Evidence-based Strategies to Reduce Unconscious Bias

Jennifer Sheridan, PhD
Eve Fine, PhD

May 14, 2013

Strategies That DO NOT Work

- ## Stereotype Suppression

  (e.g., Galinsky & Moskowitz. *J Pers Soc Psychol* 2000;
  Monteith et al. *Pers Soc Psychol Rev* 1998)

  – Banish stereotypes from one's mind
  (i.e., gender or race "blind")

Strategies That DO NOT Work

- ## Stereotype Suppression

  (e.g., Galinsky & Moskowitz. *J Pers Soc Psychol* 2000;
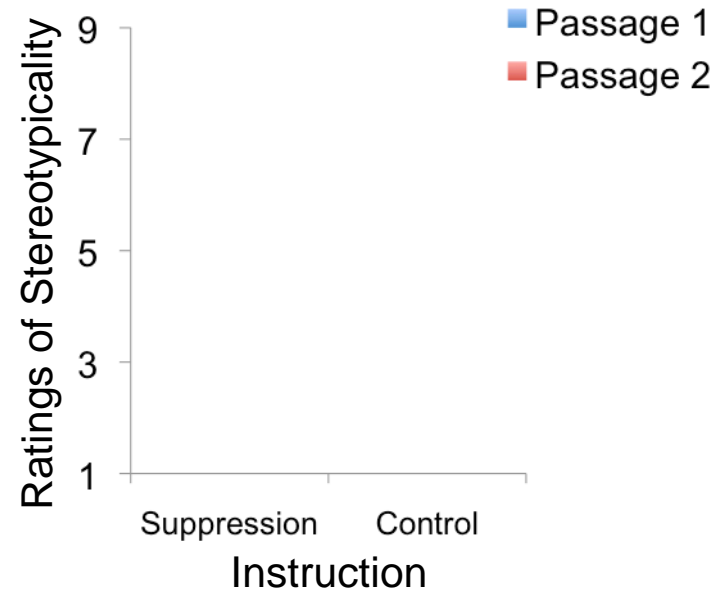 Monteith et al. *Pers Soc Psychol Rev*1998)

  – Banish stereotypes from one's mind
  (i.e., gender or race "blind")

  – Macrae et al (1994, Experiment 2)
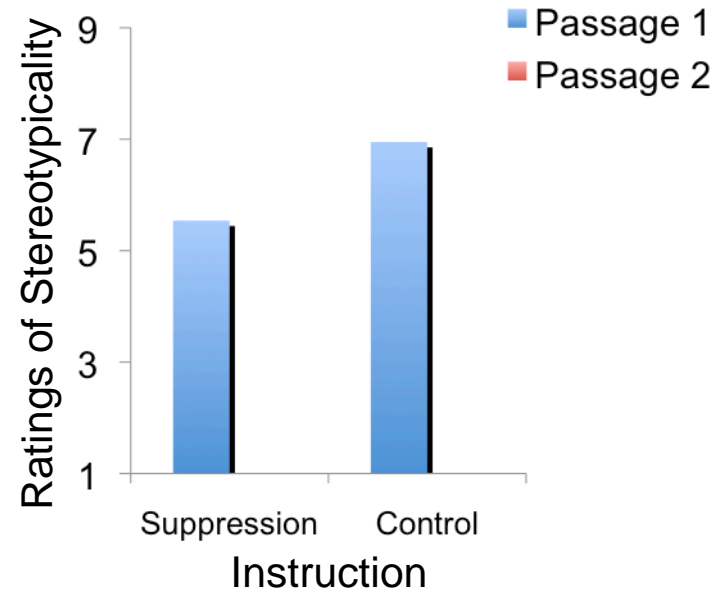 (Macrae et al. *J Pers Soc Psychol* 1994)

Strategies That DO NOT Work

- ## Stereotype Suppression

  (e.g., Galinsky & Moskowitz. *J Pers Soc Psychol* 2000; Monteith et al. *Pers Soc Psychol Rev* 1998)

  – Banish stereotypes from one's mind (i.e., gender or race "blind")

  – Macrae et al (1994, Experiment 2)
    (Macrae et al. *J Pers Soc Psychol* 1994)

Strategies That DO NOT Work

- ## Stereotype Suppression
  (e.g., Galinsky & Moskowitz. *J Pers Soc Psychol* 2000; Monteith et al. *Pers Soc Psychol Rev* 1998)

  - Banish stereotypes from one's mind (i.e., gender or race "blind")

