Implicit Bias: Conscientious Interventions to Tackle the Elephant in the Room

“Best Intentions” Small Group Tool

Learning Objectives:
1. To acknowledge that bias is inherent in physicians' perspectives.
2. To recognize the importance of self-reflection as a method for understanding one's own biases.
3. To verbalize the impact of stereotyping or personal bias on medical decision making.
4. To list strategies to mitigate physician bias in patient care.

Format and Materials Needed:
- 60 minute small-group workshop
- Recruit 1-2 facilitators for group of 10-12 participants
- One week prior to the workshop, participants are assigned advance work: to take two Implicit Association Tests (IATs) on the Project Implicit website, and to read the article by Green et al that describes the relationship between bias and disparities in medical care (references below).

Description of Tool:
- Review ground rules
- Facilitators lead guided discussion reviewing the following concepts:
  o Discuss the experience of taking an IAT (5-10 minutes)
    ▪ Were your results what you expected? Why or why not?
    ▪ How do you feel about your results?
  o Discuss the process of self-discovery and role of perspective taking (5 minutes)
    ▪ How do you uncover or become aware of the unconscious beliefs or impulses that govern your thoughts, actions, and feelings?
    ▪ Consider an experience where someone may have seen your actions differently than you see them, or where you recognized beliefs or assumptions you held after considering another person’s perspective about your actions
  o Relationship between IATs and clinical practice (30 minutes)
    ▪ Have you ever witnessed what you thought was physician bias during your training? Was the bias acknowledged or addressed by the physician or other members of the team? Do you think the bias was explicit (the person was aware of it) or was it implicit (they were unaware they held a bias)?
    ▪ Have you experienced insights about your assumptions or beliefs about patients, where you recognized a bias in yourself that you were previously unaware of? How did you learn that?
  o Lessons learned from the group discussion (10 minutes)
- A summary sheet of strategies to mitigate bias was distributed to all participants

References:
- Project Implicit Website: https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/index.jsp

Adapted From: