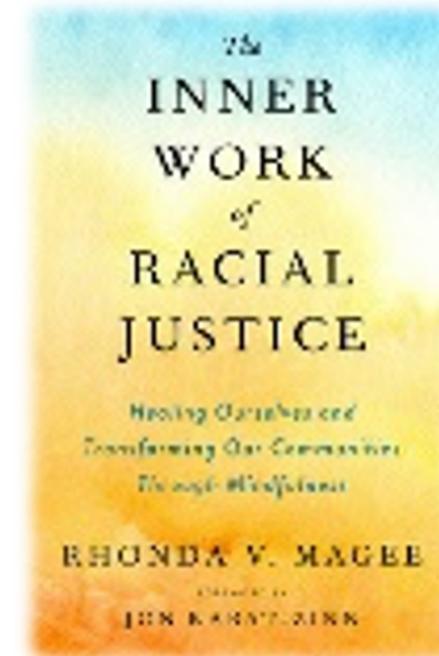


Joining the Inner and Outer Work:

Mindfulness Principles and Practices for Addressing Bias in Assessment

November 17, 2022



The Problem?

Studies show gaps between stated support for equity and antiracism, and actions taken to address these.

And implicit, subtle competing values and biases make it difficult to confront the impediments to taking more effective anti-bias action.

Q: How do we engage Mindfulness to assist us in addressing bias in assessment?

Common view: Mindfulness meditation may support *individual* psychological focus and *personal* well-being...

Personal Stress Management



Increasing Productivity at Work

What is Social Mindfulness?

Paying attention, on purpose, with openness to what is present in the inner and social realms, including unacknowledged/ unbidden thoughts, emotions and sensations and social dynamics...

A way of being with reality and in diverse settings that results from the regular practices, study and supportive community engagements supported by mindfulness.

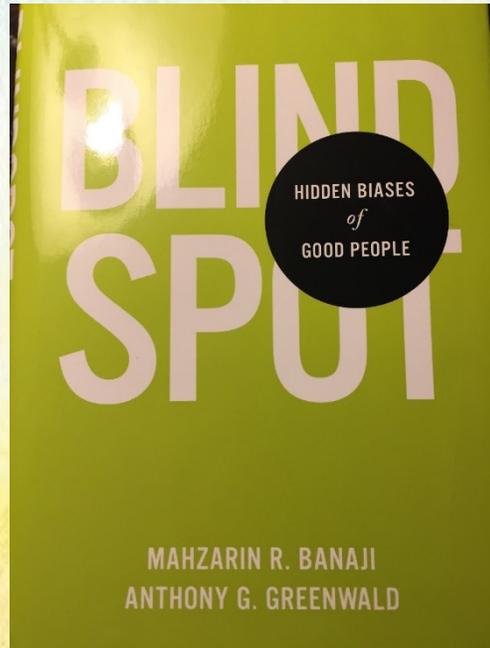
Three Domains of Experience and Inquiry in focus:

1. Personal

2. Interpersonal

3. Systemic/Institutional

Even among the committed, *doing the work is not easy.... For example: how do we deal with bias?*



BLINDSPOT,
Banaji and
Greenwald
(2013)

Defining Implicit Bias (Implicit social cognition):

The attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner.

These biases, which encompass both favorable and unfavorable assessments, are activated involuntarily and without an individual's awareness or intentional control. Residing in the subconscious, these biases are different from *known* biases that individuals may conceal for the purposes of social and/or political correctness. Rather, **implicit biases are not accessible through introspection.** (For more: Project Implicit, IAT test).

One area for focus and awareness practice:

Social-identity based harm known as
“microaggressions:”

Brief, commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental; indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative [racial] slights or insults toward marginalized or vulnerable people.

Varieties of microaggressions?

