

# BIAS BLOCKING

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We tend to know...	
...what <i>not</i> to do	
...the things that are ineffective or illegal	
...we could be making better decisions	

We tend to know...	We tend NOT to know...
...what <i>not</i> to do	...what <i>to</i> do
...actions that are ineffective or illegal	...actions that are effective
...we could be making better decisions	...exactly HOW to make better decisions

Today's workshop will help you know how to make better decisions by:

- **Explaining** why our decision making is not “perfect”
- **Describing** how to recognize common patterns of workplace bias
- **Applying** bias blocking strategies in response to workplace scenarios

# We are not perfect decision makers



Image from Wikihow

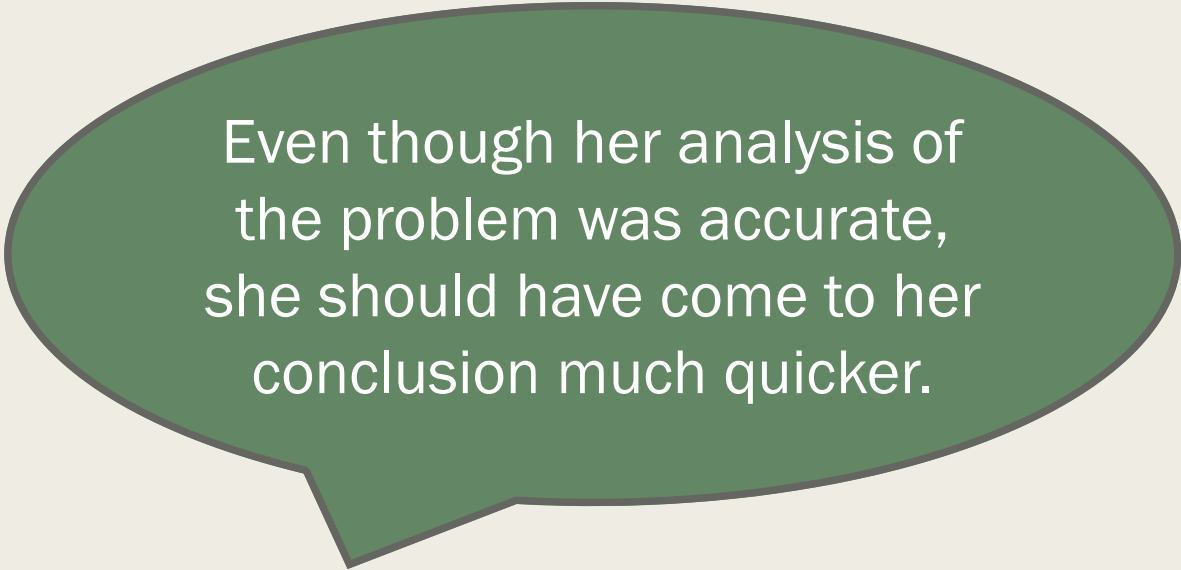
# COMMON PATTERNS OF WORKPLACE BIAS

(i.e., Errors in Decision-Making)



