

Brain Science Training Institute

The Elephant in the Room: Addressing Implicit Biases

Introductions



Kiera McGillivray, LMFT

Kiera McGillivray is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and the Chief Program Officer for School-Based Initiatives with Children & Families First. Kiera is trained in several trauma focused modalities including Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing (EMDR), Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT), Trauma-Informed Yoga, Trauma Focused Expressive Arts Therapy, and Child-Centered Play Therapy with Neurorelational Emphasis. She is published in internationally peer-reviewed journals on the topics of trauma and children, and has presented to military personnel, clinicians, educators, law enforcement, and victim service professionals on trauma, children, resilience and ethics. Kiera McGillivray is also a clinical supervisor and co-chair of the Brain Science Training Institute.



Shannon Fisch, LCSW

Shannon Fisch is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in the state of Delaware and is the Compliance & Accreditation Manager for Children & Families First. Shannon Fisch received her post graduate certification in trauma from Widener University and her non-profit management certification from University of Delaware. Shannon is an avid volunteer in her profession, currently serving as secretary and previously serving as the treasurer and president for the National Association of Social Workers - Delaware Chapter. Shannon Fisch is also a clinical supervisor and co-chair of the Brain Science Training Institute.



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Addressing Implicit Biases

Brain Science & Trauma Awareness

Key Terminology

Trauma is a threat or series of threats that overwhelms our nervous system, and impacts our mental, physical, social, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) refers to serious childhood traumas that cause toxic stress, and are linked to mental illness, chronic disease, depression, and violence.

The Upstairs Brain is our rational, logical, planning brain. It is still developing at birth and isn't finished developing until our mid to late twenties. Inside our upstairs brain is our "watchtower."

The Downstairs Brain is the oldest, most primitive part of our brain; consisting of the limbic region and brain stem. It oversees our most basic functions and fear responses (fight or flight). Inside our downstairs brain is our "smoke alarm."

Microaggressions are the everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership.

Cultural Identity is a combination of multiple, interlocking, and social identities (ability, race, age, geography, etc.).

Intersectionality are the multiple social identities that intersect at the individual level to reflect interlocking systems of privilege and oppression at the societal level.

Mitigating Implicit BIAS

Breathe: Take a moment to regulate your nervous system.

Identify: What thoughts and emotions are you experiencing right now? How is this impacting how you show up in the room?

Ask: Am I safe right now? Sometimes our amygdala sounds the alarm for good cause. The situation is threatening, but sometimes it is responding to implicit bias.

Stop: Evaluate and think about how you want to respond using your upstairs brain.



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Addressing Implicit Biases

Takeaways

What are 1-2 strategies you will practice to continue to increase awareness of your own implicit biases?

How will you use the information you learned today to support your colleagues on their journey?

What is one thing you will do differently in working with victims knowing that they have their own implicit biases?

Resources

National Child Traumatic Stress Network: <https://www.nctsn.org/>

CDC ACEs: <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/index.html>

SAMHSA's Guidance for Trauma-Informed Approach:
https://ncsacw.samhsa.gov/userfiles/files/SAMHSA_Trauma.pdf

PACEs Connection: <https://www.acesconnection.com/>

The Body Keeps the Score by Bessel van der Kolk

The Deepest Well by Nadine Burke Harris

Self-Compassion by Kristin Neff

How to Be an Inclusive Leader: Your Role in Creating Cultures of Belonging Where Everyone Can Thrive by Jennifer Brown