  - Macrae et al (1994, Experiment 2)
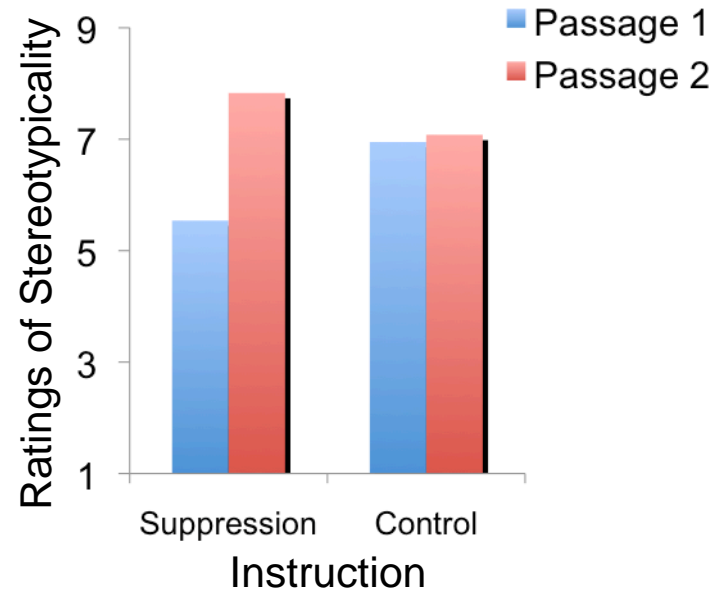   (Macrae et al. *J Pers Soc Psychol* 1994)

Strategies That DO NOT Work

- # Stereotype Suppression

  (e.g., Galinsky & Moskowitz. *J Pers Soc Psychol* 2000; Monteith et al. *Pers Soc Psychol Rev*1998)

  – Banish stereotypes from one's mind (i.e., gender or race "blind")

  – Macrae et al (1994, Experiment 2)
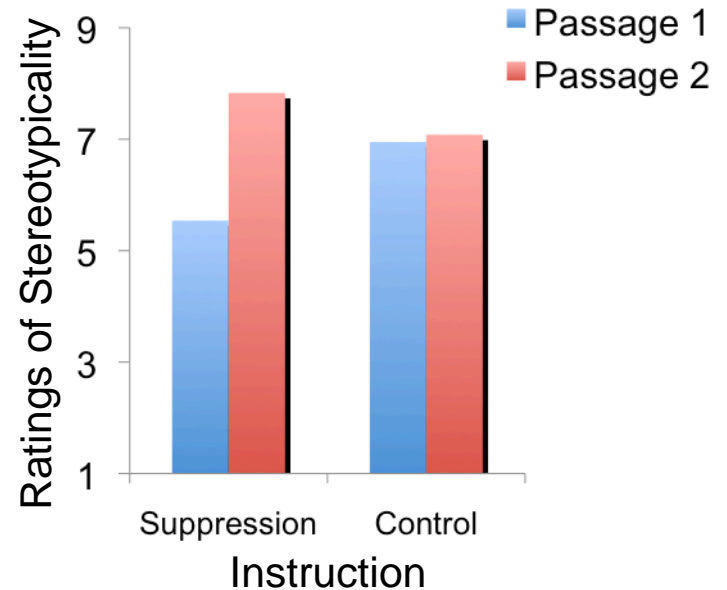   (Macrae et al. *J Pers Soc Psychol* 1994)

  – Rebound effects

Strategies That DO NOT Work

- ## Stereotype Suppression
  (e.g., Galinsky & Moskowitz. *J Pers Soc Psychol* 2000; Monteith et al. *Pers Soc Psychol Rev* 1998)

  – Banish stereotypes from one's mind (i.e., gender or race "blind")

  – Macrae et al. (1994, Experiment 2)
  (Macrae et al. *J Pers Soc Psychol* 1994)

  – Rebound effects

- ## Belief in personal objectivity
  (Uhlmann & Cohen. *Organ Behav Hum Decis Process* 2007)

