

BLIND SPOTS (PART 1): IMPLICIT BIAS IN THE WORKPLACE

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Wendy McGuire Coats authored the article, "Blind Spots (Part 1): Implicit Bias in the Workplace," which is featured in the November issue of the *WCR* newsletter. In this article, Coats discusses the hidden biases that play a role in workplace discrimination.

"Isms" can be tough, like the words racism, ageism, and sexism. "Ism" is even its own word. It is a noun meaning "a distinctive doctrine, theory, system or practice." Mostly, we use -ism as a suffix as in vegetarianism or regionalism. The same is true for -ist words like racist, sexist, socialist, typist, motorist, though here we're now referring to a person with a set of skills or beliefs. Depending on a ton of factors -ism and -ist words may be shunned or embraced. With hot button -isms and the climate, it is often hard to hear (or read), "I'm not a bad person. I'm not a ___-ist." In this scenario, what is often being referred to is an explicit or overt opinion or view point. Biases, however, are different from -isms or --ists. As Verna A. Myers explains in *What If I Say the Wrong Thing: 25 Habits for Culturally Effective People*, "the isms speak to how certain groups have the power and privilege to act on their biases and prejudices, and to define what is right and good and beautiful and true." "

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