



Commissions, Committees, & Boards: Interview Process Training & Anti-Bias in Recruiting

SEPTEMBER 2023

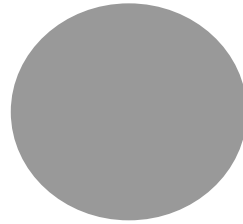
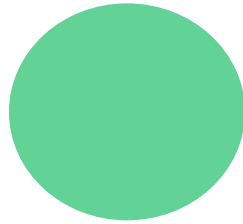
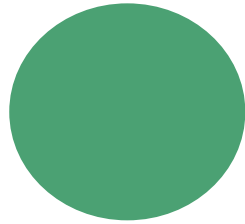
PRESENTERS

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Welcome & Introduction



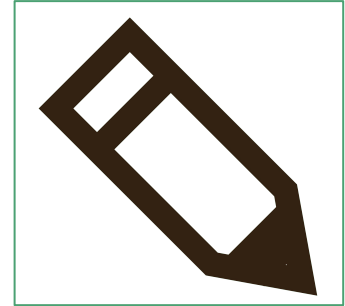
AGENDA ●

1. Welcome & Introduction
2. Community Norms
3. Board /Commission /Committee Mission, Values, Vision
4. Key Definitions
5. Dimensions of Diversity & Intersections
6. Interviewing Guidelines
7. Common Biases in selection
8. Takeaway & Questions

COMMUNITY NORMS



- Speak Your Truth and Use “I Statements”
- Respect Everyone’s Opinion
- Listen with an Open Mind and Heart
- Expect and Accept Non-Closure
- Parking Lot



Board/Commission Member Recruitment Policy Guidelines ●

Mission

The mission of each commission, board, and committee is to support the City of Somerville and encourage all residents to participate in their local government's decision making and planning processes.



Values

The City of Somerville sets a high priority on the **core values of equity, transparency, access, and social justice**. Prioritizing these values helps to make meaningful and actionable progress on our greatest challenges and our community members' most urgent needs.



Vision

To standardize the process and guidelines around b/c/c membership recruitment (outreach, interviewing, appointment, and onboarding) and DEI frameworks to ensure it is equitable and increases representation of all community members in Somerville.



KEY DEFINITIONS



Anti-Bias

Opposing or prohibiting unfair discrimination against people based on race, religion, etc. : preventing or counteracting bias (as in hiring practices)
(Merriam Webster)

