Introduction

Narration:
At NIH, our fundamental mission is to turn discovery into health. Our ability to accomplish this mission relies on great minds throughout our research enterprise, to develop effective solutions to complex health problems that affect millions of people. Great minds require diverse perspectives.

At NIH, we are deeply committed to fostering an inclusive environment, one that embraces and values different perspectives. Diversity enhances creativity and innovation and broadens the scope of scientific inquiry, enabling the understanding required for fulfilling our mission. Yet biases and ineffective communication and team dynamics can impede such efforts.
Most of us don’t recognize our own biases, yet we have them. It is the very nature of being human. They shape our world view, our daily interactions with each other, and our behaviors and most importantly, our decisions. And some of those decisions can have profound consequences on others.

Many of us have the best intentions of being inclusive in all we do, but our underlying biases can still get in the way, often without us even knowing. These biases can subtly affect who is hired, what we think of our colleagues and other people with whom we’re collaborating, how we interact with patients and research participants, and how we review scientific materials that may have an impact on biomedical research.

The good news is that there are effective, evidence-based tools to reduce the effect of bias, and to keep it out of our decision-making.

To enhance our efforts to ensure that diversity and inclusion thrive at NIH, we have created evidence-based implicit bias training.

The training will help NIH staff to learn what bias is, how to recognize it, and how to minimize its impact.

But beyond formal training, consider how implicit bias can creep into day-to-day interactions with your colleagues and with the public. Are we doing all we can to welcome diverse ideas, backgrounds, and expertise?
The more perspectives brought to solve a problem, the greater is the opportunity for effective solutions. Indeed, great minds think differently!

The Roles of Psychological Safety and Employee Engagement

Narration:
Psychological safety and employee engagement are important for attracting, selecting, developing, and retaining the best talent across all professions at NIH.

Psychological safety is defined as “a climate where people feel safe enough to take interpersonal risks by speaking up and sharing concerns, questions, or ideas.”

Employee engagement is defined as "an employee’s sense of purpose that is evident in their display of dedication, persistence and effort in their work or overall attachment to their organization and its mission."

All staff are fundamental to fostering this cultural change. Our actions can boost our colleagues' motivation and enable our teams to perform to the best of their abilities. Creating this culture of inclusive excellence requires that all staff be empowered with effective tools.
Citations:

Psychological Safety

Employee Engagement

Course Overview

Strategies and practices for NIH staff to foster an inclusive and thriving workplace culture

Narration:
This course is designed to provide all NIH staff with an understanding of how to effectively create an inclusive workplace culture. Every individual in the NIH community is a change agent who can influence and contribute to positive organizational change.
We will focus on barriers to and solutions for **creating psychological safety** and **enhancing employee engagement** to foster an inclusive and thriving workplace culture.

To examine these issues, a workplace case study at a hypothetical NIH Institute, Center, or Office (referred to as an ICO) is presented. You will put yourself in the shoes of the case study staff confronting challenging workplace conditions.

**Benefits**

Narration:
Examining issues at the organizational level will provide a more holistic view of how workplace biases constrain employee and organizational growth.

Further, research shows that taking others’ perspectives is itself a useful practice for both reducing stereotypic biases and fostering creativity.

**Citations:**

Learning Objectives

- **Recognize** the concepts and **value** of psychological safety and employee engagement in the workplace.
- **Identify** organizational conditions constraining psychological safety and employee engagement.
- **Apply tools** and organizational levers for creating psychological safety and enhancing employee engagement.
- **Develop solutions** for the case study Institute, Center, or Office (ICO), which you can practice at your own ICO.

Narration:
Following the case study and related evidence-based frameworks, you will be able to:
- Recognize the concepts and value of psychological safety and employee engagement in the workplace.
- Identify organizational conditions constraining psychological safety and employee engagement.
- Apply tools and organizational levers for creating psychological safety and enhancing employee engagement.
- Develop solutions for the case study Institute, Center, or Office (ICO), which you can practice at your own ICO.

Diversity and Implicit Bias Review

Narration:
Let’s begin by briefly reviewing key concepts related to diversity and implicit bias that are available in the corresponding full course. This will provide general background to then focus on psychological safety and employee engagement in this refresher course.
We will define diversity, discuss why diversity is important for teams, outline some of the biases that can prevent diversity, and highlight some bias busting actions to facilitate a more diverse and inclusive environment.

**How do we define diversity?**

Most people consider nationality, ethnicity, gender identity, race, and disability to be defining characteristics of diversity. Sometimes characteristics can be visible, but other times they are hidden.

Picture an iceberg. Some forms of diversity are at the top of the iceberg that is above water.

However, **most characteristics of diversity are not visible**. Diversity is often hidden from view, just like the largest portion of an iceberg is hidden below the surface of the water. This deeper level diversity reveals differences in people’s beliefs, how they think, and how they perceive the world, as shown here: perspectives, sexual orientation, religion, skills, age, culture, thinking style, language, geography, physical abilities, experiences, socio-economic status, first generation professional, and professional role.
Diversity Definition

DIVERSITY reflects . . .

