



# Better Ways To Work Together

## A Playbook for Fostering Critical Thinking in Workplaces

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Within the National Counterintelligence and Security Center (NCSC), the primary mission of the National Insider Threat Task Force (NITTF) is to develop a Government-wide insider threat program for deterring, detecting, and mitigating insider threats, including the safeguarding of classified information from exploitation.



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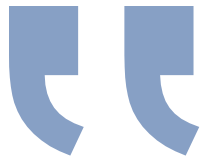
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## Better Ways To Work Together

Counter-insider threat and security professionals increasingly recognize that preventing and managing the risks posed by an organization's trusted insiders requires a different way of thinking. They have come to understand that insider threat incidents always occur in a broader organizational context, so it makes sense that everyone in the organization has a part to play in securing the workforce and workplace.

Building a safe and secure organizational environment means improving the well-being of organizations and their people. This playbook is part of a series, *Better Ways to Work Together*, designed to support one of the most critical tasks of the counter-insider threat mission. Each playbook addresses a topic that affects the healthy functioning of organizational relationships and shared workspaces. They are designed to help organizations build practical threat prevention initiatives that leaders at all levels can adopt to promote organizational well-being.

This playbook addresses critical thinking. Other playbooks in the series will help you understand important topics such as resilience, workplace toxicity, and organizational culture that are just as critical to building a healthy, effective organization as they are to preventing insider threat incidents. We hope these playbooks will contribute to the efforts of counter-insider threat programs and their partners in building safe, secure, and better workplaces.



Many of our behaviors, in the workplace and elsewhere, are motivated by unconscious triggers and emotions. Some of those unconscious motivations are fueled by biases of various sorts. Whether they are biases about race, about ability, about personality type, or about gender, biases exist in all of us, and they can drive behaviors that negatively impact diversity. Unconsciously motivated behaviors can cause people to feel excluded, undervalued, disliked, and even discriminated against. But all of that is preventable. We can all take control of these unconscious impulses. We can reflect on the everyday choices we make, especially in the workplace, and we can make more conscious choices that serve to include, to welcome, and to enhance diversity.



— Ronald Wheeler



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## This Playbook

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### Playbook Tips

Regularly review and think through this playbook.

Let it inspire more self-exploration of key topics and concepts.

Make it the focal point of peer discussions regarding best practices.

Treat it like a living document; note new discoveries and techniques that work best for you and your organization.

Write personal notes in the section at the end.

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We designed the *Better Ways to Work Together* series to support counter-insider threat programs by offering practical solutions to improve the well-being of organizations and their people. In this playbook, we focus on how to foster critical thinking across an organization. It is intended for use by government or private sector counter-insider threat programs to facilitate prevention initiatives that engage leaders in efforts to counter misinformation, disruptive bias, incivility, and poor judgment.

Insider threat prevention is most effective when everyone in an organization does their part. Consider using the materials in this playbook in partnership with other stakeholders in your organization, such as human resources, security, or information technology, to promote critical thinking as a tool to protect the organization and its people from the underlying causes of insider threat behavior. For example, you could use selections from this playbook in leadership training programs, security awareness campaigns, or even in team-building exercises.

With that in mind, we designed the materials to be accessible to a general audience—no previous knowledge of insider threat prevention is needed to make use of this playbook. The material can be used effectively by managers or individuals who want practical ideas for contributing to the well-being of their organization.

This playbook is organized in four parts.

Part 1 describes the learning objectives of the critical thinking playbook; breaks down the shared responsibilities of organizations and individuals to keep workplaces safe, healthy, and productive; and itemizes the best practices for organizations to promote critical thinking.

Part 2 provides group training exercises based on the best practices.

Part 3 provides a helpful infographic that summarizes key takeaways regarding the value of critical thinking in healthy organizations.

Part 4 contains a library of helpful and practical resources to aid in promoting critical thinking in organizations and broader communities; and resources for individuals who seek to better understand their own behavior, their role in their organization, and how thinking more critically can improve their workplace.



**Civility means a great deal more than just being nice to one another. It is complex and encompasses learning how to connect successfully and live well with others, developing thoughtfulness, and fostering effective self-expression and communication. Civility includes courtesy, politeness, mutual respect, fairness, good manners, as well as a matter of good health. Taking an active interest in the well-being of our community and concern for the health of our society is also involved in civility.**



— P.M. Forni



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# Part 1: Understanding the Role of Critical Thinking in Organizations

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Critical thinking consists of seeing both sides of an issue, being open to new evidence that disconfirms your ideas, reasoning dispassionately, demanding that claims be backed by evidence, deducing and inferring conclusions from available facts, solving problems, and so forth.

— **Daniel T. Willingham**

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### Organizational Learning Objectives

Leaders at all levels of an organization have a shared responsibility for promoting its core values, and their actions reinforce the behavioral norms and practices that set the

tone for a positive or negative culture. The value of critical thinking skills in an organization's culture reflects its commitment to independent decision making, fairness, and civility. By promoting critical thinking, organizations also promote the health of the organization and the well-being of its people. This playbook is designed to help you improve the culture of your organization and help you

- Understand the centrality of critical thinking for efficient organizational operations.
- Recognize the indicators of deficient critical thinking in your organization.
- Understand the importance of fair, fact-based, and transparent procedures for decision-making.
- Support open communication and reporting of concerns within your organization.
- Understand the importance of workforce education that includes skill building, not just training for compliance.
- Know how to develop standards and practices that promote healthy group relationships and outcomes.

### Individual Learning Objectives

People are key to successful organizations, whether they are managers, leaders, staff, or volunteers. Engaged employees, business partners, and the broader community can all have an effect on an organization's work. This playbook is designed to help individuals improve their critical thinking skills to become better members of their organization and improve its culture. This playbook will help you

- Understand terms and concepts related to critical thinking, bias, civility, and acceptance.
- Be empowered to advocate for standards and practices that promote healthy group relationships and outcomes.
- Be able to apply tools to build and sustain healthy organizations and communities.
- Learn to participate constructively as a member of healthy organizations and communities.

### The Value of Critical Thinking

An often-cited definition puts critical thinking at the center of a productive life.



We understand critical thinking [CT] to be purposeful, self-regulatory judgment which results in interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference, as well as explanation of the evidential, conceptual, methodological, criteriological, or contextual considerations upon which that judgment is based. CT is essential as a tool of inquiry. As such, CT is a liberating force in education and a powerful resource in one's personal and civic life. While not synonymous with good thinking, CT is a pervasive and self-rectifying human phenomenon. (Facione, 1990)

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“Critical thinking is the same as thinking rationally or reasoning well. In order to reason well, a thinker must be able to give reasons for what she believes, and these reasons must actually support the truth of the statement or belief they are claimed to support.”

–Jennifer W. Mulnix

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The full definition describes critical thinking as “the basis of a rational and democratic society.”

There are many aspects and impacts of critical thinking. Critical thinking is part of rational work and cooperative relationships. Workers need this essential analytic skill to assess and interpret the facts of a situation, apply good judgment, and make sound decisions. Critical thinking skills are needed to be a good organizational citizen. In the same way that we want to do business and perform for clients based on good information and decisions, we want to foster respectful and ethical behavior in our own work community.

Making logical decisions, identifying and using credible information, understanding and addressing expected types of bias, applying emotional intelligence, and promoting civility and acceptance of others all depend on critical thinking. Taken together, these critical thinking skills can be an effective means for managing organizational risk.

Critical thinking is a positive approach to counter or preempt negative workplace conditions and harmful behaviors. Organizations that fail to value and promote critical thinking can create unnecessary and harmful stressors like bias, incivility, poor judgment, unethical behavior, and flawed decision making. These stressors can be indicative of a toxic organizational culture, which can be a contributing factor to insider threat incidents, including workplace violence (Calhoun & Weston, 2003; Shaw & Sellers, 2015; Interagency Security Committee, 2019).

