Combating Implicit Bias and Stereotypes

Implicit bias refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. An implicit bias can make us susceptible to unintentionally acting in ways that are inconsistent with our values. Although you do not choose to have an implicit bias, you can choose to be aware of it and combat its effects.

Two important first steps are to:
- Recognize that we all have implicit biases and that implicit bias can negatively affect clinical interactions and outcomes
- Accept the responsibility to identify and understand your implicit biases

The table below presents the next steps you can take to confront your implicit biases and reduce stereotypic thinking. Consistent and conscious use of these strategies can help you create a habit of nonbiased thinking.

Stereotype replacement	Become aware of the stereotypes you hold and create non-stereotypical alternatives to them
Counter-stereotypic imaging	Remember or imagine someone from a stereotyped group who does not fit the stereotype
Individuating	See each person as an individual, not a group member; pay attention to things about them besides the stereotypes of their group
Perspective-taking	Imagine the perspective of someone from a group different than your own ("Put yourself in the other person's shoes.")
Contact	Seek ways to get to know people from different social groups. Build your confidence in interacting with people who are different from you. Seek opportunities to engage in discussions in safe environments, spend time with people outside your usual social groups, or volunteer in a community different than your own.
Emotional regulation	Reflect on your "gut feelings" and negative reactions to people from different social groups. Be aware that positive emotions during a clinical encounter make stereotyping less likely.
Mindfulness	Keep your attention on the present moment so you can recognize a stereotypic thought before you act on it.

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