

# CRB IMPLICIT ASSOCIATIONS TRAINING

## A Big Blue Frog???

Some of us are old enough to remember a Peter, Paul and Mary song from 1967 called "I'm in Love with a Big Blue Frog" by Les Braunstein, Mary Travers, Noel Paul Stookey, and Peter Yarrow. Here are a few lines from the song:

*I'm in love with a big blue frog,  
A big blue frog loves me...*

*Well I'm not worried about our kids,  
I know they'll turn out neat.  
They'll be great looking cause they'll have my face,  
Great swimmers cause they'll have his feet!*

*The neighbors are against it and it's clear to me  
And it's probably clear to you  
They think value on their property will go right down  
If the family next door is blue.*

*Well I'm in love with a big blue frog  
A big blue frog loves me*

*I've got it tattooed on my chest  
It says P.H.R.O.G. (It's frog to me!)*

A silly song, right? Not in 1967! In reality, the metaphor in the song still speaks today of society's explicit and implicit biases and how bias can affect how we see and respond to one another as human beings.

As human beings, we see the world from our own subjective perspectives which stem from our background experiences, upbringing, and belief systems. One issue that has gained a lot of attention lately in the media and social science research is that of *implicit preference*. Each of us has preferences of which we are aware, that influence our daily decision-making and judgments. What we are not so aware of however, are implicit preferences that operate at the unconscious level, which means they are not readily available to our conscious thought processing yet still have the ability to impact our decision-making. We have the potential to become self-aware so that they do not make decisions based on our implicit preferences.

Our role as CRB members is to make findings on topics containing highly emotional content. While we may be quite aware of explicit views and judgment preferences that we hold in daily life, psychological research has demonstrated that we also hold implicit views that we may not be aware of that could influence how we make findings in our Reviews.

The CRB Cultural Responsiveness Committee is asking all CRB staff and volunteer board members to examine the influence of unconscious preferences and associations as they relate to the review process. This assignment has three components:

**1) Select and complete a minimum of two IAT tests at the following link: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>**

The Implicit Association Tests (IAT) were developed by researchers from Harvard, the University of Virginia, and the University of Washington. The IAT seeks to measure our implicit associations between various concepts (e.g., race, skin color, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, etc.) and evaluative judgments (e.g., positive/negative, good/bad). The IATs have been taken by more than 4 million people. While demographic information is gathered on test takers, the results are confidential. **You do not need to report your results to the CRB.** Our goal for having people take the IAT is to encourage self-awareness and critical thinking about these issues.

**2) Listen to the 38 minute podcast "*The Hidden Brain - In the Air We Breathe*" available at: <https://www.npr.org/2017/06/05/531578107/the-thumbprint-of-the-culture-implicit-bias-and-police-shootings>**

**3) Discuss your experience taking the IATs and listening to the podcast with your fellow board members and field managers**

Can you identify ways to improve the Review process by limiting the possible negative influence of personal preferences?

***Please complete the three tasks above by June 1, 2018. Talk to your Field Manager about opportunities to listen to the podcast together as a board. Board Members can receive cultural responsiveness continuing education credits for these activities.***



## **Why do we want CRB volunteer board members and staff to do this training?**

As part of the CRB 5 Year Strategic Plan, a goal related to Access states: *“Volunteer board members provide an impartial, culturally responsive legal review ensuring each participant has a voice that is heard.”* One of the strategies to meet this goal is to recognize and mitigate the effects of bias. As part of this strategy the CRB reconvened the Cultural Responsiveness Committee to develop detailed plans to further this strategy and to provide diversity training for all staff and board members. One of the first efforts of the committee was to develop this training on implicit associations. These activities are also being incorporated into the orientation training for new volunteer board members.

## **CRB Cultural Responsiveness Committee Members**

- Tracy Powell, Polk County VBM
- Jeri Mustain, Curry County VBM
- John A. Nichols, CRB Staff
- Amanda R. Hazen, CRB Staff
- Tiffany L. Lamberth, CRB Staff