The range of human differences, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, social class, physical ability or attributes, religious or ethical value system, national origin, and beliefs.

Narration:
Diversity reflects a range of human differences, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, social class, physical ability or attributes, religious or ethical value system, national origin, and beliefs.

Is diversity invisible?

Narration:
Because the broad range of characteristics that define an individual are hidden from view, our processes for reviewing grant applications, recruiting or hiring people, or recruiting study subjects must look beneath the surface to discover all that people have to offer.

We'll examine some of these processes later, but now, let's discover why diversity is so important for teams, for the sciences, and for NIH.
Why is diversity important for teams?

Narration:
Multiple studies over decades have shown the positive impact of diversity within groups, including these studies which show better, more creative problem solving and more accurate decision-making.

[On click Professor Scott Page]
Professor Scott Page’s work reveals that innovation may depend less on smart individuals than on the diversity of a group of people working together and capitalizing on their individuality. Page’s work shows how groups of people with a range of perspectives outperform groups of like-minded experts.

[Citation]
Professor Katherine Phillips’ work suggests that the mere presence of diversity in a group creates awkwardness, and the need to diffuse this tension leads to better group problem-solving. In one of her studies on problem-solving, diverse groups performed with higher accuracy, even though the group did not feel confident in their decisions. In contrast, the homogeneous groups in the study reported much higher confidence in their decisions, but in truth their performance was less accurate. This is perhaps due to the groups’ feeling that “since everyone else felt the same way I did, we must be on the right track.”

[Citations]


**What’s preventing diversity?**

***Narration:***
There are many barriers to achieving diversity in an organization, but at the most basic level, it comes down to people preferring people who are like themselves. We do this because human brains are designed to quickly recognize what’s familiar and unfamiliar, based on our past experiences.

**Mental Shortcuts**

***Narration:***
Mental shortcuts activate implicit biases that lead to errors in judgment. We can act impulsively and based on emotion, overweigh certain evidence, ignore baselines, and only recall certain aspects of information to inform a judgment.

We want to reduce our biases to improve our evaluation processes and more generally improve our workplace culture.

***Citation:***
[https://us.macmillan.com/books/9780374533557/thinkingfastandslow](https://us.macmillan.com/books/9780374533557/thinkingfastandslow)
Narration:
In the full course, you learned some common types of bias that can impede effective decision-making.

Click on each type of bias to learn more.

[On click Stereotyping]
A stereotype is an oversimplified belief about a group of people, usually based on limited or incorrect information. We often rely on stereotypes to make judgments, because stereotypes are easily accessible and all around us.
A blind spot is a tendency to recognize cognitive biases in others, but not recognize how bias influences your own thinking.

Confirmation bias is the tendency to gravitate to, and to remember, facts that confirm our own beliefs. Confirmation bias can cause us to ignore information that contradicts our hypotheses.
Affinity bias is when we prefer people who are similar to ourselves. Often, our social networks are made up of people very much like ourselves, and we feel comfortable with them. This feeling of comfort makes us seek more of the same type of people in other arenas of our lives, such as the workplace.

Groupthink happens when a group of people desire harmony or conformity in their group, hoping to minimize conflict and reach a consensus without critical evaluation of alternate ideas. Groupthink usually results in flawed decision-making. Those caught in the vise of groupthink are often fearful of offering a dissenting opinion.
Bias Busters

Narration:
You also learned some actions to reduce bias and improve decision-making.

Click on each of the actions to learn more.

[On click Broaden Images of Success]
We often hold our own prototypes of what a successful candidate or scientist looks like. If we broaden our images of success — seek them out and allow new images to come to mind — we can expand what we look for.
[On click Use a Habit-Breaking Routine]
To change deeply embedded habits, such as always greeting certain people before others in a group, plan out in advance when, where, and how to act, using an if-then format. For example: If I am the most senior person in the room, then I will share my ideas last. If I’m in grant review and someone rejects a first-time applicant, then I will ask that person to share their thought process.

[On click Be Transparent]
Transparency is explanation. It’s the ability to explain your decision-making process. When you have to explain your decision to someone else, you will more carefully scrutinize your own decision-making process. The process of explaining also helps you slow down your thinking, which is a great way to reveal any implicit preferences that may have influenced your decision.
Create a Welcoming Environment

The Golden Rule encourages us to “treat others as you want to be treated.” But to attain true inclusion and welcome people from all cultures and viewpoints, we need to try on the Platinum Rule, which states, “Treat others as they want to be treated.” The Platinum Rule is all about asking and listening. Recognize that what drives people is highly variable.

Case Study Review

Case Study Overview

Narration:

With that background on diversity and implicit bias, we’ll now focus on psychological safety and employee engagement to further create an inclusive workplace culture.
Let’s begin by looking at some of the key issues at our case study Institute, Center, or Office (ICO) X. Note that the specific issues and scenarios in this training are developed for learning purposes and are not necessarily a direct characterization of NIH.