  – Leads to biased evaluations of women

Strategies That DO NOT Work
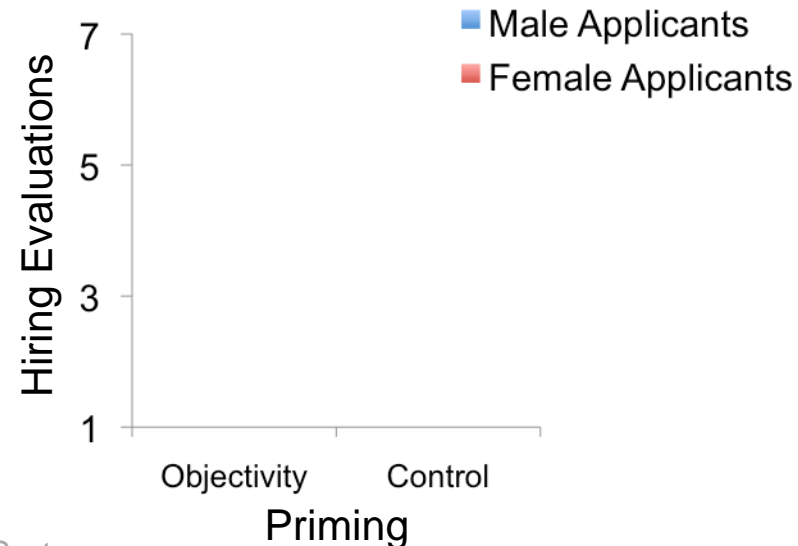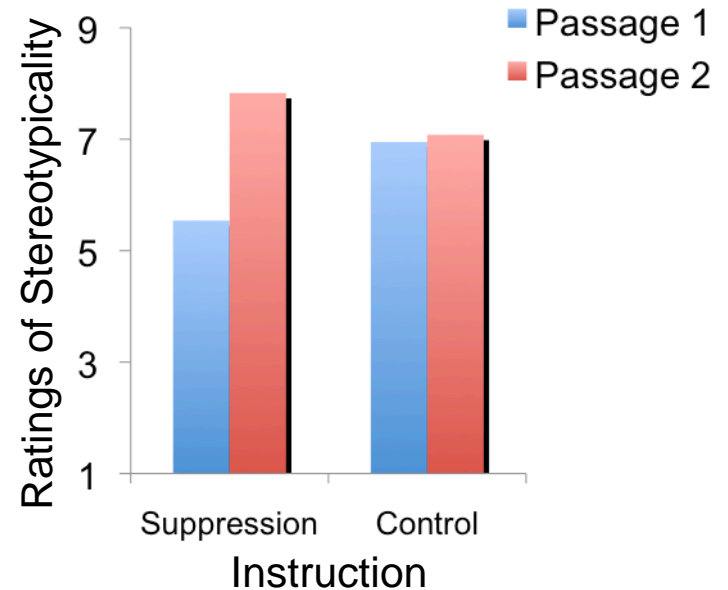
- ## Stereotype Suppression
  (e.g., Galinsky & Moskowitz. *J Pers Soc Psychol* 2000; Monteith et al. *Pers Soc Psychol Rev* 1998)

  – Banish stereotypes from one's mind (i.e., gender or race "blind")

  – Macrae et al. (1994, Experiment 2)
  (Macrae et al. *J Pers Soc Psychol* 1994)

  – Rebound effects

- ## Belief in personal objectivity
  (Uhlmann & Cohen. *Organ Behav Hum Decis Process* 2007)

