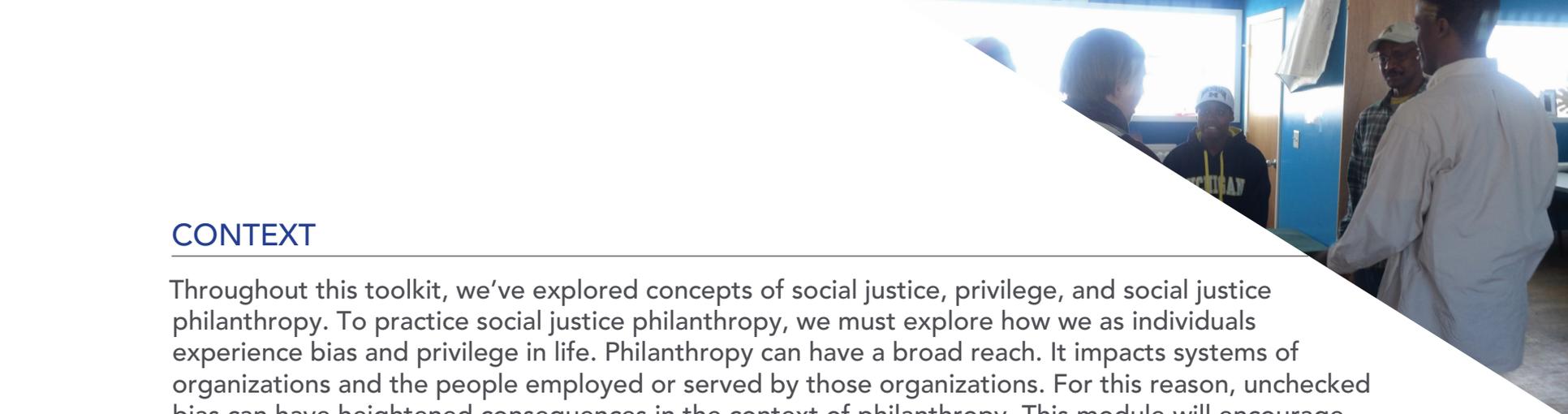


MODULE 7:
PERSONAL BIAS,
POWER
AND PHILANTHROPY

**"POWER IS THE ABILITY
NOT TO HAVE TO LEARN
ANYTHING...AND YET
HOW PARADOXICAL,
FOR POWER CONFERS
THE ABILITY TO LEARN
ABOUT ANYTHING AND
EVERYTHING."**

— Craig McGarvey



CONTEXT

Throughout this toolkit, we've explored concepts of social justice, privilege, and social justice philanthropy. To practice social justice philanthropy, we must explore how we as individuals experience bias and privilege in life. Philanthropy can have a broad reach. It impacts systems of organizations and the people employed or served by those organizations. For this reason, unchecked bias can have heightened consequences in the context of philanthropy. This module will encourage participants to think about how their personal biases might impact the role they play as philanthropists.

OBJECTIVES

- Participants will identify how personal bias, power and privilege show up the work of philanthropy.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

- Read New York Times article "The Measuring Sticks of Racial Bias"
http://bit.ly/NYT_Bias
- Watch video "How to tell someone they sound racist"
http://bit.ly/Video_Racist
- Read about Project Implicit at Harvard University
http://bit.ly/Harvard_Project-Implicit
and take individual tests to measure implicit bias
http://bit.ly/Harvard_Implicit-Project_Tests
- Read "Unconscious Bias: It Starts With You and Me"
http://bit.ly/Article_Unconscious-Bias
- Read Craig McGarvey's "The Power Imbalance and the Program Work of Philanthropy" GIA Reader, Vol 17, No 3 (Winter 2006).
http://bit.ly/McGarvey_Power-Phil



EXERCISES AND ACTIVITIES

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

CHECKING OUR SNAP JUDGEMENTS

Have the group read the New York Times article “The Measuring Sticks of Racial Bias”
http://bit.ly/NYT_Bias

Ask participants to select the three words, phrases, or excerpts that resonate most with them as they read. As a group, go around the circle or table (depending on the configuration of your room) and tell the group you’re going to retell the story of the article by lifting up the ideas that they most connected to. Here’s how the activity can look:

- After the participants read ask them to “highlight” the three words, sentences or paragraphs that they believe are the most important or the most powerful such that other people would benefit from hearing them and discussing them.
 - You can pass out actual highlighters or they can make a box/circle around the text with their pens.
- Designate an order for the group to read their selected passages. You will go around the group (up to three times completely. It’s OK if more than one person selects the same word/sentence/passage to read aloud. In fact, it’s powerful to hear the same excerpts multiple times throughout the activity as it signifies how important that idea or concept is to your group.
- Have the group read their selections in succession.
- When you’ve gone around the group and heard from everyone up to three times, debrief as a large group:
 - Facilitate a conversation with participants about all of the resources they read/watched, noting patterns in what they’re commenting on and probing deeper when appropriate.
 - What stood out to you from the passages we each chose to read aloud? What did our retelling of this article highlight as the most important message or theme?