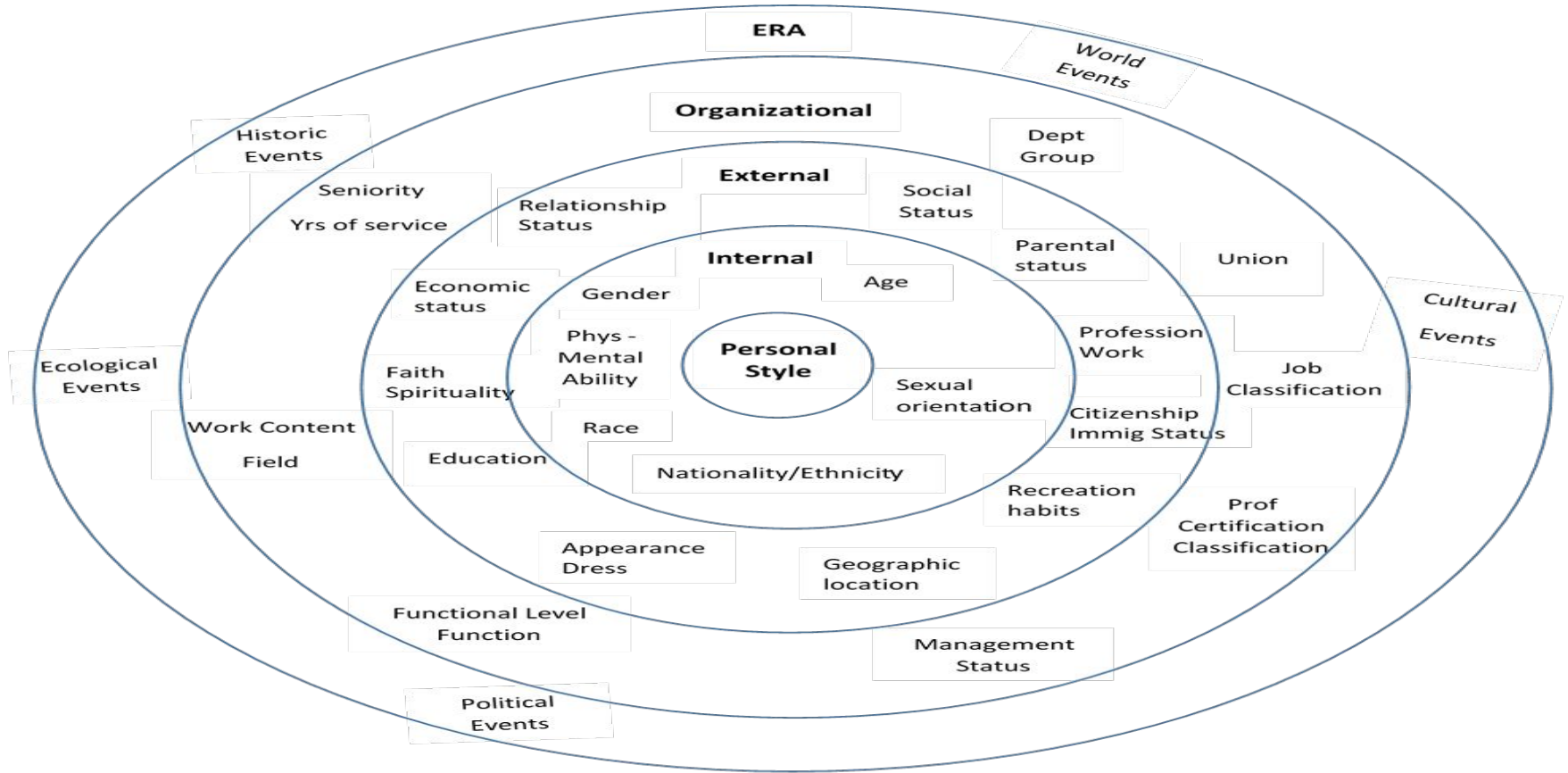
Anti-Racism

Anti-racism involves a set of practices aimed at challenging, addressing, and eradicating racism and its systemic manifestations. It goes beyond simply not being racist; it actively seeks to dismantle racist structures, policies, and practices and promote equity and justice for all racial and ethnic groups.

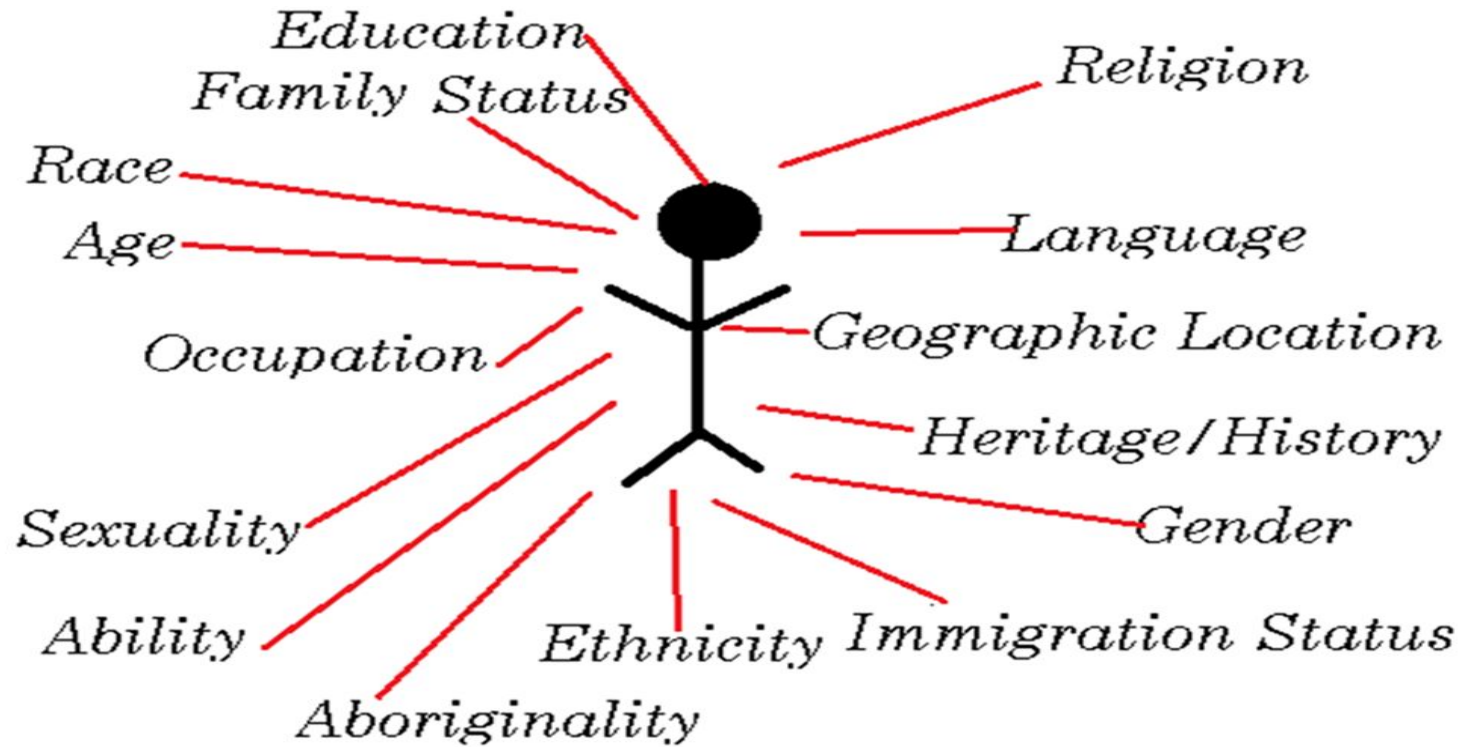
Implicit Bias

(aka **Unconscious Bias**) - Snap judgments that result from the short cuts, or preexisting knowledge structures in our brains, that make us very efficient at interpreting incoming information quickly, below our level of conscious awareness, about what or who we see; these judgments tell us who or what is likeable, safe, valuable, right, or competent; they impact how we see people; they are influenced by society; they affect our objective observations.
(eCornell)

DIMENSIONS OF DIVERSITY



INTERSECTIONALITY



Recruiting & Interviewing Guidelines

Advertising & Outreach

01

- **Widen Recruitment Channels** Don't be afraid to be creative and market the benefits of giving back to the community that you live in.
- **Utilize your resources & networks** Boost our reach by sharing city calls for vacant seats

Staff Liaisons are tasked with the below, which may involve some members:

- **Decide who will be involved in the process (if the Appointments Advisory Committee is not required).** Establishing a diverse interview panel will help us to think broadly and inclusively when selecting candidates.
- **Develop candidate profiles .** As a interview committee, decide what attributes and skills you are looking for in the ideal candidate. Think what skills and characteristics will address representation and goals of the commission, committee, or board
- **Design an interview process that is consistent across all candidates.** Maintain a structured and consistent selection process and **be responsive to applicants (consider the candidate experience).**
- **Ensure equity by completing each step of the selection process with all candidates who were invited to interview.**

At the Interview

03

- **Put the candidate at ease** by letting them know what the interview process will be like.
- **View the interview as a two-way conversation.** You are helping the candidate decide if this opportunity is right for them.
- **Recognize and be aware of how unconscious bias can impact our selection decisions.**
- **Avoid unstructured interview questions.** Please utilize our Standard Interview Question provided to you.
- **Give the candidate an opportunity to share any final thoughts.**

(Beyond Gut Feeling, ThriveMap.io; Hyper Recruitment Solutions)

Post-Interview

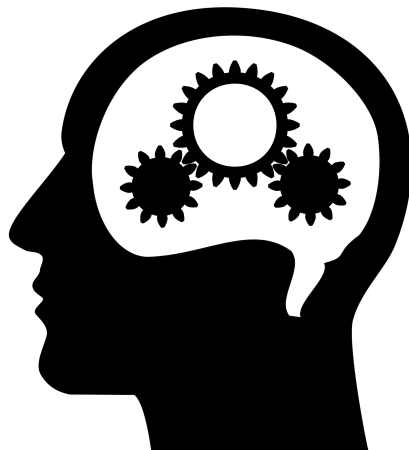
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- **Go through each desired candidate criteria and debrief as a group.** Refrain from asking general questions such as “What did you think?” which is more catered towards intuition.
- **Challenge any bias.** Help each other stay accountable. You can always go back to your ideal candidate persona and focus on the requirements for the role as a touch point.

Common Biases in Recruiting

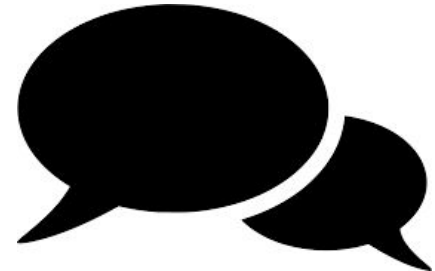
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It's impossible to *completely* be conscious of all of the 175 biases that influence our thinking but we can be informed about the major ones and try to limit their impact on decision making in the hiring process.



Top 5 Biases in Recruiting

- **First impression bias** – making up your mind in the first few moments of meeting someone. *It takes 7 seconds to make an impression!*
- **Non-verbal bias** – basing an opinion on someone's body language.



Top 5 Biases in Recruiting (continued)

- **Contrast bias**– judging performance against the person that came before them and NOT the hiring criteria
- **Negative emphasis bias**– When a negative detail about a candidate informs the rest of an interview and impacts the hiring process.
- **Similar to me bias**– judging someone based on as you see something of yourself in that candidate, e.g. similar background or went to the same school (this type of bias can also be known as affinity bias).

EXAMPLE of a Real World Scenario



Key Takeaways

- General Interview Best Practices
- Mindfulness: Fact or Bias?
- Use your team: Accountability & Trust
- How else does this apply?
 - Application review
 - Approval processes

Questions?