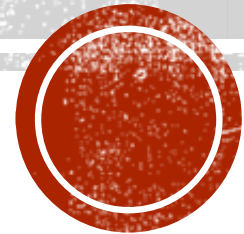


EXAMINING OUR UNCONSCIOUS BIAS AND HOW IT COULD AFFECT PROFESSIONAL JUDGEMENT OUTCOMES

**PRESENTED BY: STACY WALKER, MASFAA PRESIDENT
ASSOCIATE FINANCIAL AID DIRECTOR-UNIVERSITY OF MS MEDICAL CENTER**



SESSION GOALS

- Recognize cognitive biases that influence your thinking and decision making
- Learn how to overcome these biases in order to make better decisions or complete stronger analysis during the Professional Judgement Process
- Understand why it matters



DECISION MAKING

- What do we mean by decision making?
 - When problems or issues arise, we need to make a decision about what to do
 - We engage in a decision making process to come to the action we want to take
 - During the process, we often use “rules of thumb” or heuristics or shortcuts

We make better decisions using critical thinking





'I DON'T THINK I'M BIASED'

- How do I know if my biases affect the decisions I make on Professional Judgments?
- Ask yourself these questions?

Have you ever mumbled, under your breath, “Oh, goodness, here comes Chris” as a response to an “active” student who frequently visits your office?

Have you attached certain identifiers to this particular student based on your perception of the “ideal” student?

Have you considered where your understanding of the ideal student was conceived?

Have you reflected on having built expectations for certain students, whether they are white or of color, male or female, able-bodied or with disabilities, transgender or Not?

How are you thinking about your students?

All of these questions consider the biases that ultimately affect your decisions when making Professional Judgment decisions.



UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

- It's a natural function of the human brain, and it affects us all!
- Biases that we are completely unaware of cause us to potentially make the worst decision based on factors that are irrelevant to a student's PJ.
- The **ONLY** way to overcome Unconscious Biases is to Recognize it exists and educate yourself to take measures keep them in check!



