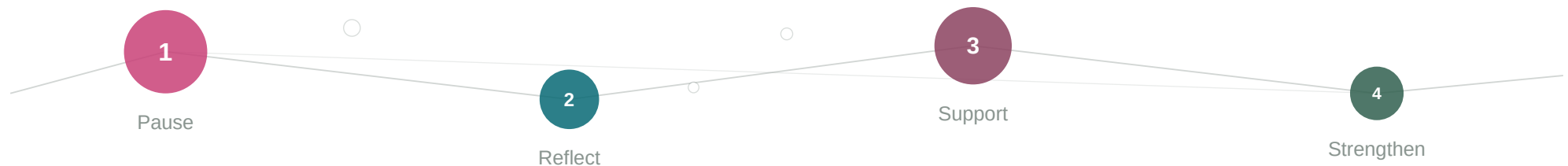




Responding to Bias

A 4-Step Reflection Tool



Working with bias is lifelong work. Bias often comes from automatic shortcuts in the brain that help us make quick decisions, assess situations, and respond to what feels familiar or unfamiliar. That is also why bias can be difficult to recognise. It is automatic and often happens before we have time to think.

The work is not to control every thought or eliminate bias completely. That is not possible. The work is to become more aware of the patterns, triggers, and circumstances in which bias becomes active. What does it make us assume? How does it shape our behaviour, decisions, and relationships?

This tool helps you pause, reflect, and choose a more intentional response. Use it to look at what is happening within you, between people, and in the wider system.



STEP 1

Pause and Acknowledge

When you notice bias, exclusion, or unfairness, pause before reacting. Take a moment to slow down, breathe, and create space between what happened and how you respond.

ASK YOURSELF

- What happened?
- What did I observe?
- What did I feel?
- What facts do I have, and what am I interpreting?
- What was my first body reaction?

Bias often shows up quickly, through assumptions, discomfort, defensiveness, silence, or an automatic reaction. Noticing it is the first step.

STEP 2

Reflect and Choose

Before taking action, look at what may be influencing your response.

ASK YOURSELF

- What assumptions might I be making?
- What was my intention?
- What was the impact?
- Was this connected to identity, role, background, status, or power?
- What triggered the reaction or behaviour?
- Is this a one-off situation, or part of a wider pattern?

Then decide what is needed next. It may be a conversation, a boundary, an apology, a repair, a report, or simply more perspective before acting.

1

Pause

2

Reflect



STEP 3

Support Others

Bias work is not only individual. It also happens in relationships, teams, and conversations.

YOU CAN SUPPORT OTHERS BY

- Creating space for honest dialogue
- Sharing examples and learning resources
- Asking better questions
- Listening to different experiences
- Separating intention from impact
- Encouraging feedback and reflection
- Supporting people to take responsibility without shame

The goal is not to blame. The goal is to build awareness, care, and better choices.

STEP 4

Strengthen the System

Bias becomes harder to address when systems are unclear, inconsistent, or unsafe. Look at the conditions around the behaviour.

ASK

- Are expectations clear?
- Are decisions transparent?
- Are people treated consistently?
- Are different voices included?
- Are there safe ways to raise concerns?
- Are leaders held accountable for non-discriminatory behaviour?

Strengthening the system means looking beyond individual incidents and addressing the patterns, processes, and behaviours that allow bias to continue.

3

Support

4

Strengthen