## Bias Pattern #1

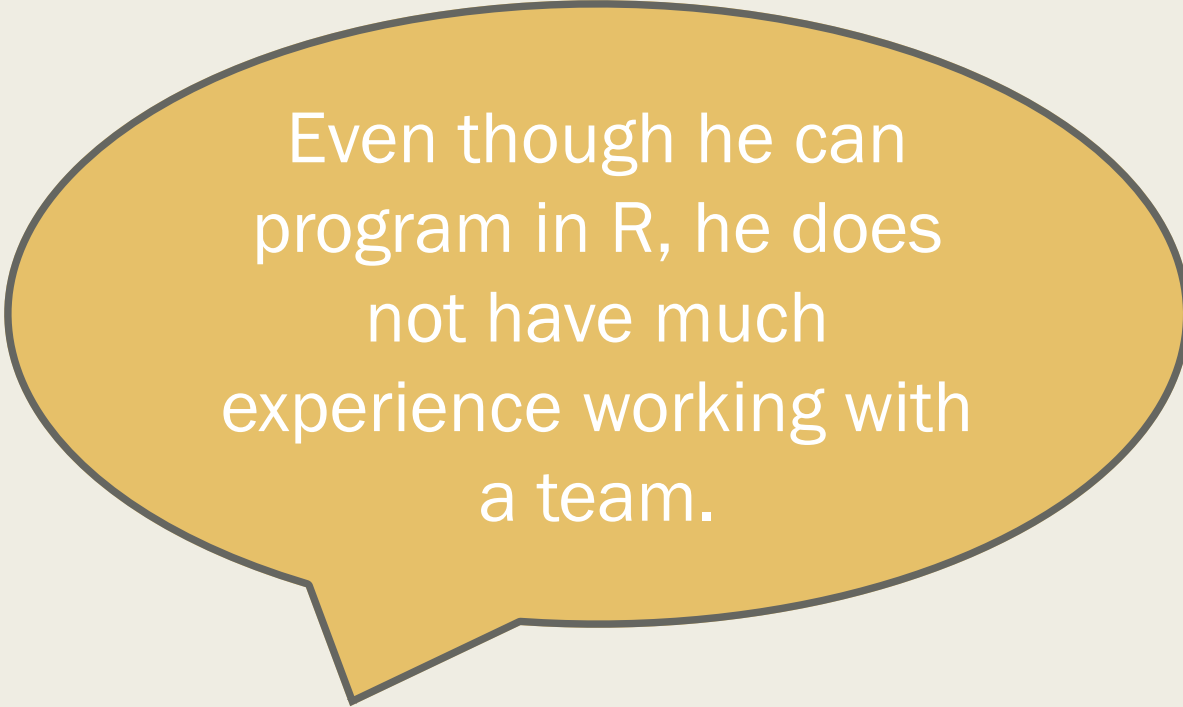
# Higher Bar



Even though her analysis of the problem was accurate, she should have come to her conclusion much quicker.

## Bias Pattern #2

# Shifting Criteria

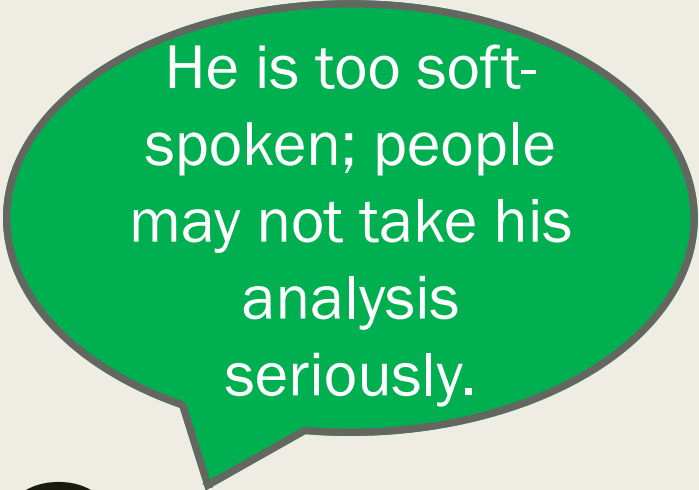


Even though he can program in R, he does not have much experience working with a team.

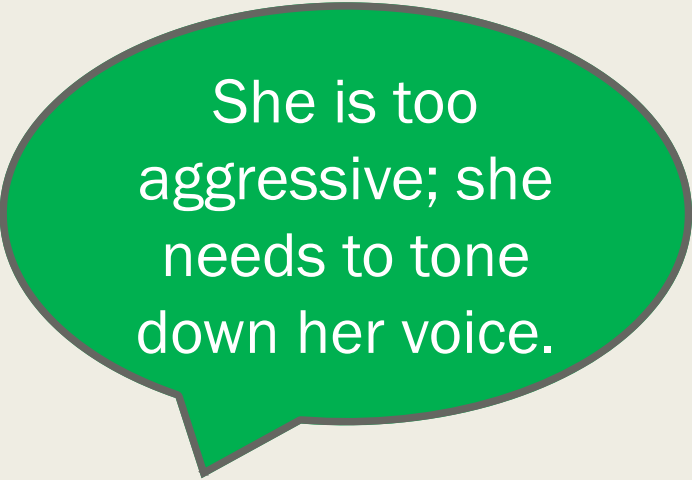


## Bias Pattern #3

# Undue Style Criticisms



He is too soft-spoken; people may not take his analysis seriously.



