Implicit Bias

CCAR Virtual Dialogues

Created by New Point Strategy
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Welcome & Overview

I. Group Introductions

II. Technology Guidelines

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IV. Group Norms

V. Group Expectations

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VIII. Questions and Comments
Introductions

Please take a moment to introduce yourself to the group. Please share your:

- Name
- How long you have been with the community
- One thing you love about being a part of this community.
Technology Guide

Virtual Etiquette

- Mute unless speaking
- Turn webcams on
- Only use chat for questions and constructive dialogue
- Please send personal chat to facilitator for tech assistance
Dialogue Objectives

Dialogue vs. Debate vs. Discussion

The way we approach our interactions with others will dictate the outcomes.
Common Norms

- Listen to understand others
- Honor confidentiality
- Suspend judgments
- Use “Yes, and” thinking
- Participate fully
- Share airtime
- Disagree respectfully
- Use “I” statements
- Speak from the heart as well as the head
- Ask questions with the intent to learn
Group Expectations

Please take a moment to share what your expectations are for today's dialogue.

- Share with your computer’s audio, or
- Share via the chat
Scenario One
Back to Work
Rabbi Rosenshine recently had a baby and has returned to work after maternity leave. As a member of the board, you’re really happy to have her back in time for Passover. Though Rabbi Rosenshine was pretty happy when she first returned, you notice that she doesn’t seem to be her cheerful self recently. She doesn’t spend as much time talking with members of the congregation after services, and she’s not smiling much either. You’re concerned about her, but don’t want to make her feel like she can’t do her job after having a baby.
Question One

Why do you think Rabbi Rosenshine has been “less cheerful” lately?
Scenario One – Part A

Back to Work

Question Two
What are some other possible explanations?
Scenario One – Part A

Back to Work

Question Three

How could you approach Rabbi Rosenshine to share your concerns?
Rabbi Rosenshine: “I thought coming back to work was going to be easier. Everyone is so happy for me and thrilled to meet the baby, and that’s great. But members of my congregation just won’t stop commenting on my appearance. I’m getting all of this unsolicited advice about how to lose the baby weight. I just wish I could focus on my job as a spiritual leader instead of feeling self-conscious about how I look!”
Scenario One – Part B

Back to Work

**Question One**

How does hearing Rabbi Rosenshine’s perspective impact your interpretation of her behavior since she returned from maternity leave?
Question Two

What implicit biases might be impacting this situation?
Question Three

How could you and other congregational leaders better support Rabbi Rosenshine?
Scenario One

Learning Points:

- The implicit biases in this situation have to do with gender and body size.
- Women are often expected to live up to unrealistic beauty standards.
  - It is more common for people to comment on the appearance of a woman (dress, hair, make-up, size, etc.) than a man.
- While all larger-size people (both women and men) face social stigma, women often deal with more unsolicited comments, especially post baby.
Scenario One

Back to Work

Learning Points:

• More attention on a woman’s physical appearance means that less attention on her intellectual, spiritual, social, and emotional capabilities.
  ○ This can be very frustrating for women who expect to be valued as professionals and leaders.

• Other congregational leaders could support Rabbi Rosenshine by focusing their attention on job-relevant conduct, not on irrelevant factors such as physical appearance.
  ○ When they hear someone else make a comment about losing weight, they could politely point out that unsolicited advice is not helpful and Rabbi Rosenshine will seek out support IF she would like it.
Scenario Two
Don't Give it
Another Thought
Scenario Two – Part A

Don't Give it Another Thought

You are an associate rabbi for a large congregation in a metropolitan area. You and the cantor are both men, and the senior rabbi, Rabbi Katz, is a woman. An older male visiting scholar is giving a lecture to the congregation, and, refers to you as the senior rabbi and Rabbi Katz as the associate. In the moment, you decide not to correct him so as to be polite, and he delivers the rest of the lecture. The congregation seems very interested and he receives hearty applause at the end of the lecture.

Cantor: “Well that was an interesting conversation, wasn’t it?”
Rabbi Katz: (hesitates) “Yes. It certainly was.”
You (Associate Rabbi): “It was a bit awkward when he got us mixed up!”
Rabbi Katz: “That was disappointing. And even before the lecture he directed all his comments to you rather than to me. It happens so often—”
Cantor: (quickly cutting in and laughing) “Don’t give it another thought! You can’t teach an old dog new tricks, right?”
Scenario Two – Part A

Don't Give it Another Thought

Question One

What is causing Rabbi Katz to be concerned about the assumption that she is not the senior rabbi?
Scenario Two – Part A
Don't Give it Another Thought

Question Two
What is the possible impact of the cantor responding to Rabbi Katz this way?
Scenario Two – Part A
Don't Give it Another Thought

