



Confronting Bias in Youth Career Advising

Norma Rey-Alicea, Executive Director of NextGen Talent
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On a piece of paper/index card,
write **ONE adjective**
that comes to mind
when you think of . . .

Please write an adjective – not a noun or verb.

*You have **10 seconds** per slide.*

Let's practice on the three next slides.



Example 1: **Eating cilantro**

Example 2: **Riding the
MBTA**

Example 3: Your date
invites you to a
robbery

4. High school counselor job

5. The military

6. College Career Services

7. Social media

8. Politician

9. Psychology college major

10. Plumbing work

11. Corporate job

12. Living with your in-laws

13. Police officer

13. Police officer

On a piece of paper/
index card, write **ONE**
PERSON
who comes to mind
when you think of . . .

Must be a name some of us could recognize!

Person can be alive or deceased.

*You have **20 seconds** per slide.*

Let's practice one on the next slide.

Practice – 1. A celebrity
YOU find attractive

2. Blond(e)
spiritual/religious
leader

3. Inspirational Muslim public figure

4. Black scientist

5. Lesbian fashion figure

6. Native American politician in the US

7. TV star with a
bad attitude

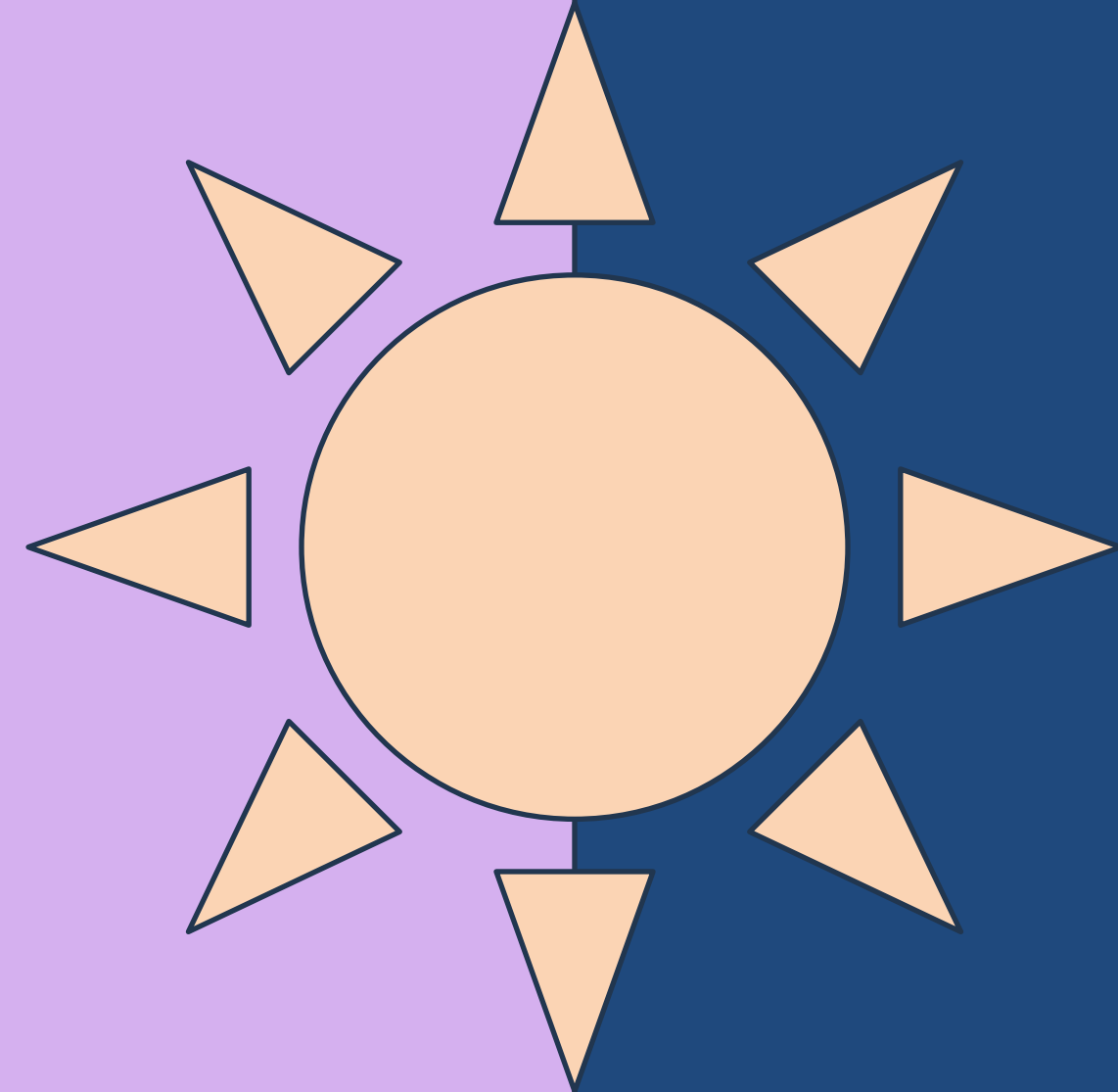
8. Asian American dancer

9. Latina (female) business leader

10. Male heartthrob with a disability

Learning Outcomes for Today

- ✓ Understand what bias is -- and how it can affect students':
 - career identity formation; and
 - postsecondary & career decision making
- ✓ Understand how unconscious bias impacts advising practices and interactions, including the career/postsecondary exploration process and guidance students receive and accept (or not)
- ✓ Learn about bias in the Massachusetts labor market
- ✓ Learn about strategies and tools to minimize bias in yourself, your work, and your students (their own biases)



Bias = A prejudice in favor of or against a person, group, or thing compared with another, typically in a way that's considered to be unfair.

Source: <https://diversity.ucsf.edu/>

Biases may be held by:

- An individual
- A group
- An institution

... And can have  or  consequences.

2 types: 1) Conscious (or explicit) bias

2) Unconscious (or implicit) bias

Types of Bias *include* :

Bias based on Gender, Race, Age, Religion, Ability, Sexuality, Accent, Appearance, Education, etc.

Statistics on Hiring or Workplace Bias

•Gender Bias:

- Women are 25-46% more likely to get the job when there are blind interviews or auditions.
- Men are less likely to seek careers in early education and some other fields traditionally associated with women.
- Female school counselors recommended math as a major (relative to English) 13.6 percentage points LESS for an academically “outstanding” female versus male student.

•Racial:

- Names of workers perceived as Black, such as Shanice or Terrell, are more likely to elicit negative presumptions, such as being less educated, productive, trustworthy and reliable, than people with either white-sounding names, such as Melanie or Adam, or racially ambiguous names, such as Krystal or Jackson.
- Requiring that hiring managers select a worker within only 2 seconds led them to be 25% more likely to discriminate against candidates with names they perceived as Black-sounding.