  – Leads to biased evaluations of women

Strategies That DO NOT Work
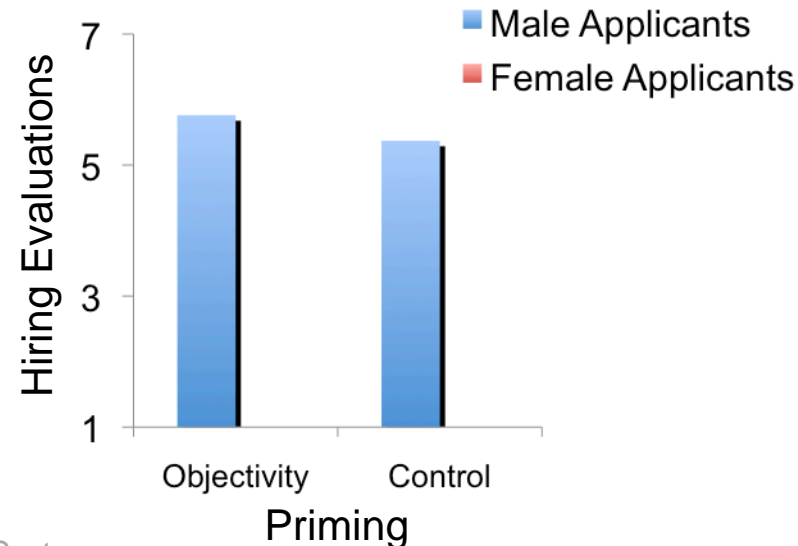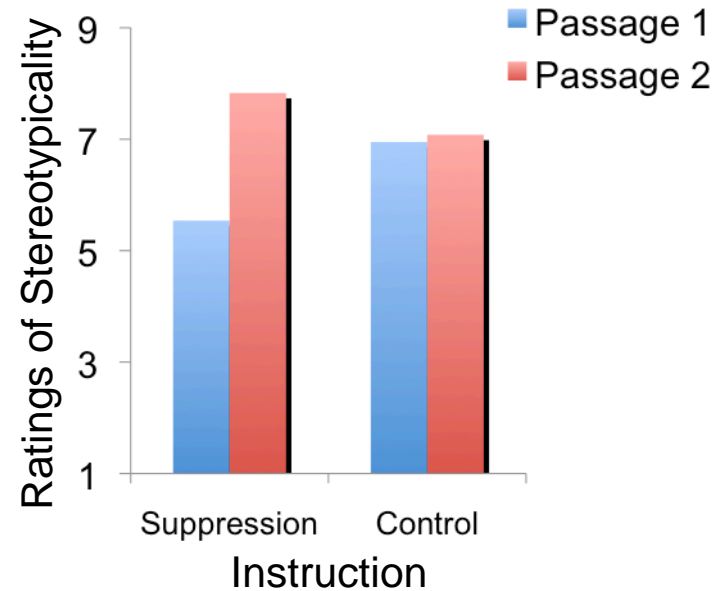
- **Stereotype Suppression**
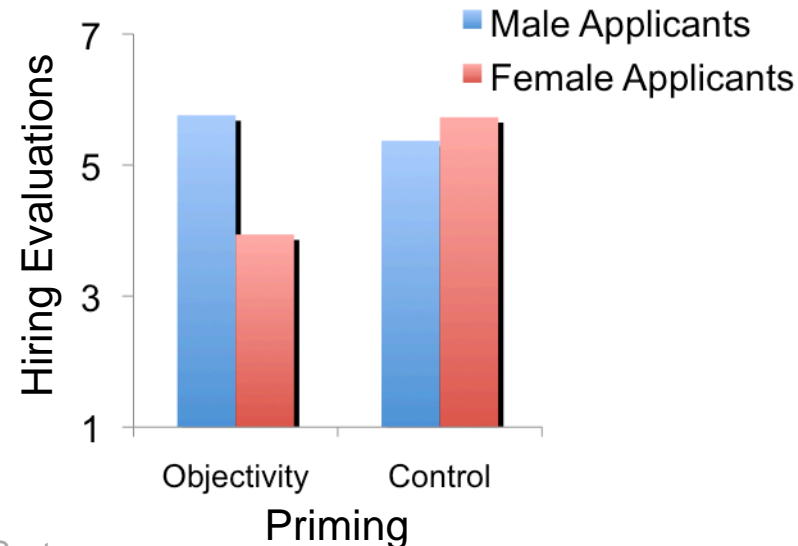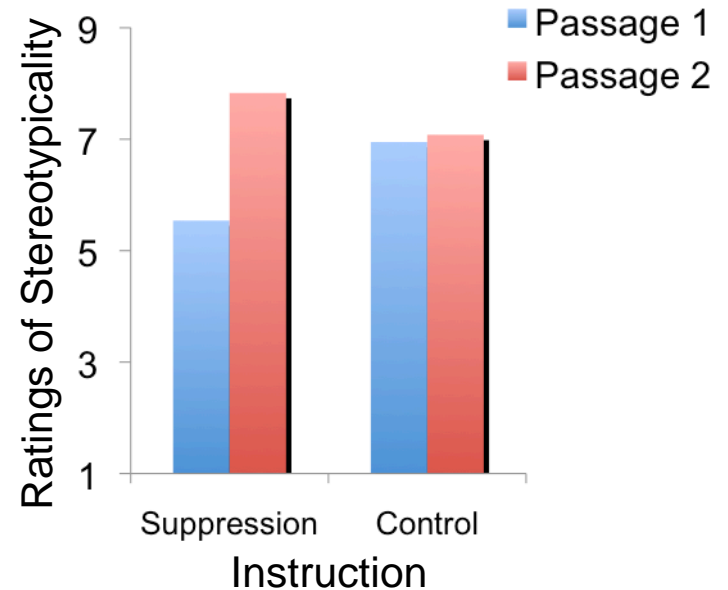 (e.g., Galinsky & Moskowitz. *J Pers Soc Psychol* 2000; Monteith et al. *Pers Soc Psychol Rev* 1998)