Question Three
How might you or the cantor have responded if Rabbi Katz were a man?
Rabbi Katz: “Well if that wasn’t just too ironic. As I expressed my concern about being overlooked or dismissed by men...the Cantor butts in and makes a joke out of it. I’ve been at the synagogue for 6 months and have already been asked to clean up after meetings, patronized, and interrupted more times than I can count. I thought that if I chose a large congregation in a more urban environment I would be able to escape some of this sexism, but it seems to follow me anywhere I go. And nobody bothered to even correct his error. It makes me feel like my own colleagues don’t support me.”
Scenario Two – Part B

Don't Give it Another Thought

**Question One**

How does hearing Rabbi Katz’ perspective impact your interpretation of the meeting?
Scenario Two – Part B

Don't Give it Another Thought

Question Two

How could you, as the associate rabbi, better support Rabbi Katz?
Scenario Two – Part B

Don't Give it Another Thought

Question Three

What can the cantor do to better support Rabbi Katz?
Scenario Two – Part B

Don't Give it Another Thought

Question Four

How can Rabbi Katz best deal with her frustration about how she is being treated?
Scenario Two

Don't Give it Another Thought

Learning Points:

- The implicit biases in this scenario have to do with gender and possibly age.
- Female rabbis often report being mistaken for a less senior position, or that the men they are with (e.g. colleague, spouse) are assumed to be the rabbi.
Scenario Two

Don't Give it Another Thought

Learning Points:

• Gender biases are prevalent around the world and in the U.S.
  ○ Women, including women in leader positions, are asked most often to engage in administrative or menial tasks, such as being asked to take notes, fetch coffee, or even clean up a room after a meeting.
  ○ Women are interrupted more than and by their male colleagues, while women are less likely to interrupt others, either male or female.

• When the cantor dismissed Rabbi Katz’ claim that she was being treated disparately, even if his intentions were to console her, the impact was that he was denying or discrediting her experience.
Scenario Three

Just Ignore It
You are a cantor at your synagogue and are helping to orient a new associate rabbi, Rabbi Roth, who has recently moved from a large city to a smaller college town. The senior rabbi at your synagogue, Rabbi Bergman, has been a rabbi for 25 years and is very well respected by the congregation and in the wider Reform community. Both rabbis are women. You observe the following interaction in a meeting:

**Rabbi Bergman:** “So, how are you feeling after your first month here?”

**Rabbi Roth:** “I feel welcomed! I appreciate all the warmth of this community. But, if one more person comments on the clothes I’m wearing, I might just lose it.”

**Rabbi Bergman:** “Oh, that’s nothing! People used to tell me what to wear. They called me Rabbi Lisa, instead of Rabbi Bergman! Can you image former senior rabbi being called Rabbi David?”

**Rabbi Roth:** “What did you do? How did you handle it?”

**Rabbi Bergman:** “Oh, you just have to ignore it. You have to develop a thick skin in this job.”
Scenario Three – Part A

Just Ignore It

Question One

Why might the perspectives of Rabbi Bergman and Rabbi Roth be so different?
Scenario Three – Part A

Just Ignore It

**Question Two**

What biases might they have about each other?
Scenario Three – Part A

Just Ignore It

Question Three
What is the potential impact of these potential blind spots on their relationship?
Scenario Three – Part B
Just Ignore It

Rabbi Roth: “I’m feeling pretty lonely here in this new town. It’s such a big adjustment to serve in this congregation. I thought I would have some support with a female senior rabbi, but Rabbi Bergman doesn’t take my concerns seriously. I’d like to actually change how people in the congregation engage with female clergy, but I don’t think that change is going to happen unless I say something and am backed up by the senior rabbi.”
Scenario Three – Part B

Just Ignore It

**Question One**

How does hearing Rabbi Roth’s perspective affect your interpretation of what happened in the meeting with Rabbi Bergman?
Scenario Three – Part B

Just Ignore It

**Question Two**

How could Rabbi Bergman better support Rabbi Roth?
Scenario Three – Part B
Just Ignore It

Question Three
What’s the best way for Rabbi Roth to bring this up with Rabbi Bergman?
Scenario Three – Part B

Just Ignore It

**Question Four**

How could you (as an observer) help facilitate greater understanding between Rabbi Bergman and Rabbi Roth?
Scenario Three

Just Ignore It

Learning Points:

- The implicit biases in this scenario are gender and age.

- Even as more women have entered the clergy, many report comments on their clothing or style
  - Comments that would not be directed toward a male rabbi.

- From a cross-generational perspective, Rabbi Bergman’s experience as a rabbi was different than Rabbi Roth’s.
  - She might have felt like she had to endure biased behaviors in order to keep her position.
  - Often, women who “paved the way” may perceive a sense of entitlement or lack of recognition for the kind of challenges they had to suffer through.
Scenario Three

Just Ignore It

Learning Points:

• For Rabbi Roth, she expected to have support and empathy

• She wants to challenge the status quo and push progress, and, is frustrated that another woman leader appears to support her.