- In a 2020 DOL study, in Massachusetts black workers made 72 cents per dollar earned by a white worker, Native American workers 74 cents, Asian-Pacific Islander workers \$1.09, Latinx workers 66 cents, and multiracial workers 83 cents.

•Age:

- Hiring managers tend to view job applicants who are 45 or older negatively, even though employers rate highly the job performance of the older people they do hire.

•LGBTQ+:

- Nearly half (48.8%) of transgender employees reported experiencing discrimination (being fired or not hired) based on their LGBT status compared to 27.8% of cisgender LGB employees.

Overconfidence

Tendency to be more confident in your own abilities than is objectively reasonable

Similarity

Tendency to favor people who have similar characteristics or attributes to ourselves, such as gender, race, or ethnicity.

Confirmation

Tendency to focus on and look for evidence that confirms our existing beliefs of a person/group, rather than information that refutes this belief.

Social Comparison

Tendency to harbor feelings of dislike and competitiveness toward individuals perceived as physically, socially, or mentally superior to oneself.

Attribution Error

Tendency to attribute the behavior or actions of others to internal characteristics, such as personality traits or abilities, while underestimating the influence of external factors or situational context.

Bias in the Field & System

- ✓ Traditional career counseling theories, methodologies, and practices were created by White scholars and focused on European and Western values of individuality, competition, separation of work and family, and a “pull yourself up by your own bootstraps” mentality (Jameka Falconer & Kimberley Hays).
- ✓ Systemic bias perpetuates existing inequalities in the job market and workforce. It makes organizations less effective, corporations less profitable, and work teams less strong:
 - ✓ Boston Consulting Group found in 2018 that companies with diverse management teams earned 20 percent more revenue from new innovations than less diverse organizations. Paul Gompers, a professor at Harvard Business School, showed that diverse venture capital firms were more successful at investing in companies that end up acquired or going public (Boston Globe).
- ✓ **Black and Latinx students are:**
 - ✓ More likely to pick college majors that result in lower earnings (in part due to lack of exposure to higher-paying careers and lack of connections to professionals in these careers) and higher underemployment rates.
 - ✓ **Less likely to land well-paying jobs post-graduation.** (Dynamos for Diversity.FINAL.pdf (workday.com). The Burning Glass Institute. 2021)

How biases can affect a young person's career ideas, exploration, decisions, and identity

Examples

Student:

- “I don’t see people like me in that kind of work, so I don’t think it’s for me.”
- “I’m not smart enough to become an X.”
- “My dad says I should become a doctor because doctors make good money and are well respected.”
- “I want to become a nurse because they make MONEY, HONEY!!!!
- “My grandmother wants me to carry on the family business, so I guess I need to do that.”
- “I want to be a high school counselor like Mrs. Vega or a police officer like Mr. Washington in my neighborhood.”
- “I’m a small woman, so I doubt I can work in construction.”
- “I don’t want to go to a community college. It’s not like real college.”

