



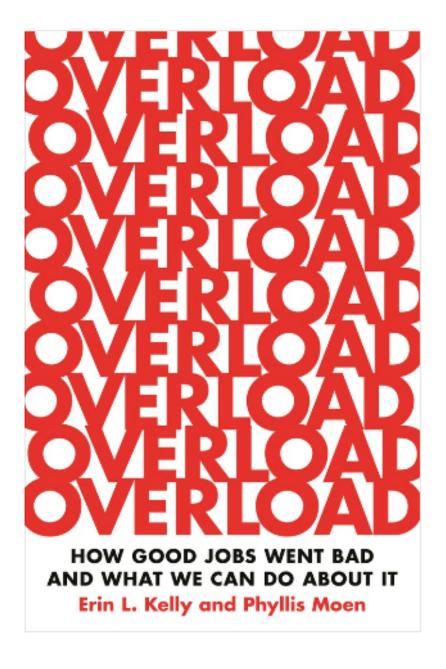
MIT SLOAN IDEA EXCHANGE

GLOBAL WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

OVERLOAD AND WHAT WE CAN DO ABOUT IT

Erin Kelly, Sloan Distinguished Professor of Work and Organizational Studies, MIT Sloan School of Management

.......





An Interdisciplinary Network

Supporting Partners

The Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health & Human Development (NICHD)
Rosalind Berkowitz King, Project Scientist
U01 HD051256



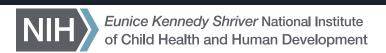
National Institute on Aging

Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR)

National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI)

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Primary Setting for Our Study

- IT Division of a Fortune 500 firm we call TOMO
 - Not tech elite or Silicon Vally
- All jobs in development process
 - Highly educated, highly paid
 - U.S. employees eligible to participate

- 38% women IT employees
- 34% women IT managers



Argument in Brief

- Work as it is currently configured isn't sustainable.
 - Professional and managerial jobs are more intense, less secure.
 - Break people, break organizations, or both.
- The root problem is not (only or primarily) work-family balance. And a work-family framing is risky, as well as inaccurate.
- But organizational changes are possible. Dual Agenda Work Redesign benefits employees & organizations.



UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM



Life at TOMO → Overload

- Four Work Practices that Contribute:
- Long hours
- "Always on" availability
- Multi-tasking, split attention
- But "face time" still expected, valued
- * Overload: Too Much to Do with Too Few Resources



Life at TOMO → Overload

- Why did they put up with overload, high demands?
- Increasingly insecure work environment:
 - Downsizing routine → greater work loads
 - Off-shore labor strategy → new tasks
 - Risky to push back or raise concerns about timelines, workload



"Given the way things are today, how do you feel?" – Free response from >25 teams





"Given the way things are today, how do you feel?" – Overload vs. Work-Life Conflicts





Costs of Current Situation

Firm's recognized concerns:

- Burnout
- Retention
- Recruitment (particularly of younger workers)

Less recognized costs:

- Rewarding wrong things?
- Inefficiencies in daily work distractions, meetings
- Inefficiencies tied to global staffing strategy those with great technical skills aren't doing that work because busy with training, prepping, monitoring offshore work
- Productivity losses due to fatigue, health concerns
- → Missed deadlines, lower quality, vicious cycles



POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

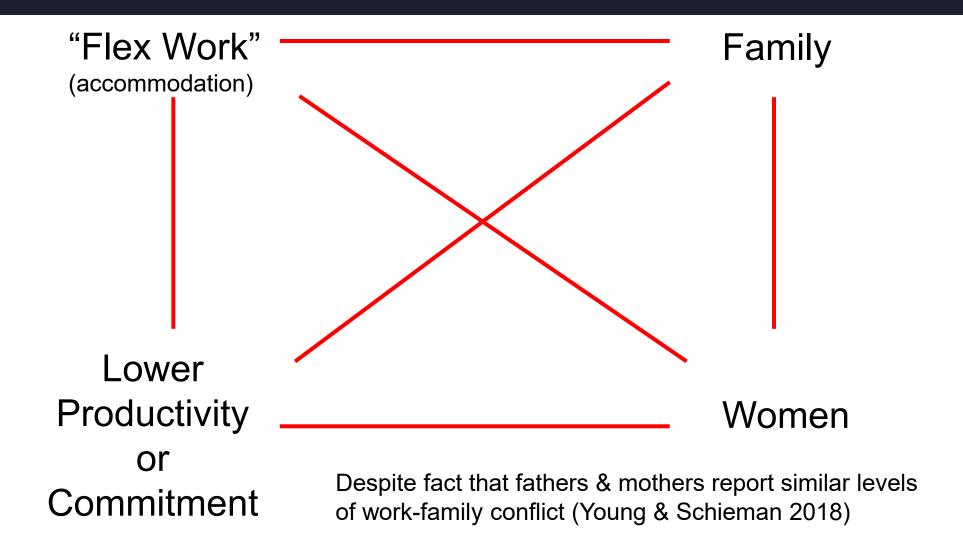


A Problematic Approach to Flexibility: Flexible Work as an "Accommodation"

- Official policy allowing flexible schedule, regular telecommuting
- Individually negotiated + manager discretion
 - "Mother, May I?"
 - "Lucky" manager or resentful if manager doesn't allow
- Other research: Flex stigma and fear of negative career consequences
 - Many employees (especially men) will not pursue
 - Can reinforce gender inequality



Powerful Cultural Associations





STAR at TOMO: A Work Redesign Approach

What? Work groups reconsider when, where, and how work is done.

