

Overview

50 Ways to Fight Bias is a free digital program to empower all employees to identify and challenge bias head-on. The program is optimized for virtual workshops and consists of two parts: a short video that explains the most common types of biases that women face, and a digital card activity where participants discuss specific examples of bias in small groups, brainstorm solutions together, and learn research-backed recommendations for what to do.

This digital program includes 12 sets of digital cards curated for different audiences and workplace interactions—for example, we offer a set for managers and a set focused on bias in hiring and promotions.

Your role as moderator

To facilitate real conversations about biases women face at work, you will:

- Guide the group through the different parts of the activity
- Ask follow-up questions to encourage discussion and mutual learning
- Make sure everyone feels supported

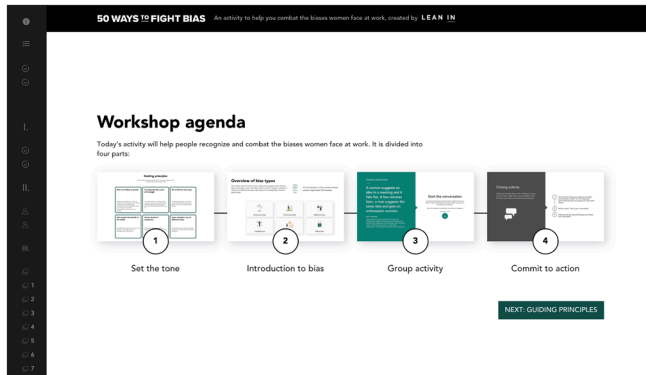
Running the program virtually

50 Ways to Fight Bias can be run virtually using any platform you choose. Below are some best practices for engaging participants virtually:

- **Use breakout rooms:** For the group activity, you will divide participants into mixed-gender groups of 6-8 people. Some platforms will allow you to assign participants to breakout rooms before the meeting, while others will only allow this while the meeting is in progress.
- **Share the link to the digital program with participants:** Before sending participants to breakout rooms, share the link to the digital program and the name of the set you have selected. This will allow all breakout rooms to engage with the situations you selected.
- **Use announcement feature:** If your platform allows for it, keep participants on track and moving through the situations by using the announcement feature.
- **Leverage chat feature for closing activity:** When facilitating the “One Action” activity, ask participants to share their One Action in the chat of the platform.

1. Workshop Agenda (~2 min)

WHAT THEY'LL SEE

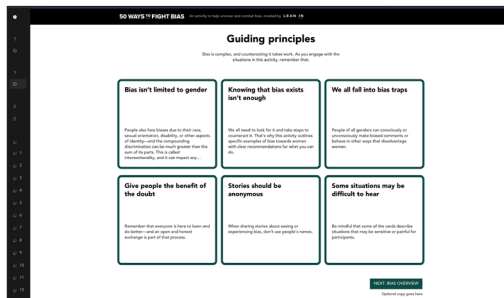


WHAT YOU'LL SAY

- 1 "Welcome to this session of 50 Ways to Fight Bias developed by LeanIn.Org."
- 2 "My name is _____ and I'll be moderating today's activity."
- 3 "Research shows bias is holding women back in the workplace. Our aim for this session is to learn what bias is, how it arises, and what we can all do to combat it at work."
- 4 Give an overview of the different parts of the activity:
 - "In today's activity, we're going to first lay some guiding principles and learn about different types of bias."
 - "After that, we'll spend most of our time discussing common situations involving bias. We'll also hear what the research recommends for addressing them."
 - "Finally, we'll commit to taking One Action to address bias in the workplace"

2. Guiding Principles (~5 min)

WHAT THEY'LL SEE



WHAT YOU'LL SAY

Read these guiding principles aloud to level set with participants and encourage an open and respectful discussion.

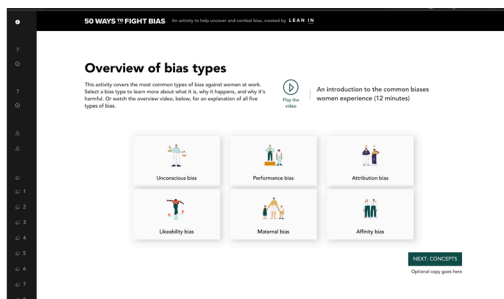
- 1 Women face biases due to their race, sexuality, and other aspects of their identity.**
“Bias isn’t limited to gender. People can also experience multiple biases due to their race, sexual orientation, disability, or other aspects of their identity—and the compounded discrimination can be significantly greater than the sum of its parts. This concept is called intersectionality.”
- 2 Intersectionality can be at play in any situation.**
“Many of the situations in this activity focus specifically on the experiences of women with other marginalized identities. Others focus on biases women face in general, but highlight ways that intersectionality makes bias different or worse. Even if intersectionality isn’t explicitly mentioned on a card, it’s important to keep it in mind, since women’s experiences are always shaped by all aspects of their identity.”
- 3 We all fall into bias traps.**
“People of all genders can make biased comments or behave in other ways that disadvantage women. We often do this unconsciously, but it’s also important to remember that not all bias is unconscious. Unfortunately, many people still experience overt discrimination based on their race, gender, sexuality, disability, or other aspects of their identity.”

- 4 **Give people the benefit of the doubt.**
“Remember that everyone is here to learn and do better—and an open and honest exchange is part of that process.”
- 5 **Stories should be anonymous.**
“When sharing stories about seeing or experiencing bias, don’t use people’s names.”
- 6 **Some situations may be difficult to hear.**
“Be mindful that some of the cards describe situations that may be sensitive or painful for participants.”

3. Learn about bias types (~10–15 min)

Help participants build foundational knowledge about the most common types of biases women face.

WHAT THEY’LL SEE



WHAT YOU’LL SAY AND DO

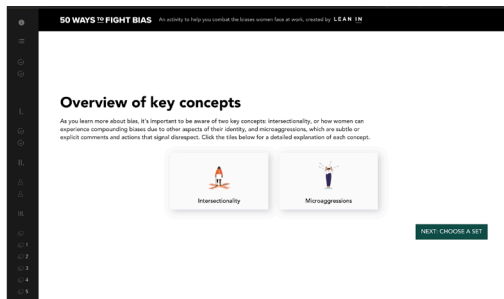
Help participants build foundational knowledge about the most common types of bias against women.

- 1 “Before we start the activity, let’s review the common biases women experience.”
- 2 Lead the group in learning about bias:
 - a. Video option: play the 50 Ways video for the entire group now. It’s about 12 minutes long.
 - b. Non-video option: have participants take turns reading the bias types aloud on the **Learn about bias types** page.

4. Learn about bias concepts (~2 min)

Help participants understand two key concepts: intersectionality and microaggressions.

WHAT THEY'LL SEE



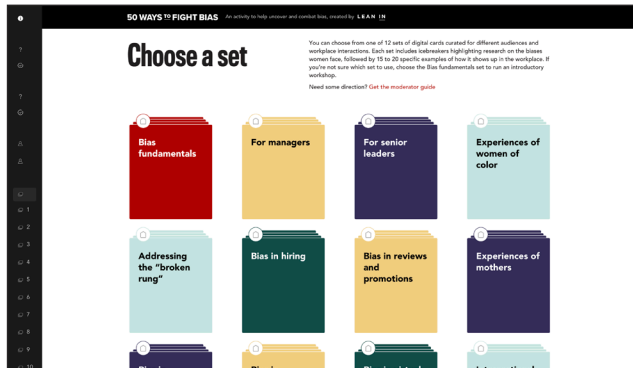
WHAT YOU'LL SAY AND DO

If you did not watch the video, explore both the Intersectionality and Microaggressions tiles. If you did choose to watch the video, click the Microaggressions tile and say the following to participants:

- 1 One way we often see bias show up in the workplace is through microaggressions.
- 2 Microaggressions are a form of day-to-day discrimination directed at those with less power. They are an all-too-common occurrence in the workplace, and are often rooted in various types of bias—for example, performance bias may lead colleagues to question a woman's judgement in her area of expertise.
- 3 Because women experience more types of bias at work, they also face a wider range of microaggressions than men.
- 4 For some groups of women—including women of color and LGBTQ women—microaggressions are even more pronounced. These acts of discrimination may seem insignificant when viewed as isolated incidents. But when they occur day after day—as they often do—their impact builds up and takes a toll.

5. Choose a set

WHAT THEY'LL SEE

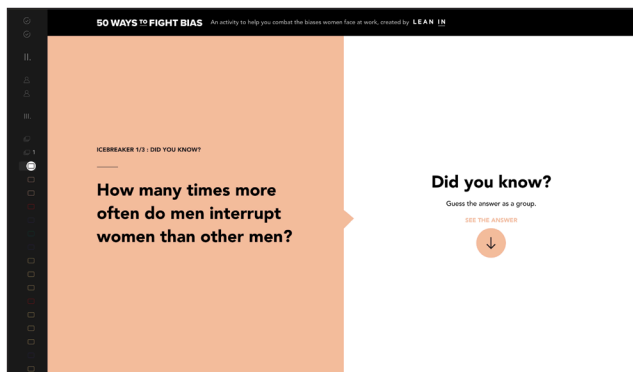


WHAT YOU'LL DO

Select the set of digital cards that participants will discuss in your workshop. You should have chosen which set you will use during your preparation. There are 12 sets of digital cards curated for different audiences and workplace interactions—for example, we offer a set for managers and a set focused on bias in hiring and promotions.

6. Warm up the room (~5–10 min)

WHAT THEY'LL SEE



WHAT YOU'LL DO

Challenge the group to guess the findings of some of the most surprising research on biases women face at work.

- 1 Read the prompt to the group.
- 2 Instruct the audience to guess the answer aloud or in the chat feature of your platform.
- 3 Click on the arrow button to reveal the answer.

7. Group activity (~30–60 min)

WHAT THEY'LL SEE

50 WAYS TO FIGHT BIAS An activity to help you combat the biases women face at work, created by LEAN IN

SITUATION 1/20: REVIEWS AND PROMOTIONS

You're on a team doing performance reviews and notice that a lot of women get feedback on their speaking style.

Bias fundamentals

Use this set to run an introductory session for all employees, or for any group that has limited time and only plans to discuss 15 to 20 cards.

SEE WHAT TO DO

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WHY IT MATTERS

Criticism like this can prevent qualified women from advancing, which hurts both them and your company.

50 WAYS TO FIGHT BIAS An activity to help you combat the biases women face at work, created by LEAN IN

SITUATION 1/20: REVIEWS AND PROMOTIONS

You're on a team doing performance reviews and notice that a lot of women get feedback on their speaking style.

What to do

When you notice this pattern, point it out. Explain this is a common bias against women and **WHY IT HAPPENS**. Suggest that the group focus on the substance of what people say, not their speaking style.

Longer term, recommend that your company use standardized criteria for performance reviews, which will reduce subjective opinions. Consider recommending anti-bias training for employees involved in the review process. When people understand how bias impacts their decision-making, they are able to make more objective decisions.

SEE WHY IT HAPPENS

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SITUATION 1/20: REVIEWS AND PROMOTIONS

You're on a team doing performance reviews and notice that a lot of women get feedback on their speaking style.

Why it happens

Studies show that women often get negative feedback on their speaking style, while men do not.¹⁴ If women are confident and assertive, they can be criticized for speaking too loudly or often. But if they are quieter, they are more likely to be told that they need to speak more confidently and assertively.¹⁵ For some groups of women, no matter how they speak, people project stereotypes onto them: Asian women are more likely to be criticized for being too quiet, while Black women and Latinas are more often labeled angry or loud.¹⁶

ROOTED IN: Likeability bias

Next situation →
Skip to closing activity

WHY IT MATTERS

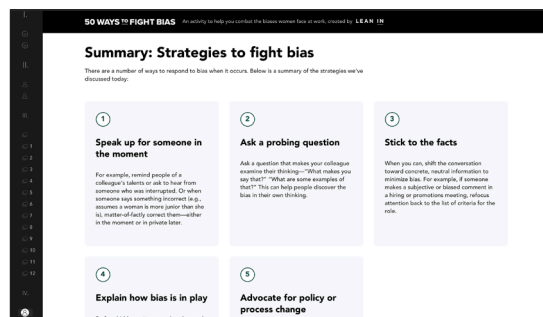
Criticism like this can prevent qualified women from advancing, which hurts both them and your company.

WHAT YOU'LL DO

- 1 Break participants into small groups and share the link to the digital program.
- 2 Ask each group to select one person to read the situation and **WHY IT MATTERS** aloud to the group.
- 3 Prompt participants to share with the group what they would do in this situation. You can use any the following prompts (or your own):
 - Has anyone experienced something like this before?
 - How would you respond in this situation?
 - How do you think bias is involved here?
- 4 After the discussion, have participants read **WHAT TO DO** and **WHY IT HAPPENS** aloud to the group.
- 5 Groups will continue through as many of these situations as they can until there are only 10 minutes remaining in the session.

8. Review strategies to combat bias (~5 min)

WHAT THEY'LL SEE



WHAT YOU'LL SAY

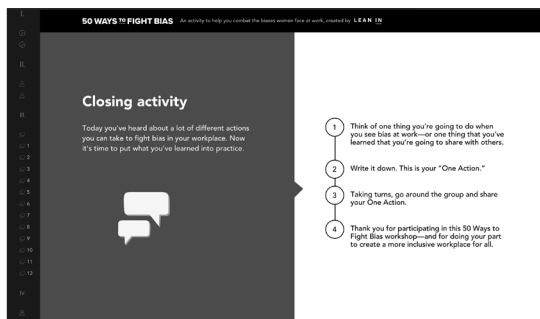
Bring participants back into the main room and share the summary of the strategies you've discussed today.

- 1 There are a number of ways to address bias when it occurs. Today, we discussed how we might respond to specific situations that come up.
- 2 Let's review some higher-level strategies you could use to combat bias in any situation. We saw examples of these strategies in many of the situations we discussed today.
- 3 **Speak up for someone in the moment:** for example, remind people of a colleague's talents or ask to hear from someone who was interrupted. Or when someone says something factually incorrect (e.g., assumes a woman is more junior than she is), matter-of-factly correct them—either in the moment or in private later.
- 4 **Ask a probing question:** Ask a question that makes your colleague examine their thinking—"What makes you say that?" "What are some examples of that?" This can help people discover the bias in their own thinking.
- 5 **Stick to the facts:** When you can, shift the conversation toward concrete, neutral information to minimize bias. For example, if someone makes a subjective or biased comment in a hiring or promotions meeting, refocus attention back to the list of criteria for the role.

- 6 **Explain how bias is in play:** Surface hidden patterns you've observed and explain what they mean. Research shows that a matter-of-fact explanation can be an effective way to combat bias. For example, mention to a hiring committee that you've noticed they tend to select men over women with similar abilities, or point out to your manager that women are doing more of the "office housework."
- 7 **Advocate for policy or process change:** Talk to HR or leadership at your company and recommend best practices that reduce bias.

9. One Action (~5–10 min)

WHAT THEY'LL SEE



WHAT YOU'LL SAY

As a closing activity, participants will commit to One Action they can take to address bias in their workplace.

"Today you've heard about a lot of different actions you can take to fight bias in your workplace. Now it's time to put what you've learned into practice."

- 1 "Think of one thing you're going to do when you see bias at work—or one thing you learned that you're going to share with others. Write it down. This is your 'One Action.'"
- 2 Give people 5–10 minutes to share their One Action with their small group.
- 3 After everyone has shared, wrap up and thank participants for sharing their personal experiences.