

Unconscious Bias: MMI Interviewer Executive Summary

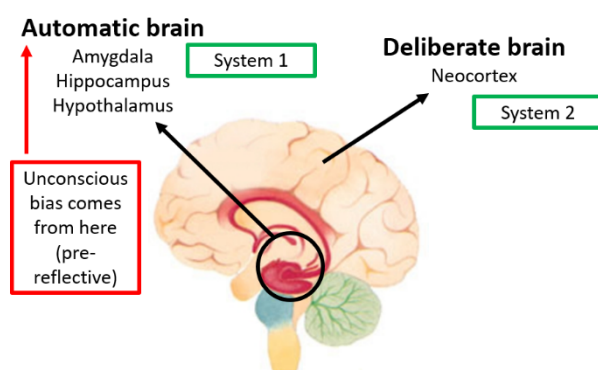
Why is this important?

An awareness of unconscious bias can help improve communication, decision-making, & fairness.

What is unconscious bias?

“Unconscious [everyday] also known as implicit bias, refers to attitudes or stereotypes that are **outside our awareness** but nonetheless **affect our understanding, our interactions, & our decisions.**” (Association of American Medical Colleges). This happens without intention/control & is part of automatic or pre-reflective thinking.

Biology of bias –



Socio-cultural influences:

Experiences - Real life, movies, books, games, media, etc.

Culture – broad & sub-cultural groups

Context – place & time

Types of bias to consider in the interview process:

1. Affect heuristic bias – “1st impression” (positive or negative) feelings in relation to a stimulus.
2. Halo or horns effect – feelings that you have about a candidate influence how you perceive & frame other responses from them.
3. Norm-referencing bias (contrast effect) – comparing a candidate to a previous one.
4. Anchoring - overly influenced by a single (& often early) piece of information or comment.
5. Premature closure – Failure to adjust to new information because you have already made up your mind.
6. Affinity or similar-to-me bias – favouring those who are more similar to ourselves.
7. Recency bias – placing more importance on something more recent.
8. Confirmation bias - placing more value on information that supports your existing belief.

Virtual interview considerations – technology & environment/setting

Strategies:

Policy level – structured interviews, interviewer training, clear criteria, scoring rubrics, & diverse interviewer pool.

Individual level – awareness & acceptance of bias, counter-thinking & multiple perspectives, & focus on content of questions only.

Take home – interrupt your automatic brain & allow your deliberate brain to be involved in the decision-making.