  - Banish stereotypes from one's mind (i.e., gender or race "blind")
  - Macrae et al. (1994, Experiment 2)
    (Macrae et al. *J Pers Soc Psychol* 1994)
  - Rebound effects

- **Belief in personal objectivity**
  (Uhlmann & Cohen. *Organ Behav Hum Decis Process* 2007)

  - Leads to biased evaluations of women

1. Stereotype Replacement

- ✓ Recognize when you have stereotypic thoughts, and recognize stereotypic portrayals in society. For example,
  - *Women faculty are less interested in leadership opportunities*
  - *Portrayal of females as poor at math or males as unable to do housework*
- ✓ Label the characterization as stereotypical
  - *e.g., Role incongruity, Prescriptive gender norms*
- ✓ Identify precipitating factors
  - *e.g., Priming with gender-congruent information*
- ✓ Challenge the fairness of the portrayal and replace it with a non-stereotypic response. For example,
  - *I know many successful women leaders*
  - *I know that training and experience rather than gender are the main determinants of leader competence*
  - *Research does not support a gender difference in math performance once we control for the number of math courses taken*

2. Counter-Stereotype Imaging

✓ Help regulate your response by imagining a counter-stereotype woman in detail

- *e.g., Imagine an astronaut, engineer, CEO who is also a woman OR specific positive counter-stereotypical individuals you know*

3. Individuating (instead of generalizing)

✓ Avoid making a snap decision based on a stereotype

- *e.g., Make gender less salient than being a scientist, physician, or program developer*

✓ Obtain more information on specific qualifications, past experiences, etc. before making a decision

- *e.g., Heilman study reviewed in Module 2.*

✓ *Practice making situational attributions rather than dispositional attributions*

- *e.g., If a woman cries, consider a situational explanation (maybe a loved one died) rather than a dispositional explanation (e.g., she's emotional)*

# 4. Perspective-Taking

✓ Adopt the perspective (in the first person) of a member of the stigmatized group

- *For example, imagine what it would be like to…*
  - *Have your abilities called into question*
  - *Be viewed as less committed to your career than colleagues with similar training and effort*
  - *Not be offered opportunities because of assumptions about family responsibilities*

5. Increasing Opportunities for Contact

✓ Seek out opportunities for greater interaction with counter-stereotypic women

- *e.g., Meet with women in high authority positions to discuss research endeavors, ideas, and visions*