• Both women have an opportunity to listen and empathize with one another.
  ○ Rabbi Bergman may need to recognize the value in supporting the next generation of female leaders
  ○ Encouraging progress rather than trying to force Rabbi Roth to accept the status quo.
Scenario Four

It's Your Attitude
Scenario Four – Part A
It's Your Attitude

You are the Chair of the Board. Rabbi Luria is meeting with you to talk about an upcoming event. You ask Rabbi Luria about his recent performance review with Rabbi Weinberger, the female associate rabbi.

**Rabbi Luria:** (Sighs) “I don’t really know how it went. I gave her the feedback about the importance of appearing warm and friendly, but she didn’t seem very receptive.”

**You (Board Chair):** “Why? What did she say?”

**Rabbi Luria:** “She didn’t actually respond to that feedback, but changed the subject. She asked for feedback on [insert job-specific responsibility].”

**You (Board Chair):** “Well, I hope that she heard you. We really need Rabbi Weinberger to connect well with our congregation.”
Scenario Four – Part A

It's Your Attitude

Question One

What do you think happened during this performance review?
Scenario Four – Part A

It’s Your Attitude

**Question Two**

Why do you think Rabbi Weinberger changed the subject?
Scenario Four – Part A

It's Your Attitude

**Question Three**

What are some other possible explanations?
Rabbi Weinberger: “And so it happens again! No matter how competent I am, the only feedback I ever get is about my attitude. ‘Couldn’t you smile more?’ ‘Why do you look so serious all of the time?’ I’m sick of it! When I speak my mind like any other male rabbi can, I get to hear about my unpleasant and aggressive tone. I don’t get any feedback about the substance of my work. This is not why I went to rabbinical school!”
Scenario Four – Part B

It’s Your Attitude

Question One

How does hearing Rabbi Weinberger’s perspective impact your interpretation of her behavior in the performance review?
Scenario Four – Part B
It's Your Attitude

Question Two
How might implicit biases be contributing to Rabbi Luria's and the Board Chair’s perspective of Rabbi Weinberger?
Scenario Four – Part B

It's Your Attitude

Question Three
What could Rabbi Luria do differently in future feedback conversations?
**Scenario Four – Part B**

It's Your Attitude

**Question Four**

How could you, as Board Chair, better support Rabbi Weinberger?
Scenario Four

It's Your Attitude

Learning Points:

- The implicit biases at play here concern gender.
- Quite often, women are judged based on if they meet gender norms around attitude.
  - Women should be pleasant, smile all the time, and avoid looking serious or upset.
  - Men who look serious or upset do not receive the same negative judgments.
  - There are significant consequences to women being assessed on attitude differently than men:
    - Women’s substantive job-related contributions are often overlooked.
- Women do not get the same opportunities to develop professionally when labeled as unpleasant or difficult.
Scenario Four

It's Your Attitude

Learning Points:

• In future feedback conversations, Rabbi Luria could focus on Rabbi Weinberger’s primary job responsibilities and accomplishments.
  ○ If he gives feedback about attitude, it should be with the focus on building relationships with congregants to foster trust.

• When discussing with a search committee, discuss how committee members may want to stay conscious of potential biases in the way they characterize candidates.

• For instance, what words are we using to describe female versus male candidates.
  ○ How does that impact the way we judge their suitability for the job?
Scenario Five

A Little Prickly
Scenario Five – Part A

A Little Prickly

You are the president of your temple, and a woman. Although you have never experienced it firsthand, you have seen the senior rabbi, Rabbi Liebman, act in somewhat dismissive ways to other women. You believe he means well, and he is beloved by the congregation, so women typically just give him a pass when he calls them “sweetie” or “honey” or “mansplains” to them in meetings. Tali is a rabbinical student who has recently come to your congregation to serve as a rabbinic intern. After temple one day you notice both Tali and Rabbi Liebman talking with an elderly congregant who recently lost her husband and seems distraught. You are pleased to see that Rabbi Liebman is including the student in his interactions with congregants. A couple of weeks later, you have the following exchange with Rabbi Liebman.
Scenario Five – Part A
A Little Prickly

Rabbi Liebman: “What do you think of our young student, Tali? A little prickly, eh?”

You (Temple President): “I hadn’t noticed. She seems really smart and accomplished. Why?”

Rabbi Liebman: “You haven’t noticed the room freeze over when she walks in? Every time I talk with her, she seems angry and impatient. I guess that’s just the way with young people today.”
Scenario Five – Part A

A Little Prickly

Question One

On what behaviors is Rabbi Liebman basing his assumptions of Tali? On what identity markers is he basing his opinions?
Scenario Five – Part A

A Little Prickly

**Question Two**

What assumptions is he making?
Scenario Five – Part A

A Little Prickly

**Question Three**

What else could explain what he perceives as Tali’s “prickly” attitude?
Tali: I am trying hard to make this work, but I can’t take more of Rabbi Liebman’s sexism and ageism. He calls me a “nice girl” and “cute” in front of congregants. The other day told me how surprised and impressed he is that I speak in an intelligent way about the text. The real kicker was the other week when I was talking to Mrs. Stern about her husband’s death and he butted in right when she was opening up with me. He took over and walked her away, as though I can’t possibly console someone who is grieving? He knows nothing about me or what sort of loss I have experienced. Even if I haven’t, I don’t need to have experienced the same things in life to be a good listener and counselor to my congregants. If that were the case, Rabbi Liebman certainly couldn’t counsel any women on postpartum issues or miscarriages or menopause!
Question One

How do you see the situation differently now that you have heard Tali’s story?
Scenario Five – Part B

A Little Pricky

**Question Two**

What could Rabbi Liebman do to act more inclusively and leverage Tali’s talent?
Scenario Five – Part B

A Little Prickly

**Question Three**

What can Tali do to make her feelings known to you and Rabbi Liebman?
Scenario Five – Part B

A Little Prickly

**Question Four**
As the temple president, what can you do to support individuals in working together?
Scenario Five
A Little Prickly

Learning Points:

• The implicit biases in this scenario are gender and age.

• Women often report “micro-inequities” or “micro-aggressions,” small, subtle acts of exclusion, often unintentional but can send a message of inferiority.

• Referring to women in diminutive terms like “sweetie” or “honey” or “nice girl” are common, and can erode trust and morale and leave women feeling like they aren’t held in as high regard as their male counterparts.

• Rabbi Liebman also shows bias in interpreting Tali’s reactions to him as “prickly” and commenting on “the way young people are.” Women are often judged more harshly for their actions, and younger people are often stereotyped by older people as being disrespectful or impatient.
Scenario Five

A Little Prickly

Learning Points:

- Rabbi Liebman’s biased behaviors also include interfering with her conversation, which sends the message to Tali that he thinks she is incapable because of her age.

- Tali is potentially drawing her own conclusions about why Rabbi Liebman interfered. Based on previous interactions, she is assuming he took over because he doubts Tali’s abilities, which may or may not be the case.

- How can search committee members stay conscious of potential biases when characterizing candidates?
Scenario Six

Who Will My Husband Talk To?
Scenario Six – Part A

Who Will My Husband Talk to?

You have been asked to join the search committee for your congregation’s new rabbi. You are approached by several members of the congregation who mention that because you already have a female rabbi, they would like to see the senior rabbi position filled by a man in order to promote gender balance. When you bring this up at the search committee’s meeting, one of the other committee members, Debbie, rolls her eyes and says, “I’ve heard it even from women! I had a congregant come up to me and say we have to hire a man because otherwise, she said, ‘who would my husband talk to?’ Listen, we can’t let a handful of people override our progress.”

The rest of the committee seems uncomfortable and you are unsure how to proceed.
Scenario Six – Part A
Who Will My Husband Talk to?

Question One
What are the different perspectives being held in this situation?
Scenario Six – Part A
Who Will My Husband Talk to?

Question Two
Why might Debbie have reacted the way she did?
Scenario Six – Part A

Who Will My Husband Talk to?

Question Three
What assumptions are you making about Debbie’s behaviors and how might that impact your communication with her?
Debbie: It’s moments like this I doubt our actual commitment to equity, especially for women. The committee says it’s interested in making the selection process unbiased and trying to hire for diversity, but then they immediately bend over backwards for anyone in the congregation who pushes back. What would be so terrible about having women in the senior rabbi, rabbi, and cantor roles? Heaven knows we’ve had all men in those positions long enough.”
Scenario Six – Part B

Who Will My Husband Talk to?

Question One

How do you see the situation differently now that you have heard Debbie’s story?
Scenario Six – Part B
Who Will My Husband Talk to?

**Question Two**

How could implicit bias affect the committee’s evaluation of the qualified candidates?
Scenario Six – Part B

Who Will My Husband Talk to?

Question Three

What could you do to ensure this selection process maximizes diversity and inclusion?
Scenario Six

Who Will My Husband Talk to?

Learning Points:

- The members of the congregation may be demonstrating implicit bias in sharing their concerns about hiring another woman.
  - The desire for “gender balance” may be legitimate, but it could also illustrate an unconscious discomfort with having more than one woman leader.
- The congregant who asked, “who will my husband talk to?” also demonstrates the bias that even women internalize around who is fit for what position.
  - Women have had to confide in male rabbis for a long time. Why wouldn’t a man be able to confide in a female rabbi?
Scenario Six
Who Will My Husband Talk to?

