

**CHECK OUR BIAS: Implicit Racial Bias Defender Agency/Office Audit
Defender**

Ways implicit bias impacts my own work and how to combat it.

EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT		
CLIENT RECEPTION AREA	<p>→ WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE: Although we serve a significant Latinx population, we don't have any Spanish-language magazines in our waiting area.</p> <p>We don't have a receptionist who speaks Spanish.</p> <p>On occasion, I have noticed that our receptionist is dismissive or impatient with our clients who don't use proper dialect or who are dressed in certain ways.</p>	<p>→ INSTEAD: I will encourage my office to invest in magazines and reading materials that reflect my clients. OR I will get together with my colleagues and donate some relevant magazines.</p> <p>I will encourage my office to hire a receptionist and support staff that reflect the demographics and background of the clients we serve.</p> <p>I will encourage our entire office team to participate in implicit bias trainings and activities. I will make sure all of our staff have access to professional development opportunities and resources.</p>
OFFICE DÉCOR	<p>→ WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE: Our office displays only sports and entertainment related décor, i.e. a photo of Michael Jordan, Lebron James, and Jay Z, suggesting that our clients can only relate to athletes and musical artists.</p>	<p>→ INSTEAD: I will suggest ways to diversify the images and décor represented around the office, e.g. adding photos of doctors, engineers, and lawyers in addition to the athletes and musical artists, etc..</p>
OFFICE LOCATION	<p>→ WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE: Our office is located in an area not easily accessible by public transportation.</p>	<p>→ INSTEAD: If there is an opportunity to move, I will lobby for our office to explore locations that are easily accessible to our clients. Otherwise, I will urge our office to consider opening a satellite office or paying for transportation.</p> <p>I will encourage our attorneys to be more understanding and flexible when meeting with clients— offering to meet clients in their neighborhoods or communities.</p>

INTRAOFFICE MANAGEMENT, STAFFING, AND POLICIES

HIRING	<p>→ WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE: Our office recruits primarily from predominately white universities and rarely searches for applicants or candidates who attend universities and schools that represent the communities we serve.</p>	<p>→ INSTEAD: I will volunteer to lead recruiting efforts in diverse communities and diverse schools, including Historically Black Colleges & Universities, to ensure that our staff reflects the background and demographics of our clients.</p>
PROMOTION	<p>→ WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE: Our office gives preference to certain demographic groups (e.g., white attorneys, male attorneys) for promotion opportunities.</p>	<p>→ INSTEAD: I will meet with our leadership, explain the problem, and offer to collaborate with them to devise solutions. [If I am white, I will seek the input of attorneys of color in our office before I do this and invite them to lead or participate as much as they would like.]</p>
DECISION-MAKING	<p>→ WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE: Our leadership team spends most of its time (socially and professionally) with other attorneys who look most like them. As a result, they often turn to this group of friends/colleagues for input on decisions that impact the entire office.</p>	<p>→ INSTEAD: I will bring this to the attention of our leadership. I will advocate for a more diverse leadership and for a more inclusive decision-making process.</p>
FUNDING FOR TRAVEL/TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES	<p>→ WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE: Our office rarely provides funding for leadership and management training, professional development, and diversity networking for minority lawyers, although these opportunities will help lawyers of color advance within our office.</p>	<p>→ INSTEAD: I will point this out to leadership and advocate that attorneys of color be given preference for professional development opportunities.</p>
LITIGATION AND ADVOCACY PRIORITIES	<p>→ WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE: Attorneys in our office are not filing motions that include racial justice arguments and challenges.</p>	<p>→ INSTEAD: I will advocate for our office to form a racial justice committee to help propose solutions to eradicate racism in the justice system.</p>

INTERPRETERS	<p>→ WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE: There is no interpreter available to meet with a client in the office, so attorneys often request an attorney who speaks Spanish to act as interpreter for the client and client’s family.</p>	<p>→ INSTEAD: Our office should contract with interpreters for our Spanish speaking population to ensure they are receiving adequate representation.</p>
INTRAOFFICE ORGANIZATION AND SYSTEMS		
RESOURCE ALLOCATION	<p>→ WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE: Staff/attorneys routinely request the services of social workers and behavioral specialists primarily when working with African American male clients.</p>	<p>→ INSTEAD: The office should reevaluate its resource allocations, and ensure that requested resources are tailored specifically to each client.</p>
OFFICE DATABASE	<p>→ WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE: We have a database system which requires the entry of race and ethnicity into our system. Our categories for race are inadequate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Don’t know/not sure b. Black Hispanic c. White Hispanic d. Asian e. Black f. Native American g. White h. Other 	<p>→ INSTEAD: I will advocate that our office evaluate our current race tracking framework and make necessary changes to our database system so it is more accurate and better tracks how one identifies their race/ethnicity. I will use this as a tool to advance racial justice.</p> <p>I will be cognizant that the way I ask my clients about their racial identity can be a microaggression.</p>
INTRAOFFICE DYNAMICS		
LEADERSHIP ROLES	<p>→ WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE: None of the supervising attorneys are attorneys of color.</p>	<p>→ INSTEAD: I will advocate that our existing leadership be intentional about offering leadership opportunities to attorneys of color.</p>
OFFICE CULTURE	<p>→ WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE: There are a number of social “cliques” in our office, usually organized along race lines.</p>	<p>→ INSTEAD: I will work to develop an “Office Culture Committee” to encourage and promote social events for all attorneys and staff.</p>

<p>COMMUNICATION AMONG STAFF (ATTORNEYS, SOCIAL WORKERS, INVESTIGATORS, ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT TEAM, ETC.)</p>	<p>→ WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE:</p> <p>Our leadership team rarely engages our non-legal staff members, who are largely people of color, in agency-wide decision-making.</p> <p>A white defender only asks Asian attorneys to weigh in on her cases when they involve Asian clients, assuming that the Asian attorneys have cultural knowledge even though the clients come from a different Asian cultural background.</p>	<p>→ INSTEAD:</p> <p>I will encourage our leadership team to convene more agency/division-wide staff meetings and to seek the individual input of all staff members.</p> <p>I will approach my coworker privately and engage her in a conversation about this behavior. I will explain to her the ways my Asian coworkers' advice has been helpful on all types of cases and encourage her to seek out their advice regardless of the client.</p>
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