- *e.g., When compiling membership for key committees or speaker lists, ensure that women (from diverse groups) are represented*
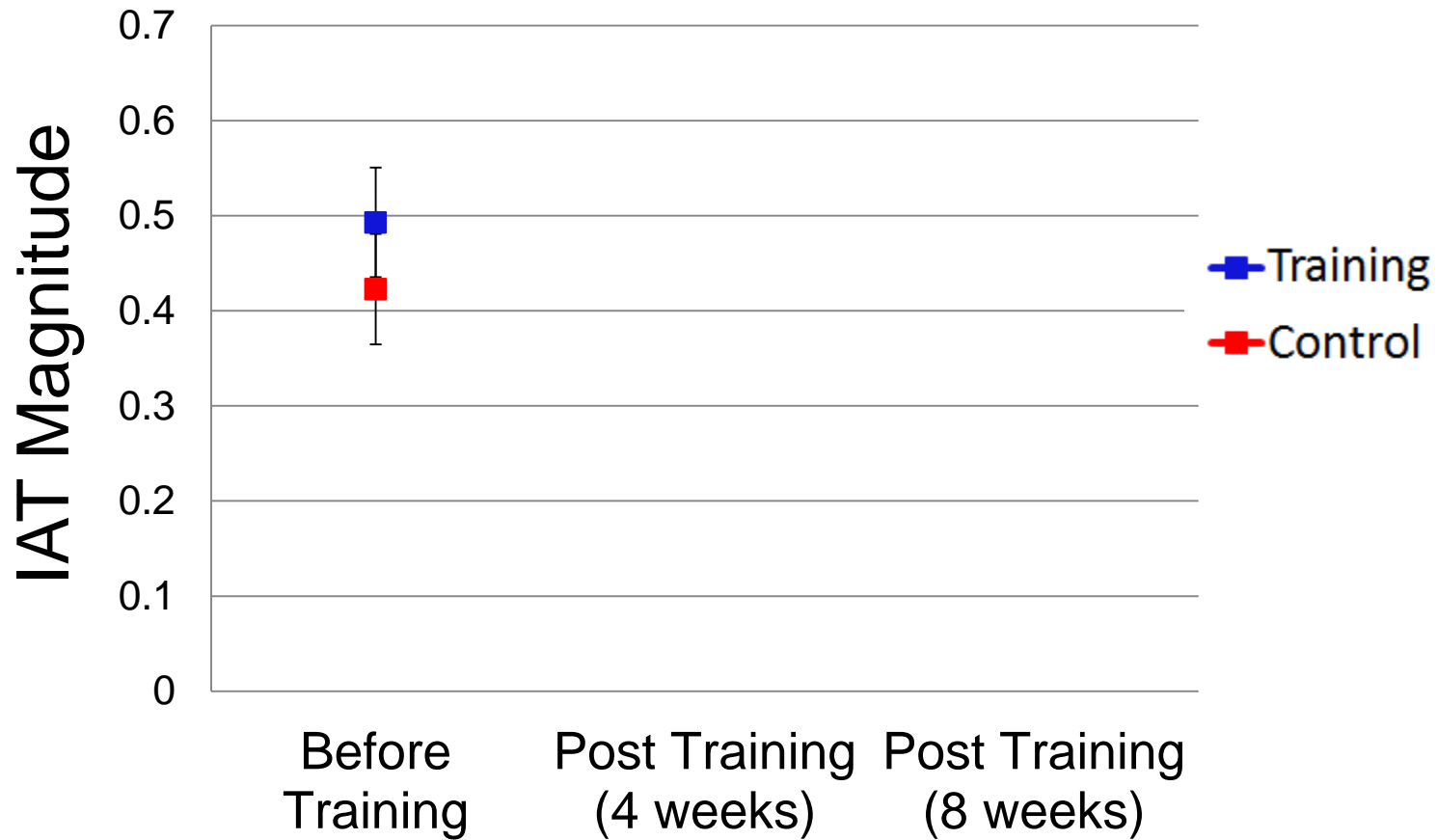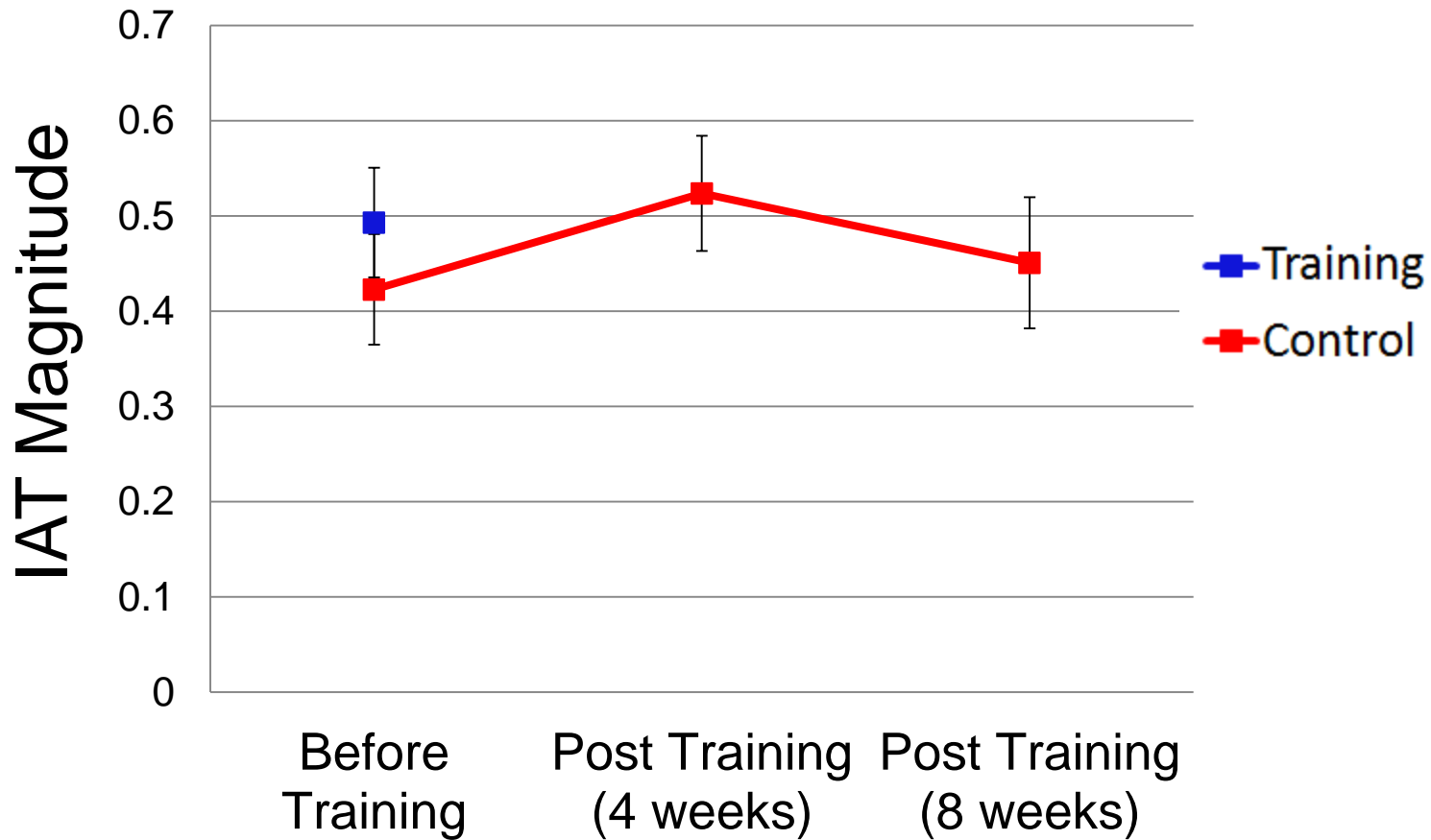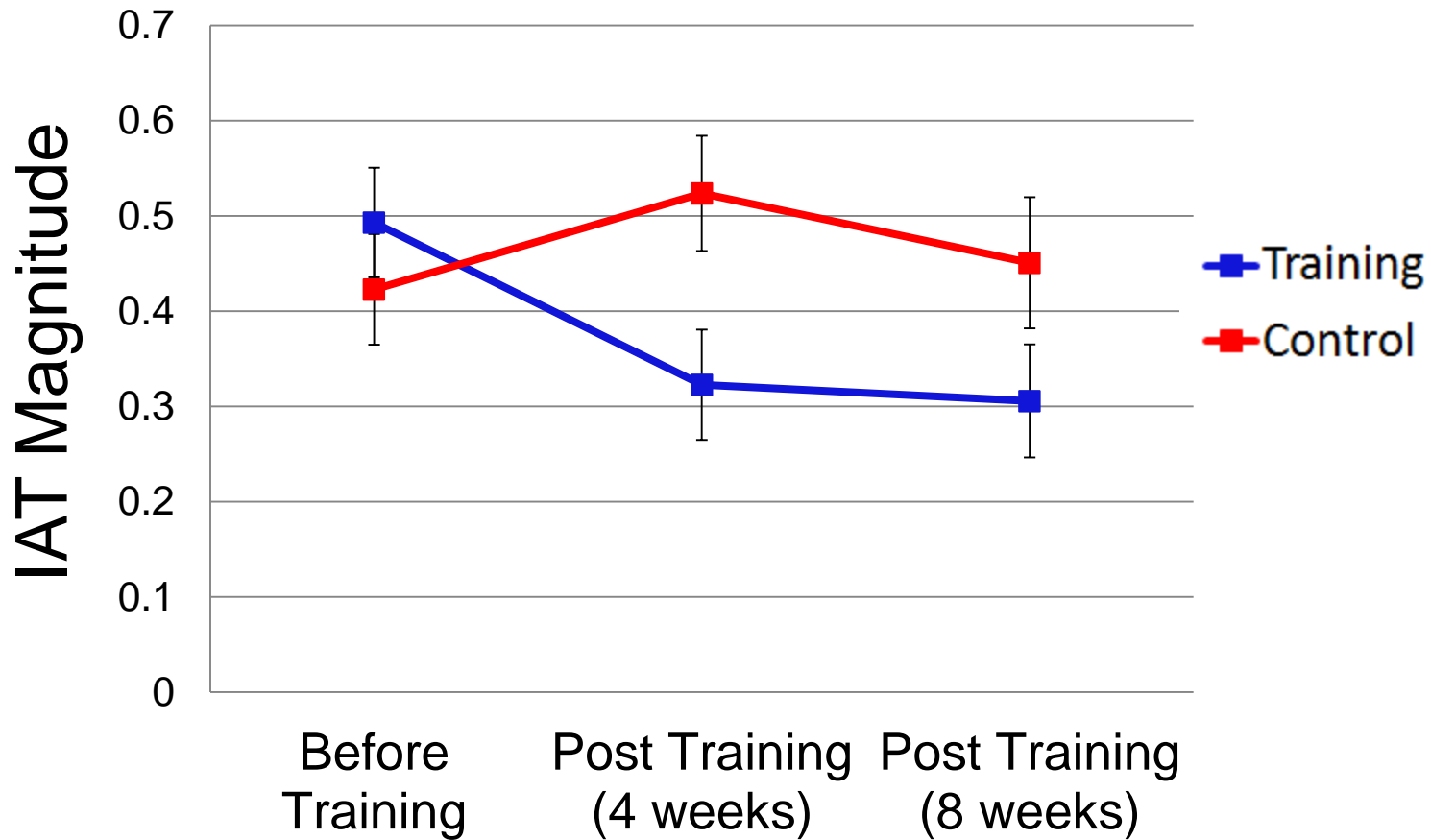
Breaking the Prejudice Habit