NIH is addressing systemic and structural racism, through efforts such as UNITE, and barriers to fostering a culture of inclusion where diverse talent can advance scientific and health discovery in a positive workplace climate.

In response, ICO X has recently examined its workplace culture, based on several metrics and feedback. Click on each source to learn about the current issues at ICO X. You can also click on UNITE for a description.
[On Click Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS)]
ICO X reviewed their employee engagement and related staff experience scores reported on the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS), covering staff in all positions and at all levels of the ICO. They identified some areas with lower scores, including staff perceptions of their unit’s communication, performance and rewards, and career development and skill utilization opportunities.

[On Click Institute, Center, or Office (ICO) X’s Data Analysis]
ICO X also reviewed its other workforce data showing that, while some progress had been made to improve representation of women and underrepresented group members, several challenges remained: White men still receive higher salaries and budgets and are provided larger lab spaces than women and individuals from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups.

[On Click Strategic Plan]
ICO X additionally solicited feedback for its Strategic Plan and identified similar workplace culture and talent development challenges. Through discussion group sessions, ICO X’s leadership gained a richer sense of specific experiences driving these outcomes. Some of these experiences included: staff feeling that they would be penalized for presenting ideas that differed from their leadership’s views and staff not receiving clear guidance on how to succeed and further develop.

[On Click HR Reports]
Finally, amidst overall lower morale, HR reports additionally show increased turnover the past couple years.

[On Click UNITE]
The UNITE initiative was established to identify and address structural racism within the NIH-supported and the greater scientific community. With representation from across the NIH Institutes and Centers, UNITE aims to establish an equitable and civil culture within the biomedical research enterprise and reduce barriers to racial equity in the biomedical research workforce. To reach this goal, UNITE is facilitating research to identify opportunities, make recommendations, and develop and implement strategies to increase inclusivity and diversity in science. These efforts will bolster the NIH’s effort to continue to strive for diversity within the scientific workforce and racial equity on the NIH campus and within the extramural community.
ICO X's Findings

Narration:
ICO X is tasked with developing solutions to remove biases and facilitate a culture of inclusion and engagement in the ICO. A team of staff convene to review the materials and identify the people issues confronting their ICO.

The team learns that morale and employee engagement are low, and turnover has increased because systemic biases have led to several pervasive conditions.

Click to learn about each of the key conditions.

[On Click Lack of Psychological Safety]
Overall, employees do not feel a sense of psychological safety, meaning they fear that sharing their concerns or mistakes will result in negative consequences, such as being blamed or ignored.

[On Click Ineffective Communication and Collaboration]
The first core organizational condition limiting employee engagement is ineffective communication and collaboration. There is a lack of effective communication and teamwork and high interpersonal conflict.
[On Click Unfair Management Practices]
The second core organizational condition is unfair management practices. Performance assessments and job assignments are widely perceived to be unfairly distributed and not reflective of true abilities and performance.

[On Click Constrained Developmental Opportunities]
The third core organizational condition is constrained developmental opportunities. Developmental pathways are unclear, with guidance and opportunities often conveyed through less-known, informal channels.

Our Learning Path

Narration:
To help us better understand these conditions — and create solutions to them — we’ll follow a learning path through the course.

We’ll begin with psychological safety. First, we’ll examine the concept. You will develop an understanding of psychological safety and learn some tools to establish it. This is the essential foundation to enable growth and allow for any further team and organizational development practices.

Next, we will apply this understanding of psychological safety to the case study. We will consider some specific actions you could take to establish psychological safety at ICO X.
Then, we will build on the foundation of psychological safety by introducing the concept of employee engagement. First, we'll cover the concept of employee engagement and three organizational levers - culture, reward and performance management, and job design - that can drive such engagement.

Finally, we will apply this understanding to the case study. We will look at each of the conditions - ineffective communication and collaboration, unfair management practices, and constrained development opportunities - across ICO X and consider how the organizational levers may be applied to improve outcomes.

Within each of these three conditions, you will view: (a) one example scenario associated with the condition, (b) an analysis of the example scenario, (c) a broader analysis of the condition, and (d) application of an organizational lever to improve that broader condition.

Enhanced Employee Engagement is built upon a strong foundation of Psychological Safety.
Psychological Safety: Concept

Establishing a Foundation for Inclusive, High-Performing Teams

Narration:
You've just discovered some pervasive problems related to ICO X's work environment.

Given these conditions, we must first consider how to create a foundation for implementing positive changes. Behaviors that reflect exclusion, unfair treatment, and poor communication often require people to be able to speak up and express their views.

Such freedom to voice views is similarly needed for the organization to innovate and grow. Yet this cannot occur where employees feel unvalued and that they will be penalized for speaking up.