Other examples?

Counselor/Teacher:

- “Construction apprenticeship programs are a good alternative to college. They can be easier to get into.”
- “No matter what, it’s important that you get your 4-year college degree. With it, you’ll find financial stability.”
- “I heard that some of the people in the trades unions can be really racist. It’ll be a tough environment to be in, so . . .”
- “A bunch of my former students went to that college/program and said it was good.”
- “If you aren’t interested in college, why don’t you consider the military?”
- (Imagine a face of horror): “You SURE you want to be a high school counselor?! Like, REALLY SURE?!”

Other examples?

FEAR OF APPEARING BIASED: “I don’t want to discourage students from underserved backgrounds who don’t look like me from ANY career they want to explore, no matter how unprepared or underprepared they may be.”

Trends & Bias in the MA Labor Market

Health Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In MA, 93 percent of workers in leadership positions in emergency medical services identify as white. This number is 79 percent in acute care hospitals and 75 percent in behavioral health (CHIA, Massachusetts Health Care Workforce Survey, May 2023). Many of the larger hospitals in the state tend hire registered nurses with a 4-year – not a 2-year – degree.
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Several tech companies (e.g., Wayfair, Toast) have laid off workers this year. However, there are still lots of job openings in areas like cybersecurity and AI development. Many tech employers in Boston are biased towards job candidates with 4-year degrees, even if the work doesn't require it. Helpdesk technician is a job that doesn't require a 4-year degree.
Green Jobs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clean energy jobs are growing in areas such as solar panel installation and maintenance, wind turbine installation and maintenance, energy auditing, building energy management, and R&D. Electricians and plumbers will be important jobs as we transition to clean energy, yet most high school students don't know how to access training for these kinds of jobs.
Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-demand jobs include electricians, plumbers, carpenters, and construction managers. On large Boston projects in 2022, 89% of elevator construction work hours were performed by white people, as were 88% of equipment operator hours. The glaziers who install windows in skyscrapers were 76% white. From 2017 through 2020, 88% of the 12,000 hours listed as “crane operator” were worked by a white person, and none were worked by women. Union apprenticeship programs are working to recruit more people of color and women. Apprentices and tradespeople of color often report that they are called racial slurs by coworkers and must deal with sexual and racial jokes aimed at them. Nepotism is common, which disadvantages people of color.
Policing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 2024 MA State Police Academy graduating class: <u>90 percent male and 68 percent white</u>. Bullying and racial and sexist remarks during training have affected the retention of women and people of color in this and local police academies. Addressing Bias: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Tewksbury Police Department is training to become “sensory-friendly” to better serve people with autism and PTSD. Just last week, the Worcester Police Department appointed an officer as a new LGBTQ+ liaison. LGBTQ+ individuals are less willing to report crimes due to past experiences with marginalization and a desire for anonymity.

Strategies for Confronting Bias in Ourselves & Our Students

<p>1</p>	<p>Use a more evidence-based approach in learning & advising</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rely more on evidence than anecdotes/generalizations when you advise on postsecondary and career options (e.g., about what it takes to become an NFL player or a Tik Tok influencer, about what electricians make in your region) • Be clear / define key concepts and emphasize critical thinking skills: Ex. <i>How do you define a well-paying job?</i> • Ensure that students assess the financial consequences of their postsecondary and career choices before decision making. Ex. <i>How will a student know if a postsecondary program will pay off in the labor market?</i>
<p>2</p>	<p>Expand your reference base and build social capital to widen knowledge and opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversify your references when you talk about professionals in different industries (see Tab 1 in materials). • Connect students with professionals with whom they can identify in different ways (e.g., background, first-gen college student) – and ones with whom they don't. • Encourage students to get internships and other WBL opportunities to build networks and increase chances of getting hired after postsecondary completion.
<p>3</p>	<p>Ask students about the biases that affect them (within themselves, family and friends, and systems)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surface bias around postsecondary and careers – For ex, play a game that asks students to react to words/phrases like: becoming an artist; becoming a doctor; going to community college; moving away from home; male nurse; I am smart; etc. Have separate columns for their own feelings vs. what they think their family, friends, etc. would say. • Question WHY students are interested in certain career paths, and how to weigh different considerations as they prioritize careers to research/explore. Exs: “model minority” pressure; continuing family tradition; helping their community; lifestyle; interests, etc.

