

**Training Advisory
Council Coursework
Comments and
Suggestions**

**Introduction to Implicit Bias
Training**

March 20, 2018

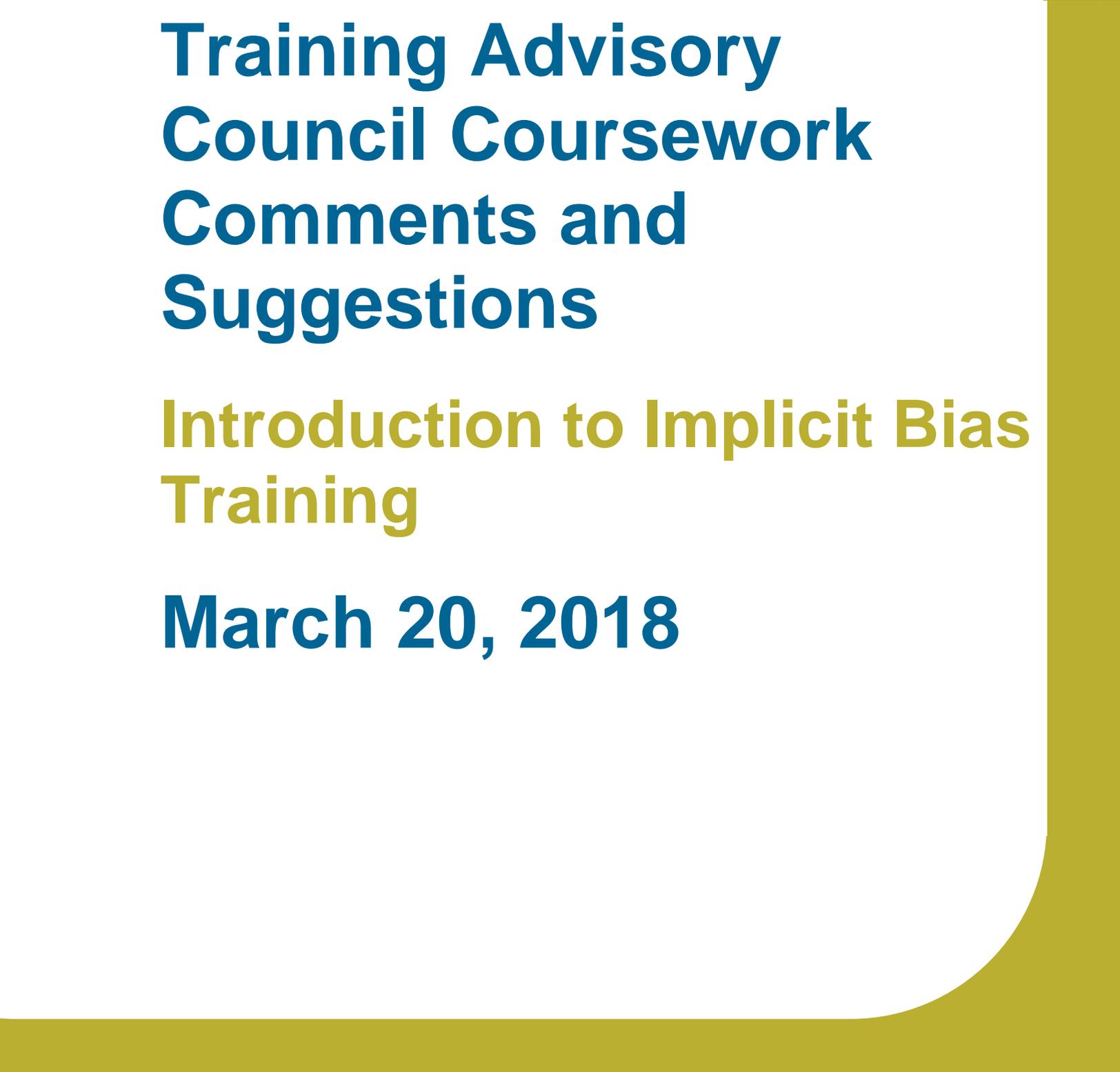


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INTRODUCTION TO IMPLICIT BIAS

March 20, 2018 (Based off of February 27, 2018 version of presentation)

1. TAC Participants

Shawn Campbell, Recorder
Sushanah Boston
Robert Fischer
Anne Parameter

2. High Level Summary

In March of 2018, members of TAC were given print copies of the February 27, 2018 version of the Introduction to Implicit Bias course presentation currently under development.