Micro-inequities: e.g. being overlooked, disrespected

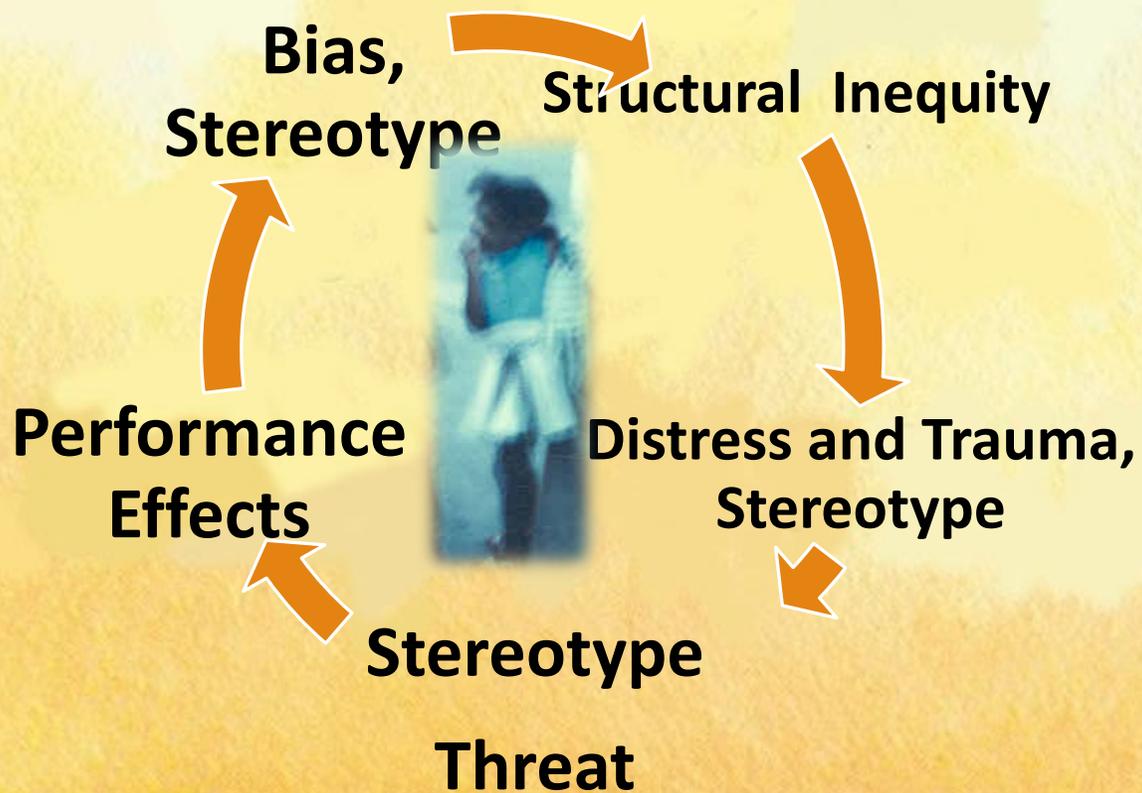
Micro-insults: e.g. rude communications

Micro-invalidations: e.g. nullified experiences

Micro-assaults: e.g. intentional racist acts

The felt-sense and consequences of Otherness is "Inter-Subjective":

It isn't just "in [our] heads..."



What is (Socially-Engaged) Mindfulness?

- *Practices and a renewing way of being present to both **internal and external** dimensions of experience...*
- ***Cultivating the capacity to reclaim and focus attention with heart-mind of kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity; AND...***
- *A means of **understanding who, what and how you/we really are, personally and socially** -- in the moments that we have, and deepening our ability to relate effectively (with wisdom) with what is arising in an ever-changing world and....*
- *An inherently **embodied and compassionate practice for deepening social connectivity** in the face of the “stunning disconnections” of our times.*

Socially Engaged Mindfulness:

Guiding Commitments.

- **Ethics as ground:** Recognize interdependence and mutuality, minimize harm; Honor diverse experience, Examine positionality, assumptions; Explore (de)(re)constructing the “social self”.
- **Practice:** Explore mindful approaches to equitable engagement; Embodied, interpersonal re-humanizing, experiences, in service of collaboration and the creation of caring communities.
- **Evolve Principles of Just Communities:** Mindful intentions, actions, in dynamic reflexivity aimed at continuously deepening capacity to flourish together.

Reflecting on **[Personal-to-Collective]** Core Values:

- **Moral/Ethical discernment?**
- **Equity, Fairness, Inclusivity?**
- **Self and Other-Regarding Compassion?**
- **Lived-Justice and Felt Transformative Impact?**
- **[More?]**



Q: How do we navigate the flood waters, the rivers of uncertainty, hope and fear arising now?

When asked by a student how he crossed “the floods,” the Buddha reportedly replied:
**“By not stopping and by not straining,
I crossed the flood.”**

Reflection questions: When it comes to addressing Othering....

Q: What does **straining** look like to you, where have you seen it (inner or outer)? What does it feel like, in your own experience?

Q: What does **stopping** look like to you, where have you seen it (inner or outer); What does it feel like, in your own experience?



Q: How might mindfulness and compassion practices assist you in minimizing bias?

Grounding Reflections:

- **How do your core values show up when confronted with social identity-bias and the call for equitable action in these times?**
- **How do you define and identify social-identity-based Othering? How were you taught to habitually normalize or excuse it?**
- **What are your personal habits and patterns around relating to it?**
- **How might mindfulness better support you in addressing and working to dismantle racism, sexism, heteronormativity, etc., and cultivate resilient communities in these times?**
- **Where do *you* get stuck, and *what does getting stuck feel like?***

One example of Ethics in Action:

Q: How might we better understand and more effectively address *race, racism, racial justice* (and other identity-based challenges to wellbeing and belonging) *as a mindfulness practice?*

E.g., by cultivating practices for examining and working with thoughts, feelings, and sensations arising as reactions in the body as we engage with these aspects of our experience, and choosing values-aligned responses.

E.g.: “RAINing Racial Awareness” Practice

Recognizing

Accepting

Investigating

With Non-Identification/Non-attachment (and Nurturing)



Gathering with G.R.A.C.E.:
A Mindfulness-for-Racial Healing Practice



- 1. Gather attention.**
- 2. Recall intentions**
- 3. Attune to self, and to others**
- 4. Consider what would serve?**
- 5. Engage and end.**

**Deepening awareness
in support of personal,
interpersonal, and collective
resilience.**

In closing.

May we deepen supportive practices for teaching and learning for all....

motivated by the sense of justice as “what love looks like in public.”

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