Unconscious Bias & Inclusivity Training Evaluation Report

Charles Sturt University

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Executive Summary

In September 2018, Charles Sturt University released a Workplace Gender Equity Strategy 2018-2022 which was endorsed by the Vice-Chancellor Andrew Vann and the Vice-Chancellor's Leadership Team.

One of the major action items that came from the Strategy was the development and implementation of unconscious bias and inclusivity training with the aim of "*improving behaviour and attitudes by challenging beliefs (both conscious and unconscious) on gender, cultural and informal practices in relation to gender*".

The measure of success is for all key management personnel and senior management to be trained by the end of 2020. This training is consistent with Williamson & Foley (2018) who identify that training programs such as the one discussed is a central component of creating a more equitable workplace culture.

The training was developed with a core working group consisting of myself, Kirsty Smith, Rachel Richardson, Kerry Silverson, Kylie Bennett, Lauren Darley-Bentley, Janelle Thomas, Denise Wood, Craig Hinley and Cate Thomas.

The first round of training delivered to staff consisted of 10 sessions across February and March 2019. During the first round a total of 160 staff completed the training. Those in attendance were a mix of professional and academic staff of various levels across the University.

The two presenters were Kirsty Smith and I. Kirsty Smith as (at the time) the Project Manager for Athena SWAN and myself as the Project Manager, Equity & Diversity. Kirsty and I co-facilitated nine sessions together, and I facilitated the training on the Albury campus by myself due to scheduling conflicts with Kirsty.

Overall, the training was well received by staff with favourable results shown in both the data and written responses.

The comparison data from the pre and post surveys are annexed at the end, including weighted average of each question.

The below is an evaluation report based on the feedback gathered from the open-ended questions asked in the post training survey. This will include a summary of the common themes and my reflections on these as one of the main creators of the program, and one of the core facilitators.

The report will conclude with the identified outcomes as a result of this evaluation.

Post evaluation survey Q1

The first of three open-ended question that was asked of participants were what they liked most about the training. 130 participants responded. This question was important to ask to highlight the individual positive highlights of the training, which would help inform what was important to keep in the training. 92% of participants agree or strongly agree that their interest was held, so this question allows people to expand on their thoughts of the training and specifically name why the reason why their interest was held.

The comments received relating to this question were broken down into sections to find common themes. It was determined that these would be categorised into content, facilitators, environment, privilege walk, real life examples and other comments.

In relation to the content, participants found the activities, examples, case studies, advice and activities practical, applicable and relevant to the topic, which assisted them in their learning. Of particular importance was those that "*drew on CSU experience*". One participant commented that there was "*an interesting range of topics*" and another found that the training contained "*thought provoking content and great explanations*".

The feedback regarding the facilitators was "*engaging and enthusiastic presenters with a passion for the topic*", "*open and encouraging, informed, passionate about making a positive difference*", "*engaging*", "*knowledgeable and approachable*", "*friendly*", "*well communicated*", "*open*" and "*enthusiastic and knowledgeable team*". A participant reported that "*you complement each other well*". One comment summarised the impact facilitators can make in training – "*I enjoyed the personal experiences they shared – it made the material more relatable*".

It was important for both the facilitators to create a safe environment to explore and discuss the topic. The feedback received demonstrated that this occurred, and was one of the common themes from participants about what they enjoyed most about the training. Participants described the environment as a "*relaxed and safe space to discuss difficult issues*", "*very safe space for open discussion*", and that "*everyone was made comfortable to speak openly*". Other comments were that "*the facilitators created a great environment to start the conversation*", "*participants were encouraged and supported in voicing personal experiences and ask questions*", and "*care was taken to bring everyone in the room along, not only those who were already on board with the topic*". Participants described the space as "*honest and non-judgemental*" and that "*it felt genuine, and safe to ask and pursue difficult questions*". One participant noted "*I hate discussions/interactions but the facilitators fostered respectful and engaging and interesting discussions that I really benefited from.*"

One of the activities, the Privilege Walk, drew eleven comments from participants, identifying the activity as the thing they liked most about the training. The purpose of the Privilege Walk Activity is to learn to recognize how power and privilege can affect individual lives even when they may not be aware it is happening. The purpose of the Walk is not to blame anyone for having more power or privilege or for receiving more help in achieving goals, but to reflect and see ways in which we can use our individual and collective privileges to work for social justice and the betterment of all.