Learning Points:

• Debbie may be frustrated if she feels like she is the only person challenging gender bias.
  ○ Women who frequently speak up often feel like they are the lone voice. They want others to see and help bear the burden.

• The search committee may want to set clear agreements up front about what qualities or outcomes they wish to prioritize.
Scenario Six

Who Will My Husband Talk to?

Learning Points:

- Women and minorities have long been kept out of leadership positions. Even when they are promoted, they face an immense deal of bias.
  - Studies show that having one woman as the "solo status" can be detrimental.
  - Women experience "stereotype threat" where they are judged more harshly, when they're in the solo position.
Scenario Seven
Too Young
Scenario Seven – Part A

Too Young

At a recent staff meeting, Rabbi Silverman asks the pre-school director and her staff what they have planned for summer activities. Jessica, a recent college graduate and teacher, enthusiastically shares that she has some great ideas for pride month in June. She wants to read the book, “Red: A Crayon’s Story,” with the kids to teach about gender identity and what it means to be transgender.

Jessica: “I’m so excited about this book! All of the characters are crayons. The main character is a blue crayon with a red wrapper. Everyone expects the crayon to color in red, and even try to help the crayon, but it can only color in blue. Eventually, the other crayons recognize that the crayon is actually blue and - “

Rabbi Silverman: (quickly interrupts) “Don’t you think these kids are a bit young to be talking about those kinds of things? I think you’ll just confuse them.”
Scenario Seven – Part A

Too Young

Question One

Why might Rabbi Silverman be uncomfortable in this situation?
Question Two
Why do you think Jessica might be so passionate about her idea for pride month?
Question Three

What implicit bias might each person bring to this discussion?
Jessica: “Why do we even hang a pride flag outside our synagogue? Rabbi Silverman thinks our students are too young to talk about gender identity, but this is such an important issue. And kids start categorizing their own gender by age 3! That’s why experts have written age-appropriate books like the one I suggested to talk to kids about gender identity so they know it’s ok. I was seriously considering inviting my friend, Dylan, who is trans, to join our congregation. Now, I’m not so sure. I don’t think this place is as open-minded as it claims to be.”
Scenario Seven – Part B

Too Young

Question One

How does hearing Jessica’s perspective impact your interpretation of the disagreement in the staff meeting?
Scenario Seven – Part B
Too Young

Question Two
How could Rabbi Silverman respond differently to facilitate dialogue?
Scenario Seven – Part B

Too Young

**Question Three**

What could you, as an observer, say or do to help bridge differences between Jessica and Rabbi Silverman?
Scenario Seven

Too Young

Learning Points:

- The implicit bias at play here is around gender expression and gender identity. There are also some generational differences in this situation.

- While there is increasing acceptance for individuals who identify has gay or lesbian, there remains a lot of stigma against people who identify as transgender or nonbinary.
  - Talking about gender expression and gender identity can be uncomfortable for some people, largely because it is unfamiliar and calls into question deeply held cultural beliefs.
Scenario Seven
Too Young

Learning Points:

• Jessica expects that a congregation that calls itself progressive should be open and welcoming to anyone from the LGBTQIA+ community.
  ◦ She could offer to do a brownbag on gender expression and gender identity for anyone interested in better understanding transgender issues.

• Rabbi Silverman could respond differently by being curious rather than shutting down the conversation.
  ◦ Perhaps he could ask to read the book or talk with Jessica individually to learn more about what she wants to teach in preschool.
Scenario Eight
Membership Comes at a Price
You are the chair of the membership committee for your temple. As part of a new inclusion campaign, Rabbi Stein sends an email to all of the committee chairs to incorporate a focus on diversity and inclusion. At the next membership committee meeting, the group has a conversation about the rabbi’s email and several members discuss ideas for focusing on diversity, specifically on women and the LGBTQIA+ community. You notice one of the other members, Michael, purse his lips, fold his arms, and look away. He stays quiet through the meeting. Michael is typically very outspoken in meetings, so you begin to wonder if he’s not interested in supporting this effort.
Scenario Eight – Part A

Membership Comes at a Price

**Question One**

What is your interpretation of Michael’s behaviors?
Scenario Eight – Part A
Membership Comes at a Price

Question Two
What implicit bias or assumptions might you have about Michael?
Scenario Eight – Part A

Membership Comes at a Price

**Question Three**

What else could explain his actions?
Scenario Eight – Part A

Membership Comes at a Price

Question Four
How can you respond effectively in this situation?
Scenario Eight – Part B

