Bias Busting Strategies for Institutions

Find out what strategies and actions you can take to counteract implicit bias.

You can take action against implicit bias on three levels:

- Institutional
- Interpersonal
- Individual

Implicit bias is the unconscious, automatic tendency to associate certain roles or traits with one social group more than another.

What Can Institutions Do?

**Perform a policy “safety check”**

Ensure that your institution has gender inclusive policies.

**Use gender inclusive imagery**

Use gender inclusive photos and pronouns on promotional materials.

**Increase the representation of women in top positions**

Seek out and hire women. Establish a goal for women across your institution.

**Promote diversity training efforts & accountability**

Implement diversity trainings and assess their effectiveness.

**Adopt anonymous evaluation practices**

Redact applicants’ names from application materials.

**Support outreach activities**

Speak at an event that inspires young girls to consider your STEM field as a career path.

The actions suggested here are just a few examples of steps you can take. Learn more about implicit bias, what you can do to combat it, and our research in our white paper series and on our website: http://successinstem.ca/
Findings & References:

1. Women who work at companies with gender inclusive policies are less worried about experiencing workplace sexism. These policies create a positive social climate between men and women by helping to improve interaction quality.

2. Women are more attracted to companies that use gender inclusive photos and pronouns in their promotional materials.

3. Having female role models in leadership positions can reduce automatic gender stereotypic beliefs. The more frequent the exposure to these successful women, the stronger this effect becomes.

4. The percentage of women selected for positions dramatically increases when judges are unaware of the candidate's gender. Gender biases favoring men are likely to occur when judges are aware of the candidate's gender.

5. When done well, knowledge about the importance of diversity and inclusion is powerful, especially when it is paired with organizational structures designed to hold those in top-level positions (e.g., managers) accountable.

6. Motivating women and girls to pursue careers in fields where they are highly underrepresented (e.g., science, technology, engineering, and math) can increase the gender diversity of the field.


About Engendering Success in STEM (ESS)

Engendering Success in STEM (ESS) is a research partnership focused on evidence-based solutions. The shared goal of our research is to foster women's inclusion and success in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math). We bring together social scientists, STEM experts, and stakeholders in STEM industry and education to use an evidence-based approach to break down the biases girls and women face on their pathway to success. With funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.