



Supporting Inclusive Communities



MODULE 5: A QUICK RECAP ON BIASES

Bias has become somewhat of a buzz word these days. From unconscious bias to cognitive bias to implicit bias, these terms emerge when we talk about diversity and inclusion, but what do they mean?

Simply put, a bias is when we are faced with a situation where we need to make a quick decision and so the brain makes quick judgments based on past experiences and knowledge. Biases are normal, and they allow us to make sense of a rapidly changing world. For example, if we see start to see dark clouds appear in the sky our biases help us figure out a storm might be near. However, biases can often lead to errors in judgement when we don't have all the information to make an informed decision. These errors can lead to actions or behaviours that unintentionally exclude folks from the Community League movement. The article [*50 cognitive biases to be aware of so you can be the very best version of you*](#) by Marcus Lu highlights common biases that impact decision making. Have a look and reflect on which biases you might be using to make decisions. It's important to be aware of your biases so that you can reflect on whether or not you have all the information necessary to make the best decisions for your Community League.

Confirmation Bias

We tend to find and remember information that confirms our perceptions.



You can confirm a conspiracy theory based on scant evidence while ignoring contrary evidence.

Stereotyping

We adopt generalized beliefs that members of a group will have certain characteristics, despite not having information about the individual.



"That guy with the fancy mustache is a hipster. He probably has a vinyl collection."

Bandwagon Effect

Ideas, fads, and beliefs grow as more people adopt them.



Sally believes fidget spinners help her children. Francis does, too.

Anchoring

We rely heavily on the first piece of information introduced when making decisions.



"That's 50% off? It must be a great deal."

Above are some common biases as featured in the article by [Marcus Lu](#).

MODULE 5 CONTINUED: HOW ASSUMPTIONS AND BIASES IMPACT US

Imagine you're taking an evening stroll through your neighbourhood. You come across one house where the lights are on and you see a car that's about to pull out of the driveway.



Why do you think the lights are on?

Many people when asked will say that the homeowner forgot to turn off the lights before leaving the house. However, if you start to brainstorm possible reasons for why the lights might be on you'll see that you can come to a variety of different conclusions like:

- There are others in the household using the space.
- Perhaps a quiet get-together is happening in the house and the person driving away is going to pick up food.
- Maybe the home has motion sensor lights that turn off automatically
- Perhaps the homeowner has smart lights that they can turn off using their phone from their vehicle.
- The home owner intentionally left the lights on so that it would be easier to unlock the front door when they come home.

Fritz Heider, in his book "The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations," suggested that people spend time observing and analyzing the behaviours of others, allowing them to come up with their own explanations for why people behave a certain way. How we frame how others act changes how we in turn act towards them. We'll explore this concept in the context of the Community League Movement next week.

Weekly Reflection:

Going back to our example with why the lights are on, consider how your behaviour might change given your reasoning. For example, if you thought the homeowner forgot to turn off the lights you might approach them before they leave to remind them. On the other hand, if you thought other people were in the house you probably won't engage the homeowner and continue on with your evening stroll. *Consider times in your role as a Community League Member when a concern has been brought to your attention, how did you frame the actions of others? Was it influenced by your biases or knowledge of the whole situation?*

