

# Implicit Bias Training in Police Departments

MSSP 606: Data for Equitable Justice Lab

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**Implicit Bias** = attitudes or stereotypes that affect our thinking and behavior in an unconscious manner

Reduce implicit bias



Reduce discriminatory behavior?



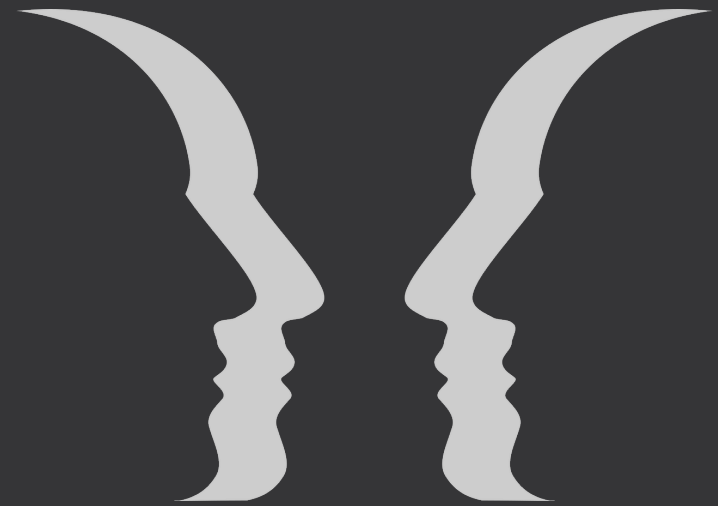
# President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing



# Reduce discriminatory behavior



# Open the conversation for deeper changes



**Ineffective/Waste of funds**



**Decrease motivation to pursue further change**



**Divert attention away from other sources of  
discriminatory policing**

# Literature Review: 73 articles (2001-2018)

Article Topic	Number of Articles
Reducing Implicit Bias	28
Police Bias	16
Racial Bias	12
Implicit Bias Mechanisms	11
Reducing Police Bias	6

Article Type	Number of Articles
Quantitative Study	47
Literature Review	9
Systematic Review	4
Qualitative Study	2
Other (chapters, essays, etc)	11

# Implicit Bias Reduction Strategies

## Acknowledgment

- Self-awareness may be enough to decrease implicit bias

## Reframing & Contact

- Think of people as individuals with similar group memberships as yourself & focus on counter-stereotypes

## Cognitive Control

- Decrease cognitive load through mindfulness, more sleep, less stress, & less multi-tasking to rely less on implicit associations

**None have been linked to long-lasting decreases in implicit bias scores or decreases in discriminatory behavior**



Is implicit bias an individual trait? *Yes and no.*

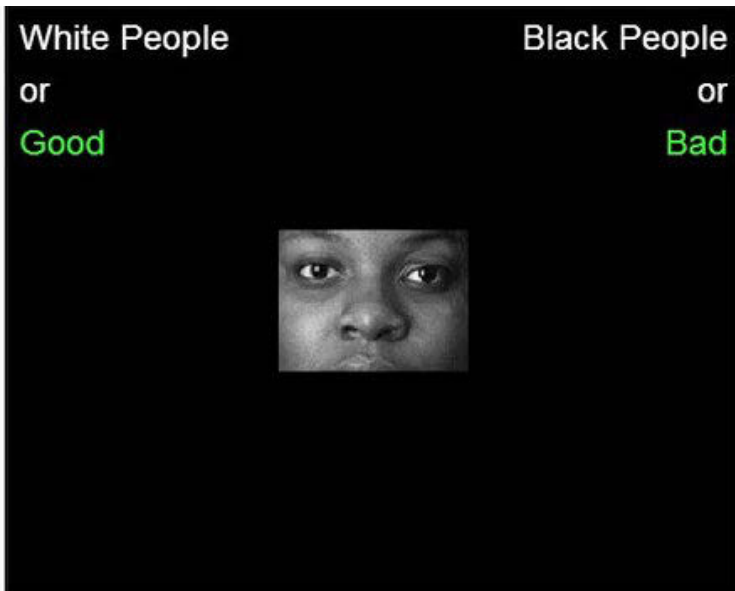


## **Context-Dependent Implicit Bias**

*More influenced by crowd/situation than individual factors*



# Is this translatable to the real world?



- Overuse of Implicit Association Test
- Weak forms of bias studied without real world factors
- Implicit bias studied in isolation without structural pressures - likely why **there's no clear link between decreasing implicit bias and decreasing discriminatory behavior**

# Implicit Bias Curriculum

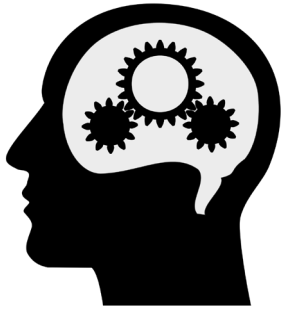
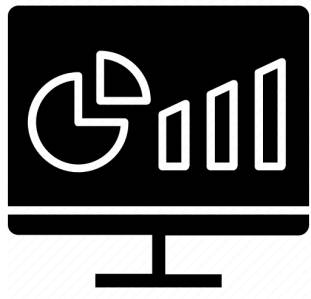
- 8 hours
- Implicit Bias = Universal & Unconscious
- Relies on “Acknowledgement”

National  
Initiative for  
Building  
Community  
TRUST &  
JUSTICE

## TWO KEY ASSUMPTIONS

1. Implicit bias can be lowered at the individual level
2. Decreasing implicit bias by itself can decrease discriminatory behavior





# Recommendations

Rely on training only to open the conversation & add:

- Reframing & reducing cognitive load strategies
- Open access
- Evaluation metrics

Refocus efforts on:

- Community policing
- Reducing the influence of context-dependent biases
- Addressing discriminatory laws, policies, &