All TAC member who reviewed the training were overall supportive of its messages and goals. Most comments detailed small changes that were felt were needed to better clarify some of the ideas presented and/or to make the training easier to understand. Comments also centered on the need to both emphasize that implicit bias is a human condition, but that also the police have a greater responsibility when dealing with their own implicit bias due to their role and powers within our society.

PPB Comment: The Training Division is grateful for the work of the Training Advisory Council. Much of the feedback has been incorporated into the curriculum. Comments are inserted into this document in response to their advice.

This class was designed for in-service 2018-2. It is part of a series of equity and diversity classes which are a part of PPB's Racial Equity Plan (Objective: On-going training; Action item 4.1; year 1). The plan was enacted by the Chief on March 23, 2017. This goal of this class is to introduce the concept of implicit bias. It will be followed by a more in-depth class focused on procedural justice and police legitimacy.

It was modeled after two courses:

- *Procedural Justice Through Non-Biased Policing*. Developed by Police Officers Kasey Kirkegard and Patrick Burke of the Metropolitan Las Vegas Police. Revised in 2016.
- *Search and Seizure and Bias Free Policing*. Seattle Police. 2014.

Learning Goals:

- 1) Implicit bias is a human trait:
 - All people have it. Not just a police issue – everyone holds these.

- It reflects our basic brain processing and can affect our decisions and behaviors in ways that we aren't aware.
- 2) Implicit bias may impact your effectiveness in the areas of:
 - Safety
 - Communication
 - Relationship Building
 - Decision making
 - Organizational legitimacy
 - 3) Implicit bias can be countered.

3. Comments and Suggestions

Note: Page numbers are based on the February 27, 2018 version of the presentation.

Introduction to Bias (Page 1-12)

Overall the reviewers highlighted a significant amount of concern over this initial section and its descriptions of how biases are formed in the mind. The section overall seemed rougher and more disjointed than the other sections.

It was felt that an overall better job could be done to highlight that our brain has evolved over time to create efficiencies which have benefited us, but that implicit bias in our modern world is the dark side of this evolutionary advantage. Overall it was felt that it was worth mentioning at some point that such heuristic shortcuts can also result in positive biases as well as negative.

PPB Comment: We agree and recognize the content could be improved to more explicitly discuss brain evolution. This is touched upon in the video, Unconscious bias basics, <https://youtu.be/PGupqNaUTnQ>.

It was also felt that perhaps more time could be spent describing how biases are formed within the unconscious mind, being basically learned over time, and how they are self-reinforcing. As a bias forms our brains begin creating the shortcut, which then focuses more on incoming information the reinforces the bias, further building the bias in a feedback loop. Over time this can begin to affect how we react to a situation and eventually our conscious thoughts.

In many cases terms like unconscious/conscious and explicit/implicit are brought up on one slide, but not defined until several slides later. In general, it was felt that new ideas need to be defined as soon as they are brought up with the correct building block order. For instance, you can't talk about how implicit bias is an unconscious reaction until you define for us what the unconscious mind is.

PPB Comment: Overall we agree, however in the beginning, the point is simply to say that this is what we are going to talk about today. For example, on page 8, is a visual intended to be no more than a moment. We want them to hear the word first, as it is in the title. Here it is intended to “plant the seed,” and then explain why we are teaching the class.

A better order may be to start by defining conscious and unconscious mind, followed by defining explicit and implicit bias (a very basic definition is fine here since it is better defined later). Next should come the activity, activity debrief, How do you Choose, Creating Associations, and finally the Why Are We Here, and Classroom Learning Goals.

PPB Comment: The class will now begin with an introduction by the Chief, emphasizes the importance of the topic and how it relates to the bureau's values. The reason we suggest beginning with the activity is to start in a very accessible way, to get the audience moving and provide relevant content to discuss before introducing loaded words.

Page #1

Reviewers highlighted the term ‘basic brain processing’ as one of the most important facets of this conversation and noted that they would like to see it emphasized more throughout the training.

PPB Comment: We are open to this. Would this be the preferred language? Do you have any resources to cite?

One reviewer felt that calling bias a “human trait” was oversimplifying the subject given that what we are actually dealing with is the way our brain is wired to think. This reviewer was concerned that we should not be treating this as something to be ashamed of or as something we need to admit, just something we need to be aware of.

PPB Comment: Can you please suggest preferred language to “human trait”. It is our goal of the class to raise awareness. There is not an intention to create “shame”. Do you have suggestions for how to improve the message?

Page #4

One reviewer noted that using the term ‘stereotype’ before the slides explaining bias/prejudice/stereotype might create an unconscious association with negative aspects of bias before you hit home the biology of bias.

PPB Comment: Good Point. This slide was changed to “characteristics”.

Page #5

There were some concerns with bringing up the ideas of unconscious/conscious and explicit/implicit here before they are actually defined later in the presentation. In general, if a new idea is brought in, then it should be defined at that point.

PPB Comment: We have decided to take this slide out. It is basically an overview of the ‘concepts’ we want the activity to illustrate. The goal is the activity will illicit feelings and actions from the audience that the instructor can build on. The points can be discussed while displaying the next slide.

One reviewer also noted that people are prone to expectational bias so the language “be subtly influenced by things you are not aware of” may shut people down before they understand how fast/slow thinking kicks in. Before it's all explained, people might interpret this as still in conscious control and think “not me.”

PPB Comment: Noted: We will spend a significant amount of time laying the foundation of how our conscious and unconscious mind works. Our hope is that the first activity will provide material for early discussion and examples.

One question that was raised is whether or not the instructor will ask which examples were explicit and which could've been implicit.

PPB Comment: We do not understand this comment? Was it intended for another section?

Page #7

One reviewer liked the idea of this slide a lot. They thought it would be a good place to talk about the number of impressions that we collect over time and how that ties into how our fast thinking operates.

Page #9

One reviewer noted that when it is stated that "It means you are human and a product of the current social system," that underscoring the physiology aspect would be helpful since there still has not been the deeper dive into impressions/how it operates.

PPB Comment: Hopefully we can address this by building in a stronger message throughout about the brain function and evolution.

Page #11

One reviewer noted that it should be noted that both driving a car and dribbling a basketball are physical examples. It might be good to bring up a mental example as well, such as someone paying more attention while driving in a place where they once had an auto accident.

PPB Comment: Agreed. Appreciate the point.

Page #12

One reviewer liked the message: "Have to be better than the average person at counteracting these biases." It elevates and appeals to our natural desire to be good guys/heroes/leaders.

Another reviewer stated that saying that the police officers "Have to be better than the average person" is not a good way to state it. Rather, it should be stated that the police officers have a greater responsibility to be aware of biases than many others.

PPB Comment: Edit made

It was felt by several reviewers that the portion of the reiterated message that "PPB believes officers are doing a great job with their conscious/explicit work" should be removed. Rather, focus on how everyone has implicit biases, it's just that police are in a position of responsibility which makes their own awareness of them more important.

PPB Comment: The comment was removed. This was originally put in, not as part of the curriculum, but a note to the instructor to invoke a feeling that this is not a class to tell the officers they are "bad" people / or create shame.

Implicit Bias Is A Human Trait (Page 13-29)

In areas where the instructor is asked to think about personal examples to share it might also be useful to include actual data that shows evidence of implicit bias within the PPB. A good example of this would be the Annual Use of Force data which shows a higher likelihood of black people having a gun pulled on them despite not having a higher likelihood of being armed and women being much more likely to be seen as having a mental health crisis compared to men.

PPB Comment: We would like to explore with TAC, the idea of using the data in follow up classes. This first class is designed to open members to the very basic concept and belief that implicit bias is real and impactful. We are concerned that introducing data too early may create defensiveness. Additionally there are many additional factors that we need to be prepared for in the conversation, that we may not have time for in this two hour introduction. For example, how many of the calls were self-initiated and how many were a response from a call from a citizen? Is the implicit bias action a result of the officer, or is it a reflection of the society that is asking the officer to take an action? It's a much bigger picture that maybe outside of the scope of this class. For example statistically, more women are diagnosed with depression. Why? Is it because of doctor bias? Is it because more women are willing to seek help? Are there other possibilities?

One reviewer noted that all of the examples of biases are negative. It might be good to include the idea that there are positive biases as well, but that these can also get a person in trouble. An example of this would be someone acting in a smiling and friendly way during an interaction with a police officer, resulting in the officer ignoring parts of their training during a situation with possible dire consequences.

PPB Comment: Additional types of bias will be included. The comment will be considered, but we also do not want to increase paranoia.

Several reviewers brought up the question of why is there a need to define and use the term schema. It is unclear how the addition of the term adds to the understanding of biases and one reviewer found it distracting from the main point of the presentation. This is especially confusing given that the idea of a schema is shown on Page 16, but not actually defined until Page 22. Plus after that the term is rarely to never used again. While technical science terms can be fun and are necessary for those making a living studying such things, they can be a source of confusion and distraction for those trying to learn. Just call it a preconceived idea.

PPB Comment: Can you tell us more about this? While the word may not need to be memorable, the concept of a schema is very important to understanding how the brain works. We referenced this video as well as curriculum from Law Vegas.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OQGIgohunVw>

Page #13

One reviewer felt that the definition of bias was incomplete and that a better definition would be "prejudice in favor or against one thing, person, or group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair."

PPB Comment: We are open to make this change, but would like a resource we can cite? Can you provide additional information?

Page #14

In the note to the instructor it might be good to add something about because of how human brain process information implicit bias is likely having an impact. This would be a good place to bring in some of the PPB Use of Force data to highlight evidence of implicit

bias within PPB. This will help alleviate the idea that it is not an issue within the department. It might not be a bad idea to seed the idea and prime the audience for later, using examples further in.

PPB Comment: This is overall good feedback, but it is likely too early in the material. At this point, implicit bias has not yet been defined.

In the note to instructor message it might be good to add something about because of how human brains process information implicit bias is likely having an impact.

PPB Comment: Will include in overall content.

Page #21

Again, you put in all this effort to show the idea of how preconceived ideas can affect how we view things and how those views can vary from person to person, then you muddle it up by putting in an unnecessary vocabulary word.

PPB Comment: Please See earlier comment about schemas.

Page #22

This would probably be a good place to mention how much effort it would take if we had to think about how to sit down every time we saw a chair. However, this doesn't mean we necessarily just sit without thinking about the situation. You went through the effort of using the chair example, keep using it.

PPB Comment: That is the intention of the second bullet point, even though not fully expanded in the explanation.

Page #24

Stereotype is similar to the 'isms' in that it has a negative connotation and may shut some people down to listening since given the assumption that we all know stereotypes are bad and therefore only bad people have stereotypes, therefore I must not have them because I'm not a bad person. It might be better to stick to the idea of preconceived ideas about people and things rather than bring up stereotypes. If stereotypes have to be used then a stronger emphasis needs to be put on how this is an unconscious stereotyping, not a conscious one.

PPB Comment: Additional examples will be added to illustrate that our brain organizations in this way both consciously and unconsciously.

This would be a good place to explain in better detail how implicit biases are formed and self-reinforcing over time. It's kind of currently dancing around the idea. Emphasis should be placed on how since they are unconscious we don't realize how much they affect what we do. The mechanics are important.

PPB Comment: This is what we are trying to accomplish. Based on the feedback, it is evident that we have not clearly explained the relationship between schemas-stereotypes-and implicit bias.

The note to instructor portion here would be another good place to insert data that shows evidence of PPB implicit bias. It's important not to show that this is just an issue for a single person, but for everybody.

PPB Comment: Please see earlier comment on data.

Page #25

The wording on this slide is confusing given that it sounds like one needs to be aware of a stereotype for it to affect their subconscious mind (a term not yet used so need to use unconscious mind). This breaks with the entire idea of implicit bias. While it's understood that this is not what the statement is trying to say, it's what it looks like.

PPB Comment: Can you provide more detail on your comment? We do not understand.

Cultural stereotypes are not the only thing that can cause implicit bias. A better definition for what can cause implicit bias would be a preconceived notion of another group and/or a majority of interactions with only certain segments of a group. For instance, police mostly deal with criminals and victims, which can over time create an implicit bias towards people that share similar characteristics.

PPB Comment: We will add this clarification.

Page #26

This would be another good spot to introduce examples showing evidence of implicit bias within the PPB.

Page #27

This would be a good spot to underscore again the importance of the officers operating on a level above most other people because of what their job entails.

One reviewer suggested using the Tetris Effect, a syndrome where people devote so much time and attention to an activity that it begins to pattern their thoughts, mental images, and dreams. It could be especially relevant to officers in that the more frequently you see patterns the more your brain will find them even when they're not there. Could help underscore the special dilemma officers experience where they need to be more careful but are more likely to be under the circumstances where fast thinking kicks in.

PPB Comment: We will consider building in these concepts. It might be too much to go into additional vocabulary words in this two hour introductory course.

Implicit Bias Effects (Pages 29-42)

Special emphasis needs to be used on how stereotypes/preconceived notions are exhibited. The difficulty is that such things might be true for the population segment which the officer deals with in their day to day work, but it does not mean it's true for the entire population that shares similar characteristics. It should also be explained how these implicit biases can make officers unconsciously act in certain ways that result in some of their own preconceived notions, thus creating a self-fulfilling prophecy and further reinforcing the existence of the implicit bias. It would also be worth bringing up feedback loops, where basically the implicit biases of one person further triggers the implicit biases of another person, so and so forth until things escalate.

PPB Comment: We have added *Confirmation Bias*.

Page #30

One reviewer stated that these bullets are a good opportunity to talk about how the formation of implicit biases are dependent upon the volume of impressions over time.

This would also be a good point to go into more detail on how implicit biases form over time and how they are self-reinforcing. Over simplifying it and relying too much on the stereotype narrative might shut people down on listening and learning. More emphasis needs to be put on how the unconscious can learn separately from the conscious.

PPB Comment: We can build into the conversation. This slide and the next video are intended to review the key points from section one.

Page #32

One reviewer noted that the bottom bullet seems very important and should have the greatest emphasis in the conversation.

PPB Comment: Notes. If you think more content should be added to this section, we welcome suggestions.

Page #34

One reviewer noted that this would be a good place to give some examples of other industries facing similar constraints.

PPB Comment: Can you provide examples? This is the intention of page 39 where we list other professions and related studies.

One reviewer stated that it should be noted that implicit bias is also in play, it just has a higher likelihood of being prevalent at the times described.

PPB Comment: Do you mean “always”? We can add greater emphasis.

Page #35

As an idea, it might be good to ask the officers how implicit bias might affect their work before actually showing the slide.

One reviewer stated that they feel strongly that with the note to the instructor it should again be underscored that bias is a side effect of our brains evolving in ways to improve efficiency.

This would also be a good point to talk about feedback loops where the implicit biases of two individuals can actually result in micro actions which escalate the situation based upon both sides views of the other. It should be mentioned that as individuals we are only able to control our own responses to implicit bias, meaning we must work on them regardless of whether or not the other person is trying to do the same.

PPB Comment: All good suggestions we will incorporate.

Page #37

This may be a good place to again reiterate evidence of implicit bias within the PPB using the Use of Force data or other sources.

One reviewer wanted to make sure that the implicit bias examples included moments when positive implicit bias resulted in harm as well. For instance, officers being hurt because someone who approached them was smiling and showing other friendly gestures.

PPB Comment: The intention of this section is to highlight professional research and peer reviewed article focused on police and implicit bias. Please feel free to suggest additional sources we should include.

Implicit Bias Can Be Countered (Page 43-60)

There was some interest in at some point requiring officers to take the several of the IAT tests, both for their own information, but also to capture group information. If it could be worked out where the individual results were anonymous, then the group results could help highlight the issue within PPB. This group data could then be compared to national data along with the reiteration that given their position PPB has a greater responsibility to help deal with the issue.

It is highly suggested as well that instructors take several of the IAT tests and share their results with the group. While it is understood that this information can be both sensitive and difficult to share, it seems unreasonable to expect others to be forthcoming on such an issue if the instructor themselves are unable.

PPB Comment: The officers are highly encouraged to take the IAT test. Logistically we cannot make the officers take it. This is due to the fact that we do not have 40 computers to bring into the classroom, and there is no way to track if an officer has taken it through their website. We are open to ideas if you have suggestions on how to make it happen.

Page #47

One reviewer stated that it should be emphasized that instructors are trying to help people understand their brains, not their minds. It seems like a good place to create different language around conscious/unconscious and implicit/explicit.

Reviewers were glad to see the IAT was included.

Page #53

One reviewer suggested again bringing up the Tetris Effect at this point. The Tetris Effect is a syndrome where people devote so much time and attention to an activity that it begins to pattern their thoughts, mental images, and dreams. It could be especially relevant to officers in that the more frequently you see patterns the more your brain will find them even when they're not there. Could help underscore the special dilemma officers experience where they need to be more careful but are more likely to be under the circumstances where fast thinking kicks in.

PPB Comment: Emphasis will be added during the “counter” section. We will highlight that officers need to work harder at countering implicit bias, both because it is their job, but also because of their daily interactions with a small percentage of our population.

4. PPB Contacts

Robert Day, Captain, Training Division
Jody Halia, Training Development Analyst, Training Division