STAR Treatment Training Module

Objectives:

• To develop skills to respond to bias based actions or statements in positive, non threatening ways.
• To develop management capacity to respond to discriminatory words or acts in appropriate ways.
• To create institutional responsibility for responding to inappropriate bias in actionable ways.

Time:

- Introduction: 5 minutes
- Case Study: 10 minutes
- Role play: 15 minutes
- Debrief/closing: 15 minutes

Group Arrangement:

Entire group seated facing facilitator for opening
Pairs or small group for role play

Pre-work:

Harvard’s Project Implicit
https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/

Materials:

- STAR treatment handout
- STAR treatment brochure
- Methods for reporting handout
- Whiteboard or Flipchart
- Dry erase or flipchart markers
- Role play scenarios on note cards

Procedures:

1. Present context
   a. See model script
2. Present STAR model
   a. Write STAR acronym on board with corresponding words while explaining (or present prepared model board)
3. Present Case study
4. Role play
5. Debrief
**Model Script**

Bias is a term used to describe a tendency or preference towards a particular perspective, ideology, or result; especially when the tendency interferes with the ability to be impartial, unprejudiced, or objective. Bias stems from our everyday sense of “the way things are”, which informs our everyday workplace interactions. Bias affects what we notice about people, how we interpret their behavior, and what we remember about them. While no one is or can be free from bias, we can learn to recognize it in ourselves and when we see it around us and learn more effective ways of dealing with it.

It is important to recognize that bias may affect the way we treat people, including hiring and promotion decisions and our use of performance reviews. The reason we had you look at Harvard’s Implicit Bias was to have an understanding of your own biases. Now that you have had an opportunity to examine your own them, let’s take a look at how bias impacts the workplace and practice using some tools to better approach inappropriate bias.

**STAR Model**

Everyone is responsible for making STARs. The STAR Model stands for Stop, Think, Act and Respect and allows individuals the opportunity to respond to bias statements or acts in a calm and reasoned fashion. It also provides a framework for supervisors to guide their staff to a more inclusive work environment by modeling appropriate behavior, assisting in education efforts and providing departments with useful tools. The STAR model assists in recognition of illegal bias and provides administrators, managers and supervisors with the resources to appropriately respond. By implementing the STAR model across units and involving students, staff, faculty and administrators throughout campus, institutional responsibility for responding to bias will become a reality.

**Case Study**

Barb is the only female supervisor (faculty) in a department with several male supervisors (faculty). She has held this position for 10 months and is very knowledgeable. Before accepting this position, Barb held positions of similar scope and duties for 12 years. She is used to working with independent judgment and is also skilled at consensus and team building. During staff meetings the male supervisors (faculty) often make gender related comments, such as “The little woman at home doesn’t like it when I am late” and “It’s a good thing I’m paid well because the wife will never make as much as me”. Sometimes they curse, but when Barb is present, they apologize to “the woman at the table”. Barb feels uncomfortable with these comments, although she is not particularly bothered by the cursing itself.

1. What bias issues are at work here?
2. How could Barb handle the issue to calmly resolve it?
3. Should she walk away? Why or why not?
4. What other options does she have?
5. What is the responsibility of the director/dean?
Role Play (sample)

Group Arrangement:
In teams of two (2) each participant takes a turn playing each part. If there is an odd number, the third member may be an observer and provide feedback. After 5 minutes, switch roles.

Sender: “I think Asians get all of the breaks on campus. Just because they are all good at math doesn’t mean they should get all the spots in the Engineering graduate school.”

Respondent: Stop
While this may be an offensive or hurtful statement, responding with emotion can escalate the situation. Take a breath and relax

Think about appropriate responses
(Suggestions: Acceptance to graduate school is competitive and people are accepted based on merit, not on race. Do you want to go to graduate school? Is there something I can do to help? Making global statements about a group doesn’t tell you much about them. What other responses can you think of?)

Respondent: Act
(This is the time to speak calmly about your response to the bias statement. You may not change the person’s mind, but by taking the time to think and speak calmly, you have taken charge of a difficult situation)

Sender: “I still say Asians get ahead because they are better at math than the rest of us. You aren’t going to change my mind.”

Respondent: Respect her/his right to those feelings
“Ok. I can’t change your feelings, but I disagree. I respect your right to feel differently from me; however, it is not ok for you to make general, stereotyped statements about a group of people. If you would like to talk more, I am open to that. I am also still willing to help you with your efforts to get into graduate school.”

Debrief
We have practiced using the STAR treatment to deal with bias on both an individual and a management level. It is important to understand what illegal bias is. Illegal bias is discrimination against a person on the basis of any protected category (age, ancestry, color, religious creed, disability, marital status, medical condition, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity). While a statement may not constitute illegal bias, actions being taken against a person or group may. If in doubt, report it. If illegal bias is occurring, you must respond to and report the incident. Ideally, you would report to your supervisor. You may also report to:

- Office of Faculty and Staff Affirmative Action (faculty and staff)
- Office of the Ombudsman (students, faculty and staff)
- Academic Senate (faculty)
- Labor Relations (staff and student staff)
- Conflict Resolution (faculty and staff)
- Student Conduct and Academic Integrity (students)
- Whistleblower Hotline (students, faculty and staff)