- Not necessarily easy

- With effort (awareness, motivation, and a sustained commitment), prejudice is a habit that can be broken
  - Can expect that you may slip up
  - Stay committed

- Strategies we provided are powerful tools to combat implicit biases
  - Implicit responses can be brought into line with explicit beliefs

Reducing Bias in Evaluations

What Not to Do:

- Suppress bias and assumptions from one's mind (or try to)

- Rely solely on a presumably "objective" ranking or rating system to reduce bias

  Wennarås & Wold. Nepotism and Sexism in Peer Review. *Nature* 1997.

Reducing Bias in Evaluations

Know what factors increase vulnerability to unconscious bias

- Believing oneself to be objective and unbiased
- Believing oneself to be colorblind or gender blind
- Having insufficient or ambiguous information
- Being busy and under time pressure
- Multi-tasking
- Being stressed, tired, and/or hungry

Reducing Bias in Evaluations

What to do:

- Replace your self-image as an objective person with recognition and acceptance that you are subject to the influence of bias and assumptions
  Uhlmann and Cohen. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 2007.

- Diversify the evaluation committee
  - Social tuning/increased motivation to respond w/o bias
    Lowery, Hardin, and Sinclair. *J. Personality and Social Psychology* 2001.
  - Counterstereotype imaging
    Blair, Ma, and Lenton. *J. Personality and Social Psychology* 2001.
    Dasgupta and Greenwald. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 2001.

- Hold each member of the evaluation committee responsible for conducting equitable evaluations
    Dobbs and Crano. *Social Psychology Quarterly* 2001.
    Foschi. S*ocial Psychology Quarterly* 1996.

- Critical Mass – increase proportion of women and minorities in the pool
    Heilman, *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance* 1980.
    van Ommeren et al. *Psychological Reports* 2005.

Reducing Bias in Evaluations

What to do (cont.):

- Develop and prioritize criteria prior to evaluating applicants.
  Uhlmann and Cohen. *Psychological Science* 2005.

- Spend sufficient time and attention on evaluating each application
  Martell. *Applied Social Psychology* 1991.

- Focus on each applicant as an individual and evaluate their entire application package – information minimizes bias
  Heilman. *Organizational Behavior & Human Performance* 1984.
  Tosi and Einbender. Academy of Management Journal 1985.
  Brauer and Er-rafiy. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 2013.

- Use inclusion rather than exclusion decision-making processes
  Hugenberg et al. *J. Personality and Social Psychology* 2006.

- Stop periodically to evaluate your criteria and their application

- Accountability - Be able to defend every decision
  - **Competence:** Biernat and Fuegen,, J*ournal of Social Issues*, 2001
  - **Equity:** Dobbs and Crano, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 2001
    Foschi, *Social Psychology Quarterly,* 1996

Institutional Solutions

- Leadership: Awareness, commitment, talking about it (*Lean In*)

- New educational practices around unconscious bias (*Why So Slow?*)

  – Hiring, climate, tenure/promotion, awards, more!

  – Examples at UW-Madison:

    Searching for Excellence & Diversity workshops for hiring committees; Bias Literacy workshops

Institutional Solutions

- Family-friendly policies and practices (*More Women in Science*)

  - Change of culture around use of these policies required!

  - Examples at UW-Madison:
    Tenure clock extensions, childcare, lactation rooms, dual career hiring, Vilas Life-Cycle Awards

- Attention to workplace "climate" (*More Women in Science*)

  - Examples at UW-Madison:

    Faculty Worklife Study, Department Climate Workshops, Chair chats

- Attention to pipeline (*More Women in Science*)