Bias Mitigation in Peer Review Training for Program Staff

September 2023
Overview

- Review the goals of the training
- Outline the content and structure of the training
- Present data from the pilot training process
Bias Mitigation Training Working Group

- Jenna Hicks, *Inclusive Grantmaking Initiative Program Lead, HRA*
- Jessica Biddinger, *National Senior Director, American Heart Association*
- Kim Lezak, *Managing Director, Biomedical Research Grantmaking, Health Resources in Action*
- Kevin Sia, *Program Officer for Medical Research, Doris Duke Foundation*
- Maryrose Franko, *Executive Director, HRA*
Bias Mitigation in Peer Review Training

**Goals**
- Equip participants to recognize and mitigate bias during peer review
- Define bias, including types of bias and different manifestations of bias
- Describe how bias can impact the review process
- Identify strategies for mitigating bias during the review process

**Audience**
- Program Staff at HRA member organizations
- 78% (n=38/49) of HRA members who responded to an interest survey about bias training said training would be beneficial for program staff
- Future iterations of the training will target reviewers

**Format**
- Asynchronous, self-paced training
- Priorities when designing format:
  - Balance between brevity and completeness (30-40 min)
  - Accessibility (delivery platform can be navigated by screen readers; content includes audio voiceovers and captions)
Health Research Alliance Bias Mitigation in Peer Review Training for Program Staff

Training Overview

Welcome to the Health Research Alliance Bias Mitigation in Peer Review training for program staff!

Bias in peer review of grants and fellowships can affect funding decisions and lead to inequitable outcomes. This training will define bias, discuss how bias can occur and present during peer review, and outline strategies that can mitigate the impact of bias on decision making. The content of this training is situated within the context of peer review of grants, and the strategies and examples presented within the training are most directly relevant for staff at organizations who include live review committee meetings as part of their review process, though those who have other peer review processes may still find the information valuable.

This training will take approximately 30-40 minutes to complete, and is best viewed within a desktop browser rather than on a mobile device. Portions of this training are videos containing audio voiceovers, and closed captions are available. The training is comprised of three modules which must be completed in sequential order. Click on Module 1 below to get started.
Module contents and structure

01 Basics of Bias
- High-level overview of bias
- Definitions of conscious/unconscious bias
- Short narrated video

02 Bias in Peer Review
- Research on the effect of different types of bias on peer review (e.g., gender, institution, race)
- Examples of these biases in the context of peer review
- Short narrated video, case study of a review meeting

03 Strategies for Mitigating Bias
- Structural measures to limit opportunities for bias during review meetings
- Sample language to question bias during discussion
- Short narrated video, case study demonstrating implementation of questioning language
Supplemental resources

Types of Bias handout
- Definitions of various types of bias
- Examples of behavior or statements
- Selected references

Strategies to Mitigate Bias handout
- One-page reference document
- Bias mitigation strategies outlined in the training
- Example statements to question bias in conversation
Training Development and Implementation

Pilot Test (Version 0.5)
10 - 30 individuals from 10+ organizations complete the draft training and provide feedback via survey and focus groups.

May - June 2023

June - August 2023
Iterate & Redesign (Version 0.5 -> 1)
Compile feedback from pilot testers and incorporate changes based on said feedback.

September 2023
Distribute Version 1.0 to HRA Members
Full launch of the asynchronous training module for program staff, available to all HRA members.

~January/February 2024
Iterate & Redesign (Version 1.0 -> 2.0)
Compile feedback from Version 1.0 users via embedded evaluation survey and incorporate changes based on said feedback.

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Pilot Training (May - June)

Pilot Objectives:
● Collect formative qualitative feedback about relevance, utility, and accessibility
● Identify elements that should be revised before the training is available to all HRA members
● Pilot survey questions that may be used to evaluate the effectiveness of subsequent versions

Participants
Signed up: 40 (22 orgs)

Training + Surveys
Pre-Training Survey: 29
Post-Training Survey: 25

Focus Groups
Attended: 15 (11 orgs)
Pilot Training: Impact on participants

How **confident** are you in your **ability to identify bias** during the review process?

| Very / Extremely Confident in ability to **identify bias** | Before | 21% |

How **comfortable** are you **taking action to mitigate bias** during the review process?

| Very / Extremely **Comfortable taking action to mitigate bias** | Before | 25% |
Participants experience with the training

Participants thought that the training was...

- Relevant for program staff: 96%
- Addressed important topics: 92%
- Accessible: 100%
- Easy to navigate: 96%
Future Bias Mitigation Training plans

- Begin development of a training for scientific reviewers (aiming for launch in ~January 2024)
- Develop facilitator guides and discussion materials to facilitate use of the training materials outside of the asynchronous online training
Training Access

HRA Homepage > Members > Members Only Information > Bias Mitigation Training for Program Staff

- Access instructions are on this page
- The training is hosted on a learning management system (Canvas)
- Go to canvas.instructure.com/enroll/H8CRWA

healthra.org/members/members-only-information/bias-mitigation-peer-review-training/
Q&A

Contact Jenna with additional questions: jenna@healthra.org