

Exercise

Saying to yourself

“I must not be biased”
might not be enough.

Being aware of a tendency towards bias can help avoid it; it has been shown that overconfidence in decision-making can be reduced if decision makers can consider why their judgements might be wrong. However, ‘confirmatory bias’ – which is coming to a view and then looking for evidence to support it - is such a strong tendency that it needs attention at all levels.

Consider each statement and try to identify possible underlying assumptions. Try also to come up with similar statements that you are aware of, or that give words to often unvoiced assumptions:

- This child is not developing because all the children in this family have been late developers.
- This parent’s drinking is a response to domestic violence.
- The school are not providing all the facts because they don’t trust social workers.
- The marks on the child’s arm are due to ringworm.
- Poor financial decisions in this family are a consequence of the parents’ learning disabilities.
- I’ve seen worse in an area like this.
- That’s okay in that culture and we have to respect this family’s culture.
- She’s (mother) trying her best.
- It’s all about poverty.

Thinking about your
perceptions

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