

Implicit Bias in Obstetrics

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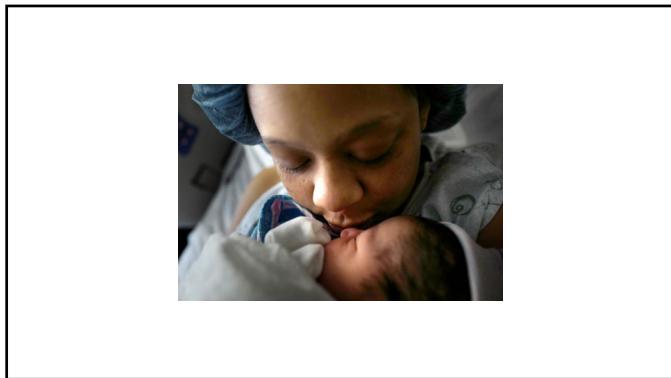
Objectives

1. Learners will be able to define and identify implicit bias, birth equity, and reproductive justice
2. Learners will understand the current U.S. Maternal Mortality Crisis
3. Learners will obtain history of racial injustice in American healthcare
4. Learners will appreciate the use of stereotypes and language in bias
5. Learners will discover bias mitigation techniques
6. Learners will be able to practice bias reduction techniques in their own practices
7. Learners will continuously practice being gentle with themselves



Conversation with a friend







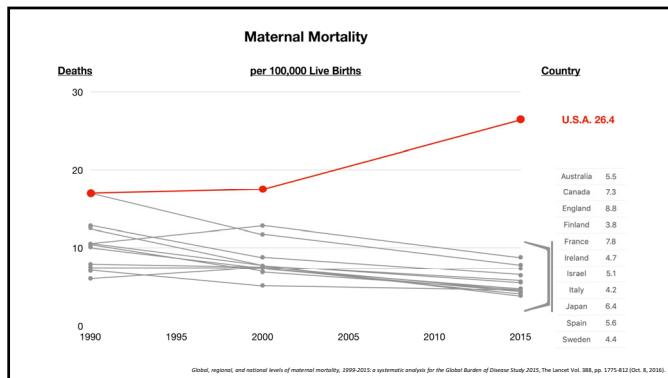
Why am I here?



The United States is “the most dangerous place to give birth in the developed world,” according to a *USA Today* investigation.

<https://www.usatoday.com/series/deadlydeliveries/>

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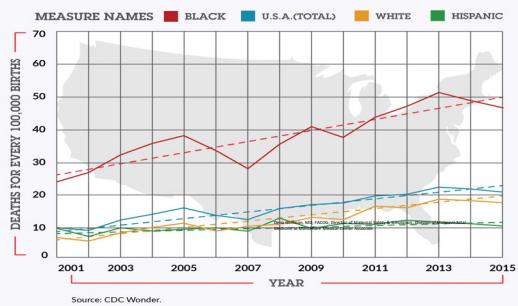
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The approximate number of women who die in childbirth each year in this country.

3-4x

The rate at which Black and Indigenous women die from pregnancy-related deaths compared with White women in the United States, even when controlling for factors, such as income and education level.

Maternal Mortality/Morbidity



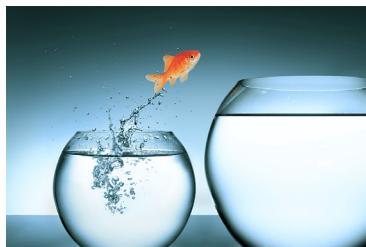
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The number of pregnancy-related deaths that have been determined by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to have been **preventable**.

Why are you here?



What is the big goal?



birth equity (noun):

The assurance of the conditions of optimal births for all people with a willingness to address racial and social inequities in a sustained effort.

Joia Crear-Perry, MD
National Birth Equity Collaborative

reproductive justice (*noun*):

The human right to maintain personal bodily autonomy, have children, not have children, and parent the children we have in safe and sustainable communities.

-Loretta Ross
SisterSong Women of Color Collective



implicit bias (*noun*):

The unconscious activation of prejudice notions (of race, gender, ethnicity, age, etc.) that influences our judgment and decision-making.

Patricia Devine, 1989
The Prejudice Lab

The Prejudice Lab demonstrated that even if people *don't believe* racist stereotypes are true, those stereotypes, once absorbed, can influence people's behavior without their awareness or intent.



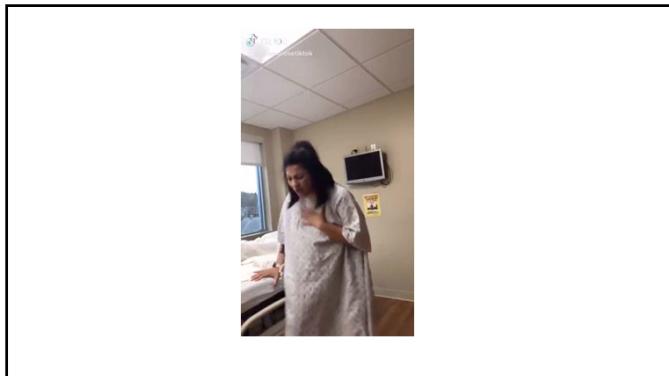
Common Types of Implicit Bias

- Affinity
- Anchoring
- Attribution
- Beauty
- Confirmation
- Similarity
- Contrast
- Gender
- Halo
- Horns



How does bias show up in obstetrics?

- Did you hear what they named that baby? How's that kid going to get a job one day?
- All these Hispanic moms come over here and pop out baby after baby, that we taxpayers have to pay for.
- You can walk past an Asian woman's room and not hear a peep the whole time they're in labor. They are just so stoic.
- I will never understand these drug addicts. How little do you have to care about your baby to keep shooting up while you're pregnant?
- So it's OK for you to smoke cigarettes while pregnant, but you won't get the flu shot because it's going to hurt your baby.
- She shows up to triage every week saying she's short of breath. Duh. You're pregnant. Every pregnant woman is short of breath.



DFE @Lakisagoddess
Replies to @DamnDRoseTweets

Sooo is this why black women keep dying?

12:21 PM · 11/20/19 · Twitter for iPhone

cannabutter baby 😊😊😊
Replies to @DamnDRoseTweets

This same attitude is exactly how black women go into labor and delivery and don't come out.

7:53 AM · 11/20/19 · Twitter for iPhone

Maybe Just Wave it Around a Little... @BrrnLaStrange
Replies to @DamnDRoseTweets

This is disgusting!! Black Women are accused of faking it and our pain levels and expressed symptoms are not taken seriously! I hope you never treat another patient ever!

Social Media Accuses Registered Nurse Of Mocking 'Black Women In Hospitals' In Viral Video

We know when y'all are faking 😊

1 Like in 1 Retweet and 2,260 others

sk8nmonk This is NOT OKAY! This article is at the root of the maternal death crisis. Sometimes we are fighting for our lives and sometimes we are fighting against. And what we are fighting for. Our skin color. This is bigger than the maternal death crisis this is.

Tianna 🌈 @Tianna_

Replies to @DamnDRoseTweets and @Ofeoi_U24

I swear this was my labor and delivery nurse at @OUIMedicine Children's hospital when I told her I felt like I needed to push and she said I was "overexaggerating" and 3 min later I had my baby NATURALLY without an epidural like I requested because she felt as if I was "FAKING"

taurus moon ☽ @annianarchy
Replies to @tswalela and @achankir

The crazy (but not surprising) thing is @DamnDRoseTweets is completely unapologetic and tone deaf to the black ppl pointing out her ignorance. I hope she loses her job.



Mrs. Kira Johnson

- 39
- Race Car Driver, Marathon Runner
- Mother of 2
- Los Angeles – Cedars Sinai
- Died 12 hours after giving birth
- Hemorrhage



How did we get here?

- Black women's bodies used as vessels for the institution of slavery in the U.S.
- Experimentation on black female slaves paved the way for modern day gynecology: Dr. J. Marion Sims
- Dr. Samuel Cartwright's Drapetomania facilitated and supported by Tulane University
- Black women forced to care for and breastfeed white babies (wet nurses)
- Eugenics and systemic manipulation of Black family planning



Statue of gynecologist who experimented on slaves removed from NYC, but remains in Columbia

BY NOAH FRITZ
APRIL 17, 2018 11:29 PM



A worker covers a tarp over the 19th century statue of Dr. J. Marion Sims, Tuesday, April 17, 2018, in New York's Central Park. Sims was known as the father of modern gynecology, but critics say his use of enslaved African-American women as experimental subjects was unethical. The statue is being moved to Green-Wood Cemetery in Brooklyn, where Sims is buried.



What can we do today?

- Face the reality that we have all gotten it wrong
- Listen to our patients
- Have the crucial conversations
- Ask hard questions
- Allow ourselves to feel whatever we feel, including shock or grief
- Commit to personal and institutional change
- Be gracious with ourselves and one another as culture change occurs



“Anytime I would ask a question, I was told that it was normal.”

—Bekah Bischoff, Kentucky

Mitigating Implicit Bias in Clinical Practice



An ongoing, deliberate process

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Ways to Mitigate Implicit Bias

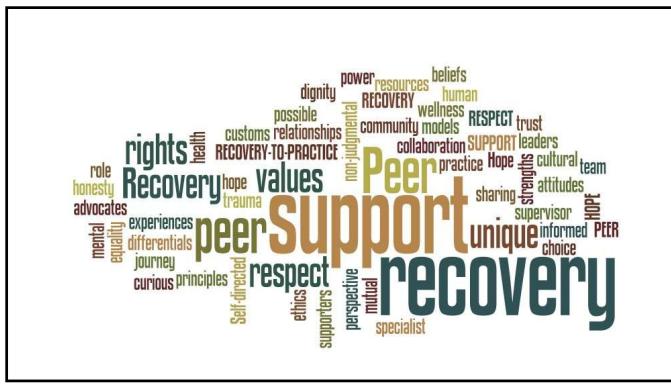
- Increasing self-awareness
- Building empathy or “walking in their shoes”
- Practicing mindfulness techniques that develop self-regulation
- Keeping people in the context of their experiences & environment
- Individualizing, instead of generalizing
- Resisting the temptation to “other”
- Avoid easy labeling



Ways to Mitigate Implicit Bias

- Thinking of counter-stereotypical examples
- Increasing opportunities for exposure to biases
- Fostering a culture of accountability
- Incorporating bias discussion into clinical debriefs
- Thinking critically about information being presented, even when it comes from sources or institutions we trust









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