Strategies ctnd.

4

Teach students about the effects of bias (e.g., wage and advancement gaps, occupational segregation, insecurity, educational and health disparities, police brutality) – and how to advocate for themselves

- Do you talk with your students about how different types of bias negatively affect various populations/communities, including theirs?
 - When African Americans strongly identify with their ethnic identity, they tend to report higher levels of career decidedness (Duffy & Klingaman study on 1st-year college students).
- Talk with students about how everyone has biases, including biases against members of their own group.
- Teach students how to spot workplace discrimination and advocate for themselves and others (e.g., negotiating pay, reporting harassment, etc.).
- Cultural bias can influence things like why it's still semi-taboo to talk about salary in the US – question why and how this may relate to systems “keeping people in their place.”

5

Encourage students to explore a wider range of career paths – and think of careers with a new angle

- Ensure that students research several career paths, including some they are interested in and at least one they know little about.
- Help students and their families open their minds about how they think about different kinds of careers (e.g., corporate jobs can help communities as much as “helping” jobs, a career in construction can include college).

6

Question your own biases, ideas, and assumptions – how do they affect your relationships with and guidance for students?

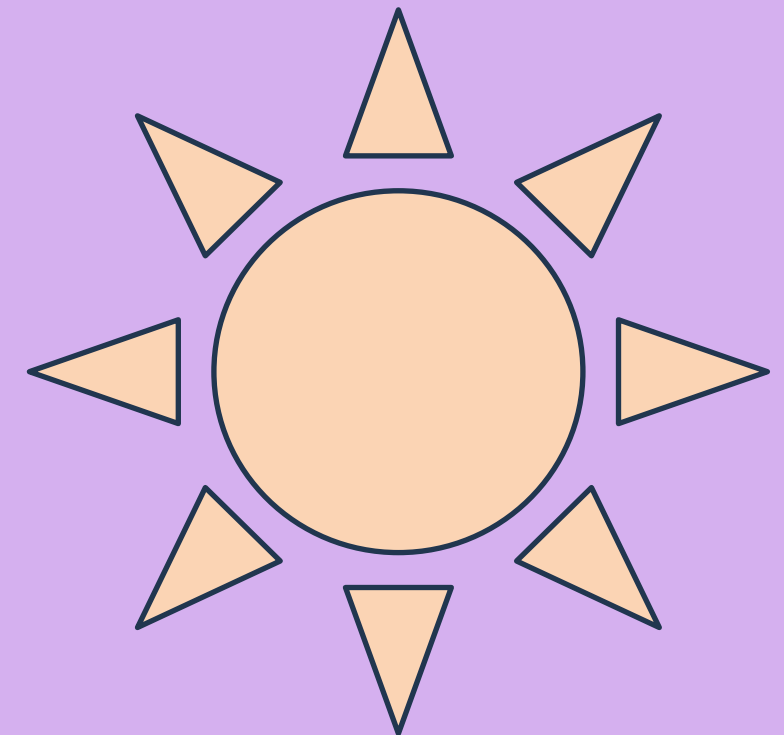
- How do my identity and background impact the way I interact with students, and how they interact with me? Does this affect trust building? Do I listen enough? Do I tend to share my cultural resume, or get defensive?
- How do my experiences (including my own work experience) affect how I advise students about careers and postsecondary?
- Do I consider, understand, and appreciate the ways in which my students' racial, ethnic, gender, cultural, socioeconomic, and other experiences and backgrounds influence their ideas about careers?

Strategies ctnd.

7

- Acknowledge what you don't know or understand.
- Apologize for any offense. Remember that good intentions aren't the same as action.
- Forgive yourself for mistakes along the learning process and start tomorrow with a more informed lens.

- "I've never experienced being the only person of color in a room before. How did that make you feel? I support you and want you to know that you belong in that room. You're an asset to everyone there."
- "If at any point during our interactions, I am not understanding your identity or experience, please tell me and help me to understand better. I promise to always listen and try."
- "Thank you for helping me understand how it felt to come out to your parents. How can I help to support you now and moving forward?"
- "I did not realize how the recent events on the news are affecting your community. I'm so sorry for what you and your community are experiencing."
- "I'm sorry that I said the wrong thing (or made an assumption I shouldn't have). I want to learn more so I don't do that again. I can learn from you, too!"



NextGen Talent has created and collected materials for your continued exploration of this topic [HERE](#).



. . . And now, Q&A!

Contact me to learn more about NextGen Talent's services, including our tools for counselors and PD:

Norma Rey-Alicea

nreyalicea@nextgentalent.org

Gracias