She is too aggressive; she needs to tone down her voice.

## Bias Pattern #4

# Vague Praise

She is really sweet.

vs

He's had a great year; he  
attracted more clients  
than last year.

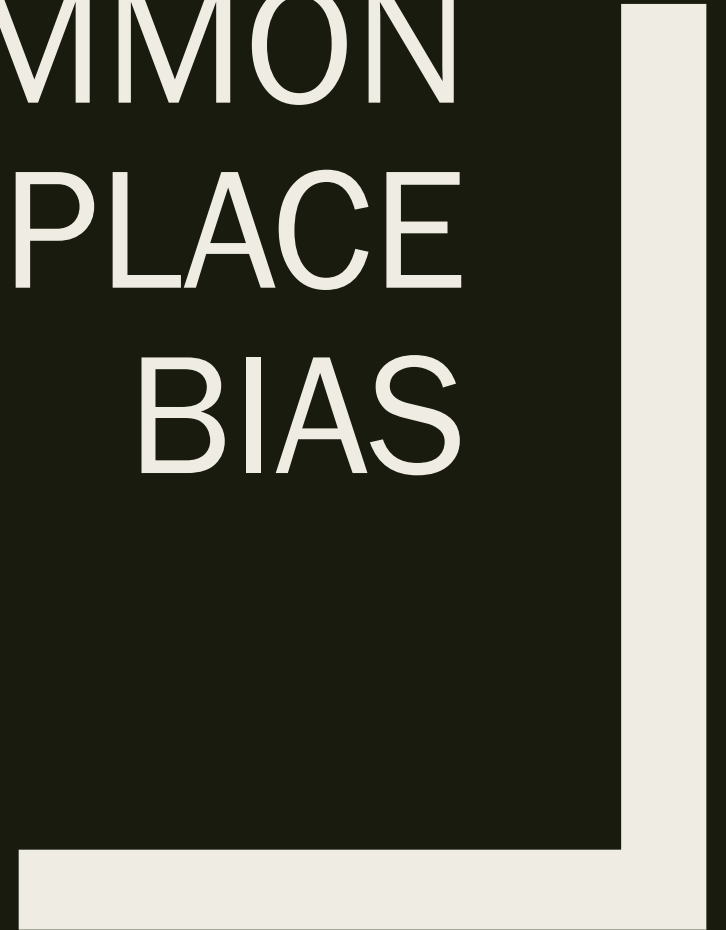
## Bias Pattern #5

Now that he's a dad, he'll want over-time to pay for the added child expenses.

# Work-Life Assumptions

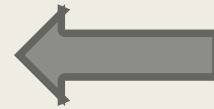
She won't want to travel because she just had a baby .

# HOW TO BLOCK COMMON PATTERNS OF WORKPLACE BIAS



# BIAS BLOCKER TIPS

**Tip #1: Reference original criteria**



Tip #2: Agree to importance of criteria

Tip #3: Block use of new criteria

Tip #4: Disregard ineffective or biased criteria

Tip #5: Ask for clarity

Tip #6: Ask if similar comment would be made about someone else

Tip #7: Express emotion

# Bias Pattern: Higher Bar

Even though her analysis of the problem was accurate, she should have come to her conclusion quicker.

## Bias Blocker Tip: Reference Original Criteria

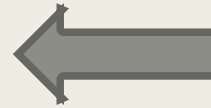
Even though her analysis of the problem was accurate, she should have come to her conclusion quicker.

While speed in coming to a conclusion might be worth considering, we agreed that analytic accuracy was the most important criteria.

# BIAS BLOCKER TIPS

**Tip #1: Reference original criteria**

**Tip #2: Agree to importance of criteria**



Tip #3: Block use of new criteria

Tip #4: Disregard ineffective or biased criteria

Tip #5: Ask for clarity

Tip #6: Ask if similar comment would be made about someone else

Tip #7: Express emotion



# Bias Blocker Tip: Agree to Importance of Criteria

Even though her analysis of the problem was accurate, she should have come to her conclusion quicker.

Can we agree to focus on our top criteria, one of which I interpret to be analytic accuracy?

