provide & support mentoring training; track and evaluate mentoring results.

Leadership Accountability & Decision-Making:

- Challenge organizational cultural norms and patterns to achieve better equity and balance. Seek to develop talent by assigning projects as growth opportunities.
- Prime yourself before making major decisions to uncover possible biased patterns. Evaluate your process for recognizing and rewarding talent.
- Identify people who annoy you and analyze why. They might remind you of someone in your background, and now you are projecting your bias onto them.
- Add *inclusion and engagement process* to your meeting agenda to discuss at the end of meetings- listen and explore ways to improve.

Resources

Implicit Bias Test

<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>

Project Implicit is a non-profit organization and international collaboration between researchers who are interested in implicit social cognition - thoughts and feelings outside of conscious awareness and control. The goal of the organization is to educate the public about hidden biases and to provide a "virtual laboratory" for collecting data on the Internet.

Race - The Power of Illusion

http://www.pbs.org/race/000_General/000_00-Home.htm

Online companion to the PBS series.

HRC Consulting Services

<http://www.hrc.org/>

Human Rights Campaign working for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender equal rights.