- How does this article connect to the concept of privilege we've discussed before?
 - Working definition of privilege (from Module 1): The unquestioned, unearned, most often unconscious advantages and expectations given to certain people solely because of their membership in a particular social group.
- This article talks about implicit bias. As a group, come up with your own working definition of implicit bias.
- What is the significance of implicit bias? How does it affect your own life?
- What role does implicit bias play in philanthropy?
- How might implicit bias show up when funders are deciding who to make grants to? What are the implications of this?
- How can we each identify our own implicit bias? What can we do to check our own implicit biases in our work in philanthropy?

ACTIVITY

WHAT ARE YOUR BIASES?

Have participants complete two implicit bias tests from the Harvard Implicit Bias Project:

http://bit.ly/Harvard_Project-Implicit

Ask participants to share their reactions to the results of their implicit bias tests.

- What was it like to take the test?
- Were you surprised by the results? How do you feel about what these tests revealed about your implicit biases?
- How have you witnessed these biases play out in your own life?
- Has anyone ever given you feedback about any of these biases before? Why or why not?
- Where do we go from here?

Watch this video to get one perspective on how to have a productive conversation when you want to give someone feedback about their unchecked bias or privilege:

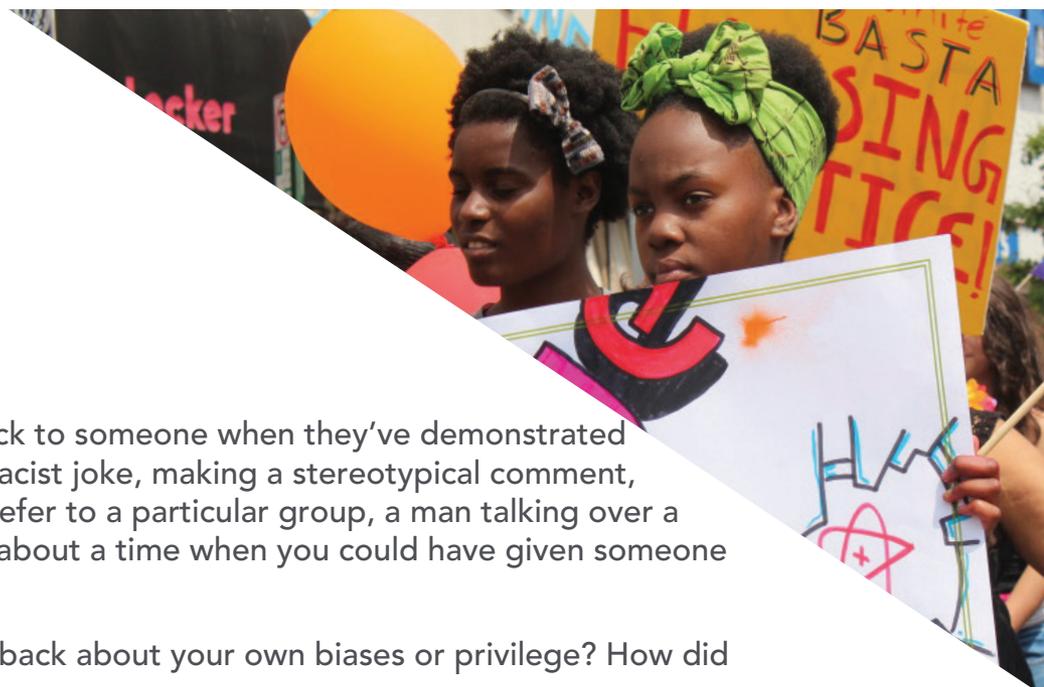
“How To Tell Someone They Sound Racist” by Jay Smooth:
http://bit.ly/Video_Racist

FOR A MORE EXTENSIVE CONVERSATION ABOUT HOW TO TALK ABOUT RACE SPECIFICALLY, JAY SMOOTH ALSO HAS A TEDX TALK:

http://bit.ly/Video_TedX_JaySmooth_Race

After watching the video, discuss in pairs or small groups:

1. Have you ever given anyone feedback about privilege or bias? If you're comfortable, please share with the group. What did it feel like to give that feedback? How did the other person receive it?
 - What did you learn about yourself in that situation?



2. If you have never given feedback to someone when they've demonstrated bias or privilege (e.g. telling a racist joke, making a stereotypical comment, using derogatory language to refer to a particular group, a man talking over a woman repeatedly, etc.), think about a time when you could have given someone feedback. Why didn't you?
3. Have you ever been given feedback about your own biases or privilege? How did you feel?
What about that situation made you feel uncomfortable? defensive? Other reactions you may have had?
 - What could the person giving feedback have done differently that would have been more effective in getting through to you?
4. What are some strategies Jay Smooth shared in the video that can help us to have productive conversations about unchecked bias and privilege?

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Highlight the ideas that they should address the behavior and not the person.

BIAS IN PHILANTHROPY



FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Before delving into this “Bias in Philanthropy” activity, which serves as a bridge activity between the social justice and self-reflection work participants just did and the philanthropy-specific conversations in the second half of this module, provide some context and acknowledge an explicit shift between the previous activities designed to explore how we, as individuals, experience bias and privilege in life. Note that the next activities are meant to help the group think about how their personal biases might impact the role they play as philanthropists.

You may want to ask them to describe why that distinction matters and take a pulse on the group’s understanding:

- Philanthropy can have a broad reach. It impacts systems of organizations and the people employed or served by those organizations. For this reason, unchecked bias can have heightened consequences in the context of philanthropy. What would justice look like when it comes to the gaps created in access to opportunities by income level?

Next, recall the Fictional Foundation case studies and ask participants to recount any biases that could have underpinned the staff members’ decision making. After some discussion, acknowledge that it’s often difficult to see how and when biases show up.

Challenge the participants to think about how their personal biases might show up as they become more engaged in philanthropy by covering the questions on the next page.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. How has your understanding and perception of privilege changed since you started this program? Share one example of how you've looked at a situation (either in your own personal life or in the news) differently since you've gained a deeper understanding of social justice and privilege.
2. How has your understanding and perception of philanthropy changed? What in your opinion is the role of a grantmaker?
3. Think about yourself: what types of work are you most likely to connect with? Are there specific social justice issues that resonate most with you (eg. race, gender, sexuality, religion, education, ability status, employment, socioeconomic status, etc.)? Explain which issue(s) and why you connect to each so much.
4. As you become more deeply involved in philanthropy, what personal biases and/or passions will you have to keep in check to ensure you're as fair and open minded as possible? How can your peers support you in doing this?

If your program includes a capstone activity that includes group work, you may wish to elaborate on the last question and ask participants to commit to an approach for raising conversations about bias (drawing on Activity 2, question 4), and holding other group members accountable.

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

POWER IMBALANCE AND THE PROGRAM WORK OF PHILANTHROPY

Ask the group to read “Power Imbalance and the Program Work of Philanthropy” by Craig McGarvey: http://bit.ly/McGarvey_Power-Phil

This can be done in real time or you can assign this as pre-reading. Pull out the following quotes and ask participants to divide into four groups. What opinions will you have to keep in check to ensure you’re as fair and open-minded as possible? How can you peers support you in doing this?

- Power is the ability not to have to learn anything...and yet how paradoxical, for power confers the ability to learn about anything and everything.”
- “Against power's corrupting influence, what we have is power, which, as we use it, corrupts us.”
- “The program officer has little inherent incentive to consider the mindset and worldview of the community leader.”
- “There can also be a tendency for the presumption of expertise – the culture of knowing – to carry over from the program officer's work in the boardroom.”

Frame these quotes as warnings issued by a conscientious grantmaker and seasoned professional in philanthropy. Ask participants to respond to the following questions and prompts:

- Consider this quote as a warning. What advice is McGarvey issuing?
- How might biases become more entrenched if we do not actively heed these warnings?
- Tell a story of what it would look like for a program officer to internalize and apply this advice. What concrete steps might he or she take?

If participants are engaging in a capstone project, you may ask them to think about how they will approach this work with the lessons they discussed. If participants have started a philanthropic autobiography, you may ask them to commit to behaviors or actions that they’ve discussed throughout the session.