Membership Comes at a Price

Michael: Of course I’m dedicated to total equality in our congregation. I sometimes feel like our congregation leadership has some bias around other populations who may not feel included, like people from a different socioeconomic background, people of color, or immigrants. We’re in a wealthy neighborhood and our congregants can all easily afford membership dues and contribute to our fundraising efforts. There are people who live in our area, but are left out because they can’t afford entry into our community. But I can’t say anything because if I try to steer the conversation away from gender or sexual identity, they might label me as narrow-minded. I feel like I’m better off just staying quiet.
Scenario Eight—Part B
Membership Comes at a Price

Question One
How does hearing Michael’s perspective impact your interpretation of his behaviors in the meeting?
Scenario Eight – Part B
Membership Comes at a Price

Question Two
What can Rabbi Stein do to address Michael’s concerns?
Scenario Eight – Part B

Membership Comes at a Price

**Question Three**

How can you ensure that all implicit bias issues get an adequate amount of attention?
Scenario Eight – Part B
Membership Comes at a Price

💡 Question Four
What can you do as the committee chair to ensure a commitment to inclusion?
Scenario Eight
Membership Comes at a Price

Learning Points:

- This scenario deals with biases around gender, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status.

- People tend to be more aware of the biases that others possess but are far less able to notice their own biases.
  
  - Members who want to focus on gender and sexual orientation might be missing out on other identity groups that are marginalized or experiencing bias. This could be an opportunity to explore how the membership committee broadens their focus to be actively inclusive of other communities.
Scenario Eight

Membership Comes at a Price

Learning Points:

• Michael may have some of his own implicit bias when it comes to gender and/or sexual orientation bias.
  ○ As a straight white male, he may be uncomfortable acknowledging where he has automatic advantages, especially if he consciously supports equality and inclusion.
  ○ He may be dismissive of gender and sexual orientation issues because it’s easier to talk about issues of race or economic inequality.
Scenario Eight
Membership Comes at a Price

Learning Points:

- Michael has a good point, but also needs to shift his mindset from seeing this as an either/or situation.
  - Focusing on building an inclusive community for people of all economic backgrounds, races, and nationalities should not preclude the committee from addressing gender and sexual identity issues.
Scenario Nine

Welcome!
Rabbi Fierst has organized a dinner for potential new members of the congregation. You are a board member in charge of the catering and are setting up the buffet table when the first guests arrive. They're a family of four: Rebecca (a black woman), Aaron (a white man), and their two young children. You welcome them and introduce them to Rabbi Fierst.

**Rabbi Fierst:** “Welcome! So good to meet you.”
**Aaron:** “Thanks for having us.”
**Rabbi Fierst:** “Glad you could make it and that you brought the kiddos.”
**Rebecca:** “Hi Rabbit Fierst. How long have you been a rabbi for this congregation?”
**Rabbi Fierst:** “Oh it’s been a good ten years now. And how about you Rebecca - when did you get involved in Jewish life? After marrying this lucky guy [pats Aaron on the back]?”
**Rebecca:** “Oh my mother is Jewish, and I grew up going to synagogue. Aaron actually started coming to services after marrying me.”
Scenario Nine – Part A

Welcome!

Question One
What are the potential automatic assumptions that Rabbi Fierst might make?
Welcome!

**Question Two**

How might Aaron and Rebecca react to this and their decision to join the temple?
Welcome!

**Question Three**

What might be the impact on their relationship?
Rebecca: “Here we go again! I go out of my way to find the most progressive religious community I can, but I’m always an outsider. Never mind that I grew up Jewish and Aaron never went to synagogue before meeting me. In the eyes of the world, he’s the real Jew and I just don’t belong.”
Scenario Nine - Part B

Welcome!

Question One

How does hearing Rebecca’s perspective impact your interpretation of this exchange at the dinner?
Scenario Nine – Part B

Welcome!

Question Two
How do you think Jews of color might feel when it’s assumed that they are not Jewish?
Scenario Nine – Part B

Welcome!

Question Three

What could Rabbi Fierst do differently to welcome potential members of color?
Question Four

Who might be in the best position to give Rabbi Fierst some feedback about his own implicit bias about race and how could they bring it up?
Scenario Nine – Part B

Welcome!

Question Five

How could you as the committee chair anticipate this false assumption and prevent or respond to such comments?
**Scenario Nine**

**Welcome!**

**Learning Points:**

- The implicit bias at play in this situation is around race and skin color.
- Jews of color experience these kinds of situations quite often.
  - Leaders and community members may unintentionally exclude individuals who don’t “look Jewish” and make them feel like outsiders.
**Scenario Nine**

**Welcome!**

**Learning Points:**

- To be more inclusive, Rabbi Fierst could simply ask any potential new member what brought them to the synagogue and what their previous experiences in Jewish communities have been.
  - That would remove assumptions and allow for a more open conversation.