Psychological Safety and Diversity

Narration:
To facilitate positive changes in team and organizational performance, it is essential to first create psychological safety. As a reminder, psychological safety is defined as “a climate where people feel safe enough to take interpersonal risks by speaking up and sharing concerns, questions, or ideas.”
Research on drug development teams in the pharmaceutical industry shows that psychological safety is especially important for successfully leveraging the value of diverse teams.

Citations:


Psychological Safety Framework

Narration:
Harvard Business School Professor Amy Edmondson offers a framework for creating psychological safety-for which she finds that staff at all levels of the organization play an important role. Edmondson and her colleagues have examined the effects of psychological safety across contexts, including in healthcare and technologically-innovative environments.
To facilitate psychological safety, we want to engage in three critical steps. We’ll introduce them here and then provide examples so that you can consider ways to apply them at ICO X.

First, we can Set the Stage so that employees have shared expectations and meaning.

Second, we can Invite Participation so that employees have confidence that their voice is heard.

And finally, we can Respond Productively by facilitating continuous learning and improvement.

Importantly, Professor Edmondson recommends adopting a learning orientation and using these tools continually rather than as a one-time action, as building and reinforcing psychological safety are both required for a truly inclusive workplace culture.

Citation:
Psychological Safety: Case Study Application

Set the Stage

Narration:
You just learned that the first step for facilitating psychological safety is setting the stage.

Setting the stage involves:
- Framing the work to set expectations about failure (such as zero tolerance vs. some acceptance for experiments),
- Uncertainty (to encourage observation and curiosity),
- Interdependence (to encourage collaborative conversations about how various work efforts fit together), and
- What is at stake (considering the implications of high stakes vs. low stakes errors).

Set the Stage Action

Narration:
What is one action you would take at ICO X to Set the Stage for a psychologically safe work environment?

Type your text here.
Click the EXAMPLES icons to see some example actions.

[On click Additional Examples]
Additional Examples to Set the Stage:
- Clarify the purpose of your team’s work to facilitate a sense of purpose among all team members.
- Guide staff on what is at stake with a given effort so that they have context on the value of speaking up (whether to prevent catastrophic outcomes for high stakes efforts or to openly share insights learned from failure on low stakes efforts).
- Encourage staff to learn how initiatives, projects, or tasks are interdependent and for which information and idea sharing will be important.
- Explain to staff the uncertain nature of your team’s work and promote their continual learning.

[On click Failure Example]
Examples for Discussing Failures:
- Discuss with your staff how the team will manage failures by considering:
- Failures that are avoidable—e.g., those related to routine processes—and consider strategies the team will use to prevent them.
- Failures that are intelligent—e.g., those related to unsuccessful trials (including scientific, administrative, or management related)—and consider how some of these failures may be encouraged to enable creativity and innovation.
- Explain high stakes errors (e.g., patient safety errors) vs. low stakes errors so that employees can be cognizant of the difference.

Invite Participation

Narration:
The second critical strategy to facilitate psychological safety is to Invite Participation.

This involves making people feel that the invitation to participate is genuine by applying situational humility. Remain confident in your overall abilities yet be open about your shortcomings in certain areas and interest in learning more.

It can also be helpful to practice inquiry through asking good questions, listening, and avoiding cutting people off. Provide positive acknowledgement of their input before disagreeing with their ideas.
Additionally, you may set up structures and processes to invite participation by creating forums for input or providing discussion guidelines.

One example of inviting participation is humble listening. Click the Example icon to learn more about the practice of humble listening.

**[ON CLICK Example icon]**

You can practice good listening by engaging in what Edmondson calls “humble listening,” which involves entering situations with a mindset of “not knowing.” This can enable others to feel safe and even encouraged to present their own ideas to help you.

Humble listening is a useful practice that Edmondson identifies from successful clothing designer Eileen Fisher.

### Invite Participation Action

**Narration:**

What is one action you would take at ICO X to Invite Participation?

Type your text here.

**EXAMPLES**

to Invite Participation for Psychological Safety

[Click the EXAMPLES icon to see some example actions.]

**[On click Example]**

Some examples to Invite Participation for Psychological Safety:

- Engage in the practice of situational humility by acknowledging specific issues on which you are not an expert.
- Acknowledge your errors and shortcomings.
- Proactively inquire about issues to learn more.
- Ask useful questions – those to which you don’t know the answer, for which the answer is open-ended rather than “yes/no,” and which elicit focused but thoughtful responses for the context.
- Create structures to enable input (e.g., information sharing teams).
Narration:
The third critical strategy for facilitating psychological safety is to Respond Productively.

Responding productively involves expressing appreciation by listening, acknowledging, and thanking; destigmatizing failure, including by offering help and guidance; and sanctioning clear violations so that people know what is and is not acceptable.

Narration:
What is one action you would take at ICO X to Respond Productively?

Click the EXAMPLES icon to see some example actions.

[On click Example]
Some examples to Respond Productively for Psychological Safety:
- Express appreciation by listening and thanking staff for speaking up or sharing information.
- Praise staff for their efforts regardless of outcomes.
- Destigmatize failure by announcing and celebrating an intelligent failure that enabled learning.
- Sanction clear violations of rules, when needed, to maintain consistent communication on the established culture.

