

# Advocate

## Common Biases in the Workplace

at  
**HER  
BEST**

COMMON BIAS	SITUATION #1	SITUATION #2	SITUATION #3
<p><b>PERFORMANCE BIAS:</b> based on deep rooted- and incorrect- assumptions about women’s and men’s abilities. We tend to underestimate women’s performance and overestimate men’s</p>	<p>Assuming the manager is a man. <b>What To Do:</b> Jump into the conversation to correct the record. Say something that underscores her leadership abilities.</p>	<p>Men sitting front and center with women sitting on the sidelines. <b>What To Do:</b> Encourage women that sit on the side move towards the center. Consider planning ahead by encouraging a better mix.</p>	<p>A man asks a woman to do office housework, even though it’s not her job. <b>What To Do:</b> Suggest a solution that distributes the work more fairly and ask to switch up people. Explain how women are more likely to be asked to do these tasks.</p>
<p><b>ATTRIBUTION BIAS:</b> closely linked to performance bias. Because we see women as less competent than men, we tend to give them less credit for accomplishments and blame them more for mistakes</p>	<p>Colleague comments how “lucky the woman was to land a project.” <b>What To Do:</b> Ask about luck. If disparaging, ask why they think she’s less competent.</p>	<p>A woman suggests an idea at a meeting and it falls flat <b>What To Do:</b> remind people where the idea originated from. Advocating for women colleagues can help them get noticed.</p>	<p>A woman colleague is spoken over or interrupted <b>What To Do:</b> Speak up. You might say, “I’d like to hear the rest of X thoughts”. Encourage thoughts from everyone, not just one person</p>
<p><b>LIKEABILITY BIAS:</b> rooted in age-old expectations. We expect men to be assertive, so when they lead, it feels natural. We expect women to be kind and communal, so when they assert themselves, we like them less.</p>	<p>Colleague comments on how a woman candidate is “aggressive” and “out for herself” <b>What To Do:</b> Ask if a colleague would have the same reaction if it were a man. Reframe it and ask if being focused and decisive is what the biz needs</p>	<p>During performance reviews, team focuses on their speaking style <b>What To Do:</b> Point it out. Explain this is a common bias and why it happens. Suggest that the group focus on the substance, not speaking style</p>	<p>A manager describes a woman who reports to her as ‘overly ambitious; when she asks for a promotion <b>What To Do:</b> Ask to explain their thinking. Suggest there may be a double standard. If this is a pattern, point it out.</p>
<p><b>MATERNAL BIAS:</b> Motherhood triggers false assumptions that women are less committed to their careers — and even less competent.</p>	<p>Colleague advocates for applicant who has no gap in resume over one who was a full-time mom <b>What To Do:</b> Evaluate candidates based on skills and experience. Longer term, recommend team using standardized hiring criteria</p>	<p>A colleague without children asks a woman with children how she manages work while raising kids, thinking she is overwhelmed. <b>What To Do:</b> Point out feeling overwhelmed is universal and that it’s not always related to having kids</p>	<p>A colleague suggests that it isn’t a good time to offer a new mom stretch assignment <b>What To Do:</b> Remind your colleague that this could be a career defining project and enable the mom to determine</p>
<p><b>AFFINITY BIAS:</b> what it sounds like: we gravitate toward people like ourselves in appearance, beliefs, and background. And we may avoid or even dislike people who are different from us.</p>	<p>“Not a good cultural fit” <b>What To Do:</b> Ask the person to be specific. If it’s about differences, point out that they can be good. Propose a “culture add”. As a longer term solution, ask that a set of standardized criteria be used for all hires, reducing subjective bias</p>	<p>Male colleague only mentors other men <b>What To Do:</b> Talk to colleagues, explaining why mentoring is so valuable and share observation. Recommend he mentor at least one woman, and point out public places to meet</p>	<p>You mentor someone as they remind you of yourself <b>What To Do:</b> Be aware of this dynamic and let it inform your choices. Consider proactively reaching out to mentor someone from a different background</p>
<p><b>DOUBLE DISCRIMINATION &amp; INTERSECTIONALITY</b> isn’t limited to gender. Women can also experience biases due to their race, sexual orientation, a disability, or other aspects of their identity.</p>	<p>A colleague assumes that a woman of color you are talking to is junior <b>What To Do:</b> Correct the record. Add some context that highlights impact to the company. Recommend bias training</p>	<p>A colleague comments to you that another colleague “got a promotion because she’s a black woman” <b>What To Do:</b> What makes you say that? Stand up for your colleagues and qualities for promotion. Highlight the value of diversity</p>	