



Implicit biases

are pervasive. Everyone possesses them, even people with avowed commitments to impartiality, such as judges.

BIAS IN FORENSICS

Bias manifests across race/ ethnic, gender, & other lines. Some facts about gender impacts in debate¹:



Aggression

Female-presenting debaters are criticized on ballots for being “aggressive” at a rate 2x higher than male-presenting debaters.



Emotion

Female-presenting debaters are criticized on ballots for being “emotional” at a rate 10x higher than male-presenting debaters.



Tone

Female-presenting debaters are 2x as likely to be criticized for *how* they debate, rather than the substance of their arguments.

A quick note on Implicit Bias

WHAT IT IS: The attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. Activated involuntarily, without awareness or intentional control. Can be either positive or negative. Everyone is susceptible.

What you can do

- ✓ When assessing the performance of someone from a marginalized group, try to focus on concrete positive and negative factors and your memory of what actually happened, rather than relying on overall “gut” feelings.
- ✓ Notice when your decisions or comments might have been caused by bias or stereotypes, and make an intention to think positive thoughts when judging members of marginalized groups.
- ✓ Bias is a habit. Like any habit, becoming aware of the habit and being motivated to change are necessary first steps.