# BIAS BLOCKER TIPS

**Tip #1: Reference original criteria**

**Tip #2: Agree to importance of criteria**

**Tip #3: Block use of new criteria**



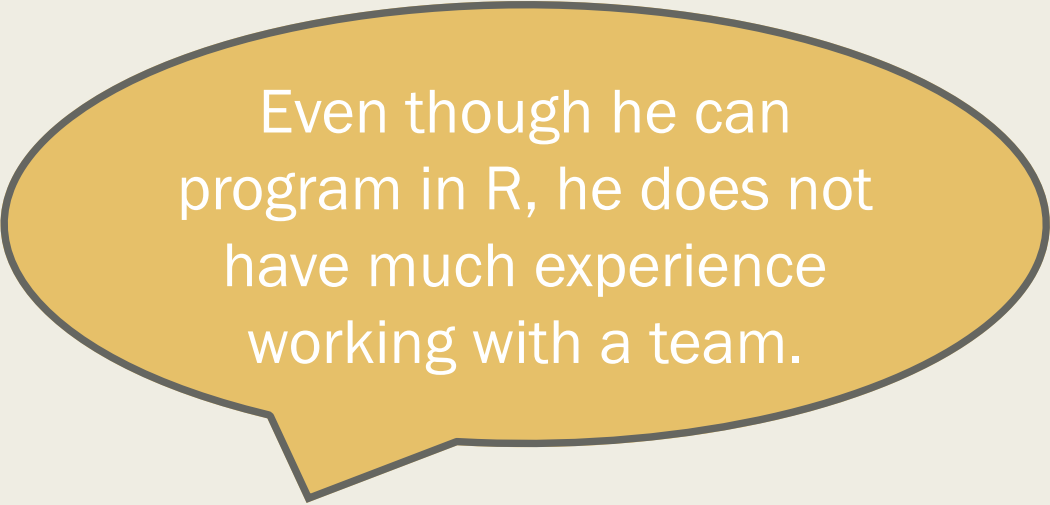
Tip #4: Disregard ineffective or biased criteria

Tip #5: Ask for clarity

Tip #6: Ask if similar comment would be made about someone else

Tip #7: Express emotion

# Bias Pattern: Shifting Criteria



Even though he can program in R, he does not have much experience working with a team.

# Bias Blocker: Block use of New Criteria

Even though he can program in R, he does not have much experience working with a team.

We agreed that programming in R was the most important. Let's focus on that in this discussion.

# Your turn...

get

While she can code  
(original criterion), she may  
not be good at teaching  
others how to code.

get


?

# BIAS BLOCKER TIPS

**Tip #1: Reference original criteria**

**Tip #2: Agree to importance of criteria**

**Tip #3: Block use of new criteria**

**Tip #4: Disregard ineffective or biased criteria** 

Tip #5: Ask for clarity

Tip#6: Ask if similar comment would be made about someone else

Tip #7: Express emotion

# Bias Pattern: Vague Praise



She is really sweet.

## Bias Blocker Tip: Disregard ineffective or biased criteria

She is really sweet.

That sort of information does not seem to be helping us make a decision. Let's stick to evaluating whether her performance helped us accomplish our yearly goals.



# Your turn...

Yes, she can speak in public. But she seems so nervous.

?

# BIAS BLOCKER TIPS

**Tip #1: Reference original criteria**

**Tip #2: Agree to importance of criteria**

**Tip #3: Block use of new criteria**

**Tip #4: Disregard ineffective or biased criteria**

**Tip #5: Ask for clarity** 

Tip#6: Ask if similar comment would be made about someone else

Tip #7: Express emotion

## Bias Blocker Tip: Ask for clarity



She is really sweet.

## Bias Blocker Tip: Ask for clarity

She is really sweet.

I'm not sure I  
follow what you're  
saying. Can you  
help me  
understand?

# Your turn...

She seems like a good person, but my gut tells me she's not promotion material.

?

# BIAS BLOCKER TIPS

Tip #1: Reference original criteria

Tip #2: Agree to importance of criteria

Tip #3: Block use of new criteria

Tip #4: Disregard ineffective or biased criteria

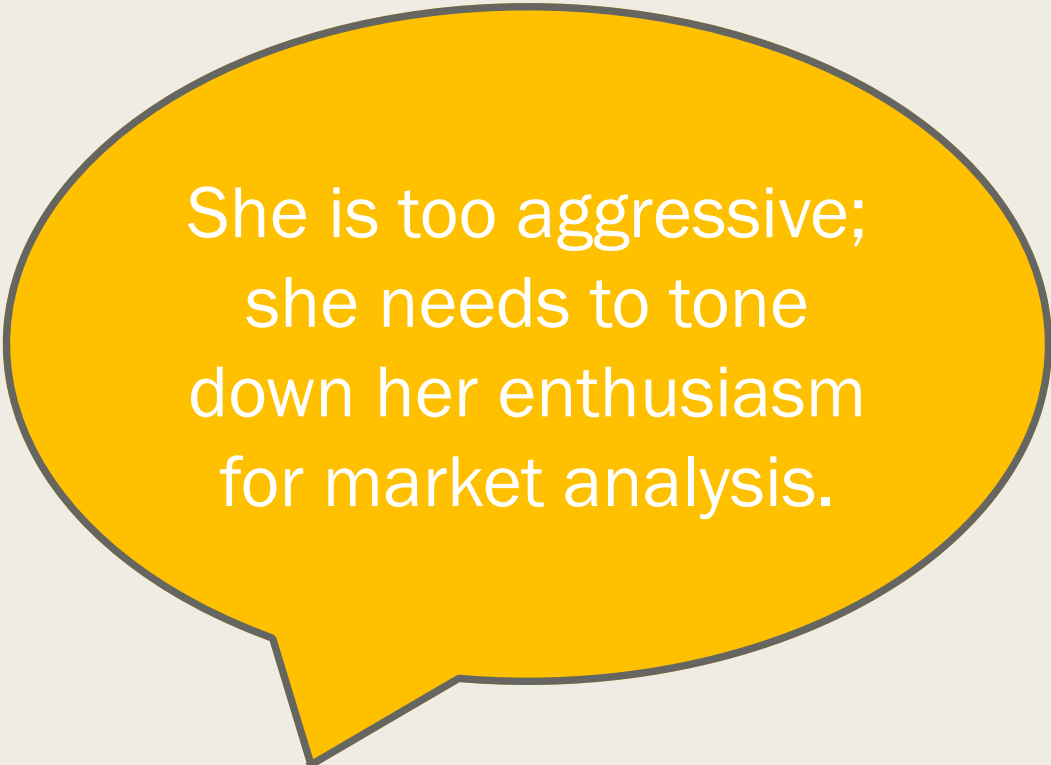
Tip #5: Ask for clarity

Tip#6: Ask if similar comment would be made about someone else

Tip #7: Express emotion



# Bias Pattern: Undue Style Criticisms



She is too aggressive;  
she needs to tone  
down her enthusiasm  
for market analysis.

Bias Blocker Tip: Ask if similar comment would be made about someone else.

She is too aggressive;  
she needs to tone  
down her enthusiasm  
for market analysis.

Hmm...would that  
even be an issue if  
Frank acted that  
way?



# Your turn...

get

She really rubs people the wrong way, although I know her style comes from her training in business school.

get

?