### 6.7 Psychological Safety Summary

**Narration:**
You have now been introduced to a psychological safety framework and considered practices to help establish psychological safety at ICO X.

We now have a foundation from which to build for developing high performing teams. Next, we'll review the concept of employee engagement and learn how to apply organizational levers to facilitate it.
Employee Engagement: Concept

Employee Engagement: What Is It and Why Does It Matter?

Narration:
Now, let's talk about employee engagement and why it matters in the workplace.

Employee engagement—reflecting employees’ involvement in, enthusiasm about, and commitment to their work and workplace—is critical for organizations to operate effectively and efficiently.

Research across organizational and industry contexts has found that greater employee engagement leads to increases in positive organizational outcomes—for example, key performance metrics, such as customer satisfaction, employee productivity, and other forms of discretionary effort.

Engaged employees are more likely to take on additional tasks, including being a good organizational citizen by helping colleagues. Increased engagement is also associated with decreases in negative employee behaviors and organizational outcomes. For example, greater engagement reduces absenteeism and turnover and results in fewer patient safety defects.

Citations:


Employee Engagement in the U.S. Workforce

Narration:
How engaged are employees in the U.S. workforce?

Recent 2020 statistics from Gallup show that only 36% of employees in the U.S. workforce are actively engaged—meaning that they’re involved in, enthusiastic about and committed to their work and workplace.

That leaves about two-thirds of the workforce not engaged. Cases of active disengagement, which account for 14% of employees, could result in employees undermining their employer. Further, half of the workplace is simply not engaged, meaning they may indicate that they’re generally satisfied but do not feel fully encouraged or able to do their best work.

Lack of engagement constrains opportunities for greater organizational performance.

Creating a diverse and inclusive workplace helps facilitate trust and, in turn, engagement.

Next, we’ll look at practices that foster diversity, equity, and inclusion, and drive engagement.

Citations:


Narration:
Management and organizational scholars Paul Lawrence and Nitin Nohria developed a theory of motivation to guide practices that foster engaged, motivated employees. Drawing on cross-disciplinary research in the social sciences and life sciences—including fields like neuroscience, biology, and evolutionary psychology—they found that people are driven by basic emotional needs, or drives.

Click to learn about the basic emotional needs or drives.

[ON CLICK Bond]
Bond refers to our drive to form connections with individuals and groups.

[ON CLICK Acquire and Defend]
Acquire refers to our drive to obtain scarce goods, including intangibles like social status. Defend refers to our drive to protect against threats to justice and fairness, including in the allocation of goods.

[ON CLICK Comprehend]
Comprehend is our drive to understand and be able to master the world around us.

Citation:
Organizational Levers

Narration:
Lawrence, Nohria, and colleagues find that to fulfill each of these needs, organizations can apply specific organizational levers.

Select each drive to learn about the associated organizational levers.

[ON CLICK Bond]
To fulfill the need to bond, organizations can change the culture to foster collaboration, cooperation, and sharing of best practices among employees and teammates.

[ON CLICK Acquire and Defend]
To fulfill people’s need to acquire, organizations can implement reward systems that differentiate between good and poor performers and tie performance to rewards. Relatedly, to fulfill the need to defend, organizations can increase the transparency of their processes, including those related to performance management and resource allocation and emphasize the fairness of the processes.

[ON CLICK Comprehend]
To fulfill the need to comprehend, organizations can improve job design to include distinct and well-understood roles that employees find meaningful, and therefore feel they’re able to contribute to the organization’s mission.

Citations:

Employee Engagement: Case Study Application

Ineffective Communication and Collaboration

**Narration:**
Next, we'll examine the three remaining conditions at ICO X and consider how to apply these organizational levers to improve workplace outcomes.

ICO X’s leadership has learned about ineffective communication, including lack of teamwork, minimal information sharing, and high interpersonal conflicts. The issues have occurred between leaders and staff and among peers.

Ineffective Communication and Collaboration Example Situation

**Narration:**
Let’s look at one example from ICO X’s Policy and Planning office to view some communication issues in further detail.

Click on each image to meet the team members.
[ON CLICK Jordan]
Jordan is a Health Science Policy Analyst on one of ICO X’s Policy and Planning Office teams and for whom English is a second language.

[ON CLICK Jonathan]
Jonathan is another analyst on the team, who is deaf and works very closely with a sign language interpreter.

[ON CLICK Natalia, Sign Language Interpreter]
Natalia, the sign language interpreter, has worked with Jonathan and they have a very good working relationship.

[ON CLICK Erin]
Erin is a new analyst on the team who hasn’t yet fully integrated with the group.

[ON CLICK Kelly]
Kelly is an experienced supervisor in the group.

The Meeting

Narration:
Let’s join a meeting with Jordan, Jonathan, Erin, and Kelly.