- If you are a white leader, consider giving Rabbi Fierst this feedback.
  - Rather than the burden of pointing out bias to fall on the group that is the target of the bias, this is an opportunity for someone from the dominant group to be an ally and provide constructive feedback.
Scenario Ten

The "Right" Kind
You are the board secretary of a small, rural congregation. Rabbi Pereira has just recently arrived. He is joined by his husband and two young children. When Rabbi Pereira arrived, you sat down with him and the temple president, Abel.

**Abel:** Well, first of all, I just want you to know that we have had gay rabbis in the past and it’s okay if you are gay. Whatever your preference, we welcome you.”

**Rabbi Pereira (smiling):** “Thank you. I’ve had straight presidents before and it’s okay with me if you are not gay.”

**Abel: (laughs)** “Hey listen, you have a solid family life and two adorable children. We are excited to welcome you all to our community.”
Scenario Ten – Part A
The "Right" Kind

Question One
What do you think are Abel's intentions?
Scenario Ten – Part A

The "Right" Kind

Question Two

What blind spots might Abel have?
Scenario Ten – Part A
The "Right" Kind

**Question Three**
How might either of his statements be received by Rabbi Pereira? How might Rabbi Pereira interpret these comments?
Rabbi Pereira: “What I heard in that conversation was an older straight man telling me he will tolerate me even if he doesn’t agree with my life. And would he or others in the community be as accepting if I wasn’t married with children? Would they see me as promiscuous, unstable, or less trustworthy around their kids?”
Scenario Ten – Part B

The "Right" Kind

**Question One**

How might hearing Rabbi Pereira’s perspective alter your interpretation of this conversation?
Scenario Ten – Part B
The "Right" Kind

**Question Two**
What information might Abel have missed in your conversation with the rabbi?
Scenario Ten – Part B

The "Right" Kind

**Question Three**

What can you do to ensure Rabbi Pereira feels truly included in the community?
Scenario Ten

The "Right" Kind

Learning Points:

- The implicit biases here are sexual orientation and possibly age.
- Even though Abel likely intended to make Rabbi Pereira feel welcome and comfortable, by calling out his sexual orientation may indicate to Rabbi Pereira that he is an outsider and that his sexual orientation is tolerated but still seen as the “Other.”
- Abel's comments about Rabbi Pereira’s family life indicates to Rabbi Pereira that Abel has negative stereotypes about single gay men.
Scenario Ten
The "Right" Kind

Learning Points:

- Regardless of good intentions, actions may have an adverse effect on the message receiver based on that person’s lived experiences and identity lenses.

- In the future, Abel should consider how Rabbi Pereira might interpret such statements based on his experiences as a member of the LGBTQIA+ community.

- In the selection process it’s important to question what hidden stereotypes we may be unconsciously holding about who is suitable and who isn’t when it comes to a rabbi’s sexual orientation, as well as relationship status and parental status.
Scenario Eleven
Find a Way
Rabbi Friedman is a new associate rabbi for a suburban congregation. He has recently moved with his wife and two young children, ages two and five. The senior rabbi, Rabbi Diamond, has been with the congregation for 25 years. He and his wife are empty-nesters and recently became grandparents. In a recent meeting, they have the following exchange:
Rabbi Friedman: “I was looking at next month’s schedule, and I see there are a number of admin and finance meetings scheduled for Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday evenings.”

Rabbi Diamond: “Yes, there is a lot we need to work through, we need to involve some Board members who are only free in the evenings.”

Rabbi Friedman: “I respect the Board’s schedules, but I won’t be able to make Monday and Wednesday evenings. I have to take care of the kids. Could we reschedule for early morning or lunchtime?

Rabbi Diamond: “Can’t your lovely wife take care of the kids? We need you in these meetings.”

Rabbi Friedman: “My wife has regular work commitments those evenings, so she’s not available to take care of the kids.”

Rabbi Friedman: “Well you’re a smart, creative young man. Maybe call your mom or mother-in-law to help out. I’m sure you can find a way.”
Scenario Eleven – Part B

Find a Way

Rabbi Friedman: “Rabbi Diamond is so old school. I bet his wife was a stay-at-home mother when their kids were young. The thing is that my wife and I have an equal partnership. We co-parent, and it’s just as much my responsibility to care for our two young kids as it is hers. I know that my job requires some evening and weekend work, but I don’t think it’s too much to ask that some administrative meetings take place during the day. If I were a woman, I wonder if Rabbi Diamond would have the same expectation that my spouse take care of the children.”
Scenario Eleven – Part B
Find a Way

**Question One**

What assumptions is Rabbi Diamond making in this situation? Where do those assumptions come from?
Scenario Eleven – Part B
Find a Way

Question Two
What assumptions is Rabbi Friedman making in this situation? Where do those assumptions come from?
Scenario Eleven – Part B
Find a Way

**Question Three**
What could Rabbi Diamond do to accommodate Rabbi Friedman’s request?
Scenario Eleven – Part B

Find a Way

Question Four

What could Rabbi Friedman do to further explain his needs?
Scenario Eleven

Find a Way

Learning Points:

• The implicit biases in this situation are around gender and generation.