# BIAS BLOCKER TIPS

Tip #1: Reference original criteria

Tip #2: Agree to importance of criteria

Tip #3: Block use of new criteria

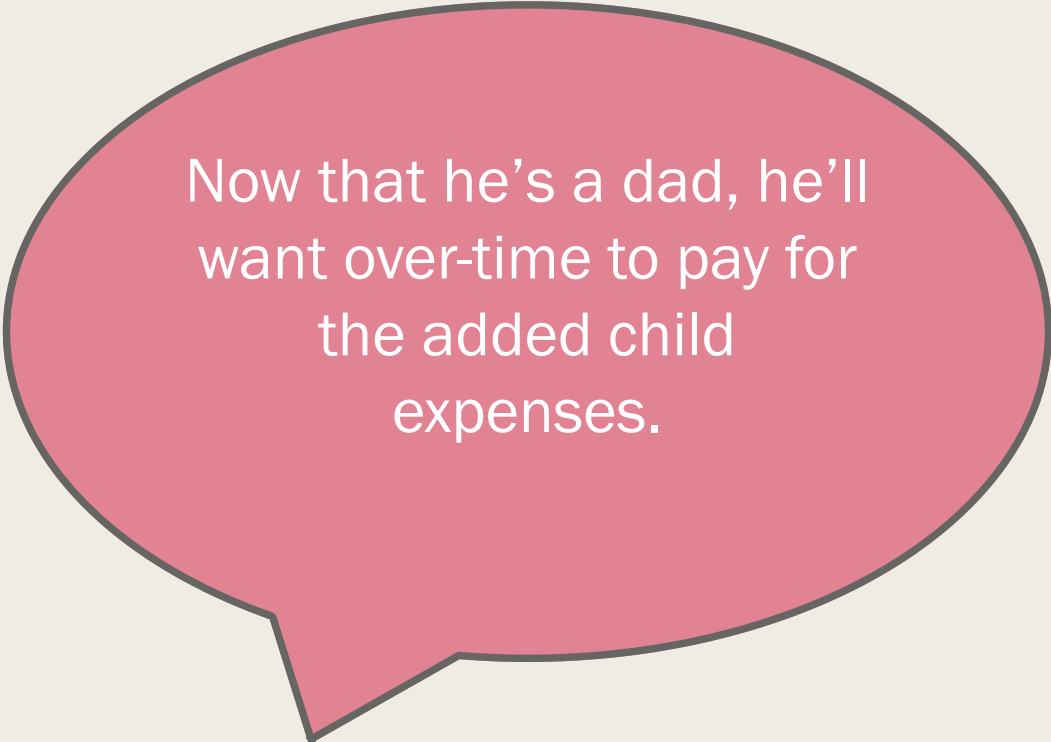
Tip #4: Disregard ineffective or biased criteria

Tip #5: Ask for clarity

Tip#6: Ask if similar comment would be made about someone else

Tip #7: Express emotion 

# Bias Pattern: Work-Life Assumptions



Now that he's a dad, he'll want over-time to pay for the added child expenses.

## Bias Blocker Tip: Express emotion

Now that he's a dad, he'll want over-time to pay for the added child expenses.

I'm concerned about whether we're being fair talking about his child.

I'm confused about why we're talking about his child.

# Your turn...

get

She's been busy with her kids and I'm not sure she's been adding as much to the team.

get

?

Changing the environment is  
about making the right decisions  
a little bit easier and the wrong  
ones a little bit harder.

-Modified from Nielsen & Kepinski, 2016, *Inclusion Nudges*

<i>Pattern of Bias</i>	<i>Example of Bias</i>	<i>Bias Blocker Tip</i>	
<b>Higher Bar</b>	“Even though her analysis of the situation was accurate, she should have come to her conclusion quicker.”	<b>Reference original criteria</b>	“While speed in coming to a conclusion might be worth considering, we agreed that analytic accuracy was the most important criteria.”
		<b>Ask for clarification</b>	“Can you tell me why analytic speed is important in this case?”
		<b>Agree to importance of criteria</b>	“Can we agree to focus on our top criteria, one of which I interpret to be analytic accuracy?”
<b>New Criteria</b>	“Even though he can program in R, he has no experience working with a team.”	<b>Block use of new criteria</b>	“We agreed that programming in R was most important. Let’s focus on that in this discussion.”
<b>Vague praise</b>	“She is really sweet.”	<b>Disregard ineffective or biased criteria</b>	“That sort of information does not seem to be helping us make the decision. Let’s stick to evaluating whether her performance helped us accomplish yearly goals.”
		<b>Ask for clarity</b>	“I’m not sure I follow what you’re saying. Could you help me understand?”
<b>Undue style criticisms</b>	“She is too aggressive; she needs to tone down her enthusiasm for market analysis.”	<b>Ask if similar comment would be made about someone else.</b>	“Hmmm...would that be an issue if Frank behaved in a similar way?”
<b>Work-life assumptions</b>	Now that he is a dad, he’ll want over-time to pay for the added expenses.”	<b>Express emotion</b>	“I’m concerned about whether we’re being fair talking about his child.” OR “I’m confused about why we’re talking about his child.”