Participants are asked to stand in a straight line across the room, leaving space in front and behind. A series of 22 questions are asked, and participants are asked to step forward or back depending on the question. It is a visible representations of the various privileges and/or disadvantages individuals have in their life. There was some further comments, with participants stating that the privilege walk was "*confronting but valuable*", "*very effective*", "*interesting and revealing, especially of the positions of my co-workers*" and one participant found it "*very useful for me going forward*".

From the content, the participants identified that the group work, table and whole group discussions was one of the top comments relating to what participants liked most about the training. The groups did vary depending on the number of attendees in the session, and one participant highlighted that "*due to us being in a smaller group, it was easier for sharing in one way but in a different group they may have felt not so comfortable*".

Through the group work, table and whole group discussions came personal disclosures and real life examples were given by the presenter and other attendees. Participants noted that "*stories are the most powerful*", "*sharing others situations and experiences in these cases*" and "*using specific examples and drawing from everyone's experiences*" added value to the training. One participant identified that the session had "*different perspectives from a diverse range of participants*". The facilitators, the respect in the room from other attendees, and the safe environment allowed disclosures in a meaningful way, and must be noted for future training sessions.

A few highlights from the feedback relating to what participants liked most about the training are: "*very balanced, broad coverage*", "*was very inclusive*", "*there were some questions raised that I hadn't considered in the past in my leadership role*", and "*helped me self-assess where I am at but also contextualise amongst my peers*".

One participant really liked "*the fact that we are talking about it, the acknowledgement of bias with CSU*". Another found that the training "*challenged my thinking in a very good way, made me more aware (and grateful?) of my privilege, made me more aware of how my behaviour reinforces a lack of inclusion in society and it identified the importance of calling shit out*".

Post evaluation survey Q2

The second open-ended question related to the most important thing the participant learned from the training, and how they would apply that to their role. 124 participants responded. This was particularly important to ask to ensure concrete actions came from the training package, and gathering individual application of the skills taught. This also expands on two other questions asked in the post evaluation survey, specifically if the training objectives were met where 93.96% agree or strongly agree that they were, and if the content of the training was practical and useful, in which 89.33% agree or strongly agree.

The comments received relating to this question were broken down into sections to find common themes. It was determined that these would be categorised into definition of topics, bystander intervention, self-identified behavioural changes, non-predicted outcomes and unsure.

One of the most important things attendees took away from the training was the definition of topics. These definitions including equity versus equality, "*the breath of privileges and disadvantages that we might be ignoring*" (and the various types), the various types of unconscious biases and giving clear and practical examples around how this may manifest. Two comments from respondents stated "*the biases we have and how we need to make ourselves aware of what and how we act*" and "*identifying different types of privilege and bias, and being more open and aware of these*" as the most important thing they learnt from the training.

Another common theme that participants felt was the most important aspect of the training, and applicable to their role, was the topic of bystander intervention. 27 replies were on the topic of bystander intervention, or addressing non-inclusive behaviour as a bystander, such as "*using the quote: what do you mean by that?*". It is important to note that the majority of interventions come from a strength based, assertive but not aggressive approached, summarised by the comment "*helpful and positive ways to respond in situations including "lines to use" that clearly and gently challenges*". Awareness was also raised around the types of micro-behaviours that exist, and require intervening (if one feels comfortable, safe and confident to do so). One respondent stated "*don't ignore. Educate people and call out bias*". Another respondent also felt that it was important to "*promote the bystander culture*".

By far the most common theme from this question was the self-identified behavioural change as a result of undertaking the training. These varied, and it is important that outcomes are individualistic, despite having overall objectives from the training. These can be defined as concrete actions, as well as awareness and a change in thinking. Attendees came away with awareness of their own biases, biases in their team, recognised the harm in assumptions and judgements and acknowledged the importance of self-reflection in daily activities as well as ongoing. Some responses include "*acknowledge that we all have biases that will affect our judgements and decisions*", "*awareness of what biases exist and how they impact all areas of CSU*", "*being more aware of unconscious bias, it is a life long journey*" and "*keep thinking and learning; CSU has a way to go; based on examples provided by others - use this awareness to work through some of these*".

Some concrete actions identified by attendees include, but not limited to, "*I will need to think more about the younger staff members in the schools and how they might feel when dealing with Senior people*", "*understanding viewpoints of others - spend more time listening*", "*considering others journeys and being more understanding of that*", "*keeping an open mind and assisting students with being inclusive without biases. Learning from our differences*", "*revisiting this area regularly is important (but it also means brain is in overflow so some 'latent learning' will happen)*", "*the unconscious bias exists even in very professional settings. I'll be more cautious in my role to identify such bias and now I'm more informed to address that at my workplace*" and "*being aware of different types and biases and checking them when making decisions. May not change the decisions but will ensure I've used better and more equitable process to get the decision.*"

There were a few comments from attendees that were not predicted at the beginning of rolling the training out. These related to attendees embedding some or all of the content from the training into their curriculum or course teachings. The fact that this outcome was not predicted was also highlighted by a respondent who

stated "*some of the content on powerpoints I'll follow up on and use when teaching about diversity in 1st year. (I know this wasn't the primary purpose of the day)*". Another comment from an attendee learnt "*That most 'trainers' at CSU/HR are not adequate to the task*". This does not appear to be the consensus of those who attended; it is the participants' individual experience.

A small number of respondents required more time to process the content, and stated that they "*need to consider it a bit more*" and another needed "*some time to reflect*". This demonstrates the importance of follow up evaluations 6 months post workshop for attendees, particularly to monitor the change in behaviour from participants.

Others felt that "*it was a good reminder*", "*reinforced existing knowledge*" and "*I have been involved in this area for a long time*". It is important to recognise that there will be differences in experiences in the room, and that every attendee will provide individual perspectives which are all valued. The exposure to the topic may be varied, and taken into consideration when planning the future sessions.

One particular comment stood out regarding the most important thing an attendee learned from the training, and how they would apply this in their role. They stated "*that maybe I know more than I thought I did! Who knew? I'm going to keep doing what I'm doing and get better at influencing change.*"

Post evaluation survey Q3

The third open ended questions asked participants to make suggestions for improving the content or delivery of the training. 111 participants responded. This question was particularly important to ask to ensure that the training meets the individual needs of the participants, and allowing an honest opportunity for constructive feedback. The participants each have their own experiences and knowledge, and this questions was asked in the hopes of unlocking these to improve the package.

41 comments did not provide suggestions for improving the content or delivery of this training, with many responding "*no*", "*N/A*", "*no suggestions*" and added praise and gratitude for the training. Some participants added comments like "*keep going*", "*very well presented and very informative*", "*this is a great professional development especially for me who is from a male dominant discipline. Nothing further to add, it seems perfect to me. Thank you*", "*I got a lot from this*", and "*was very engaging and educational – very interesting*".

Some participants expressed a desire to have more breaks. However, there was a 15 minute break following the privilege walk where tea and coffee were provided.

The other, constructive suggestions were categorised into examples/activities, content, time, facilitators, follow up and other.

Some key points raised by attendees that need to be considered as the training package is reviewed relate specifically to the examples/activities in the current training package. Responses include "*need to develop more participant discussion - perhaps encouraging people to think about if they personally agree with concepts vs if their agreement is a factor of social desirability*", "*some real life examples with what related to*

the topic", "*pay case study - use uni examples such as academic promotion / reclassification*" and "*practical activities were great, more if possible*".

Also important to note is expanding the examples provided, with one attendee commenting "*it concentrated on management/staff relationships. Could benefit from considering some examples of staff/student interaction and relationships.*" This needs to be taken into consideration during the review of the training package as there is a large cohort that is student facing in addition to staff facing.

Role plays were also suggested which will be considered through the revision of the training package. Comments related to a desire to practice the skills taught in the session, including addressing non-inclusive behaviours, calling out unconscious bias, and other situations that involve staff and students. Through the revision of the training package, there is room to consider adapting some activities for practical application of the skills taught.

Other comments relating to the exercises/activities focused primarily on the Privilege Walk. One attendee commented that "*I think the walk of privilege needs more work - questions should be contextualised a little more*" and another offered an alternative activity which needs to be researched and explored, mentioning "*could replace the privilege walk with the privilege store*". Another attendee felt that the privilege walk needed to reconsidered, however, another attendee placed emphasis on the fact that facilitators need to "*acknowledge some people may find the issues raised in the privilege walk (and open disclosure) too personal*". Despite the challenging and confronting nature of this particular activity, it is important to have such a visible representation of the different types of advantages and disadvantages one experiences in life, and how these privileges inform our unconscious biases. Emphasis needs to be placed on why the activity is being conducted, and ensuring that the environment is safe and open for people to feel more comfortable in participating.

Feedback relating to the content of the training provided areas for noting and development during the review process of the overall package. Two comments related to the readability of two of the slides, named specifically, which will be looked at further. Another comment relating to the content was a suggestion to "*move beyond just gender to other factors; people tend to be aware of gender but not some other factors*" however, another comment stated that the content needed to have "*more of a focus on gender specifically – did not challenge me enough*". Although contradictory, both comments are important and relate to other comments from attendees on the need to adapt the content to different audiences.

Some attendees felt that the training was "*overly simplistic*", suggested "*more complex information and case studies depending on the audience*" and "*more on what managers can/should do to foster an inclusive environment*" as well as "*more on how to manage teams and ensure own practices as managers*". Initially, the content is introductory to most, and as highlighted previously, the impact has been quite positive. Also, the attendees were mixed in professional/academic staff, levels, seniority, schools/faculties and disciplines. However, the need to adapt the content to the various audiences is something to note for future training packages. One suggestion from an attendee is to "*perhaps the pre surveys could be used to tailor the material to audiences?*". This is a difficulty due to the topic being quite new to most attendees.

In relation to the time and length of the training, the majority of comments related to more time allocation for the training, particularly in relation to the last (and subjectively the most important part) section which focuses on bystander intervention and strategies to mitigate bias. This is also reflective in the data from the post evaluation where only 73.33% of respondents felt that the time allocated for the training was sufficient.

Comments regarding the time were "*it could be longer but the main points were covered*", "*would actually be good to have longer to explore some things in more depth*" and "*more time for group discussion*". Some suggested an extra hour, while other suggested a full day, which could be included within a further session on the topic. One did suggest to compress the topic to two hours. The timing of the training will be reviewed, particularly through the exploration of a pre-session online training component prior to attending the Face-to-Face workshop.

Some participants raised some good feedback in relation to verbal communication. Future facilitators need to be mindful of their verbal communication skills in the future. Another comment related to the "*time management of workshop*" which is another point for consideration in the future by facilitators. This will considered through the revision of the training outline.

Six respondents highlighted the need for follow up. Despite the lengthy resource pack that is provided, as well as a follow up email to all attendees a week after the training, some attendees felt that a follow up session could be beneficial. Feedback asked for more detail in the bystander intervention section in particular. Another comment worth noting is a request for "*check in training after this to see improvement in perceptions. Or perhaps follow-up survey*". A follow-up survey is planned for approximately 6 months following the completion of the training, planned for August/September.

