

SHAPING THE FUTURE

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F-45

Reducing Bias in Decision Making

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When offering opinions to the court, or to other decisions makers, it is important to be aware of bias and situations that influence their decision making. As social clinicians, we are well trained on biases regarding race, gender, sexual orientation and a variety of other demographic areas. However, we are often less aware about how our thinking is impacted by common, normal cognitive processes. Although these processes are frequently not problematic in day to day decision making, they can become problematic when it influences our assessments of others, especially when assessing risk. This presentation will look at several processes such as conformation bias, hindsight bias, availability heuristic, over reliance on unique data, fundamental attribution error and how they influence thinking without our awareness. There are external factors that influence our decision making and, again, these are often outside our awareness. These factors include the adversarial nature of the criminal justice system, the gamblers' fallacy, and framing. The presentation will conclude with ideas for reducing the impact of bias and improving decision making.

Learning Goals:

- Identify external sources of bias that influence decision making
- Identify internal sources of bias that influence decision making
- Identify strategies for reducing the impact of external and internal bias.

Dr. Magnuson earned her MSW at NYU and then her PsyD from Colorado School of Professional Psychology. She has been treating and assessing people charged with a sex offense for over 20 years. Dr. Magnuson teaches Assessment and Diagnosis at Simmons School of Social Work. She currently has a private practice in Portland Maine.