



# inSIGHT: A Workshop on Implicit Bias for Child Protection Workers

Center for the Study of Social Policy  
and the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity

Decisions made at the earliest stages of child welfare system involvement, from an investigation to decision-making regarding removal of a child from the custody of a parent(s) or other caretaker, to decisions about placement and service provision, can have long lasting effects on a family's outcomes. Despite good intentions, research shows that racial and ethnic disparities and disproportionality exist throughout systems. A child protection workforce that is aware of the latest research on implicit racial bias, and trained and supported by their organization to engage in de-biasing techniques, is vital to help make the most informed decisions about safety and risk.

The Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) developed **inSIGHT: A Workshop on Implicit Racial Bias in Child Protection** in collaboration with the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity. inSIGHT capitalizes on the expertise of the two partners: CSSP, as the leading organization for child welfare reform with racial, economic, and social equity at the forefront; and the Kirwan Institute, the leading national organization for research and training on implicit bias.

The purpose of inSIGHT is to provide child protection workers, supervisors, and managers with the knowledge and skills to address implicit racial bias in investigation and decision-making processes. CSSP will work with local jurisdictions to identify policies, practices, and procedures which may be leveraged to support staff in the transfer of learning. CSSP will also work with each jurisdiction to customize the four inSIGHT in-person modules to be relevant to the jurisdiction where the workshop will be delivered.

## inSIGHT Overview

### 1. E-learning Pre-Work: Implicit Bias Module Series

- A four-part online module series developed by the Kirwan Institute in consultation with CSSP.
- Modules provide an overview of foundational concepts related to implicit bias, including the origins of biases, effects on the brain's processing capacity, understanding how biases operate in the real world, ways to mitigate their presence, a brief history of race and child protection in the U.S., and why implicit racial bias matters for child and family outcomes. Includes short quizzes to help assess learning.



## 2. In-Person Workshop: Four Modules

- A one-day session developed and facilitated by CSSP in consultation with the Kirwan Institute.

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### **Module 1: Introduction and Background of Implicit Bias**

Participants will be able to describe (1) the definition and origins of implicit bias; (2) the effects of implicit bias on the brain; (3) how biases operate in all people in their day-to-day lives and work, and; (4) understand why there is a need to focus specifically on implicit racial bias.

**2**

### **Module 2: Implicit Racial Bias in Child Protection**

Participants will be able to (1) examine how implicit racial bias created unintended outcomes; (2) explain how disparities and disproportionalities in child protection outcomes may be related to implicit racial bias, and; (3) connect knowledge on implicit racial bias in child protection investigative practice.

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### **Module 3: Identifying and Mitigating Implicit Racial Bias**

Participants will be able to describe (1) conditions that increase the likelihood that implicit bias may influence one's thoughts and actions; (2) strategies to overcome racial biases, and; (3) interpersonal and institutional strategies for recognizing implicit racial bias and its impact on relationships.

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### **Module 4: Applying Mitigation Strategies**

Participants will be able to (1) understand reflective practice as a strategy to make informed decisions about child protection; (2) practice strategies to reduce the influence of implicit racial bias; (3) identify bias mitigation strategies to apply during the child protection investigative process, and; (4) identify individual action steps to apply strategies in their

## **Background on the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) and the Kirwan Institute**

CSSP is a national non-profit organization that connects community action, public system reform, and policy change to achieve a racially, economically, and socially just society in which all children, youth, and families can thrive by encouraging the use of data and a focus on results. CSSP has a long history of working to address equity, implicit bias, and structural racism, both internally within its own organization and externally with partners, communities, and public systems. The organization's racial equity efforts have been focused not just on raising awareness of racial and ethnic disparities in the child welfare system, but also on improving practices and systemic structures. Since 2004, CSSP has worked on reducing disproportionality and disparity in child welfare through the Alliance for Racial Equity in Child Welfare. The Alliance has become a leading voice for promoting racial equity and improving outcomes for children and families of color involved with the child welfare system.

The Kirwan Institute conducts interdisciplinary research to educate the public, build capacity of allied social justice organizations, and influence policy, practice, and investments in support of equity and inclusion, established in 2003 at The Ohio State University. The Kirwan Institute publishes an annual State of the Science: Implicit Bias Review to deepen public awareness of implicit biases and the challenges they pose to a society that strives to treat all of its members equally. Kirwan's Implicit Bias team leads workshops and presentations in states and communities across the country as the desire for help in understanding this important body of research continues to grow.

For more information on...

- inSIGHT or on the Alliance for Racial Equity: [communications@cssp.org](mailto:communications@cssp.org)
- CSSP: <https://cssp.org/>
- The Kirwan Institute: <http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/>