### Organizational Responsibilities

All organizations have a legal and moral obligation to provide a safe workplace for their employees. Promoting critical thinking skills is part of building a safe and secure climate and culture, and can contribute to organizational efforts to prevent the underlying behaviors and conditions that can make a workplace unsafe.

U.S. law requires private companies to provide a safe workplace. Specifically, the General Duty Clause, Section 5(a)(1) of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, requires employers “to provide their employees with a place of employment that is ‘free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm’” (Occupational Safety and Health Administration [OSHA], n.d.). Although OSHA

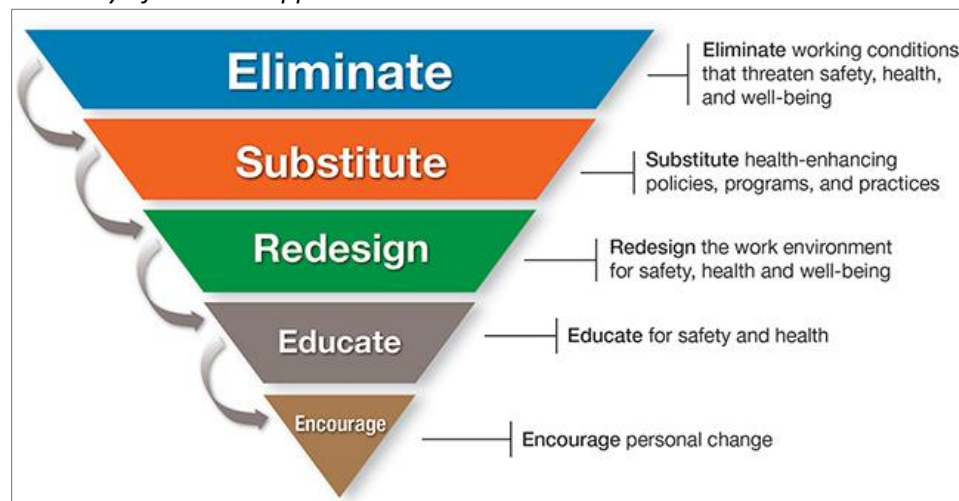


regulations do not directly address workplace violence or stressful conditions such as toxicity or bullying, the OSHA website advises:

An employer that has experienced acts of workplace violence, or becomes aware of threats, intimidation, or other indicators showing that the potential for violence in the workplace exists, would be on notice of the risk of workplace violence and should implement a workplace violence prevention program combined with engineering controls, administrative controls, and training.

To respond to these risks, The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) recommends organizations adopt the *Total Worker Health*<sup>®</sup> approach to promoting worker safety, health, and well-being (2016). Rather than simply responding to individual-level risks, organizations should emphasize organizational changes to eliminate working conditions that threaten worker safety and to promote a culture of individual and group well-being.

**Figure 1**  
*Hierarchy of Controls Applied to NIOSH Total Worker Health<sup>®</sup>*



NIOSH (2016).

For Federal agencies, the Interagency Security Committee (ISC) has published guidelines for workplace violence prevention training (see Table 1 below). The goal of training is to ensure that employees know how to report incidents of violence, threats, harassment and intimidation, or other disruptive behaviors and to demonstrate that the agency is committed to taking actions for their prevention (ISC, 2019). Critical thinking skills can be incorporated in these training guidelines to foster employee engagement in their prevention responsibilities and help leaders create a safe and secure organizational climate and culture.



**Table 1**  
*Guidelines Based on ISC Workplace Violence Prevention Training*

Employee Training	Supervisor Training
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Overview of the various aspects and types of bullying and violence in the workplace</li><li>■ Symptoms and behaviors often associated with those who commit aggressive or violent actions</li><li>■ Security hazards found in the agency’s workplace</li><li>■ The Department or Agency’s workplace violence prevention policies and procedures</li><li>■ Reporting requirements and processes</li><li>■ Specialized training on how to create a positive work environment and develop effective teams</li><li>■ Escalation of subtle behaviors that could lead to violence</li><li>■ Training to improve awareness of cultural differences (e.g., diversity)</li><li>■ Tips for protecting oneself and fellow coworkers from workplace violence</li><li>■ Response plans, communication, and alarm procedures</li><li>■ Active Shooter Response Training – Run, Hide, Fight</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Basic leadership skills, such as setting clear standards, addressing employee problems promptly, performance counseling, and disciplinary procedures</li><li>■ Ways to encourage employees to report incidents that made them feel threatened for any reason by anyone inside or outside the organization</li><li>■ Skills in behaving compassionately and supportively towards employees who report incidents</li><li>■ Skills in taking human resources actions and disciplinary actions</li><li>■ Basic skills in handling crisis situations</li><li>■ Basic emergency procedures</li><li>■ How to ensure that appropriate screening of pre-employment reference is completed</li><li>■ Bullying</li><li>■ Confidentiality procedure awareness</li><li>■ How to conduct a peaceful separation from service</li></ul>

### How Leaders Can Recognize the Need for Better Critical Thinking

Organizations that do not prioritize critical thinking may find themselves reliant on bad information and decision making. Inaccurate decision-making processes bypass the talent and knowledge of an organization in favor of gut feelings and ad hoc assumptions. Such an organization will not achieve its mission efficiently and will experience conflicts in work relationships. This bypass results in organizational failures and worker frustration.



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“Critical thinking is self-guided, self-disciplined thinking which attempts to reason at the highest level of quality in a fair-minded way. People who think critically consistently attempt to live rationally, reasonably, and empathetically.”

—Linda Elder

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Healthy organizations have transparent rules, standards, processes, and structures that guide employees on how to approach problems and conduct their work lives. Conflicts and stressors matter can lead to workplace violence, hostile acts, sabotage, accidents, lost productivity, sexual harassment, intellectual property theft, and individual health problems

The lack of critical thinking can contribute to the type of toxic workplace culture that drives employees away. Negative employee morale, performance, and retention should be major warning signs because bad organizational decision making is often most consequential in hiring and promotion. Better guidance on decision-making processes can also reduce workplace hostility. The following are some signs to look out for in your organization (Tippett, 2021):

- Poor management of organizational risk.
- Repeated bad organizational outcomes and failures where no one can offer good reasons for why certain decisions were made.
- Conversations, evaluations, and hiring that rely on stereotypes.
- Incivility and workplace conflicts, especially those that arise from differences in culture, generation, or experience.
- High absenteeism or turnover rates, especially among specific groups.
- Ad hoc, subjective, or nontransparent procedures for business decisions, including hiring and promotion.
- Employee data that suggest disparities or inequities in pay, promotion, and opportunities.
- Unethical behavior and lack of company guidance on ethical and civil behavior.

If these problem signs and behaviors are present in your organization, contact your human resources, EO/EEO, or general counsel office for help with assessment and

correction. But there are also actions that leaders at all levels can take to foster critical thinking in their organizations. The following Best Practices section provides actionable ways to address critical thinking in your organization.

### **Best Practices To Promote and Use Critical Thinking in the Workplace**

Critical thinking is fundamentally a means for managing organizational risk. If your organization is not promoting critical thinking, it will have difficulty justifying choices or recognizing true problems and opportunities. This playbook defines critical thinking to include clear procedures for making logical decisions, identifying and using good



information, understanding and addressing expected types of bias, employing emotional intelligence, and promoting civility and acceptance of others.

Consequently, successful critical thinking in the workplace includes recognizing bias and misinformation as well as valuing difference and emotional intelligence. Ultimately, improving these aspects of critical thinking will improve the overall health of an organization and the well-being of its people while reducing the risks that arise from a negative organizational culture. The six best practices offer resources, insights, strategies and tools to foster critical thinking skills in your organization.

## 1. Organizations Should Establish Transparent Procedures for Decision Making

### Background and Justification

Establishing procedures for decision making codifies aspects of your organizational culture:

- What counts as good information/data?
- How long should study and deliberation go on?
- Which decisions are automatic and which ones require discussion?
- What is the process for study and deliberation?
- Who makes or reviews the final decision?
- Who participates in the decision-making process?
- How much dissent or disagreement is allowed?
- How flexible or adaptable is the decision-making process?
- How does the organization follow and learn from outcomes?
- How do decisions and outcomes inform opportunities for organizational change?

Organizations build trust with employees when expectations and rules are clear. Even if leaders are the only ones involved in management decisions, employees need to understand the way that leaders arrive at those decisions. Likewise, there should be procedures and standards for the day-to-day work decisions of the organization, with clarity where employees are empowered to innovate.

### Best Practice Implementation

Organizations should:

- Promote a culture that follows logical processes for decision making.
- Provide information literacy training for employees, including how to recognize, evaluate, use, and communicate good information to solve problems and make effective decisions (Spitzer et al., 1998).
- Build trust through ongoing clear communication and transparency.
- Encourage employees to bring up issues and concerns if they hear rumors.

## 2. Individuals Should Seek Credible, Reliable Information Sources

### Background and Justification



Employees do the work of an organization and also comprise an organization’s social body. Relationships between employees set the tone and climate, as do relationships of employees to the organization. Information and misinformation play a key role: “In the end, it doesn’t matter if people are misinformed individually in their personal lives or collectively within their specific roles at work. If they are influenced by misinformation, they cannot help but carry their misinformed views into everything they do—including the decisions they make on behalf of their employer” (DosSantos, 2021).

Successful engineers cannot be misinformed about the specifications for a new suspension bridge. Firefighters cannot be misinformed about the risks associated with a particular wildland fire. Likewise, employees cannot jeopardize the civility and stability of an organization by promoting rumors or trusting suspect information.

**Best Practice Implementation**

Individuals should

- Base their work and decisions on the best available information.
- Develop a critical mindset toward information and always check the source.
- Look for confirmation from other sources when encountering sensational or dubious claims.
- Be skeptical of salacious images.
- Pause before spreading unverified information.
- Ask questions when in doubt.

**3. Leaders Should Identify and Address Unconscious Bias (Also Called Implicit Bias) That may Operate in Their Organization**

**Background and Justification**

Researchers have identified over 150 types of unconscious bias (Desjardins, 2021; McCormick, 2015). These biases are a natural product of the way that our brains seek shortcuts to simplify complex information and decisions. In the workplace, however, these biases may interfere with sound and fair decision making. Because they operate at the unconscious level, these biases can subvert an organization’s goals and principles in hidden ways.

Bias can negatively impact all the ways organizations plan and manage potential risks (often most visibly in hiring and promotion). Accordingly, organizations should proactively address the potential role of unconscious biases. Common types of unconscious bias include the following:

- **Affinity Bias:** Tending to favor people like ourselves (e.g., hiring a candidate that is like you or others at the company over other qualified applicants that would broaden the organization’s experience, skills, and perspectives).
- **Confirmation Bias:** Only seeking information that confirms pre-existing beliefs or assumptions (e.g., based on your preconceptions about what types of people make the best engineers, you attribute the success of some candidates to hard work and intellect and the success of others to luck and special treatment).



- **Conformity Bias (Groupthink):** Making decisions based on what our peers think or to gain their approval (e.g., you think others on the hiring committee are passing over the best candidate for the job, but you don't speak up because you are new and want to fit in).
- **The Halo Effect:** Assuming that a person who meets one job requirement will have skills in all the other required areas (e.g., hiring a candidate who interned at a prestigious company, but has the weakest qualifications compared to other applicants).
- **The Horns Effect:** Assuming that a person who has one negative quality will not perform well in other areas (e.g., dismissing a candidate with many strong qualifications because they had a low college GPA or had a nontraditional path to earning their degree).
- **Gender Bias:** Preferring or discriminating against one gender over another (e.g., you dislike a female candidate because you think of the position as a man's job).
- **Name Bias:** Preferring or discriminating against people based on their name (e.g., you worry a candidate with a foreign-sounding name will not fit in or be effective with customers).
- **Bias Blind Spot:** Thinking that bias only shapes other peoples' decisions, but not our own (e.g., you know that bias affects how other organizations hire and promote but do not question its effects in your own organization).

#### Best Practice Implementation

Leaders should (University of California, San Francisco, n.d.)

- Understand that biases exist in all our decision making and be self-reflective about the role bias plays.
- Work to manage bias as soon as they recognize it.
- Provide training, resources, and experiences that promote bias literacy (e.g., promoting self-awareness, understanding of bias, opportunities for discussion in diverse groups).
- Develop structured, transparent guidelines for organizational decision making, especially for performance evaluations and hiring.
- Examine current business practices for codified and engrained biases that hamper good decision making and treat employees unfairly. For example:
- Is risk taking in the organization based on bias-prone gut feelings and instinct rather than critical thinking and cost/benefit analysis?
- Do hiring and promotion practices favor performance only achievable by employees with stay-at-home spouses?
- Encourage people to speak up when they think bias is affecting the organization or its people.

## 4. Fairly Distribute Opportunities for Growth and Advancement to Minimize Bias in the Workplace

#### Background and Justification

Biased workplace decisions create unfair obstacles for employees, as well as add





stress and divisions in the workforce. Ultimately, biased decisions can cost organizations opportunities to profit from diverse knowledge and talents.

“If your company is like most, you’re likely struggling with workplace discrimination, even if you don’t know it. Equity gaps remain a pernicious problem in the U.S., particularly for women and people of color, who, on average, earn less and are under-promoted compared to their white or male counterparts. And though federal law has prohibited workplace discrimination for more than fifty years, those gaps don’t appear to be closing anytime soon. The problem... is that the law incentivizes managers and other leaders in the company to address disparities too late in the game.” (Tippett, 2019)

#### Best Practice Implementation

Leaders should (Tippett, 2019; Williams & Mihaylo, 2019):

- Implement measures to fairly distribute opportunities for growth and advancement, especially early opportunities.
- Detail the organization’s pathway to success, including required skills, knowledge, and experience, and make access equal to all employees. Identify all the on-ramps and make them equally available.
- Identify the decisions and decision makers across the organization that most impact career success and make them stakeholders in the organization’s anti-bias goals.
- Mentor new employees and help them establish 5-year and 10-year plans.
- Track data that could indicate an organizational bias.

### 5. Leaders Should Model Emotional Intelligence

#### Background and Justification

Surprisingly, critical thinking also requires us to be aware of our emotions. Emotional intelligence helps us discern when our actions in a social or work situation are based on bias, flawed assumptions, or incorrect information.

Emotional intelligence “is an individual’s capability to recognize emotions and feelings, both their own and others.’ You develop EQ [emotional quotient] by experiencing, understanding, and labeling different feelings. It also involves using emotional information to guide your thinking and behavior. The key is to adjust our emotions to adapt to the environment that we are in at any given time...” (Lundberg, 2021).

Emotional intelligence means understanding the emotional impact of the assumptions we make about others, especially the harm resulting from unfounded assumptions. Four abilities inherent in emotional intelligence are (Bariso, 2021)

- **Self-awareness:** the ability to identify and understand emotions in yourself.
- **Self-management:** the ability to manage those emotions and keep them from causing you to act (or refrain from acting) in a way that you later regret.
- **Social awareness:** the ability to identify and understand emotions in others.
- **Relationship management:** the ability to provide and receive benefits from your



relationships with others.
<b>Best Practice Implementation</b>
Leaders and individuals should <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be empathetic. Work to understand and share others' viewpoints and experiences to break down stereotypes and prejudices.</li><li>• Develop emotional self-awareness to understand how irrational beliefs and emotions color our perceptions.</li><li>• Employ self-awareness when faced with conflict or engaged in group problem solving.</li></ul>
<b>6. Leaders Should Promote Civility and Acceptance of People With Differences</b>
<b>Background and Justification</b>
<p>Workplace civility can be defined as “behavior that helps to preserve the norms for mutual respect in the workplace” (Andersson &amp; Pearson, 1999).</p> <p>One of the essential aspects of critical thinking in an organization is utilizing good decision making, unbiased information literacy, and emotional intelligence in our relationships with coworkers. Successful organizations are ones that are able to get civility right: “Companies today have the capacity to be a haven from the incivility that individuals confront every day, on the road, online, in the media, and in politics. It is where employees with diverse backgrounds and opinions can work together to pursue shared objectives, unencumbered by the divides and tensions that exist elsewhere. And for society and democracy at large, the workplace might just be the one institution that incubates a more constructive way of bringing people together” (Gaines-Ross, 2017).</p> <p>Our organizations are often the places where we encounter and can benefit from the most diversity of experience (Gaines-Ross, 2017). Organizations that promote critical thinking can provide a constructive framework for building strength through difference.</p>
<b>Best Practice Implementation</b>
Leaders should (Porath, 2018; Gibbons, 2018) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Define “civility” for the organization so there is a clear behavioral standard.</li><li>• Promote clear two-way communication so conflicts can be resolved.</li><li>• Promote inclusivity and the acceptance of personal differences.</li><li>• Meet regularly to review the organization’s values and code of conduct and discuss concerning behaviors.</li><li>• Encourage mentoring and reverse mentoring (i.e., established employees learning from new employees) relationships so people understand different experiences and perspectives.</li></ul>



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# Part 2: Training Scenarios

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This section presents three training scenarios that realistically represent how workplaces struggle with the consequences of misinformation, biases, and incivility. They are not intended to provide guidance on specific laws or regulations governing the workplace. Instead, each scenario should serve as a starting point for thinking about how critical thinking can help organizations more effectively navigate such situations. Consider using these scenarios as part of a counter-insider threat awareness campaign, as part of leadership training, or as a team-building exercise. These scenarios can be used flexibly based on or to meet an organization's needs or training schedule—use one scenario in a single training session or use them all in a multi-session course.

Before using these scenarios or answering the team-building questions at the end, participants should familiarize themselves with the best practices presented in the previous section. Email or print the best practices for participants as read-ahead material. The best practices provide the concepts and tools needed to interpret the scenarios. Participants can refer to the best practices, other playbook materials, and their own experience as the group considers each scenario.

For suggestions on how to facilitate group discussions on potentially sensitive topics, consider reviewing *The Leader's Conversation* by the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (2021). It provides strategies for conducting discussions in a safe environment to encourage participants to hear others' perspectives. This may be especially helpful if your organization uses these scenarios as part of its response to correct toxic work conditions or behaviors.

<https://www.defenseculture.mil/Human-Relations-Toolkit/Key-Topics/#leaders-conversations>

### Scenario Background

Blobber is a multinational Fortune 500 company that makes polymers, additives, adhesives, and related consumer products (e.g., glues, adhesive tapes, heat-resistant plastic cookware, tableware, packaging, plastic sheeting, automotive parts, composite shafts for fishing rods and golf clubs). The company has regional offices, factories, and shipping facilities in the United States that employ 87,000 people. Blobber corporate leaders have been committed to a positive workplace culture, but its implementation of initiatives to promote diversity, equity and inclusion, and workplace wellness has been uneven.

Not all regional and local managers support workplace culture programs. A 2021 survey of Blobber employees revealed some great sites to work at within the company and others that were toxic. Just last month, law enforcement apprehended a factory worker with two handguns in the parking lot of the Blobber factory in Kansas who had a history of repeated arguments with a supervisor over shift assignments. Additionally, rumors and conspiracy theories ran rampant through the company's workforce after a senior vice president decided to close several factories and offices and was later indicted for insider stock trading.



Blobber hired Trisha George as the company's new Chief People Person (CPP) to reinvent the company's workplace culture. Trisha began a new initiative to rebuild trust and morale that focuses on critical thinking. She wants the organization to base its decision making and work relationships on clear thinking and good information. In her plan, critical thinking includes

- Clear communication, so everyone acts on good information.
- Workplace civility that counters prejudice and harassment.
- Transparent decision making to ensure that decisions are made without bias, especially in hiring and promotions.
- A focus on facts rather than gossip and rumors.

### Scenario One: Factory Closing Rumors

Blobber's factories in Ohio and Illinois produce similar product lines. Both factories were constructed following the same blueprints in the 1980s, during which time a strong demand existed for particular types of polymers and related products. Blobber has discontinued some of the original products, but it refitted and adapted the facilities to keep pace with innovations and new processes. A sense of rivalry among the workers at the two plants has always existed due to their shared history.

Eighteen months ago, the Ohio plant manager retired and was replaced by an assistant manager, Carl Brown, from the Illinois plant. Carl brought a team of other managers from Illinois. Shortly after arriving, Carl announced an efficiency and productivity program that changed workflows and rotated 3-week maintenance shutdowns throughout sections of the factory. During these transitions, the Ohio plant lost four new projects to the Illinois plant, and Ohio workers openly grumbled and questioned the new management team's loyalties.

Carl was responsible for bringing a modern and lean manufacturing approach to the Illinois plant, and he believed the old-school operations in Ohio needed updates. He began making workflow changes that he knew would result in measurable improvements in waste reduction and worker safety. He also wanted to address a maintenance backlog with as little disruption as possible. Carl did not see the point of explaining these changes repeatedly to his employees. He thought everyone would recognize the benefits and common sense of the changes he was ordering once the changes began. Carl believed everybody was on the same team as a Blobber employee.

Four months ago, an anonymous blog appeared that focused on worker complaints at the Ohio plant. The anonymous writer complained about the new management team, who all came from the Illinois plant. Some posts pointed out that none of the new personnel bought houses in the small factory town but instead commuted from a fancy Columbus, Ohio, suburb. The writer noted that no one put their kids in the factory town's schools. Another post claimed that several new managers would be in their jobs



for only a year or 18 months. The writer said the new managers would begin new cost-saving programs and then rotate to another job in the company while touting that cost-saving experiment on their resumes. The writer said the factory workers would be the ones who would have to stay and live with the long-term effects of management's new ideas.

The blog posts started rumors that the "Illinois opportunists" were part of a corporate plan to close the Ohio plant. Some posts claimed a plan existed with the goal of making the plant look continually less efficient until Blobber could close the plant or move jobs overseas without public criticism. Some posts claimed that the Illinois plant manager hatched a secret plan that involved sending his employees to Ohio to wipe out the competition so all new product lines would go to Illinois. The writer said Blobber would have to close the Ohio plant if the maintenance shutdowns made the plant less competitive.

Occasionally, these anonymous posts threatened work slowdowns and sabotage. One post claimed that management put listening devices in the breakrooms to keep tabs on what employees were talking about. Posts criticized new workflows as part of a plan to sabotage and scrub the unique production advantages of "the Ohio way of doing things."

The new CPP, Trisha, sees this situation as a great place to begin her critical thinking program. She will travel to the Ohio plant and suggest a course of action.

**Team-Building Discussion:** Working in small groups, discuss and make notes on your answers to the following questions. Be prepared to report your answers to the group when the facilitator calls time.

- How did Carl's lack of transparent communication with employees at the Ohio plant work against the critical thinking program that Trisha is trying to apply at Blobber?
- In what ways do the rumors represent a critical thinking problem at the Ohio Blobber plant? What are the symptoms? What harm is being done? What harm might happen in the future?
- How should Trisha approach the tenuous situation at the Ohio plant? What can she do to regain employees' trust and help everyone develop stronger critical thinking skills in their work? Using the Best Practices guide in this playbook, identify which specific strategies and actions she should promote.

### Scenario Two: Hiring and Promotion Biases

Blobber promoted David Self to Sales Manager for the Mountain West region that includes eight States. Some salespeople have specific territories and others work with clients and leads across specific industries. Generally, Blobber salespeople are based out of local offices with other company functions (e.g., administrative, shipping, and



manufacturing), but some work from home in areas where there are customers but not a local company office.

While preparing for his new responsibilities, Dave met with Emma Naranjo, Blobber's Human Resources manager for the Mountain West region. Emma shared some deep concerns on salesforce employee turnover that she felt were due to bias in hiring and promotion. Ten years ago, Blobber was a mainstay on "Best Places to Work" lists in several western States, but the company no longer appears on those lists. She explained to Dave that consistent themes emerged in hiring and promotion data and during confidential exit interviews. Emma had been trying for 18 months to raise her concerns, but the expected retirement of the previous sales manager thwarted her efforts. The departing manager seemed reluctant to make some decisions that might require changes in company culture.

Wanting to start with a clean slate, Dave considered the information Emma had collected. Dave knew that critical thinking requires using the most accurate information to identify problems and consider solutions. Dave also knew from Blobber's new critical thinking initiative that unconscious bias is a prevalent issue in retaining and managing employees. Emma's information was not broken down by office or State, but Dave could tell that some issues were widespread. Historically, the salesforce was organized in teams around offices or markets, and team leads did their own hiring without much oversight from the previous Mountain West sales manager, who was only interested in high sales numbers. Each team was following their own ad hoc processes, and none of the processes seemed to be documented.

From the Blobber critical thinking materials, Dave knew that these unconscious biases were often problematic: affinity bias, conformity bias, confirmation bias, gender bias, name bias, and blind spot bias.

Emma had documentation that suggested two team leads only hired graduates of the universities they attended and that they were using an internship program to exclusively hire members of the fraternities to which they had belonged. Blobber has a goal and policy for advertising opportunities widely and encouraging applications from underrepresented groups. However, in many parts of the Mountain West region, the actual practices seemed to deviate from the company policy.

Emma's data showed that women made up 37% of the Mountain West salesforce but received only 5% of the promotions during the last two years. Accordingly, salaries for women in the region were on average 15% lower than their male counterparts. Over the last five years, men in the company received more and higher performance-based salary increases. Emma and Dave wondered if all employees were getting fair access to big clients and opportunities. During that same timeframe, women left the company at twice the rate as men.

Across the region, sales offices had low diversity numbers. One rejected job applicant wrote a review of Blobber on a career website that stated: "Interviewed for a Blobber



sales job in Phoenix. Interviewer asked me if I could use a name with customers that sounded more American and would be easier to spell and pronounce than my Vietnamese name. I said NO. Didn't get the job." Dave wondered if these practices and other indications of bias were persistent across all his sales groups. If so, he wanted to work to institute changes.

**Team-Building Discussion:** Working in small groups, discuss and make notes on your answers to the following questions. Be prepared to report your answers to the group when the facilitator calls time.

- How are the patterns in the employee data indications of bias in hiring and promotions in Blobber's Mountain West region? What harm is being done to Blobber employees and the company's reputation?
- How is unconscious bias a critical thinking problem? What is the solution?
- How should Dave approach this situation? What steps can he take to align regional hiring practices with Blobber's corporate policy? Using the Best Practices guide in this playbook, identify which specific strategies and actions he might pursue.

### Scenario Three: Civility Between Early-Career and Established Employees

Few of Blobber's direct competitors still have in-house research and development groups. Blobber has a robust set of chemists, chemical engineers, material scientists, mathematicians, and other technical experts who work at a research and development (R&D) facility near Scottsdale, Arizona, with 560 employees.

Magena Lewis was a graduate student who did her thesis research on collaboration at the Blobber R&D facility. She interviewed engineers and scientists about their work and interactions with colleagues. In her thesis, she referred to Blobber anonymously as "Company J" and assigned pseudonyms to her interviewees. In exchange for access to observe and speak with Blobber employees, Magena agreed to provide lab managers with a report and presentation summarizing her findings. Management had a sense that tensions were high among the research staff and hoped to gain insights about the staff's attitudes from Magena's research.

Among the dozen early-career researchers Magena interviewed, several confided that they were looking for positions with other companies. Most interviewees told her similar stories about senior colleagues disrespecting, harassing, and ridiculing them.

Although the lab's purpose was innovation, the culture of the organization often valued established processes over new ideas. Senior staff did not want to give up control and decisions to people who were masters of newer techniques.

Early-career researchers did not want hostile supervisors to evaluate them. A young engineer said, "I can't take being yelled at in meetings that my computer simulations are





lying to me, and that I don't understand how chemicals actually work in a real factory. You wouldn't think people would get so angry over chemical engineering, but lines are drawn in the department. It is pretty clear the people who would evaluate my work and decide my future are not my friends." Another new-hire chemist said, "Before I could start my presentation, my boss dropped my report into the trash can and said, 'Convince us we should take your ideas out of the garbage.' I didn't even know who I could talk to at the company about something like that."

A senior staff member said, "Young people just don't understand how to get the work done right. You can't trust them. They have a lot of theory from graduate school, but 95% of the time, I'm listening to my gut. They need to watch, listen, and learn. And if they aren't patient enough for that, you sometimes have to snap them back into their place." A research group leader said, "It's just like you see on the news. Younger people don't want to put in the work anymore. They want to charge right in and immediately be the boss of things. And they're not tough. You can't tell any of them they've done something wrong without them 'having feelings' about it."

Magenta reported these and other signs of generational conflict to the lab's management. Lab Manager Leo Sotolongo was shocked by this information about the lab's culture. He knew everybody. He hired half of the people at the lab, and he considered many of the senior staff to be his friends. Most had been to his house for dinner. He knew them to be kind and generous people, and these findings did not seem to be in character. Still, he understood that many ingredients go into establishing a workplace culture, and he committed to ensuring that his lab would be a place where people could trust each other.

**Team-Building Discussion:** Working in small groups, discuss and make notes on your answers to the following questions. Be prepared to report your answers to the group when the facilitator calls time.

- In what ways do the generational conflicts at the research lab represent a critical thinking problem? If the behavior of senior staff toward early-career researchers continues, what consequences may happen to the lab in the future?
- What factors are influencing decision making at the research lab?
- Given Leo's close relationship with many of the senior staff, should he approach this situation? Using the Best Practices guide in this playbook, identify which specific strategies and actions he should promote.



**The crisis we face about ‘truth’ and reliable facts is predicated less on the ability to get people to believe the ‘wrong’ thing as it is on the ability to get people to doubt the ‘right’ thing.**



— Jamais Cascio, Distinguished Fellow at the Institute for the Future



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# Part 3: Unconscious Bias Infographic



The infographic presented on the following pages describes the consequences of unconscious bias and how critical thinking skills can be used to mitigate its effects in the workplace. Use the infographic as part of a counter-insider threat awareness campaign, leadership training, or to start a discussion about critical thinking in your organization. Consider printing the infographic and posting it to an employee bulletin board or including it in training slides or your organization's newsletter. The Unconscious Bias Infographic is available in digital and printable poster formats.

<https://opa.mil/research-analysis/personnel-security/insider-threat/better-ways-to-work-together/>



Human minds are efficient because they develop shortcuts that operate below our conscious decision making. Our unconscious minds group things together and impose patterns, but these shortcuts can also be harmful. These automatic decisions can play out as biases and stereotypes that cause us to act unfairly toward others. Our conscious and rational decision making can be sabotaged by our unconscious biases and stereotypes.



What assumptions do you make about people based on appearance, height, weight, accent, age, disability, religion, race, gender, tattoos, name, military status, clothes, car, shoes, etc.?

### Types of Unconscious Bias

Researchers have identified more than 150 types of unconscious bias.<sup>1,2</sup> Here are a few examples that can affect our workplace decision making.



#### Affinity Bias:

Favoring people like ourselves (e.g., hiring a candidate that is like you or others at the company)



#### Conformity Bias (Groupthink):

Making decisions based on what your peers think or to gain their approval (e.g., you think others on the hiring committee are passing over the best candidate for the job but you don't speak up because you are new and want to fit in)



#### Confirmation Bias:

Only seeking information that confirms preexisting beliefs or assumptions (e.g., based on your preconceptions about what types of people make the best engineers, you attribute the success of some candidates to hard work and intellect and the success of others to luck and special treatment)



#### The Halo Effect:

Assuming a person that meets one job requirement will have skills in all the other required areas (e.g., hiring a candidate who interned at a prestigious company but has the weakest qualifications compared to other applicants)



**The Horns Effect:** Assuming a person who has one negative quality will not perform in other areas (e.g., dismissing a candidate with many strong qualifications because they had a low college GPA)



**Name Bias:** Preferring or discriminating against people based on their name (e.g., you worry a candidate with a foreign-sounding name will not fit in or be good with customers)

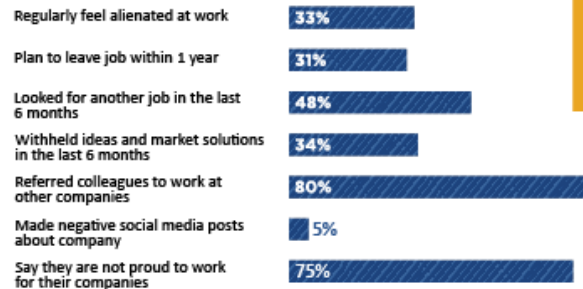


**Gender Bias:** Preferring or discriminating against one gender over another (e.g., you dislike a female candidate because you think of the position as a man's job)



**Bias Blind Spot:** Thinking bias only shapes other peoples' decisions but not your own (e.g., you know bias affects how other organizations hire and promote but do not recognize such bias in your organization)

### Employees who perceive Bias in the Workplace<sup>4</sup>



**Where Does Bias Hurt Most?**  
Bias often occurs in hiring and promotion where it can have major career impacts.<sup>3</sup>

### A survey of 3,000 workers in large organizations asked: Do you feel you've experienced bias at least once a month in the last year?<sup>5</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Bendick, J. M., & Nurwe, A. F. (2013). Developing the research basis for controlling bias in hiring. *Journal of Social Issues*, 68, 239-262.  
<sup>2</sup> Cooper, T. & Horn, E. (2019). The bias barrier: AI, jobs, inclusion, and everyday behaviors. Deloitte. <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/us/Documents/about-deloitte/us-deloitte-inclusion-survey-research-the-bias-barrier.pdf>  
<sup>3</sup> DeJardins, J. (2021, August 26). Every single cognitive bias in one infographic. Visual Capitalist. <https://www.visualcapitalist.com/every-single-cognitive-bias/>  
<sup>4</sup> Hewlett, S. A., Rashid, R., & Sherbin, L. (2017). Disrupt bias: Drive value. COQUAL. <https://coqual.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/CoqualDisruptBiasDriveValue090720-1.pdf>  
<sup>5</sup> McCormick, H. (2015). The real effects of unconscious bias in the workplace. UNC Executive Development, Kenan-Flagler Business School.





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# Part 4: Resource Library

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## Critical Thinking in Organizations

The following resources are provided to help leaders and managers learn about various principles and facets of critical thinking and apply useful strategies to improve critical thinking skills throughout your organization. These resources support and expand on key concepts presented in previous parts of this playbook. They can be used for self study or group training, published on your organization's intranet or in employee newsletters, or highlighted in awareness campaigns. The materials are intended to be accessible to broad audiences with different levels of expertise. Text in *italics* is quoted from the resource.

### Promoting Critical Thinking in Education and Society

From the Foundation for Critical Thinking

*Critical thinking requires the cultivation of core intellectual virtues such as intellectual humility, perseverance, integrity, and responsibility. Nothing of real value comes easily; a rich intellectual environment—alive with curious and determined students—is possible only with critical thinking at the foundation of the educational process.*

The Foundation for Critical Thinking. (2022). [www.criticalthinking.org](http://www.criticalthinking.org)

### RAND Corporation Study of Misinformation

From the book *Truth decay: An Initial Exploration of the Diminishing Role of Facts and Analysis in American Public Life*

*Over the past two decades, national political and civil discourse in the United States has been characterized by "Truth Decay," defined as a set of four interrelated trends: an increasing disagreement about facts and analytical interpretations of facts and data; a blurring of the line between opinion and fact; an increase in the relative volume, and resulting influence, of opinion and personal experience over fact; and lowered trust in formerly respected sources of factual information. These trends have many causes, but this report focuses on four: characteristics of human cognitive processing, such as cognitive bias; changes in the information system, including social media and the 24-hour news cycle; competing demands on the education system that diminish time spent on media literacy and critical thinking; and polarization, both political and demographic. The most damaging consequences of Truth Decay include the erosion of civil discourse, political paralysis, alienation and disengagement of individuals from political and civic institutions, and uncertainty over national policy.*

Kavanagh, J., & M. D. Rich. (2018). *Truth decay: An initial exploration of the diminishing role of facts and analysis in American public life*. RAND Corporation.

[https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research\\_reports/RR2300/RR2314/RAND\\_RR2314.pdf](https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR2300/RR2314/RAND_RR2314.pdf)



### RAND Corporation Resources To Fight Disinformation

From the website “Fighting Disinformation Online: A Database of Web Tools”

*As part of its Countering Truth Decay initiative, RAND is responding to this urgent problem. Our researchers identified and characterized the universe of online tools developed by nonprofits and civil society organizations to target online disinformation. These tools were created to help information consumers, researchers, and journalists navigate today's challenging information environment.*

The website includes links to tools for

- Bot and spam detection
- Codes and standards to guide best practices
- Credibility scoring for information sources
- Disinformation tracking
- Education and training
- Verification
- Whitelisting tools to flag trusted sites.

RAND Corporation. (2019, December 19). *Fighting disinformation online: A database of web tools*. <https://www.rand.org/research/projects/truth-decay/fighting-disinformation.html>

### Advice From Librarians For Recognizing ‘Fake News’

From the American Library Association (ALA) website “Fake News: A Library Resource Round-Up”

*As librarians everywhere will attest, fake news is not new; fabricated stories have been presented as truth for centuries. But take a divided electorate and add a social media landscape where misinformation is shared with a click, and interest in the topic has soared.*

*Learning to decipher fact from fiction is a key skill for all news consumers, and libraries across the country are stepping up to help patrons gain the information literacy skills they need. With that in mind, Programming Librarian has compiled the following round-up of resources to help libraries deliver their best programming about fake news.*

ALA Public Programs Office. (2017). *Fake news: A library resource round-up*. <https://programminglibrarian.org/articles/fake-news-library-round>





### Information Literacy

#### From *The Seven Pillars of Information Literacy*

According to the Society of College, National and University Libraries (SCONUL), people who are “information literate” possess the “awareness of how they gather, use, manage, synthesize and create information and data in an ethical manner and will have the information skills to do so effectively.”

There are seven skills of information literacy:

- Identify: Identify a personal need for information.
- Scope: Assess current knowledge and identify gaps.
- Plan: Construct strategies for locating information and data.
- Gather: Locate and access the information and data they need.
- Evaluate: Review the research process and compare and evaluate information and data.
- Manage: Organize information professionally and ethically.
- Presentation: Apply the knowledge gained: presenting the results of their research, synthesizing new and old information and data to create new knowledge and disseminating it in a variety of ways.

Bent, M., & Stubbings, R. (2011). *The SCONUL seven pillars of information literacy: Core model for higher education*. SCONUL Working Group for Information Literacy. <https://www.sconul.ac.uk/sites/default/files/documents/coremodel.pdf>

### Keep Employees Supplied With Accurate Information

#### From the article “How to Stop the Rumor Mill from Sabotaging Your Business”

*It seems that in a work setting where an authoritative and definitive source of information is lacking, any "dot" can (and will) be connected. It's just what we do. The vacuum created by a lack of details concerning and impending or currently unfolding event will be filled with all sorts of unverified data, inaccurate assumptions and far-out conclusions by those in and around the effected workplace.*

Kerr, J. (2019, September 17). *How to stop the rumor mill from sabotaging your business*. Inc. <https://www.inc.com/james-kerr/how-to-stop-rumor-mill-from-sabotaging-your-business.html>



### Tactical Approaches to Critical Thinking

From the article “Seven Critical Thinking Tactics High-Performing Leaders Use to Make Informed Decisions”

*Critical thinking is a skill that must be developed in leaders, particularly for leaders who might be lacking in this area. Critical thinking allows leaders at every level to evaluate their decision-making and how these decisions ultimately impact results.*

Kasowski, D. (2020, November 4). *Seven critical thinking tactics high-performing leaders use to make informed decisions*. Forbes.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2020/11/03/seven-critical-thinking-tactics-high-performing-leaders-to-make-informed-decisions/?sh=19ef59ee24f7>

### Questioning Assumptions

From the article “How Leaders Should Think Critically”

*If you want to succeed in 21st Century business, you need to become a critical thinker. Roger Martin of the Rotman School of Management figured this out a decade ago and as dean, has been working to transform his school’s business curriculum with greater emphasis on critical thinking skills. As Lane Wallace explained in the New York Times, what Martin and many others are seeking to do is approach learning and problem solving from a multicultural platform that borrows from academia, business, the arts and even history.*

Baldoni, J. (2017, April 18). *How leaders should think critically*. *Harvard Business Review*.

<https://hbr.org/2010/01/how-leaders-should-think-criti>

### Workshop Activities To Teach Critical Thinking Skills

From the U.S. Department of Labor presentation “Problem Solving and Critical Thinking Workplace Exercises”

*The activities in this section focus on learning how to solve problems in a variety of ways in the workplace. Participants will hear about how to properly tell the difference among criticism, praise, and feedback and reacting appropriately. The section will also review strategies for making ethical decisions, solving problems on a team with others, and learning how to take into account others’ perceptions when assessing actions or statements in the workplace.*

U.S. Department of Labor. (n.d.). *Mastering soft skills for workplace success: Skills to pay the bills*. Office of Disability Employment Policy. Retrieved October 13, 2021, from

<https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/odep/topics/youth/softskills/problem.pdf>



### Critical Thinking Materials From the Organization of American States

From the online resource “Critical Thinking Toolkit”

*To think critically is to identify and solve problems; formulate, evaluate and use information: test ideas based on relevant criteria; recognize one’s own judgments and put them to the test in light of new information or arguments; and communicate effectively with others.*

*Critical thinking is the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action.*

Organization of American States. (2015). *Critical thinking toolkit.*

<https://www.oas.org/en/iten/PDFs/Critical%20Thinking%20Toolkit.pdf>

### Promoting Organizational Citizenship

From the article “Organizational Citizenship Behaviours: Definitions and Dimensions”

*Organizational citizenship behaviours (OCBs) are individual, discretionary actions by employees that are outside their formal job description. Managers who are aware of the pros and cons of OCBs can help employees contribute optimally to the organization and avoid burnout. Here is what you need to know:*

- *Employees who feel organizational citizenship will “go the extra mile” out of personal motivation—identifying these motivations can lead to increased performance and job satisfaction*
- *Expecting or formalising this behaviour can lead to job creep or an unhealthy work/life balance; but letting it go unrecognised may diminish motivation*
- *Positive OCBs reduce the need for supervision, improve workplace morale and result in cost-saving suggestions—all of which free up managerial time*
- *Individuals are forward-thinking in the behaviours they exhibit, and tend to select those behaviours that they hope will be part of their future role*
- *Employees who are willing and happy to go beyond formal job requirements will help organizations cope with change and unpredictable circumstances*

The Economics of Mutuality Forum is affiliated with Oxford University.

Gulliver, N. (2020, July 15). Organizational citizenship behaviours: Definitions and dimensions. *Economics of Mutuality.* <https://eom.org/content-hub-blog/organizational-citizenship-behaviours>



### Bias Plays an Unwanted Role in Organizations, but Can Be Addressed

From the article “Unconscious Bias: When Good Intentions Aren’t Enough”

*A growing body of research shows that we all harbor unconscious biases. As psychologist Beverly Daniel Tatum has explained, we absorb bias in the same way we breathe in smog—involuntarily and usually without any awareness of it.*

*Tests of implicit bias (or unconscious bias) show that people of all backgrounds show unconscious preferences on the basis of gender, race, sexual orientation, or other aspects of identity. According to these tests, most people favor the group they are a member of—despite claims that they have no preference. The tests also show, however, that people across groups show preferences for the ‘culturally valued group.’ Approximately one-third to one-half of people in ‘stigmatized groups’ tend to favor the ‘culturally valued group’ (Morin, 2015).*

*These biases influence us even when they are in direct opposition to our espoused beliefs—and sometimes in opposition to our own lived experience. That’s because unconscious biases are just that—unconscious. We aren’t aware of them and how they influence our behavior. For many educators, this can be disconcerting.*

Fiarman, S. E. (2016). Unconscious bias: When good intentions aren’t enough. *Educational Leadership*, 74(3), 10-15.

[http://files.partnership-academy.net/200002623-049ce0690e/Unconscious%20Bias\\_Educational%20Leadership.pdf](http://files.partnership-academy.net/200002623-049ce0690e/Unconscious%20Bias_Educational%20Leadership.pdf)

### Tips on Eliminating Unintentional Stereotyping and Discrimination

From the article “How to Defeat Unconscious Bias in Recruiting and Hiring”

*During our initial Zoom coaching session, as participants described their existing hiring process, I stumbled upon a common--and counterproductive--pattern. Despite processes in place to ensure that discriminatory behavior would be avoided, the company’s hiring managers often relied on gut instincts when making decisions.*

*This results in a workplace that isn’t diverse and inclusive. It eventually promotes people with the same profiles to leadership positions—who will then make similar hiring decisions, thereby fortifying a self-reinforcing loop.*

*How to defeat unconscious bias in recruiting and hiring.* (2020, August 14). Inc.

<https://www.inc.com/entrepreneurs-organization/how-to-defeat-unconscious-bias-in-recruiting-hiring.html>



### Having Good Processes in Place Can Help Head Off Bias

From the article “Google Beats Unconscious Bias by Teaching Its Employees These 4 Tactics”

*It's been estimated that we are exposed to roughly eleven million bits of information at any given moment. However, our brains can only consciously manage about forty of those eleven million (that's right FORTY). In other words, the vast majority of information is filtered through a perceptual lens that is driven by our unconscious mind.*

*Everyone is subject to bias. It's a subliminal response to mitigating fears, protecting ourselves, and is a result of years of conditioning and associations. But, to ensure we're making the best decisions we possibly can (especially people decisions), we have to make sure we're objective and consider all the facts before drawing conclusions.*

Schneider, M. (2017, November 20). *Google beats unconscious bias by teaching its employees these 4 tactics*. Inc. <https://www.inc.com/michael-schneider/google-beats-unconscious-bias-by-teaching-its-employees-these-4-tactics.html>

### Addressing Unconscious Bias in Hiring Can Boost Diversity

From the article “6 Tips for Taking the Bias Out of Your Hiring Process”

Follow the article link for full text of the tips.

1. Use gender-neutral, inclusive language in job descriptions and/or questionnaires
2. Review visa sponsorship policies
3. Introduce structured interviews
4. Create consistent interview scorecards
5. Have candidate submit work samples or partake in a skill test
6. Set diversity goals

Mickiewicz, M. (2016, March 17). *6 tips for taking the bias out of your hiring process*. Inc. <https://www.inc.com/matt-mickiewicz/6-tips-removing-bias-hiring-process.html>

### Advice on Fairly Recruiting, Managing and Developing a Team

From the article “How the Best Bosses Interrupt Bias on Their Teams”

*Companies spend millions on antibias training each year. The goal is to create workforces that are more inclusive, and thereby more innovative and more effective. Studies show that well-managed diverse groups outperform homogeneous ones and are more committed, have higher collective intelligence, and are better at making decisions and solving problems. But research also shows that bias prevention programs rarely deliver. And some companies don't invest in them at all. So how can you, as an individual leader, make sure your team is including and making the most of diverse voices? Can one person fix what an entire organization can't?*



Williams, J. C., & Mihaylo, S. (2019). How the best bosses interrupt bias on their teams. *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2019/11/how-the-best-bosses-interrupt-bias-on-their-teams>

### Reverse Mentoring To Bridge Generational Differences

From the article “How to Leverage Reverse Mentoring to Increase Diversity in Your Organization”

*It's not just about understanding technology; reverse mentoring can also change ingrained perspectives that may be inhibiting true organizational diversity. For example, many older workers see younger employees as not as valuable, while younger workers believe that older workers are set in their ways and unable to grasp new technology. Meanwhile, millennials and Gen Zers are less concerned with race, ethnicity, sexual preference or identity and level of ability/disability. By having open conversations and taking the time to find common ground, younger employees can break down the beliefs held by older workers.*

Gibbons, S. (2018, October 12). How to leverage reverse mentoring to increase diversity in your organization. Inc. <https://www.inc.com/young-entrepreneur-council/how-to-leverage-reverse-mentoring-to-increase-diversity-in-your-organization.html>

### HR Departments Have a Big Role to Play in Encouraging Civility

From the article “How to Create a Culture of Civility”

*Workplace stress costs the U.S. economy billions of dollars each year, according to the American Psychological Association. When employee incivility goes unaddressed, organizations experience higher turnover, more absenteeism and lower productivity. It can also lead to workplace harassment and potentially expensive lawsuits. Conversely, research shows that civility has benefits.*

Meinert, D. (2021, July 6). How to create a culture of civility. SHRM. <https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/hr-magazine/0417/pages/how-to-create-a-culture-of-civility.aspx>

### Hire, Teach, Reward, Model and Expect Civility in Your Organization

From the article “The Price of Incivility”

*We've interviewed employees, managers, HR executives, presidents, and CEOs. We've administered questionnaires, run experiments, led workshops, and spoken with doctors, lawyers, judges, law enforcement officers, architects, engineers, consultants, and coaches about how they've faced and handled incivility. And we've collected data from more than 14,000 people throughout the United States and Canada in order to track the prevalence, types, causes, costs, and cures of incivility at work. We know two things for certain: Incivility is expensive, and few organizations recognize or take action to curtail it.*



Porath, C., & Pearson, C. (2019, March 19). The price of incivility. *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2013/01/the-price-of-incivility>

### Civility Training Toolkit

From the presentation “Supporting Our Staff: Toolkit to Promote Cultures of Civility and Respect”

The primary root causes of workplace bullying are incivility and disrespect. By changing the focus from preventing bullying to promoting civility, managers can be more effective in addressing inappropriate behaviors.

British National Health Service. (2020). *Supporting our staff: Toolkit to promote cultures of civility and respect*. (2020)

<https://www.socialpartnershipforum.org/sites/default/files/2021-10/NHSi-Civility-and-Respect-Toolkit-v9.pdf>



“ Critical thinking is reasonable reflective thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe or do. ”

— Robert Ennis





## Critical Thinking for Individuals

The following resources are provided to help individuals learn more about critical thinking and apply strategies to improve their critical thinking skills both professionally and personally. These resources support and expand on key concepts presented in previous parts of this playbook. They can be used for self study, personal growth, or discussion with colleagues. The materials are intended to be accessible to broad audiences with different levels of expertise.

### Center for Development of Security Excellence (CDSE) Handout on Critical Thinking Methods

From the online resource “Insider Threat—Job Aid: Critical Thinking Tools for Insider Threat Analysts”

This resource provides brief descriptions of 12 different critical thinking tools and heuristics for applying the tools. Although developed for insider threat analysts, the tools are applicable for problem solving across many domains.

Center for Development of Security Excellence. (n.d.). *Insider threat - job aid: Critical thinking tools for insider threat analysts.*

<https://www.cdse.edu/Portals/124/Documents/jobaids/insider/INT250-critical-thinking-tools.pdf?ver=WM3DoBaBN9bV3f7yQhQRXQ%3d%3d>

Center for Development of Security Excellence. (n.d.). *Insider threat - job aid: Critical thinking techniques for insider threat analysts.*

[https://www.cdse.edu/Portals/124/Documents/jobaids/insider/INT250-critical-thinking-techniques.pdf?ver=YCbHYzVptu5FroUNdf\\_1-g%3d%3d](https://www.cdse.edu/Portals/124/Documents/jobaids/insider/INT250-critical-thinking-techniques.pdf?ver=YCbHYzVptu5FroUNdf_1-g%3d%3d)

### Question Your Beliefs When Presented With New Evidence

From the article “*Why Thinking Like a Scientist Is Good for You*”

*In a changing world, you have to be willing and able to change your mind. Otherwise, your expertise can fail, your opinions get out of date, and your ideas fall flat.*

This article features an interview with psychologist Adam Grant about his 2021 book *Think Again, The Power of Knowing What You Don’t Know*.

Suttie, J. (2021, March 24). Why thinking like a scientist is good for you. *Greater Good Magazine*.

[https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/why\\_thinking\\_like\\_a\\_scientist\\_is\\_good\\_for\\_you](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/why_thinking_like_a_scientist_is_good_for_you)



### Avoiding False Information When Searching the Internet

From the online resource “From Search to Research: Developing Critical Thinking Through Web Research Skills”

*As our ability to gather and store information evolves, however, our skills in finding and analyzing information must also evolve. Today we need new critical thinking skills to help us be wise consumers of the data available to us.*

This web resource discusses the value of critical thinking when consuming information from the Internet.

Potter, M. L. (2010). (rep.). *From search to research: Developing critical thinking through web research skills*. Bing. [ghttp://download.microsoft.com/download/a/6/4/a645e848-4937-4564-9cf6-16a57ef8bf48/criticalthinking.pdf](http://download.microsoft.com/download/a/6/4/a645e848-4937-4564-9cf6-16a57ef8bf48/criticalthinking.pdf)

### Be Aware of Common Biases That Can Affect Your Hiring Decisions

From the article “How to Reduce Personal Bias When Hiring”

*Before taking any steps, however, it’s important to accept that no one is pre-loaded with inclusive behavior; we are, in fact, biologically hardwired to align with people like us and reject those whom we consider different.*

*Undoing these behaviors requires moving from a fixed mindset—the belief that we’re already doing the best we possibly can to build diverse teams—to one of openness and growth, where we can deeply understand, challenge, and confront our personal biases.*

Tulshyan, R. (2019, June 28). How to reduce personal bias when hiring. *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2019/06/how-to-reduce-personal-bias-when-hiring>

### Be a Better Colleague or Manager by Understanding Emotions

From the article “What is Emotional Intelligence? Here's the Simple, Easy to Understand Answer”

Emotional intelligence includes the following four abilities:

7. Self-awareness: the ability to identify and understand emotions in yourself.
8. Self-management: the ability to manage those emotions and keep them from causing you to act (or refrain from acting) in a way that you later regret.
9. Social awareness: the ability to identify and understand emotions in others.
10. Relationship management: the ability to provide and receive benefits from your relationships with others.

Bariso, J. (2021, October 31). *What is emotional intelligence? Here's the simple, easy to understand answer*. Inc. <https://www.inc.com/justin-bariso/what-is-emotional-intelligence-what-is-eq-what-is-ei-simple-answer-g-factor-multiple-intelligences.html>



### Advice From Human Resources Professionals

From the website “Implicit Bias Prevention Resources”

The Society for Human Resource Management offers practical advice for promoting fair and equitable employment practices, including tips for addressing implicit bias and making critical thinking part of your organizational culture.

*Implicit bias prevention resources.* (2020, April 2). SHRM. <https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/hr-news/pages/implicit-bias-prevention-resources.aspx>



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