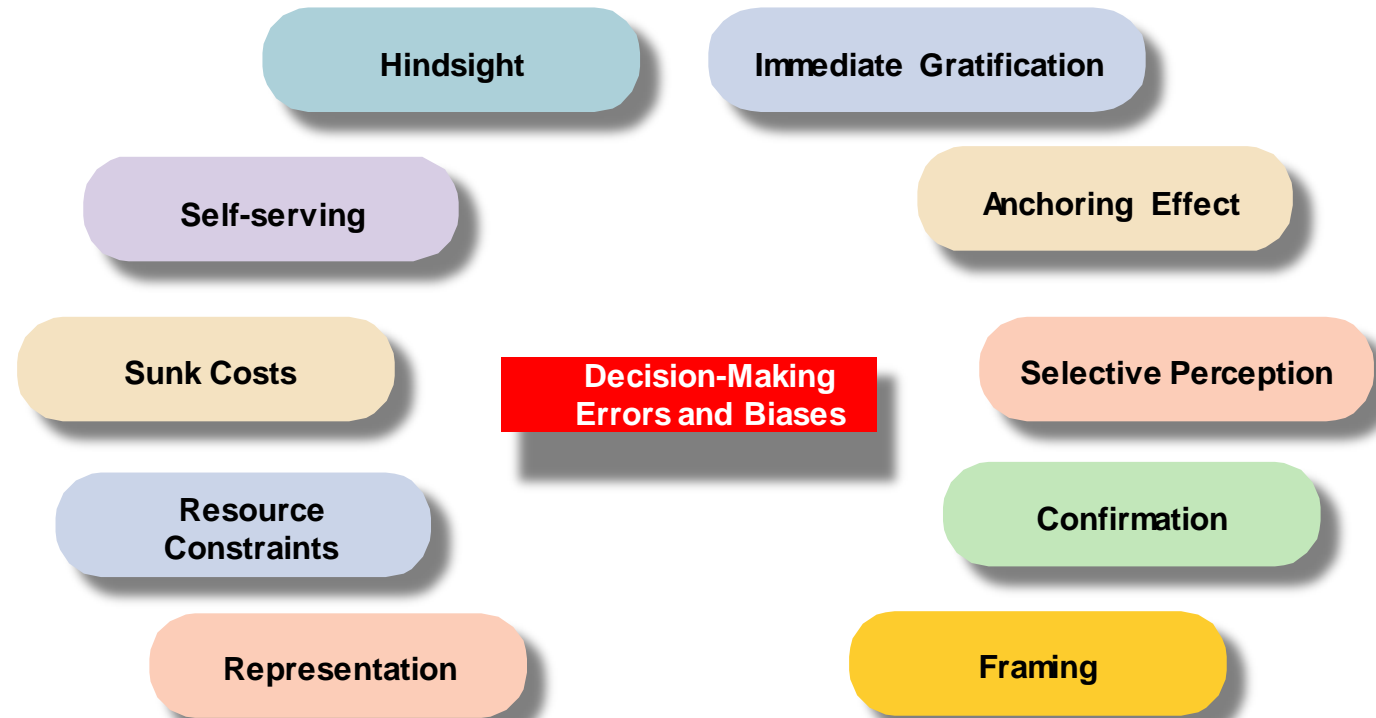
COGNITIVE BIASES

- What is a bias?
 - We tend to believe or seek out information to preserve our opinions or beliefs
 - This can cause a gap in how we reason and how we should reason
 - This causes us to make bad decisions



DECISION MAKING BIASES

Overconfidence



Availability



OVERCONFIDENCE BIAS

- When we are given factual questions and asked to judge the probability that our answers are correct, we tend to be far too optimistic.





ANCHORING BIAS

- Fixate on initial information and fail to adjust for subsequent information.
- This also happens when we are blinded by first impressions or influenced by first impressions, ideas, prices, or estimates relative to info received later.



SELECTIVE PERCEPTION

- See things from our own personal perspective
- Organize and interpret events/information based on this perception
- Influences what we pay attention to and the problems we identify, and the alternatives we develop or consider.
- CONFIRMATION BIAS is a specific case

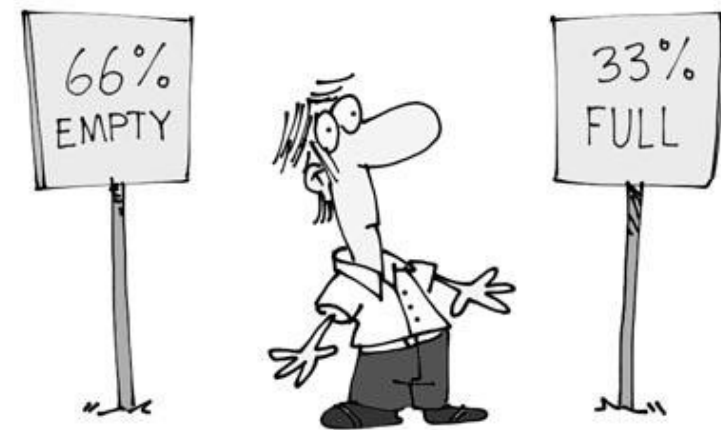


CONFIRMATION BIAS



FRAMING

- Tendency to be influenced by the way a problem is formulated even though it should not affect the solution.





AVAILABILITY BIAS

- Rely upon knowledge that is readily available rather than examine other alternatives or procedures.
- The most recent and memorable information is given preference.



RECOGNIZING YOUR BIASES

- As Financial Aid Professionals, we often believe that we can be “objective” with our students.
- Although we may try to be *neutral*, we all have values, beliefs, and predispositions that impact how we relate to others. These assumptions are not necessarily a “bad” thing since they often help us understand unknown situations or try to make sense of what is happening around us.
- But when our assumptions are manifested as implicit biases that can lead to imposed identities, we often reinforce negative stereotypes and negative school climates without even knowing it (Hanselman, Bruch, Gamoran, & Borman, 2014).
- Understanding hidden associations, assumptions, or biases allows us to better understand our “self” so we can work with “others” towards a mediated identity where positive academic and social identities can be affirmed and nurtured through an asset model for identity construction (Delpit, 1995; Nieto & Bode, 2011).



REDUCING BIASES

- ✓ Use a PROCESS
- ✓ Start with a clean slate
- ✓ Challenge the status quo
- ✓ Seek multiple perspectives
- ✓ Search for more information & data
- ✓ Play Devil's Advocate
- ✓ Reflect on your own views & values



PROCEED WITH CAUTION! BE AWARE!



**With each step, check and challenge your thinking.
What biases might be getting in the way?
Am I limiting the possibilities?**



KEEPING YOUR BIASES IN CHECK

- Keep in mind that you can't escape biases! However, if you are **aware** of them & **Challenge** them, you will become a stronger critical thinker and better decision maker overall!
- It's especially important to focus on inclusivity in our conscious minds, because our unconscious has already put most of us (me included!) in quite a deficit.
-



IMPORTANCE OF DIVERSITY

If we are not diligent in our recognition, acceptance, and awareness of diverse peoples, our diverse peoples, our higher education system will suffer serious growing pains in the near future.

“We can only strengthen America as a whole if we enhance new minds and views on diversity.”



FINAL QUESTIONS?

**Last
Call**