Another suggestion regarding follow-up worth noting is to "*embed this into on-boarding online training module for all staff. Ignorance is not acceptable*". This is a potential area for development in the future, once the Workplace Gender Equity Strategy 2018-2022 Key Performance Indicator of 100% of Senior Staff trained by the end of 2020 is met.

Other comments are important to note and take into consideration. One attendee noted that "*The people who need this most will check out halfway through the privilege walk and you'll never get them back – the examples are too clear cut and lack the nuance to engage*" and "*training does not work when 'leaders' of the session talk too much, are repetitive and have little scholarly substance*". The materials and content of the training package do have scholarly substance, however, the need for academic literature referenced clearly throughout is imperative, particularly when working within a higher education institution with a large academic cohort.

One attendee felt that "*the examples were very heteronormative and ableist. The examples were also based on white, western cultural norms. Perhaps the facilitators could engage with researchers already engaged in pedagogical techniques designed to address non-inclusivity.*" This area requires further investigation and incorporation into the training package, as it is extremely important to approach this topic with a very intersectional approach to attempt to cover the broad topic that is unconscious bias and inclusivity.

Outcomes

- A follow-up survey is planned for approximately 6 months following the completion of the training, planned for August/September to evaluate ongoing learnings and reflections from attendees;

- Review content and activities of the training package based on the feedback and suggestions received;

- Incorporate more staff/student interactions into the content;

- Introduce activities such as role plays in which attendees can practice the skills taught in class;

- Revise questions from privilege walk activity;

- Clearly reference the academic literature of the content throughout the package;

- Develop a facilitator manual and conduct a 'train the trainer' session to continue to roll this training out; and

- Explore expanding the package to 4 hours or alternatively an hour online component prior to attending the Face-to-Face workshop

Pre + Post Evaluation comparison

Question	Weighted average	Pre evaluation (agree + strongly agree)		Weighted average	Post evaluation (agree + strongly agree)
I have a good understanding of unconscious bias and how it affects the work environment	3.56	58.13%	I have a good understanding of unconscious bias and how it affects the work environment	4.30	100%
I can identify my own unconscious bias	3.45	50%	I can identify my own unconscious bias	4.10	90.66%
I can identify unconscious bias in my team	3.43	49.37%	I can identify unconscious bias in my team	4.01	88%
I feel confident to address unconscious bias in myself	3.57	54.72%	I feel more confident to address unconscious bias in myself	4.21	90%
I feel confident to address unconscious bias in others	3.04	25.01%	I feel more confident to address unconscious bias in others	3.97	82%
I have a good understanding of inclusivity	3.97	79.35%	I have a better understanding of inclusivity	4.40	98.49%
I know how to use inclusive behaviours and practices	3.62	61.39%	I know how to use inclusive behaviours and practices	4.18	90.98%
I know how to respond appropriately to non-inclusive behaviours	3.20	34.78%	I know how to respond appropriately to non-inclusive behaviours	4.40	92%

Post Evaluation Questions

Question	Weighted average	Post evaluation (agree + strongly agree)
I already had knowledge about the content before this training	3.55	56%
I will be able to use the knowledge and skills gained through this workshop	4.35	92%
My interest was held	4.40	92%
The training objectives were met	4.35	93.96%
The content of this training was practical and useful to my current work	4.28	89.33%
The case studies and exercises used were interesting and useful to my needs	4.21	86%
The facilitator's pacing was reasonable	4.28	90.57%
The facilitator was knowledgeable about the training content	4.57	96.67%
The facilitator gave clear explanations of the topics	4.53	96.67%
The facilitator encouraged participation and questions	4.62	94.67%
I would recommend this facilitator to others	4.60	95.30%
The time allocated for the training was sufficient	3.97	73.33%
I would recommend this training to my colleagues	4.52	94.67%