[Kelly speaking to the group] Jordan and I just left a committee meeting about a new program evaluation. We received a lot of feedback from the program’s stakeholders about success metrics, and now need to discuss our next steps for the evaluation. I’m trying to figure out which of these areas are most strategic to focus on. Jordan, I’ll start with you. What are your thoughts on which direction makes the most sense?

[Jordan] Let’s take a look at some of these areas. We can identify the costs and benefits of each area to help us decide.
[Kelly responds by talking loudly and over Jordan as though he doesn’t understand] We need to make a decision right away. You need to have a clear idea.

[Kelly directing her comment to the sign language interpreter instead of Jonathan] Does Jonathan have any ideas?

[Erin/thought bubble] Why is Kelly looking at the sign language interpreter instead of Jonathan?

[Jonathan through sign language interpreter] I think it would be most useful to consider the eventual publication success and mentoring efforts of the program’s awardees.

[Kelly responds to the interpreter] I don’t think that’s the best approach. You’re not considering the range of outcomes that matter for success.

[Erin/thinking to herself] Is Kelly going to ask for my feedback? I don’t feel comfortable speaking up because of how she’s reacted to Jordan and Jonathan, and I’ve only first started on the team, so my view may not be valued.

Ineffective Communication and Collaboration Example Analysis

Narration:
Kelly is in a supervisory position and does not effectively communicate or try to collaborate with her staff.

Within ICO X, there is ineffective communication. Click each button to learn more about Kelly’s biases and the effects on the team. Then learn how you can serve as a model through your leadership role.

[ON CLICK Kelly’s Biases]Kelly exhibited bias toward those with English as a second language, by talking loudly and over Jordan. Further, rather than communicating with Jonathan directly, Kelly exhibits an affinity bias toward those with a style of communication like hers and with which she is more accustomed, directing her comments to the interpreter. In doing so, she additionally explicitly shut down Jonathan’s idea. She also failed to provide an
opportunity for all to express their views, despite the session being presented as one for sharing suggestions, never asking for Erin’s feedback.

[ON CLICK Effects on Team]
Kelly’s approach impedes team members’ ability to contribute ideas, which limits their professional development and the insights they may bring to Kelly and her team. Additionally, as she shuts down or disregards input, team members will likely feel that their skills and ideas are not valued and may in turn become less committed to devoting extra effort and being fully engaged with the office’s mission. Team communication overall may suffer, as Kelly fails to model effective and inclusive communication practices with both established and new team members.

[ON CLICK Leaders as Models]
While bystander interventions can be useful, leaders can model practices to reduce the potential onus on bystanders, particularly when there are formal power differences, as in this example.

Leaders may also benefit from creating a collaborative and open culture, where staff feel comfortable speaking up in instances where less effective practices may occur.

ICO X’s Culture

Narration:
This example is only one in ICO X that reflects more general ineffective communication, a lack of helping or mentoring colleagues, and high interpersonal conflict.

What can result from this culture?
- Reduced collaboration (both within and across ICOs and departments)
- Heightened boundaries between staff
- Competition between staff
- Feeling that views are not valued

This type of culture leaves employees lacking a desired bond or drive to form connections with individuals and groups within the ICO.
Potential Actions to Improve Culture

What is one action you would take or recommend to improve ICO X’s culture and enable better connections among ICO X’s employees at all levels?

- Encourage employees to share best practices. These practices can relate to effective communication styles, such as communicating only through an interpreter, as in the earlier example. Sharing best practices about work projects can facilitate information flow and create a stronger team and better quality output.
- Foster a peer-to-peer learning community where members of the team, no matter what their job description, share an update or present information pertinent to the full team.
- Foster opportunities for employees to work together to accomplish a common goal and develop friendships. For example, identify ways for staff who may tend to work only independently on tasks to bring their respective skills to a single, multifaceted effort. Or meet with the team and assign small groups to work on a project.
- Incentivize and reward quality collaborations and teamwork. Doing so can strengthen the connection among team members, leading to a more positive and productive work culture.

Narration:
Let’s consider how we can use the organizational lever of culture.

Read all of the practices listed here that are used for improving culture. Focusing on the case study, what is one action you would take or recommend to improve ICO X’s culture and enable better connections among ICO X’s employees at all levels?

- Encourage employees to share best practices. These practices can relate to effective communication styles, such as communicating only through an interpreter, as in the earlier example. Sharing best practices about work projects can facilitate information flow and create a stronger team and better quality output.
- Foster a peer-to-peer learning community where members of the team, no matter what their job description, share an update or present information pertinent to the full team.
- Foster opportunities for employees to work together to accomplish a common goal and develop friendships. For example, identify ways for staff who may tend to work only independently on tasks to bring their respective skills to a single, multifaceted effort. Or meet with the team and assign small groups to work on a project.
- Incentivize and reward quality collaborations and teamwork. Doing so can strengthen the connection among team members, leading to a more positive and productive work culture.

