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Identifying Choice Points: The "Bias Check"

About This Resource

This template can help you reflect on common equity and inclusion choice points in your interactions with team members.

Choice points are decision-making opportunities. You can think of them like forks in the road where some paths replicate the status quo and other paths open opportunities for racial equity, inclusion, and belonging. With choice points, leaders consciously pause to reflect, generate options, and enact changes that advance equity and inclusion.

Use this tool to spot common choice points in your approach to:
- Relationship-Building
- Staff Development and Check-ins
- Performance Problems

It may help to use the tool with an eye toward your whole team (direct reports, colleagues, partners) in order to spot disparities, patterns, and uneven outcomes. However, you can also reflect on your interactions with an individual. Use the prompts as a starting point, or identify choice points that are relevant to your context.

Reflection Questions

Once you've completed one of the charts, reflect on the following questions:
1. Which of your staff or teammates had the highest **ratings**? What about the lowest? Why do you think that is?
2. What **patterns** (if any) do you notice, particularly with regard to race or other identities like gender, age, educational background, and positional power? Where could your bias be showing up? Examples:
   a. *It's harder to provide feedback to X staff member than to Y staff member because I feel like we don't communicate as well.*
   b. *When I'm having a busy or stressful week, my check-ins with X feel so much easier because we are able to connect over the many things we have in common.*
3. What **impact** might these choices have on equity, inclusion, and belonging? For example, is one person getting overlooked for promotions because they're not getting enough stretch assignments?
4. What might **change** if I made a different choice with regard to [choice point] with [team member]?

Relationship-Building

Consider these choice points in your interactions with team members (direct reports, colleagues, partners). You may want to do this with an eye toward your whole team to spot disparities and check for bias. However, the same reflection points will help with individuals as well. *Supporting resources:* The Three Dimensions of Effective Management and The Four Elements of Strong Relationships.

On a scale of 1-3, please assess your actions on the grid below:

3 = I definitely/regularly did this   2 = I somewhat did this   1 = I did not do this   N/A = Not applicable

Choice Points | *During the last quarter, I have done the following to deepen trust and authentic connection:*					
Name / Initials	Practiced genuine curiosity and sought their perspective or feedback	Created space for authenticity (the ability to be ourselves)—and modeled it	Acknowledged a mistake or misstep I made—and fixed it	Used my power for good to advocate for them or address power or inequity	Celebrated their accomplishments, skills, or role in joint efforts
AS					
DD					
TY					
EP					

Staff Development and Check-ins

Consider these choice points in your interactions with team members (direct reports, colleagues, partners). You may want to do this with an eye toward your whole team to spot disparities and check for bias. However, the same reflection points will help with individuals, as well. *Supporting resources:* Give More (and Better) Feedback with CSAW and 7 Tips for Making the Most of Your Check-ins.

On a scale of 1-3, please assess your actions on the grid below:
3 = I definitely/regularly did this   2 = I somewhat did this   1 = I did not do this   N/A = Not applicable

Choice Points	In the last month, I've done the following to help my staff succeed:					
Name / Initials	Prioritized check-ins during busy weeks	Gave regular, clear & honest feedback (constructive & positive) in check-ins & reviews	Made time to see them in action or work side-by-side	Gave them stretch assignments to grow their skills	Sought their perspective on big decisions I need to make	Asked them about skills & experience they want to gain (or their career trajectory)
MH						
EB						
DV						

Performance Problems

Consider these choice points in your interactions with team members (direct reports, colleagues, partners). You may want to do this with an eye toward your whole team to spot disparities and check for bias. However, the same reflection points will help with individuals, as well. *Supporting resources:* Four Steps for Addressing Performance Problems and Four Ways to Mitigate Bias in Performance Evaluations.

On a scale of 1-3, please assess your actions on the grid below:
3 = I definitely/regularly did this   2 = I somewhat did this   1 = I did not do this   N/A = Not applicable

Choice Points | *When faced with a performance problem, I have:*						
Name / Initials	Addressed the problem promptly and reset or clarify expectations	Made time to connect, ask questions, and seek understanding	Examined where I could improve my management practices to better support them	Shared feedback compassionately and clearly	Invested time and resources to support them to improve	Ensured no surprises in annual performance reviews or performance warnings
ER						
XG						
LH						
FG						