• Addressing gender bias means critically examining expectations of both women and men.
  
  ○ In this situation, a man is not being afforded the same flexibility to address childcare needs that a woman might be afforded in the same position.

• Men who are actively involved in parenting and childcare are often praised and celebrated for work that women typically do without any acknowledgement because it’s simply expected.
Scenario Eleven

Find a Way

Learning Points:

- Rabbi Diamond raised a family during a very different time with more fixed gender roles.
  - He needs to see beyond his own experience to appreciate shifting gender roles and accommodate work/life balance needs of all clergy and staff - both women and men.
- Rabbi Friedman is of a generation that believes in more flexible gender roles. He shares parenting responsibilities with his wife and is looking for some flexibility.
  - He may need to further explain what he and his family need and set some clear boundaries with Rabbi Diamond.
Scenario Twelve

Not a "Good Fit"
Scenario Twelve – Part A

Not a "Good Fit"

You are part of a search committee for your congregation’s new rabbi. Your committee just conducted a virtual interview with one of the candidates, Alona. When she showed up on the screen, you did a small double take. You were expecting a White woman. Alona is Black. You felt a small twinge of guilt realizing your surprise at her skin color, but wave it off, saying to yourself, “It was just unexpected, but I am not a racist.” The interview goes well and you believe Alona is a strong candidate.

Later on, as the selection committee gathers to narrow down the candidates for the next round, several of the committee members show a preference for other candidates (all White) and do not place Alona’s name in the top 3. You ask, “what about Alona?” One of the committee members, Bryan, replies, “I found her to be a bit too forceful. We want someone with charisma and passion but she was kind of ‘in your face’. I’m not sure she would resonate with some members of the congregation.”
Scenario Twelve – Part A

Not a "Good Fit"

**Question One**

What implicit biases are present in this situation and how might they impact the selection process?
Scenario Twelve – Part A

Not a "Good Fit"

Question Two

What could you as the member of the search committee do to manage these biases?
Alona: “I don’t think I will get a call back from that committee. The minute I came on the screen I could see the surprise on their faces. My parents purposely gave me a Jewish name because they wanted me to feel like I was part of the community. I sometimes think it works against me. No matter what, I am always seen as ‘different’ and not in a good way. I tried my best not to be too opinionated, but maybe I was too “honest” on some of those hard questions. I just didn’t sense a lot of confirmation with my answers. The Reform community says it’s so progressive, yet it wasn’t until I went to Jewish school as a kid that I experienced racism. I want to help be a face for the next generation of biracial and Black Jewish leaders. But it is so exhausting to feel like no matter what I do it won’t be good enough.”
Scenario Twelve – Part B

Not a "Good Fit"

Question One
What new insights did you gain from listening to Alona’s story?
Scenario Twelve – Part B

Not a "Good Fit"

Question Two

How might Alona’s past experiences impact her perceptions and behaviors?
Scenario Twelve – Part B
Not a "Good Fit"

Question Three
What could the search committee do differently to mitigate potential biases in its decision making?
Scenario Twelve

Not a "Good Fit"

Learning Points:

- Implicit biases and associations often occur when we experience what we perceive as "atypical." If people generally are accustomed to associating “Jewish” with a White person, their brain has trouble processing a Black person as Jewish.
  - The brain has trouble processing the new information it’s receiving because it is counter to past experiences.

- Cognitive dissonance can lead to confirmation bias, looking for data that upholds preexisting beliefs and experiences, discounting data that challenges those beliefs.
  - The selection committee member justifies their double take when encountering Alona by reminding themselves “I’m not a racist.”
Scenario Twelve

Not a "Good Fit"

Learning Points:

• Bryan, when critiquing Alona’s passionate, assertive responses as too “forceful” and “in your face,” drew a judgment that may reveal a bias.
  ○ Women of color are “tone policed”, where they are told they're coming off as too aggressive.
  ○ Bryan’s statement, “I’m not sure she will resonate with some members of the congregation” may show a racial and/or gender bias.

• The selection committee should be intentional about managing biases. Best practice is to decide early how to structure interviews to give equal opportunities for success.
  ○ Selection criteria should also be established up front, preventing judging a person’s character rather than evaluating actual behaviors.
Personal Action Plans

• What are we taking away from this dialogue?

• What actions or commitments do we want to make as a result of this dialogue?

• What further work do we need to do together and individually?
"Where do we go from here?"