[After first choice]
Now, choose one of these potential actions to work on with your own team in the future. You can download a list of the references and actions to mitigate bias and create inclusion presented in this course by clicking on the References tab at the top right corner and selecting the documents.
Narration:
Now, let's examine the second organizational condition - unfair management practices.

In addition to communication problems, many employees in ICO X perceive unfair management practices in performance assessments and the allocation of high-status assignments.

Organizational research shows that, in many companies, employees perceive biased and ineffective feedback. Yet performance management practices perceived as fair are also perceived as more effective.

Let’s look at an example of how staff assessments and assignments are made in one of ICO X’s labs.

Citation:
Unfair Management Practices Example Situation

Narration:
Click on each image to meet the team members.

[ON CLICK Celia]
Celia is a first-year graduate student on a rotation and the only laboratory member from an underrepresented group (URG). She is also the second trainee from a URG in the history of the laboratory. Upon Celia's joining the lab, communication expectations were not reviewed.

Celia appears to listen to others and nods to acknowledge her engagement. She is by nature an observer and good listener who does not speak before thinking things through first. As such, relative to other colleagues, her vocal participation is low in small group discussions.
Dr. Crane notices Celia is very quiet and barely participates during small group discussions. When she does speak, it is almost always to agree with what others are saying.

Dr. Crane does not expect to see this passive behavior from his graduate students and believes that participating in group discussions is an integral part of a scientist’s professional development. Over time, this behavior does not change, and Dr. Crane begins to doubt that Celia even understands the research in the laboratory.

**The Meeting**

**Narration:**
Dr. Crane schedules a one-on-one meeting with Celia to discuss his concerns.

**[Dr. Crane]** I wanted to meet with you to discuss your lack of participation and contributions to our group discussions. When you do speak, it is almost always to agree with what others are saying instead of offering your own insights.
[Celia] I appreciate hearing what my colleagues contribute and want to be supportive of them. I’m more comfortable listening and considering everyone’s viewpoints as I form my own opinions.

[Dr. Crane] Listening is good, but your lack of participation leads me to wonder if you even understand the research we’re discussing.

[Celia] I didn’t know that it was important to participate in group discussions. I do understand the research, really. Everything is fine.

[Narrator] Discouraged with Celia’s perceived lack of enthusiasm and participation in the laboratory’s intellectual exchanges, Dr. Crane stops asking for her input. He later tells her that he isn’t sure this is the best fit for her and that she might prefer working somewhere that better matches her style.

Celia became more withdrawn and decided to pursue jobs in administrative support positions and abandon her career aspirations in science.

Unfair Management Practices Example Analysis

Narration:
Here we see that the criteria for what is required for success are not clearly established. So-called requirements to be successful in a research lab are developed and applied on an ad hoc basis and in a biased manner. Dr. Crane exhibits a common workplace bias against introverted thinking and work styles. Yet a combination of both introverted and extroverted group members can help achieve a team’s goals.

Citation:
Gender Bias in Evaluating Interpersonal Style

Narration:
Additionally, research shows that women are more frequently interrupted than are men. Women also tend to correctly assume that they may face backlash for talking more than men. Therefore, simply recommending for individuals to speak up neglects broader issues with performance criteria and associated biases.

Click the icon to learn more about negative outcomes that can result from situations like those experienced by Celia.

[On click Example]
The fact that Celia decides to pursue other career options reflects a lost opportunity to engage and retain a talented person in the NIH workforce due to the potential unintended consequences of bias. This treatment may damage Celia’s self-esteem, her perceptions about NIH, and about science as a career path.

Citations:

**ICO X’s Reward and Performance Management**

Narration:
Beyond the specific example you just viewed, ICO X is experiencing broader problems with management practices for employee evaluation and recognition. Performance evaluations and rewards do not seem to be based fully on relevant abilities and skills. Good performance does not always seem recognized or rewarded.

At the same time, many perceive that poor performance is not adequately dealt with and leads to negative interpersonal dynamics like those discussed in reviewing the culture.

These issues leave employees lacking a desired need to **acquire and defend** by failing to convey fairness and reward good performance.

**Potential Actions to Improve Reward and Performance Management**

Narration:
Let’s consider how we can use the organizational lever of reward and performance management.
Read all of the practices listed here that are used for improving reward and performance management. Focusing on the case study, what is one action you would take or recommend to improve ICO X's reward and performance management practices and enable more fair and equitable practices that encourage excellent performance?

- Increase the transparency of both individual (e.g., management process for evaluating success) and organizational actions (e.g., lab, office, clinic, or unit reassignment decisions).
- Establish clear, merit-based evaluation criteria, ensuring they reflect skills and work quality important for the team and organization to meet its objectives, rather than those based on subjective personal styles.
- Tie rewards to performance on the established criteria.
- Differentiate among levels of performers once merit-based aspects of performance are established.
- Monitor and pause to examine any personal biases that may shape how employees are rated every year; confer with other leaders to provide a reality check on your approach to rating employees and gain insights.
- Recognize that bias may occur without your awareness even with objective performance criteria.

[After first choice]

Now, choose one of these potential actions to work on with your own team in the future.

**Constrained Developmental Opportunities**

**Job Design**

**Narration:**

We've discussed the first two conditions at ICO X of ineffective communication and collaboration and unfair management practices. The final condition is constrained developmental opportunities.

Talent development can be facilitated by trusting relationships among colleagues who openly share work and career information.

However, in some of ICO X's units the career pathways are unclear and the primary way to gain guidance is through informal channels, such as meeting for lunch or getting to know one another in non-work related activities.
Narration:
Let’s look at an example of staff opportunities in one of ICO X’s offices. Meet some members of the larger office, click on each image to meet the team members.

[On click David]
David is a senior member of the office, with supervisory and management responsibilities.

[On click James]
James is an individual contributor within the office.

[On click Nathan]
Nathan is also an individual contributor within the office.

[On click Barbara]
Barbara is a supervisor overseeing a small team within the office.

[On click Samantha]
Samantha is a supervisor overseeing another small team within the office.
The Invitation

Narration:
Outside of work, David is actively involved in the sailing club. He emails Nathan and Samantha to let them know that the club is looking for recruits and asks if they want to join because he thinks they may be interested. Both expressed interest and plan to attend a first outing to learn more.

David does not send any notes about the opportunity to James and Barbara, even though he has a good professional relationship with both team members, because he thinks they would not be interested. During the outing, David, Samantha, and Nathan discuss work opportunities, amidst more casual conversation, and Samantha and Nathan learn about ways they may be able to further prepare for upcoming work opportunities.

Constrained Developmental Opportunities Example Analysis

Narration:
In this example, we see that biased perceptions about who may be interested in sailing can lead to differences—in this case, by race and age—in who has access to greater information and more informal mentoring and network opportunities.
Biases in who seems to be a good fit for both formal and informal developmental opportunities can occur for many groups.

This can have a particularly detrimental effect in work contexts where the expectations for success and opportunities for advancement are ambiguous.

Click the example icon to learn more.

**[On click Example]**

Employees near retirement-eligible age, such as Barbara, may be perceived as uninterested in advancing their careers, or managers may actively choose to not invest in their development. Individuals may apply stereotypes about interests based on demographic characteristics such as race and parental status. Additionally, parents, especially mothers due to gender biases, may be perceived as needing to attend to their children and therefore not invited to off-hour work events.

Beyond the individual effects of these biases and decisions, the office, team, or lab — in the example you viewed — may be adversely affected.

Group collaboration and perceptions of fairness — issues we've covered in the previous sections — may erode.

**ICO X’s Job Design**

**Narration:**

Biases in providing developmental opportunities reflect a broader set of job design issues.

While many ICO X staff have a clear understanding of how their work connects with the mission, they do not always feel that they have clear pathways for contributing. Also, some do not believe that their talents are used well.

Collectively, these issues relate to job design, with unclear pathways being disadvantageous for all. Informal developmental opportunities can result in exclusion of some employees and lack of clarity about professional boundaries.
Potential Actions to Improve Job Design

What is one action you would take or recommend to improve ICO X’s job design practices?

- Create clear channels for development and advancement.
- Develop inclusive practices for less formal developmental opportunities (e.g., idea and information exchanges over meals, happy hours, sporting events, extracurricular activities, or other social gatherings).
- Craft role responsibilities to enable staff to utilize their skills and find value in their contributions. Doing so requires leaders to develop an understanding of their staff’s developmental goals.

Narration:
Let’s consider how we can use the organizational lever of job design.

What is one action you would take or recommend to improve ICO X’s job design practices?

- Create clear channels for development and advancement.
- Develop inclusive practices for less formal developmental opportunities (e.g., idea and information exchanges over meals, happy hours, sporting events, extracurricular activities, or other social gatherings).
- Craft role responsibilities to enable staff to utilize their skills and find value in their contributions. Doing so requires leaders to develop an understanding of their staff’s developmental goals.

[After first choice]
Now, choose one of these potential actions to work on with your own team in the future.
Course Summary

Narration:
In this course, you learned that practices that foster diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility through reducing biases and enhancing culture, rewards and performance management, and job design lead to a more engaged and thriving workforce.

Through today’s case at ICO X, you diagnosed organizational problems and considered solutions. You were provided with a framework for creating psychological safety, which then serves as a strong foundation for advancing other practices to further enhance employee engagement and create an inclusive culture of excellence at NIH.
Narration:
The strategies presented in this course are summarized well in the article “Getting Serious About Diversity,” which received the McKinsey award for best Harvard Business Review article in 2020. To fully realize the benefits of diversity, business scholars Drs. Robin Ely and David Thomas advise leaders to:

“Create a psychologically safe workplace, combat systems of discrimination and subordination, embrace the styles of employees from different identity groups, and make cultural differences a resource for learning and improving organizational effectiveness.”

Citation: