



# The Neuroscience of Implicit Bias & The Public Sector

KATE EVANS, LAURA LIGOURI – MINDBRIDGE

# The Neuroscience of Implicit Bias

## Presentation Outline

- ▶ Guidelines
- ▶ Making The Case – Bias and the Public Sector
- ▶ Neurobiology of Bias
- ▶ Interventions & Ways To Mitigate Bias
- ▶ Q&A



# Guidelines

- ▶ Frank and open dialogue is encouraged
- ▶ Listen with an open mind
- ▶ Respect confidentiality
- ▶ No idea or question is stupid
- ▶ Try to create a judge free zone – especially for yourself
- ▶ Phone and laptops silenced and put away whenever possible
- ▶ Others?





## Implicit Bias:

The automatic or neurobiological processes underlying unconscious stereotyping and prejudice guiding the perception and attitude towards social groups

# Making the Case

BIAS AND THE PUBLIC  
SECTOR

# Racial Diversity & Foundations

www.grantcraft.org

**grantcraft**  
PRACTICAL WISDOM FOR GRANTMAKERS

2 What is a racial equity lens?  
4 How a racial equity lens works  
9 Applying a racial equity lens  
13 Implementing a commitment to racial equity  
22 Looking inward: using a racial equity lens inside your foundation

**WITH A RACIAL EQUITY LENS**

In partnership with

**Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity**

GRANTCRAFT

GrantCraft is now a service of the Foundation Center. For more information, please email [info@grantcraft.org](mailto:info@grantcraft.org) or visit [grantcraft.org](http://grantcraft.org).

ACIAL Mobilizing  
CHANGE Reform  
POWER  
Inclusion  
Struct  
FORMATION Advocacy  
Equi  
Community Philanthropy  
Impact  
antmaking Racial JUST  
philanthropic Racism  
Mobilization  
Allies  
Movement  
Power

transformation inclusion racial justice movement leadership change Community  
advocacy structures power  
social justice

**Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity**

CRITICAL ISSUES FORUM  
Moving Forward on Racial Justice Philanthropy  
VOLUME 6 • JUNE 2014

# Racial Diversity & Foundations

But how do foundation CEOs perceive the connection between racial diversity of foundation leadership and foundations' ability to have impact?

# Racial Diversity & Foundations

“Foundations would be able to create more impact if their leadership teams were more racially diverse.”



Nearly half of CEOs supported more racially diverse leadership teams.

“Foundations would be able to create more impact if their governing boards were more racially diverse.”



47% of CEOs believe that more racially diverse governing boards would lead to greater impact

# Racial Diversity & Foundations

“Foundations would be able to create more impact if their leadership teams were more racially diverse.”



Nearly half of CEOs supported more racially diverse leadership teams.

Only 14% of CEOs self-identified as people of color

able to create more impact if their governing boards were more racially diverse.”



that more racially diverse governing boards would lead to greater impact

# Who's Part of Your Team

## Race to Lead: Confronting the Nonprofit Racial Leadership Gap

By Sean Thomas-Breitfeld and Frances Kunreuther

# Who's Part of Your Team

- ▶ N = 4,385
- ▶ Current nonprofit job
- ▶ Interest in leading a nonprofit
- ▶ Training/support
- ▶ Views of leadership
- ▶ Personal background



Survey results consistently indicate less than 20% of executive directors/CEOs of nonprofits are people of color.

# Foundation-Based Questions

## Timeline of Race, Racism, Resistance and Philanthropy 1992-2014

**1992**

A day before the Los Angeles police/Rodney King case verdicts, gang leaders from the Bloods and Crips meet publicly with South Central community activists to announce a cease-fire and gang truce.

On April 29, four White LAPD officers are acquitted of the 1991 beating of Rodney King, triggering five days of civil unrest leaving more than 50 people dead and more than 2,000 injured.



The W.K. Kellogg Foundation launches the African American Men and Boys Initiative, led by Dr. Bobby Austin, to repair the breach between Black males and the rest of society.

Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR) holds its first conference and briefs funders on refugee issues.

Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy (AAPIP) publishes "Invisible and in Need: Philanthropic Giving to Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders," an influential report that tackles the "model minority" myth and also shows that less than 0.2% of all philanthropic giving goes to these communities.

**2002**

How did particular moments contribute to an understanding of race and racial justice?

- How did foundations learn and shift?
- How did they communicate that learning and shifting?

How embedded was a racial justice commitment in the strategy and program of foundations as moments and situations arose?

- How did this readiness, or lack thereof, impact foundations' ability to respond effectively?

# Diversity Dimensions



# Diversity Dimensions

In its broadest  
includes all th

rac  
nat  
cul  
ger  
sta  
bac  
sta  
per  
lev



**Nine  
mensions of  
Difference**

# Primary & Secondary Dimensions

- ▶ Characteristics that represent an individual's group identity
- ▶ Unlike primary dimensions because of the element of *choice*

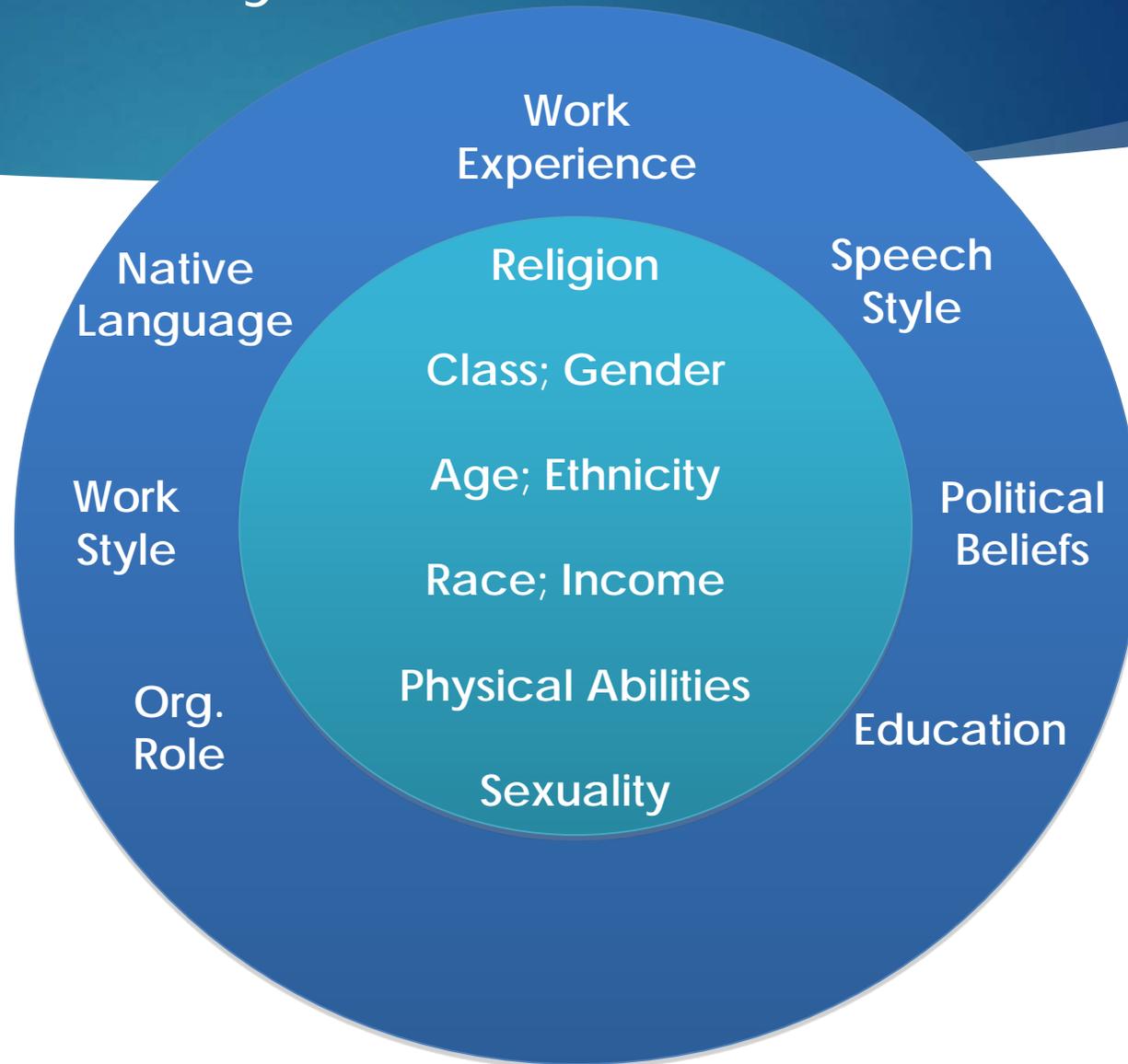
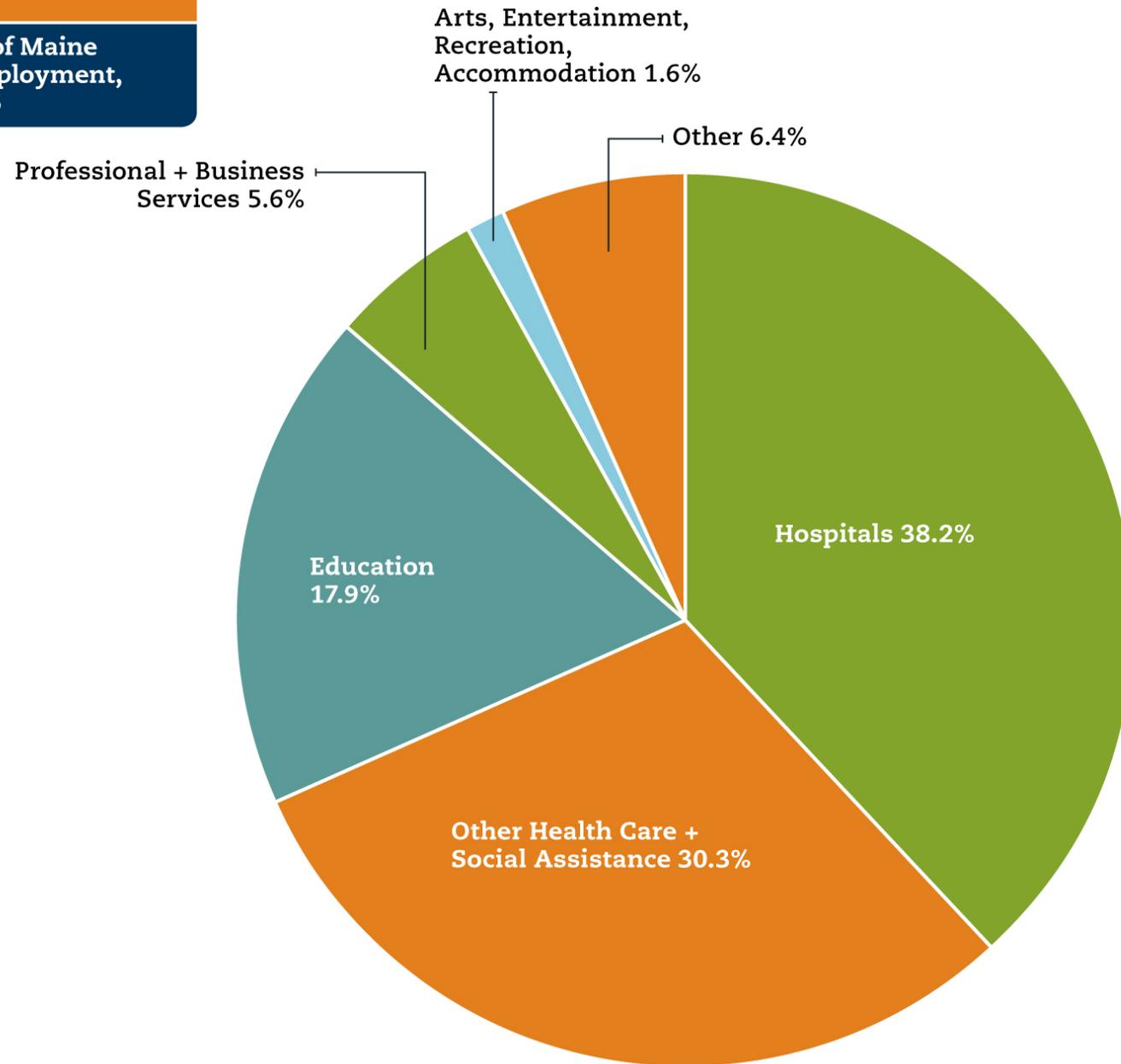


Figure 3

Distribution of Maine Nonprofit Employment, by Field, 2015



# Sector By Sector - Healthcare

Black/immigrant patients perceived poorer treatment in domains such as:

- Patient centeredness
- Contextual knowledge of the patient
- Patient-provider communication

From providers who scores higher on bias against Black/immigrant populations

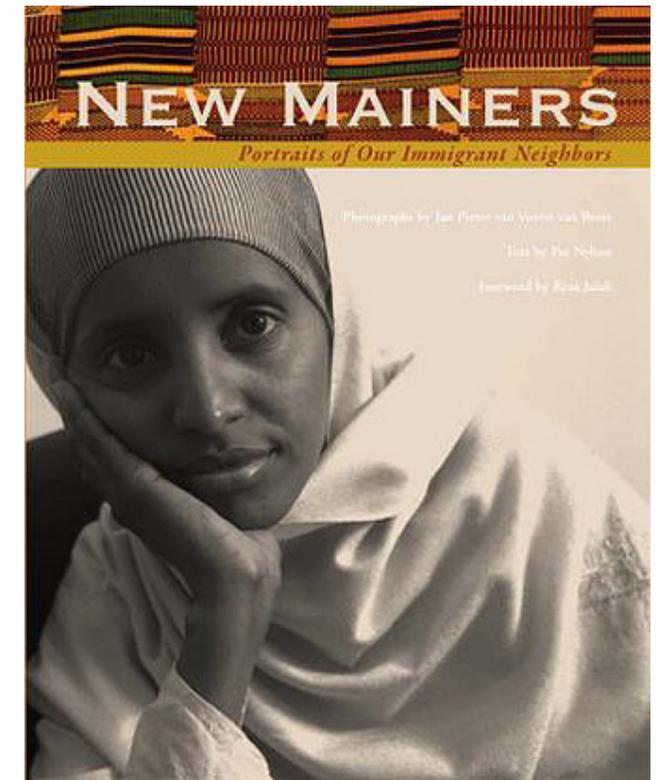
When treatment recommendation was used as an outcome, physicians with pro-White biases differentially prescribed medication between white and black/immigrant patients.

- Unfamiliarity with healthcare system(s)
- Trauma/PTSD
- Chronic Stress



NEW MAINERS  
PUBLIC HEALTH  
INITIATIVE

To increase the cultural competency of healthcare providers with an emphasis on religion, traditions, and cultural beliefs of refugees and immigrants and how these affect perceptions and expectations about public health



# Sector By Sector - Social Justice

- ▶ Implicit bias might be implicated with:
  - ▶ Racially motivated policing efforts & arrests
  - ▶ Excessive use of force and in the moment errors in decision making based on difference
- ▶ In the judicial system, implicit biases also have been shown to result in:
  - ▶ Differential ways in which judges and jurors perceive a defendant
  - ▶ Memory distortion of jurors based on race



MAINE **inside out**

Maine  
PRISONER ADVOCACY  
Coalition



# Sector By Sector - Social Justice

- ▶ While in prison, equal access to
    - ▶ Quality health care
    - ▶ Effective mental health counseling
    - ▶ Educational and professional opportunities
- can also be impacted by implicit bias perpetuating minority disparities



MAINE **inside out**

Maine  
PRISONER ADVOCACY  
Coalition

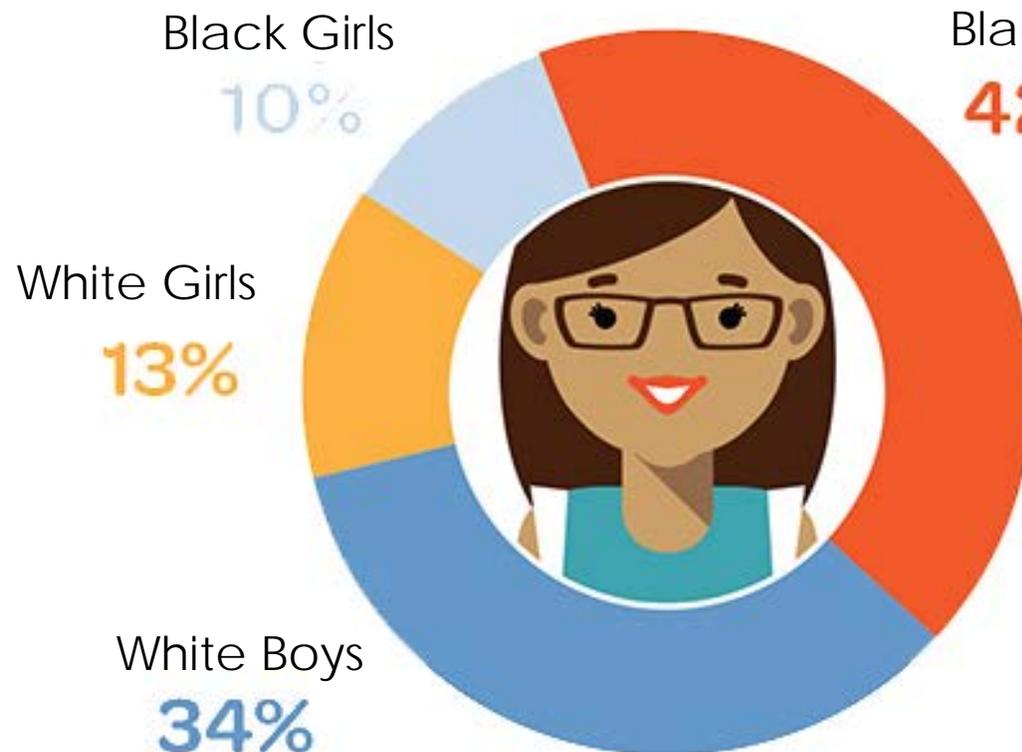


# Sector By Sector – Education



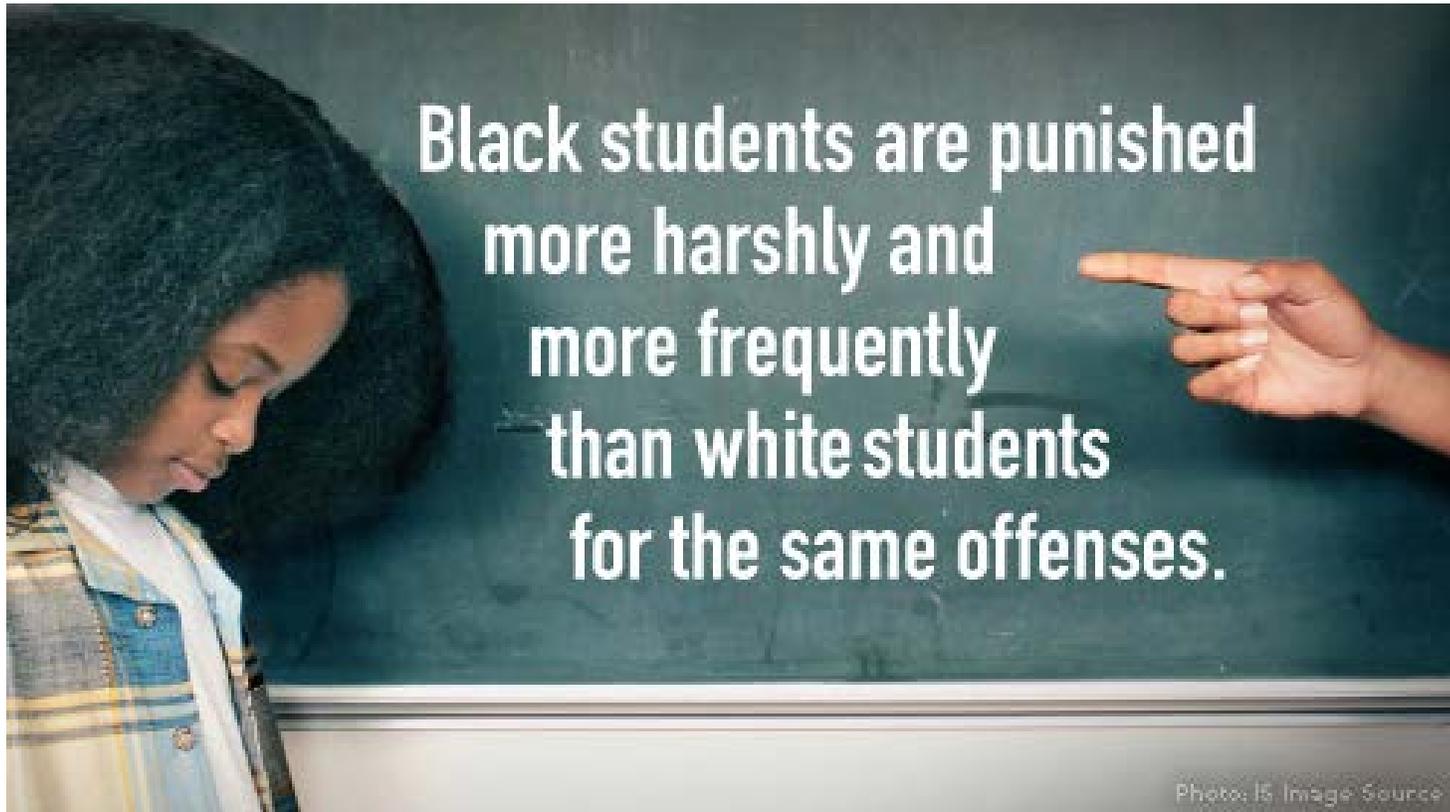
# Sector By Sector – Education

## Track the eyes: Which students are teachers watching?



Preschool teachers tend to more closely observe black than whites, especially black boys, when challenging behaviors are expected.

# Sector By Sector – Education



## Elementary & Secondary Public School Suspensions 2011-2012

Black female students suspended: 12%

White female students suspended: 2%

Native American female students: 7%

(Vega, 2014)

# Sector By Sector – Education



- Interviewed 115 students, parents, educators and administrators in over a dozen schools
- ACLU uncovered harassment and discrimination against students of color
  - Across the state
  - All grade levels
- Many students of color face a constant barrage of bullying, as well as unwelcoming school cultures

An illustration of a person in a red suit walking away from the viewer down a light blue path. The path is lined with black poles, some with white circular lights and others with white arrow-shaped signs pointing in various directions. In the background, there is a stylized cityscape with blue buildings under a dark blue sky with a few white clouds. A semi-transparent white box is overlaid on the middle of the image, containing the title text.

How Our Decision Making Impacts The Public Good



Strategies  
of  
Choice

# Group Activity

# Group Activity

- ▶ Your Organization
  - ▶ List 1 way your organization has considered implicit bias in the past
  - ▶ List 1 challenge your organization is facing in considering and/or implementing anti-bias initiatives
- ▶ You
  - ▶ List 1 way you have considered how implicit bias shows up in your life
  - ▶ List 1 challenge you are facing when you think about anti-bias work



# Discovering Our Neurobiology



## THE RIDER & THE ELEPHANT



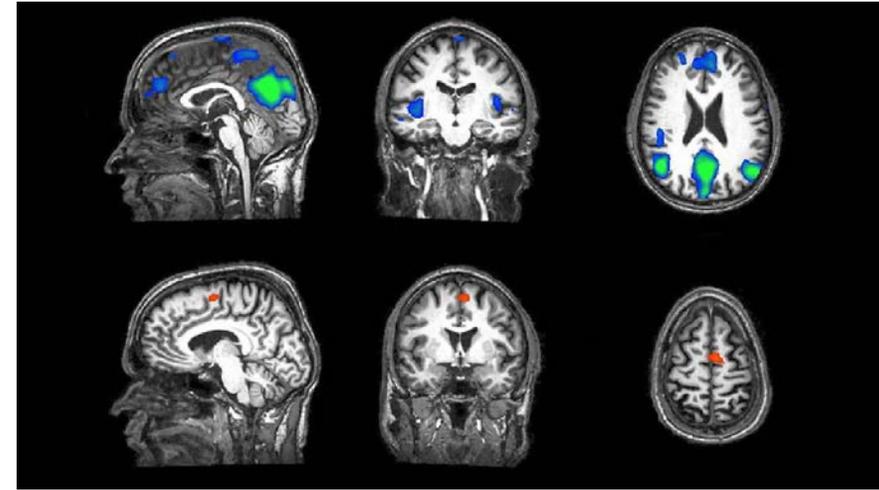
40% - 90% OF ALL BEHAVIORS  
ARE UNCONSCIOUS

AT ANY GIVEN MOMENT, OUR BRAINS  
RECEIVE **11 MILLION BITS** OF  
INFORMATION. CONSCIOUSLY, OUR  
BRAINS CAN ONLY PROCESS **40 BITS**.

TO MANAGE THE REMAINING  
INFORMATION OVERLOAD, OUR BRAINS  
CREATE UNCONSCIOUS MENTAL  
SHORTCUTS → IMPLICIT PROCESSES



Our **brain** is hardwired to sort people instinctively into different groups based on their similarities.

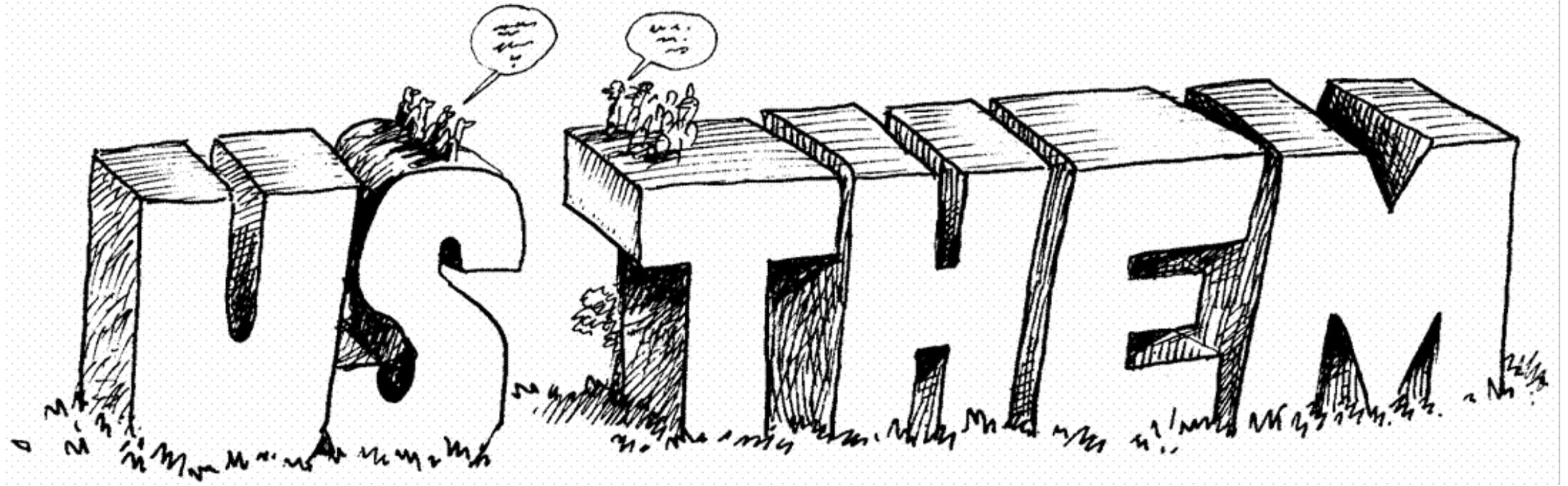


## Functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI)

Functional magnetic resonance imaging or functional MRI measures brain activity by detecting changes associated with blood flow



People are particularly adept at dividing the social world into us and them

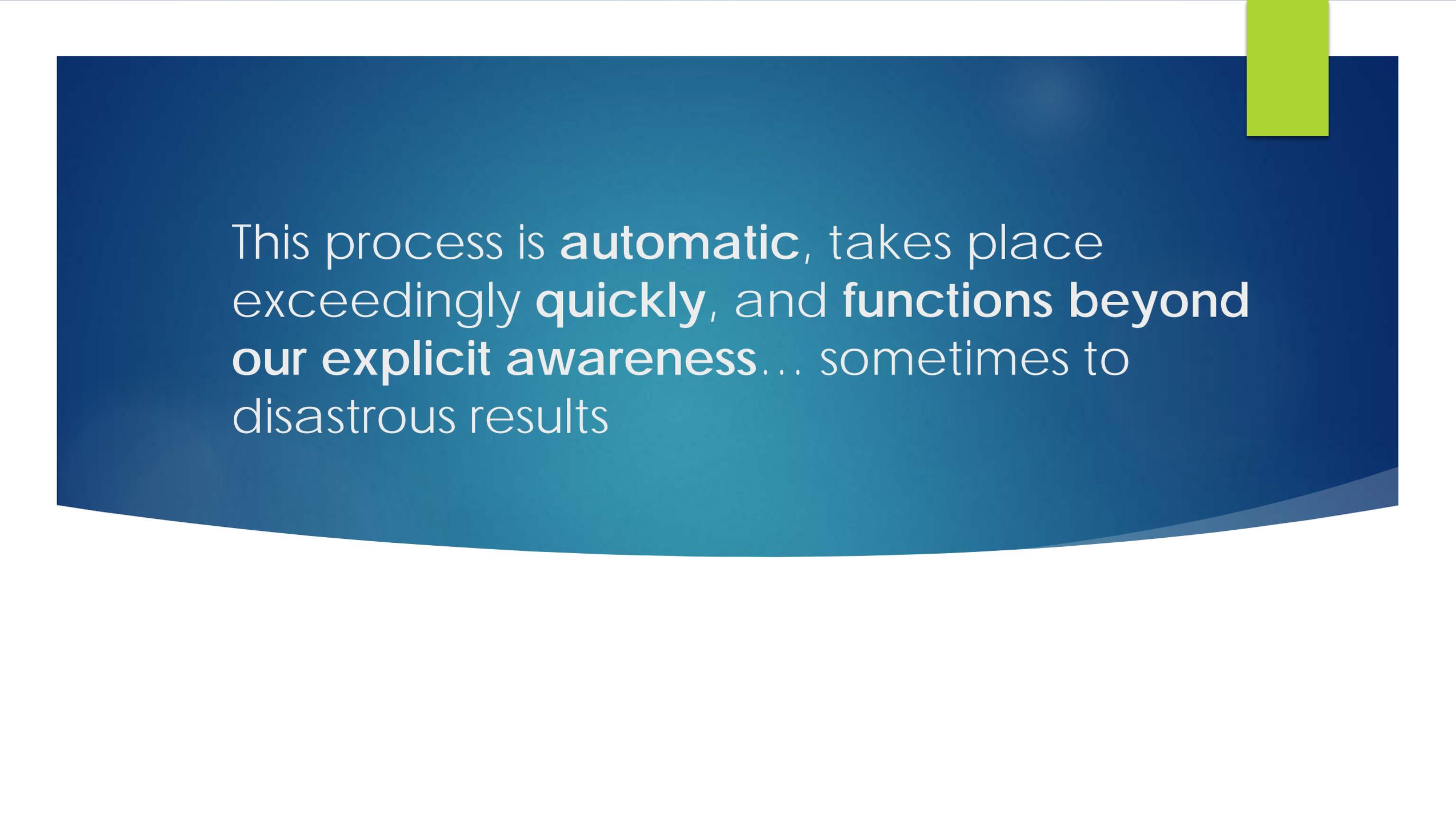




In fact, categorizing oneself as a member of a group happens in every culture...

**This process is called self-categorization:**

- ▶ The activation of psychological connections between the self and some type of representation (i.e., nationality, race, membership)
- ▶ At the personal level
  - ▶ (i.e. defining oneself in terms of similar characteristics with one group)
- ▶ And at the collective level
  - ▶ (i.e. defining oneself in terms of similar characteristics with ones social group)



This process is **automatic**, takes place exceedingly **quickly**, and **functions beyond our explicit awareness**... sometimes to disastrous results

# Implicit Association Test - Activity

**B**

For **FLOWERS** and for words **pleasant in meaning**, mark in the circle to the left. For everything else (**INSECTS** and **unpleasant-meaning words**) mark in the circle to the right. Start at top left, go from top to bottom doing all items in order, then do the second column. At bottom right, record the elapsed time in seconds.

FLOWERS or pleasant words	INSECTS or unpleasant words	FLOWERS or pleasant words	INSECTS or unpleasant words
<input type="radio"/> FLEA	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> GNAT	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/> gentle	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> enjoy	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/> ORCHID	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> WASP	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/> evil	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> poison	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/> ROSE	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> ROACH	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/> damage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> heaven	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/> DAFFODIL	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> DAISY	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/> cheer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> gloom	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/> CENTIPEDE	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> LILY	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/> vomit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> ugly	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/> LILAC	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> MOTH	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/> hurt	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> happy	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/> TULIP	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> WEEVIL	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/> love	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> friend	<input type="radio"/>

©Project Implicit, 2007

Number of seconds: \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of errors: \_\_\_\_\_

**A**

For **INSECTS** and for words **pleasant in meaning**, mark in the circle to the left. For everything else (**FLOWERS** and **unpleasant-meaning words**) mark in the circle to the right. Start at top left, go from top to bottom doing all items in order, then do the second column. At bottom right, record the elapsed time in seconds.

INSECTS or pleasant words	FLOWERS or unpleasant words	INSECTS or pleasant words	FLOWERS or unpleasant words
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<input type="radio"/> FLEA	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> ROACH	<input type="radio"/>
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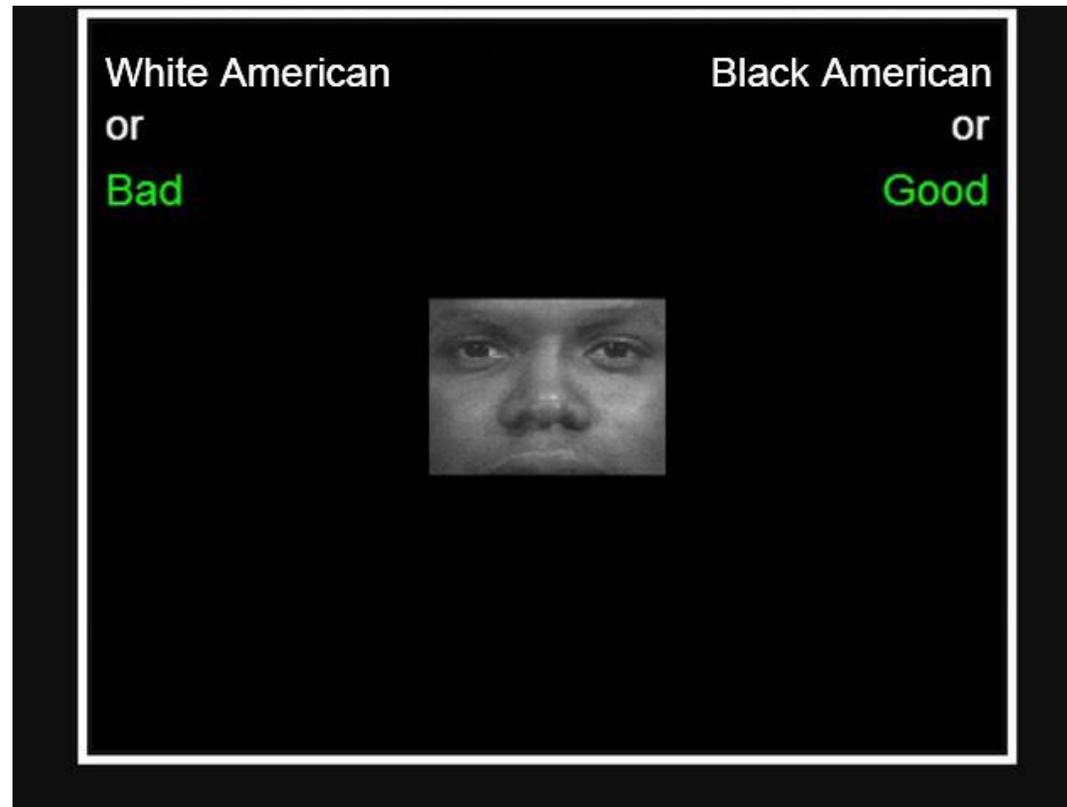
©Project Implicit, 2007

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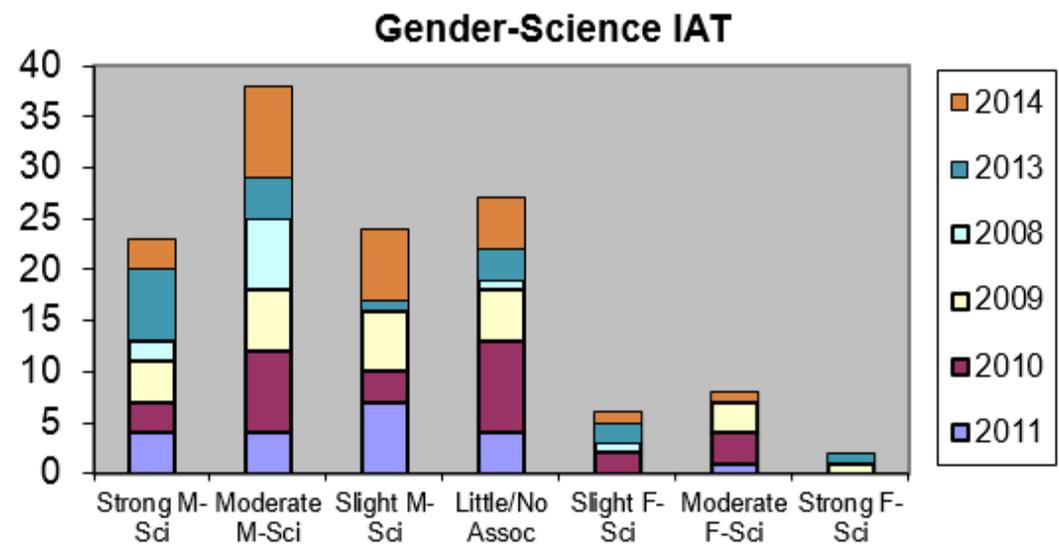
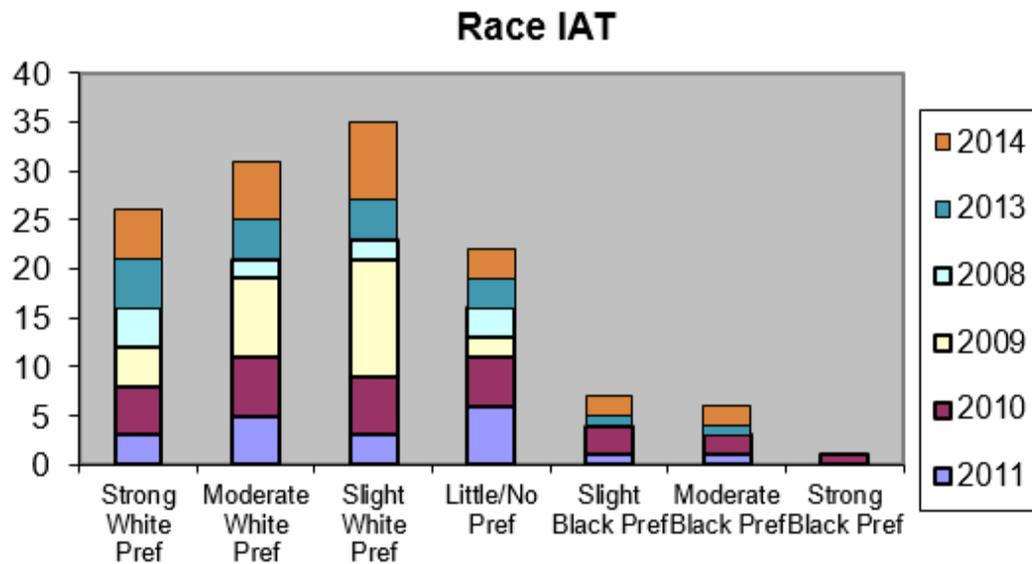
# Implicit Association Test

The Implicit Association Test (IAT) is a measure within social psychology that is designed to detect the strength of a person's automatic association between mental representations.

# Implicit Association Test



# Implicit Association Test



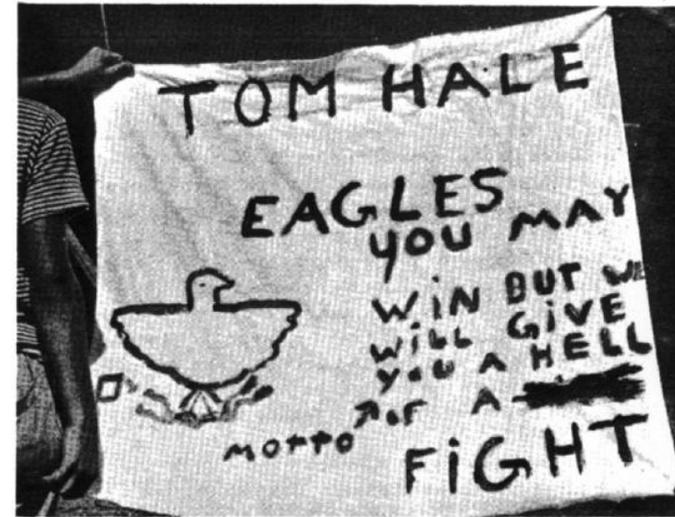
To take the test visit:  
<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>

# Robber's Cave



RATTLERS AND EAGLES: INTERGROUP RELATIONS

(STAGE 2)

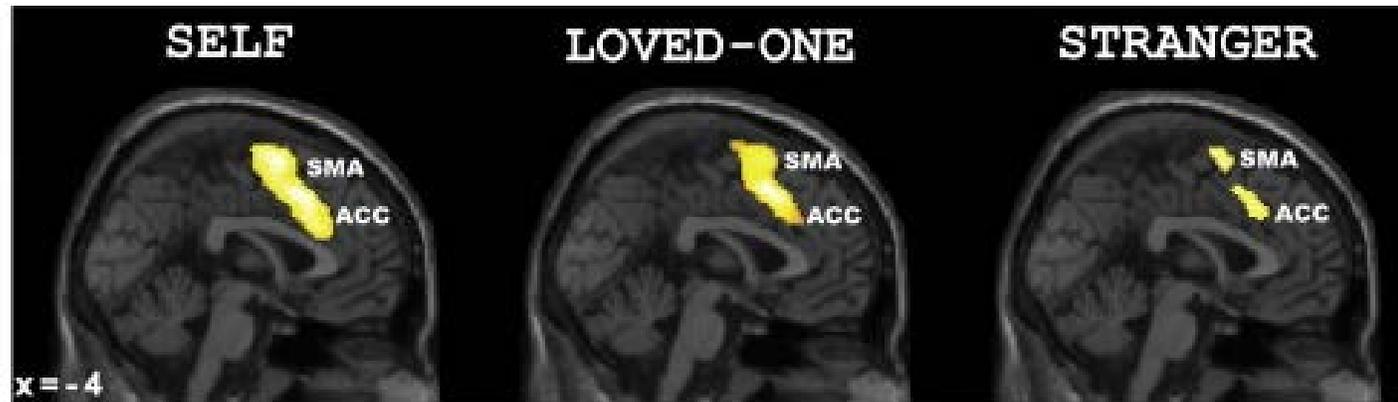


One of the Eagle banners during the tournament.

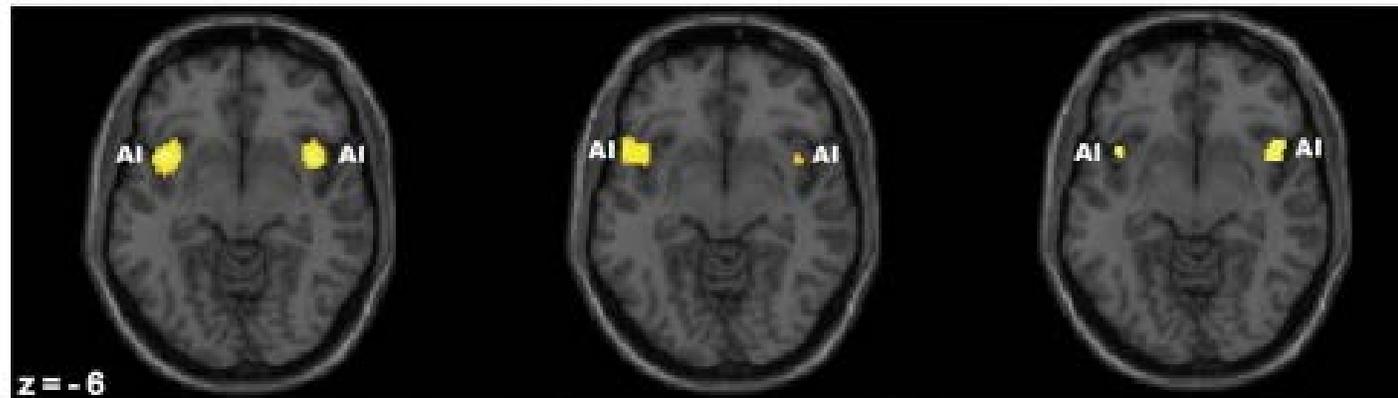
**Realistic Conflict Theory:** group conflict, negative prejudices, and stereotypes are the result of competition between groups for desired outcome/resources.

# Case Study: No Love For Strangers

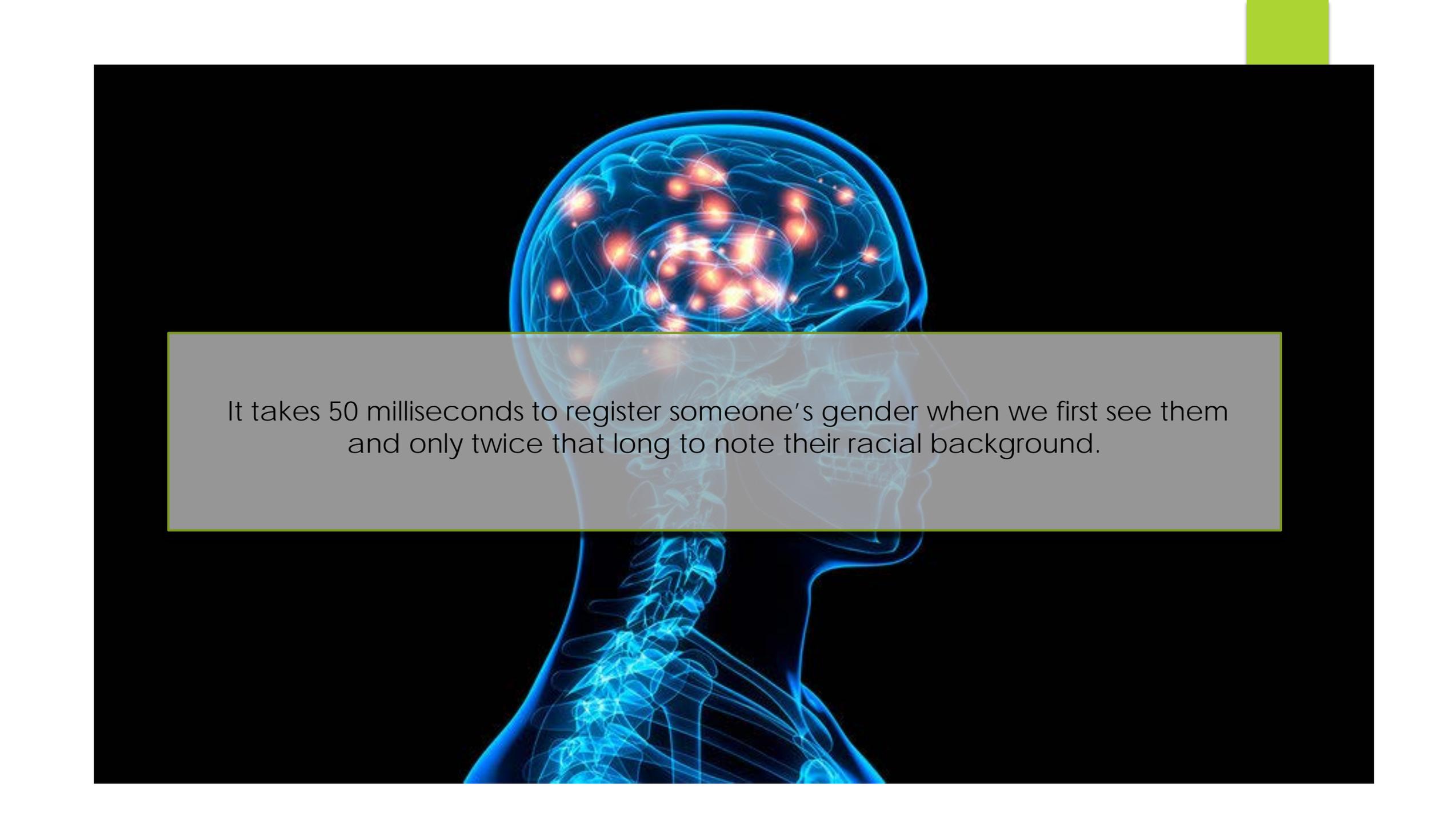
Anterior  
cingulate  
cortex



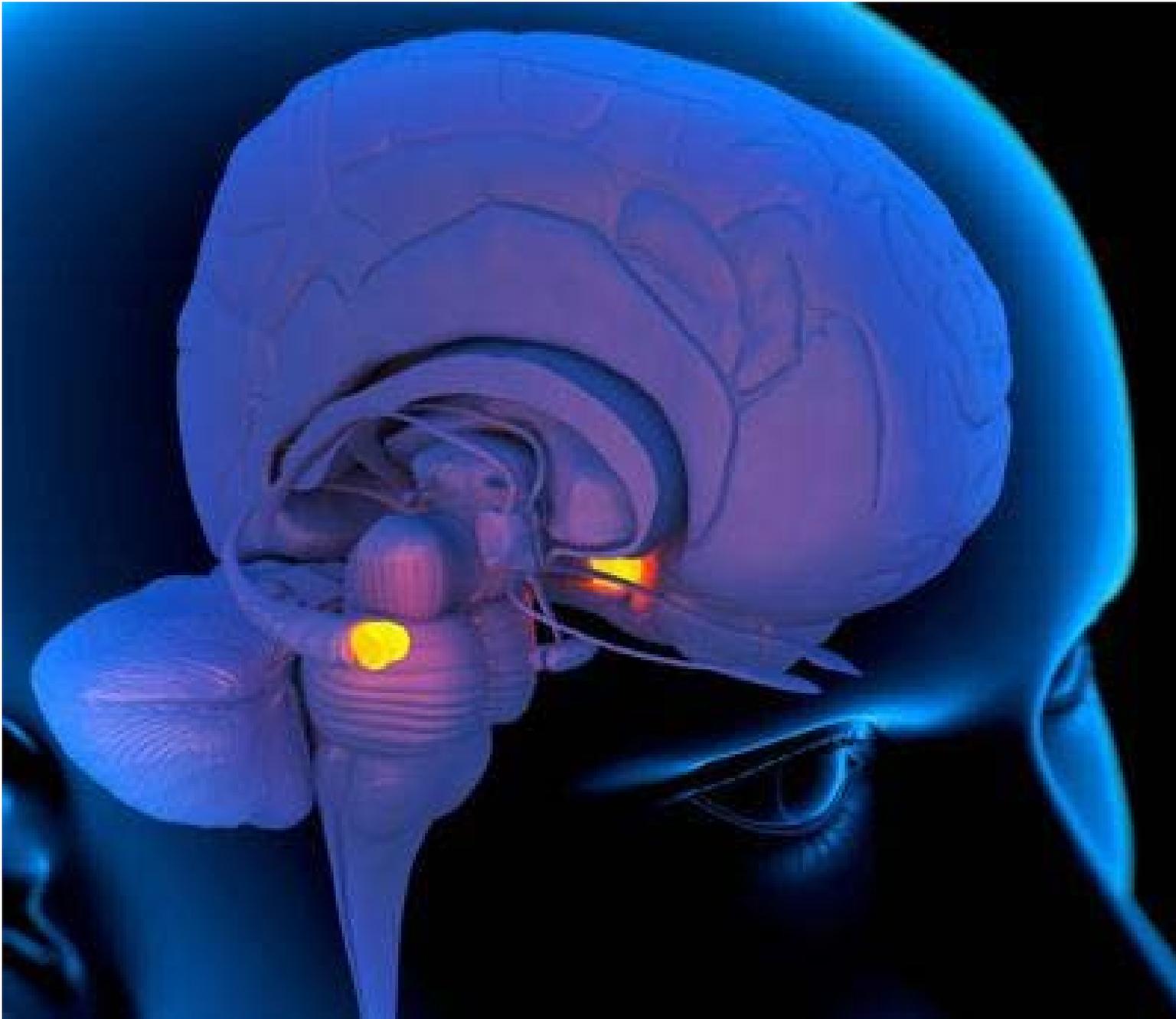
Anterior  
Insula



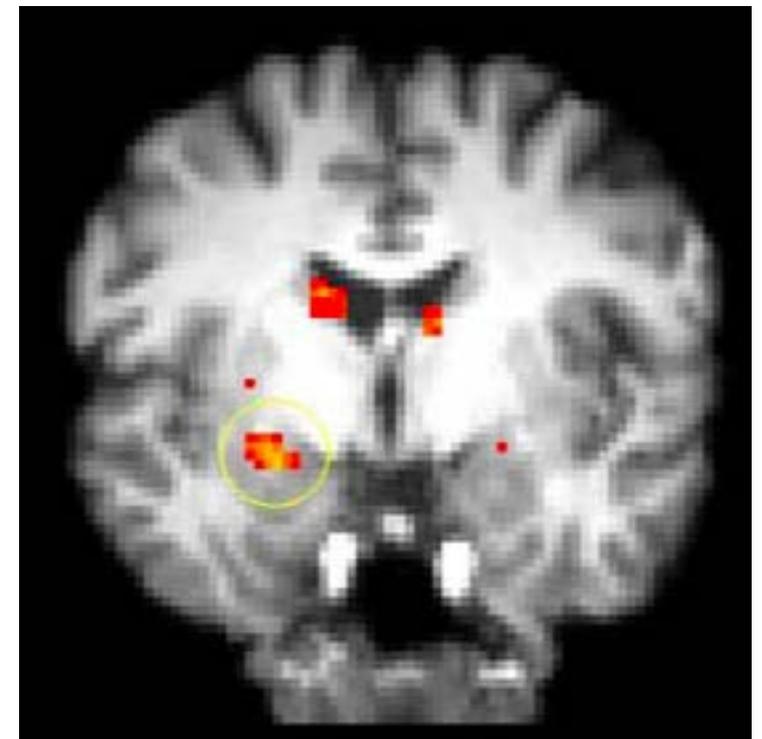
To what extent  
does imagining a  
loved-one in pain  
differ from  
imagining an  
unfamiliar other?



It takes 50 milliseconds to register someone's gender when we first see them and only twice that long to note their racial background.

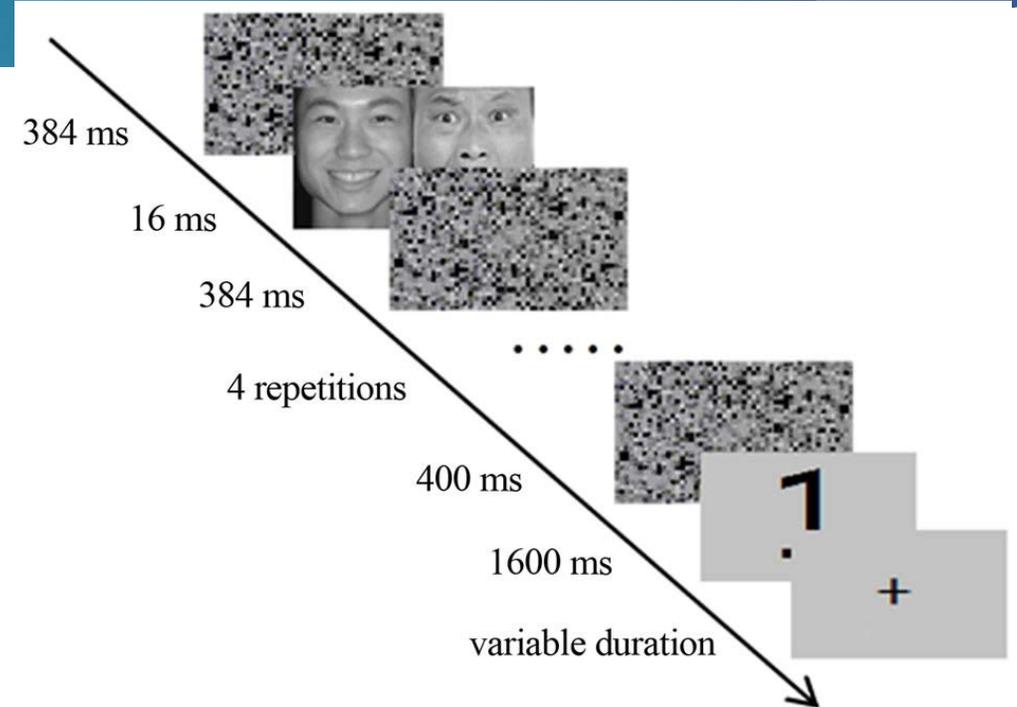
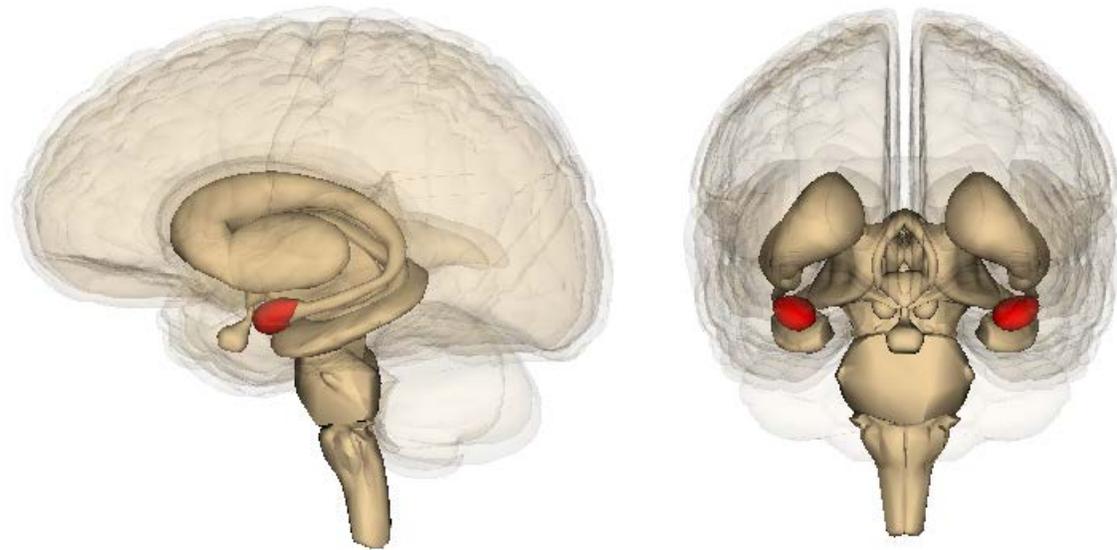


Limbic System:  
Amygdala



Amodio, 2010

# Stereotype Content Model



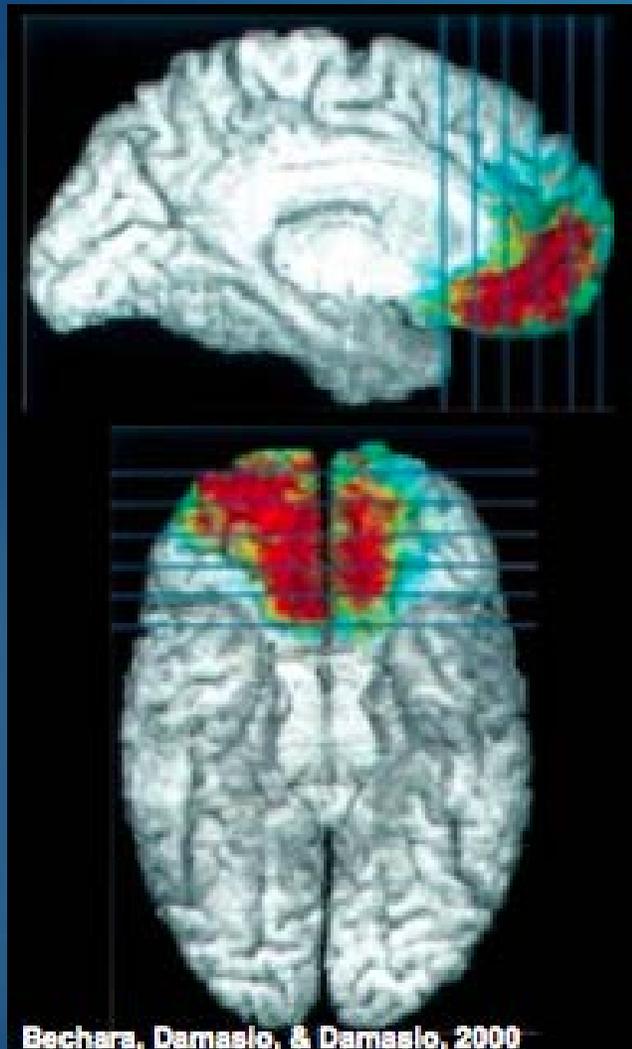
(Cunningham et al, 2000)



Medial Prefrontal Cortex

# Decision Making





EMOTIONS ARE NECESSARY  
FOR MAKING DECISIONS

# Moral Decision Making & Emotion

- ▶ Emotions tend to be:
  - ▶ Highly associated with moral judgments (Rozin et al. 1999)
    - ▶ Anger: individual rights violations
    - ▶ Contempt: Violation of communal codes
    - ▶ Disgust: Violations of purity-sanctity
  - ▶ Amplify moral judgments (Horberg, Oveis, & Keltner, 2011)
  - ▶ May even serve to “moralize” actions that would otherwise be considered nonmoral (Wheatley & Haidt, 2005)

# When are we the most susceptible?

Rushed



Multi-Tasking



Ambiguous



Micro-Biases



Vulnerability



# Group Activity

When do YOU think you're most susceptible?

When is your Foundation most susceptible?

# Confirmation Bias

# Confirmation Bias

THE TENDENCY TO SEARCH FOR, INTERPRET, FAVOR, AND RECALL INFORMATION IN A WAY THAT CONFIRMS ONE'S PREEXISTING BELIEFS OR HYPOTHESES

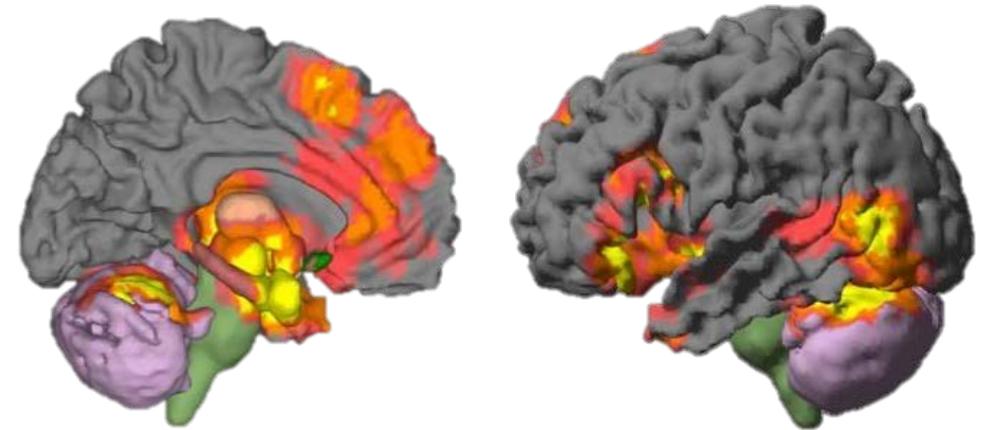
# Confirmation Bias

## Traditional 4 Factors To Change Belief:

1. Our old belief
2. Confidence in old belief
3. The new piece of data
4. Confidence in the new piece of data

→ And the further away the piece of data is from what you already believe, the less likely it is to change your belief

→ → ROLE OF EMOTION



Lindquist et al., 2012

# Confirmation Bias

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→ → ROLE OF EMOTION

→ → ROLE OF GROUP AFFILIATION/INTER-GROUP BIAS



# Confirmation Bias

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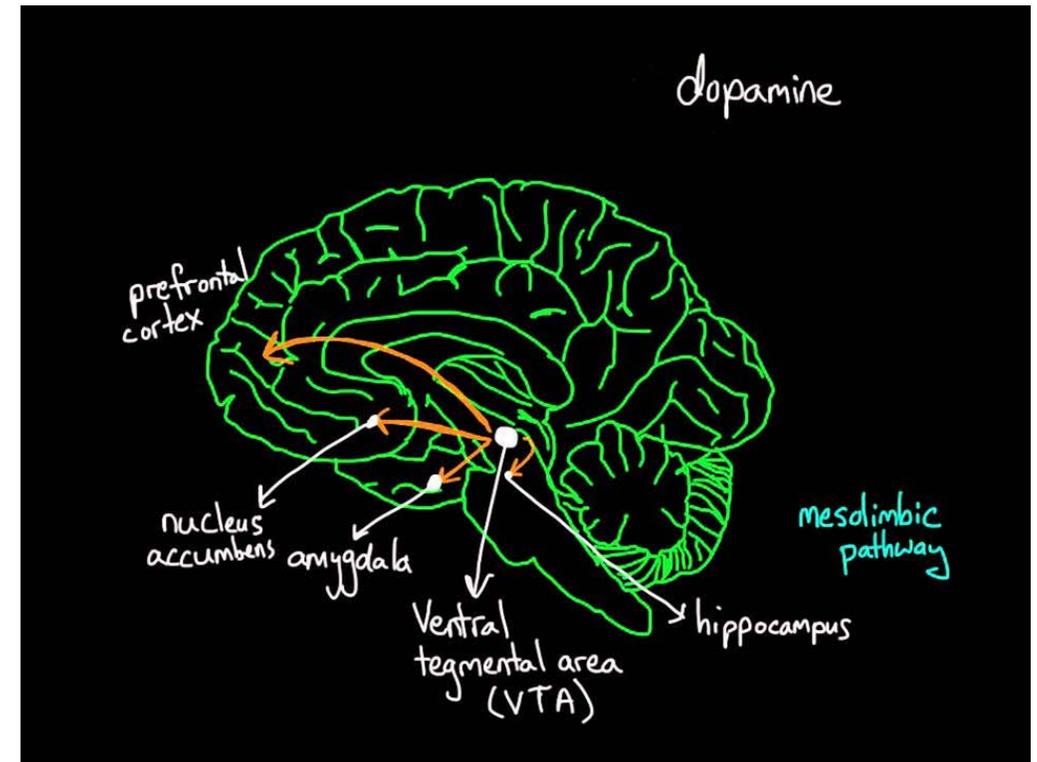
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→ → → REWARD SYSTEM



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→ → → ROLE OF GROUP AFFILIATION/INTER-GROUP BIAS

→ → → → REWARD SYSTEM

→ → → → → SCHADENFREUDE



# Confirmation Bias – Group Affiliation



## War as a moral imperative (Ginges & Atran, 2011; 2012)

- ▶ People support intergroup violence because it is the “right” or “noble” thing to do: a sacred value
- ▶ Violence is related to group commitment, not self-promotion

# Confirmation Bias – Group Affiliation

## War as a moral imperative

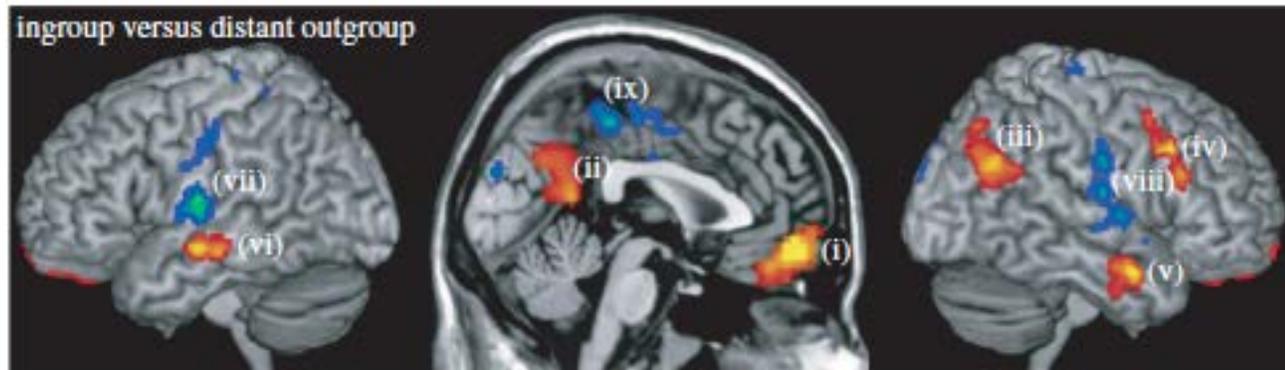
(Ginges & Atran, 2011; 2012)

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- ▶ Violence is related to group commitment, not self-promotion

## Behavioural and neural responses in Arabs, Israelis and South Americans to each other’s misfortunes (Bruneau, Dufour, & Saxe, 2012)

Moshe moved from the USA to Israel; his father says it is to support the Jewish homeland. At school, Moshe was happy that some of the boys had offered him some candy. When Moshe put some in his mouth, the boys laughed and said that they had peed on the candy. All the other children started laughing and pointing at Moshe.

# Confirmation Bias – Group Affiliation



Similarly to Cheng, 2010...

- Regions showing differential activity in response to stories about individuals from the ingroup (red-yellow) and the distant outgroup (blue).

However...

- Seeing stories next to one another (conflict group vs distant outgroup) served to increase ingroup response.



# The Role of Social Media

# Foundations and Social Media



**CHALLENGE CANCER 20**  
Cut Cancer in Maine 20% by 2020

**MCF** Maine Cancer Foundation ✓  
@MaineCancerFoundation

Donate Message

Like Follow Share Save

Nonprofit Organization • Falmouth, Maine  
4.9 ★★★★★ (17)

HOME FUNDRAISERS ABOUT EVENTS



Maine Community Foundation ✓  
@mainecf

Message

Liked Following Share Save

Related

Civility



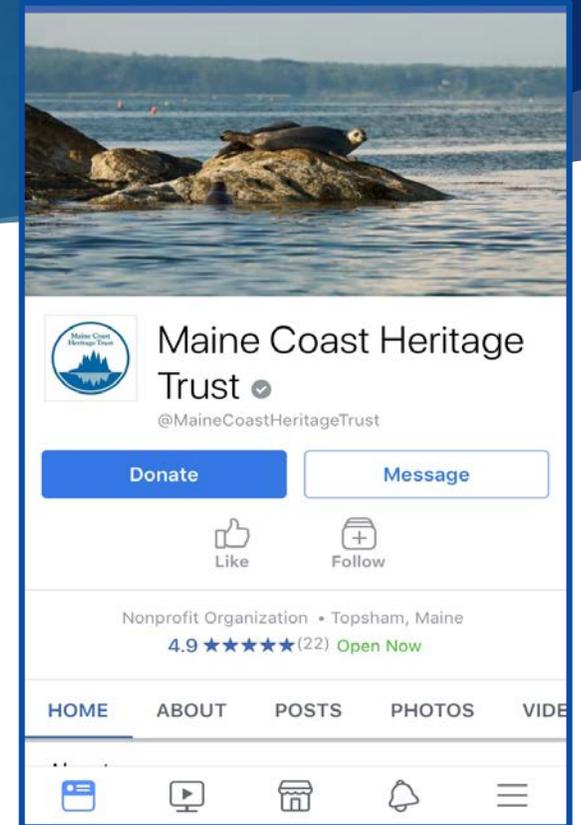
Maine Justice Foundation  
@MaineJusticeFoundation

Donate Message

Like Follow

Nonprofit Organization • Hallowell, Maine  
5.0 ★★★★★ (1)

Maine Justice Foundation is active now. Start a conversation. PH Message



Maine Coast Heritage Trust ✓  
@MaineCoastHeritageTrust

Donate Message

Like Follow

Nonprofit Organization • Topsham, Maine  
4.9 ★★★★★ (22) Open Now

HOME ABOUT POSTS PHOTOS VIDEOS



# The Confirmation Bias/Echo Chamber Interaction

## Confirmation Bias (Psych)

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→ → ROLE OF EMOTION

→ → ROLE OF GROUP AFFILIATION/INTER-GROUP BIAS

→ → → REWARD SYSTEM

→ → → → SCHADENFREUDE

## Social Media & “Echo Chambers”

- ▶ Facebook = 1.7 billion users (Pew Research Center)

- ▶ Self-selection by tribal lines

→ Block, mute, unfriend any outlet or person that does not bolster standing belief

Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (Vicario et al, 2015)

- Mapped the spread of two types of content:
  - Conspiracy theories
  - Scientific information

# The Confirmation Bias/Echo Chamber Interaction

## Confirmation Bias (Psych)

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Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (Vicario et al, 2015)

- Select and share content related to a specific narrative and to ignore alternative information
- SOCIAL HOMOGENEITY main driver
- ▶ Effect of "algorithmic curation"

# The Confirmation Bias/Echo Chamber Interaction

## Confirmation Bias (Psych)

Facebook shows an algorithmic selection, based on a number of factors including (but not limited to):

- "Sponsored" or paid posts
- Your past interaction with similar posts (i.e., liking, commenting, or sharing them)
- How much other people you are connected to have done the same

BIAS

→ → → REWARD SYSTEM

→ → → → SCHADENFREUDE

## Social Media & "Echo Chambers"

- ▶ Facebook = 1.7 billion users (Pew Research Center)
- ▶ Self-selection by tribal lines
  - Block, mute, unfriend any outlet or person that does not bolster standing belief

Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (Vicario et al, 2015)

- Select and share content related to a specific narrative and to ignore alternative information
- SOCIAL HOMOGENEITY main driver
- ▶ Effect of "algorithmic curation"

# The Confirmation Bias/Echo Chamber Interaction

Facebook shows an algorithmic selection, based on a number of factors including (but not limited to):

- How much other people you are connected to have done the same
- How much other people you are connected to have done the same

## IMPACT OF FAKE NEWS/BOTS:

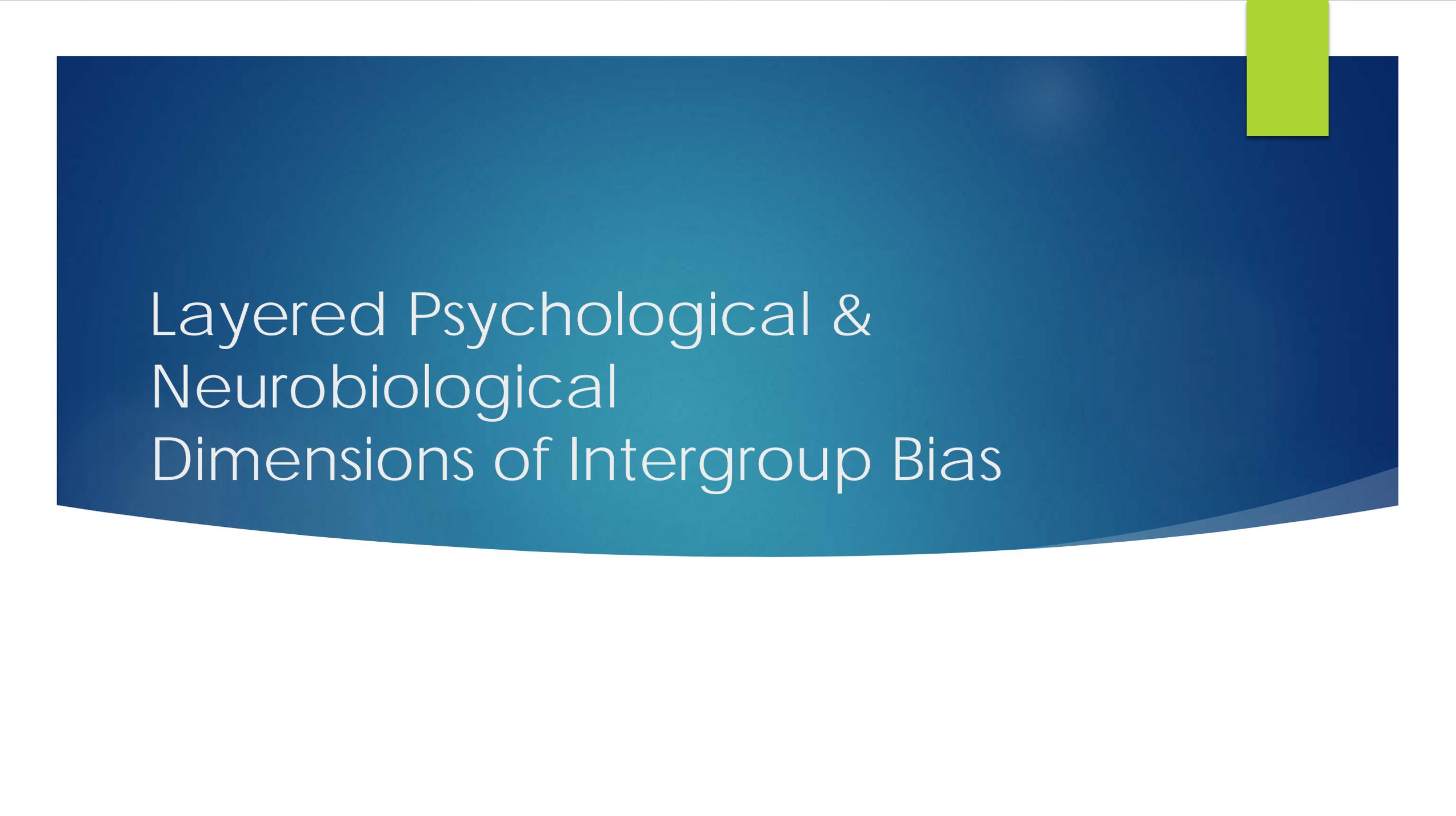
World Economic Forum listed massive digital misinformation as one of the main threats to modern society.

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# Layered Psychological & Neurobiological Dimensions of Intergroup Bias

Selection/Isolation of material based on ingroup affiliation

"Algorithmic Curation"

Confirmation Bias

Schadenfreude/  
Reward

Violence As Group  
Commitment

Ingroup/Outgroup Neuro

Implicit Bias → Prejudice

Decision Making Processes

Driven By Emotional Inputs

Layered Psychological & Neurobiological  
Dimensions of Intergroup Bias



# How to Mitigate Implicit Bias

# Mitigating Implicit Bias

- 1) Policy (Structural/Institutional Change)



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- 2) Education & Awareness



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- 3) Use the same processes for pro-social means



# Mitigating Implicit Bias

- 1) Policy (Structural/Institutional Change)
- 2) Education & Awareness
- 3) Use the same processes for pro-social means
- 4) Long-Term Implicit Bias Trainings

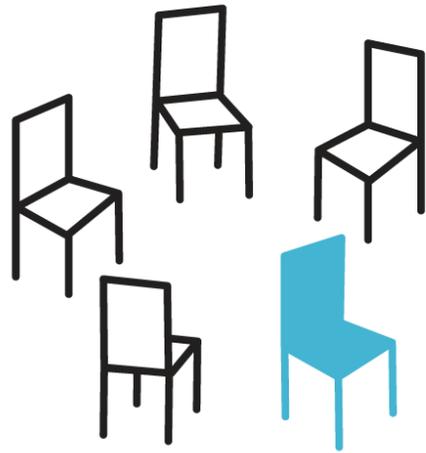


# The Implicit Bias Project



# Implicit Bias Project – Community Advisory Council

Maine Youth Action Network



MAINE **inside out**

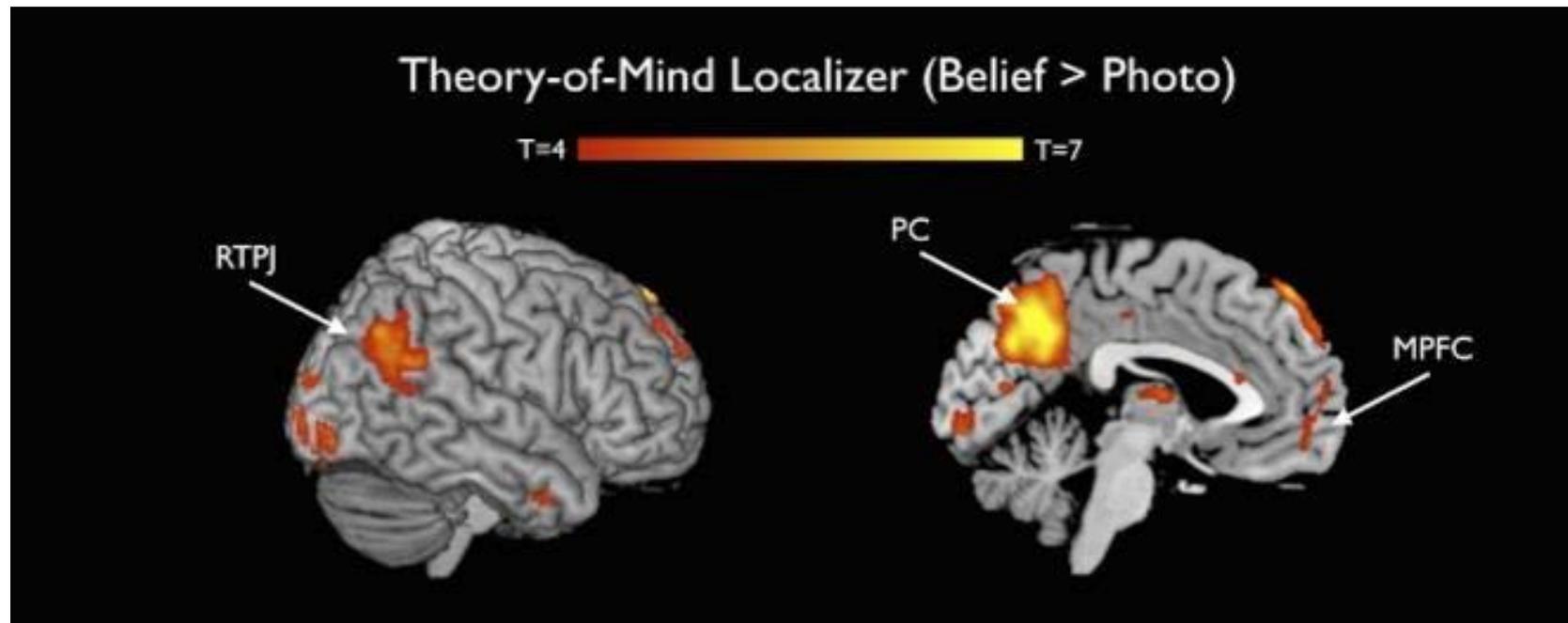




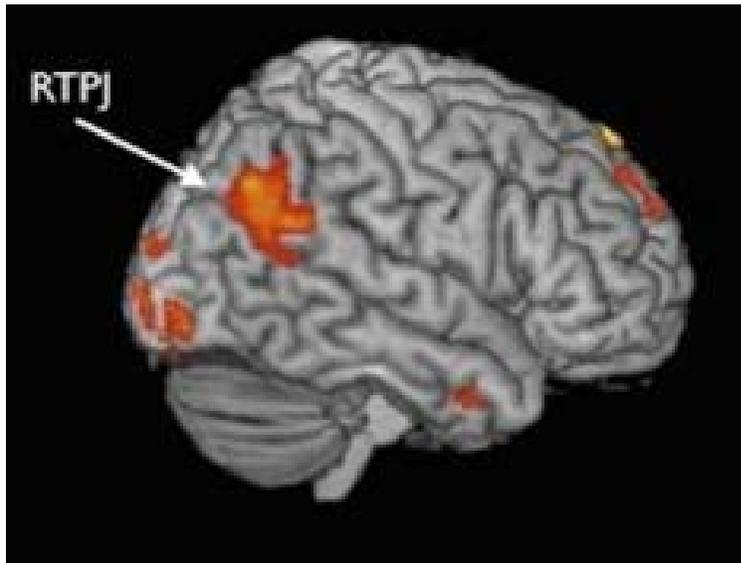
# Perspective Taking

The active contemplation of another's psychological experiences - thinking and imagining the feelings and viewpoints of others

# Perspective Taking

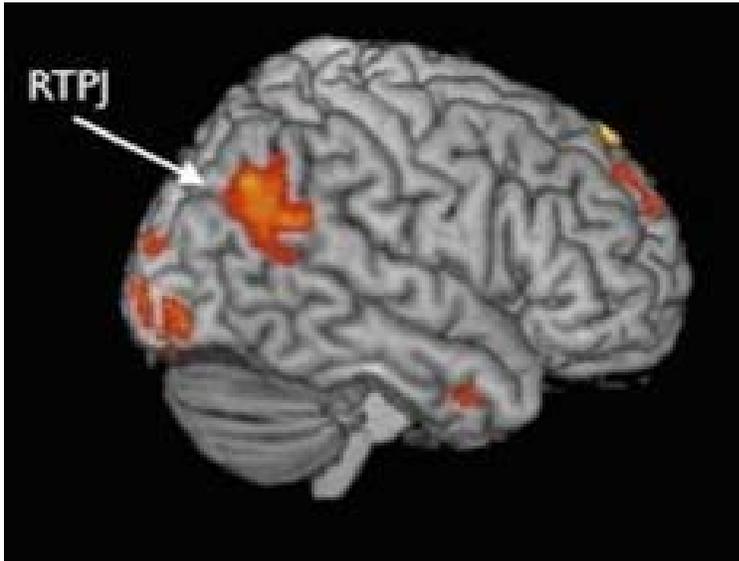


# Perspective Taking



Enhances '**self-other**' **overlap** - the merging of one's mental representation of themselves with outgroup members

# Perspective Taking



Enhances '**self-other**' **overlap** - the merging of one's mental representation of themselves with outgroup members

**Increases empathy** and reduces the activation of negative stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination

# Perspective Taking vs. Perspective Giving

- ▶ The active contemplation of another's psychological experiences - thinking and imagining the feelings and viewpoints of others

**Vs.**

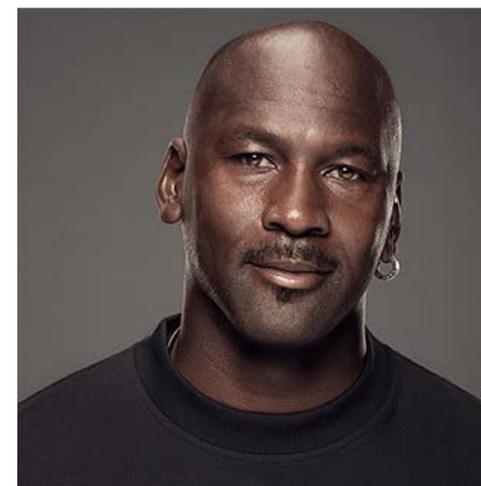
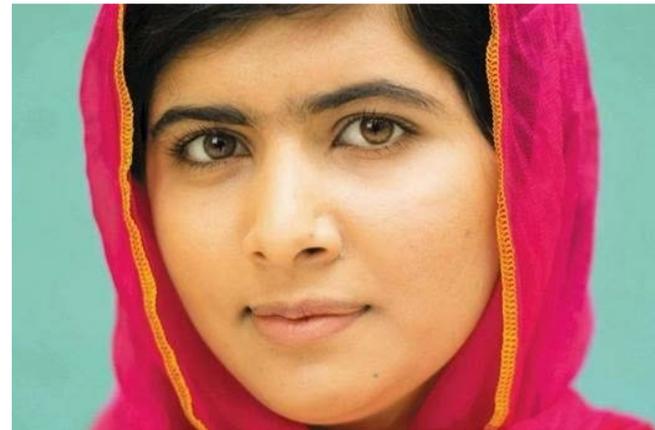
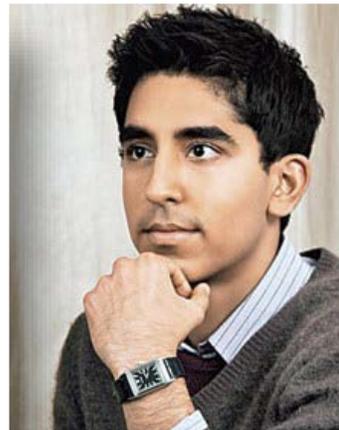
- ▶ The process by which an individual shares his/her experiences with an active listening partner

An effective way to address this need is to provide a space for individuals to speak and feel 'heard'.

Group Activity

Active Listening  
Exercise

# Exemplars



Expand Your Circle...



# Group Activity



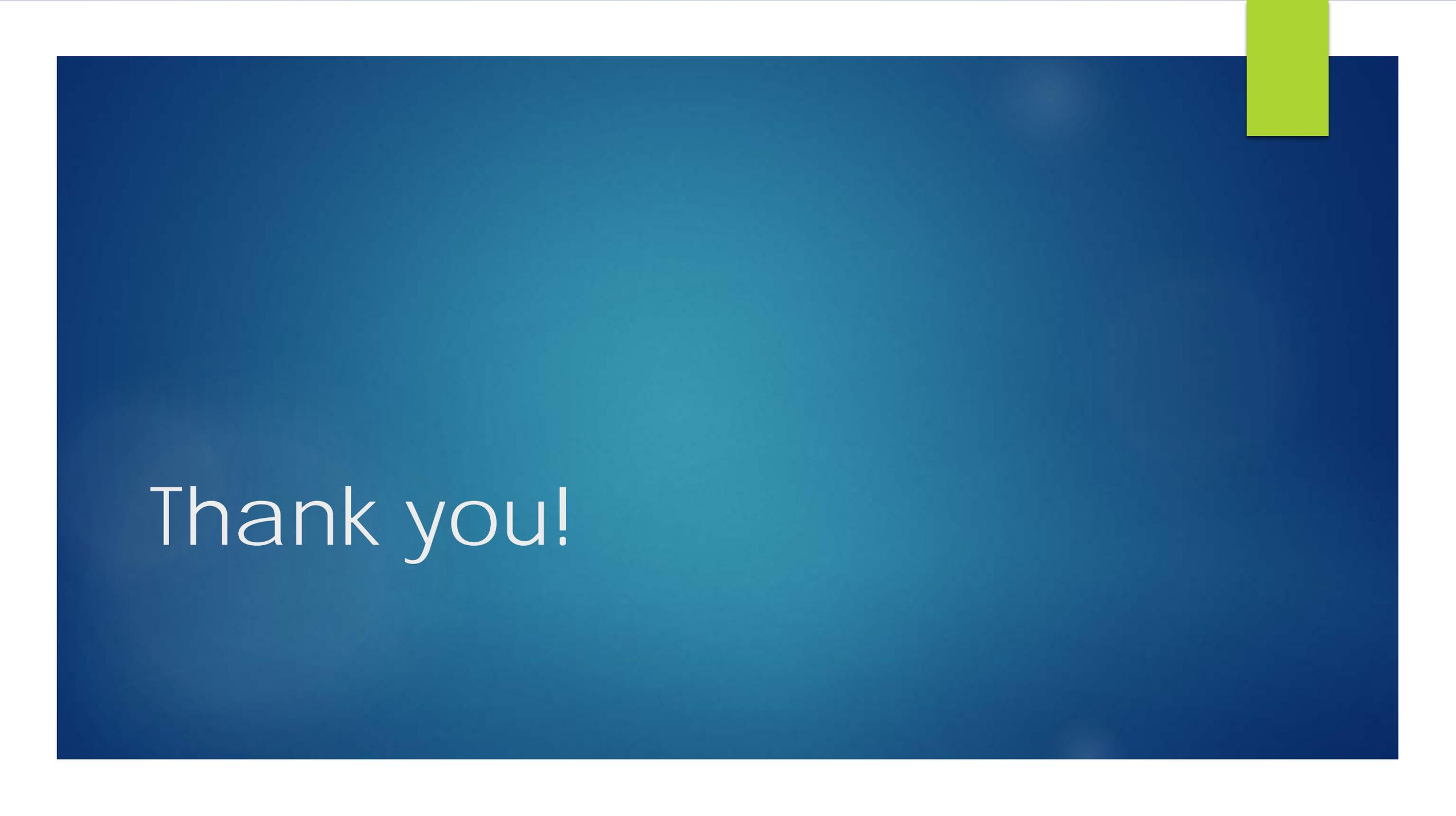
# Recap

- ▶ The role of implicit bias in the nonprofit sector
- ▶ The Neurobiology of implicit bias
- ▶ Mitigating implicit bias

- Diversity within foundations
- Ways in which implicit bias impacts nonprofit organizations
- Foundation demographics & decision making impacts the public good

- Neurobiological foundations of us vs. them
- Decision making
- Confirmation Bias
- Social Media

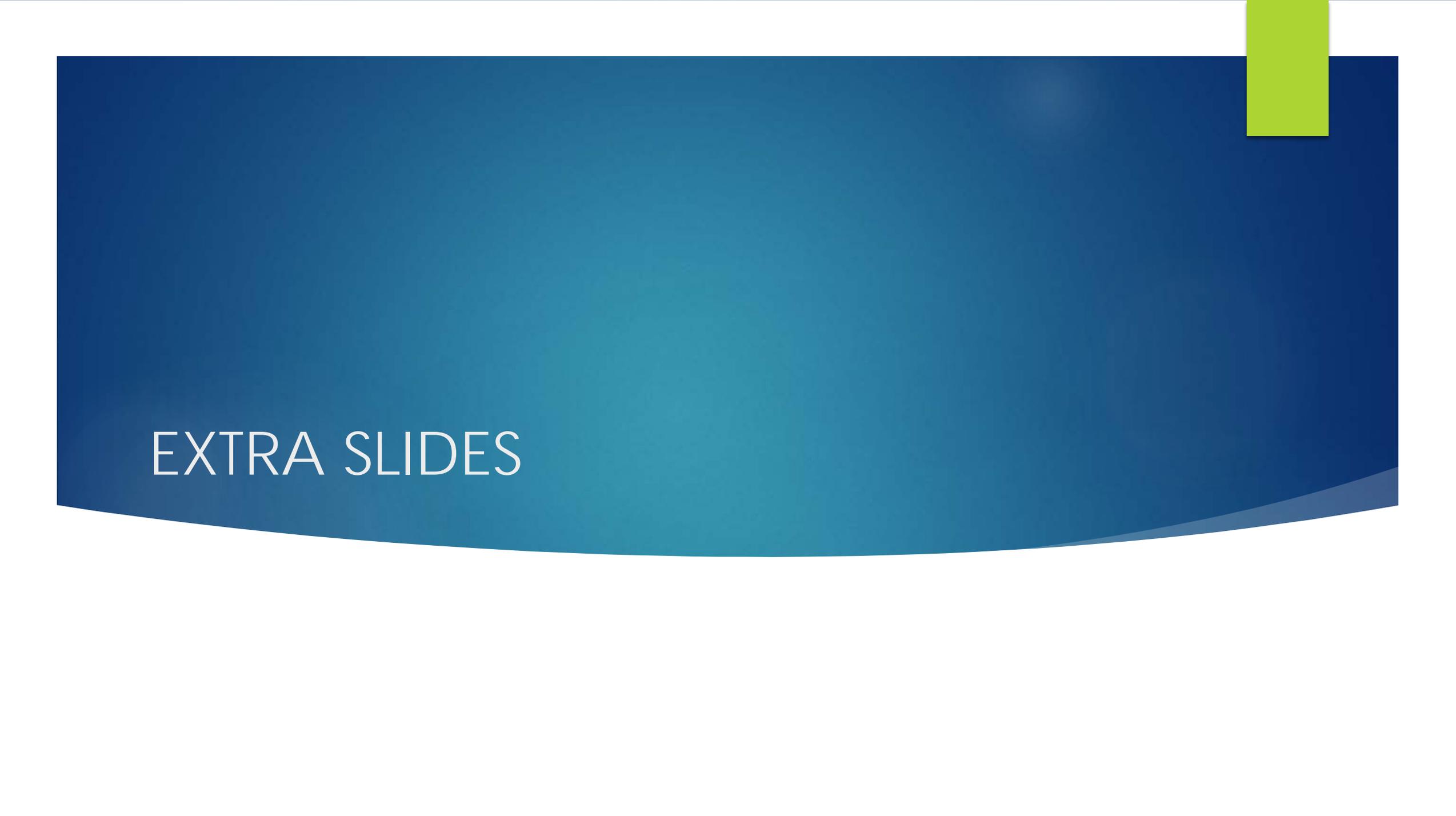
- Policy (Structural/Institutional Change)
- Education & Awareness → Long Term Training
- Perspective Take & Active Listening
- Exemplars & Expand Your Circle



Thank you!



Questions?



EXTRA SLIDES

# Perspective Taking vs Perspective Giving