Collective process vs.

individual accommodation (or unexamined intensification of work)

Why? Need to make work more effective, efficient, and sustainable for all employees.

Broadly framed interests vs. family needs or women's struggles



STAR at TOMO: A Work Redesign Approach

How?

Manager training (4 hours):

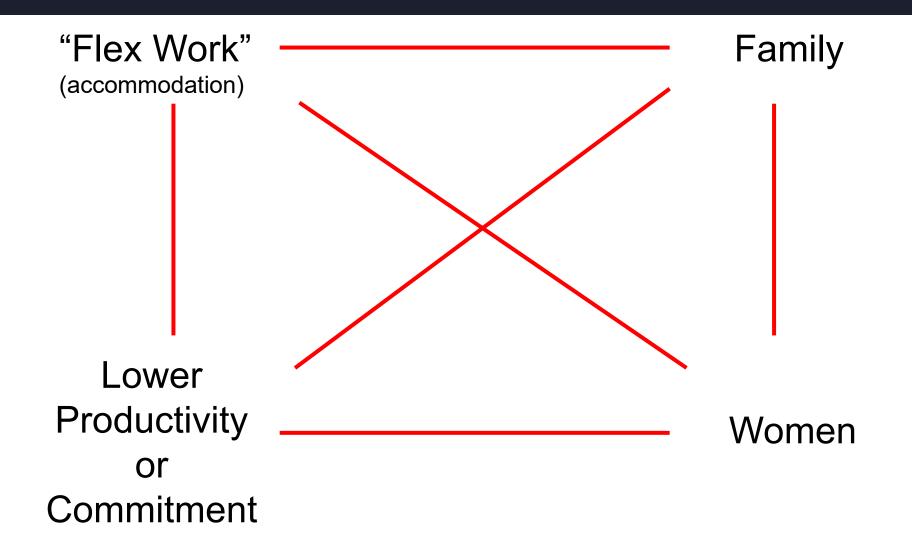
- Behaviors that demonstrate support for employees' professional and personal lives → Track over 2 weeks
- Executive support for change, peer coaching
- Reinforce supporting employees as core to role

Participatory workshops (8 hours):

- Role plays & discussion about work time (hours, availability, schedules), work location, communicating and coordinating effectively as a team
- Social change new "rules of the game" within the organization and work group.

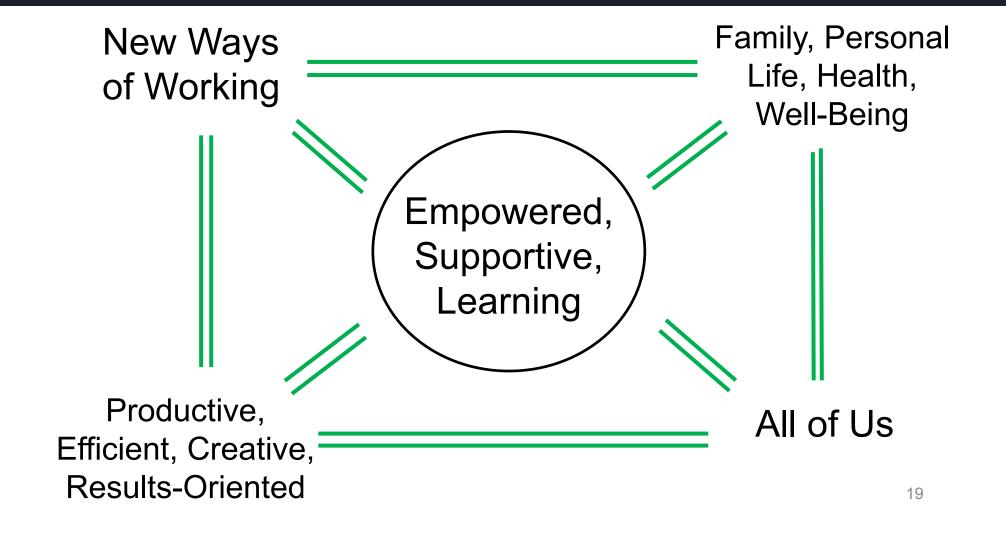


Powerful Cultural Associations





Broaden Flex Practices & Create a New Normal





STAR at TOMO: What Changes in the Work Redesign?

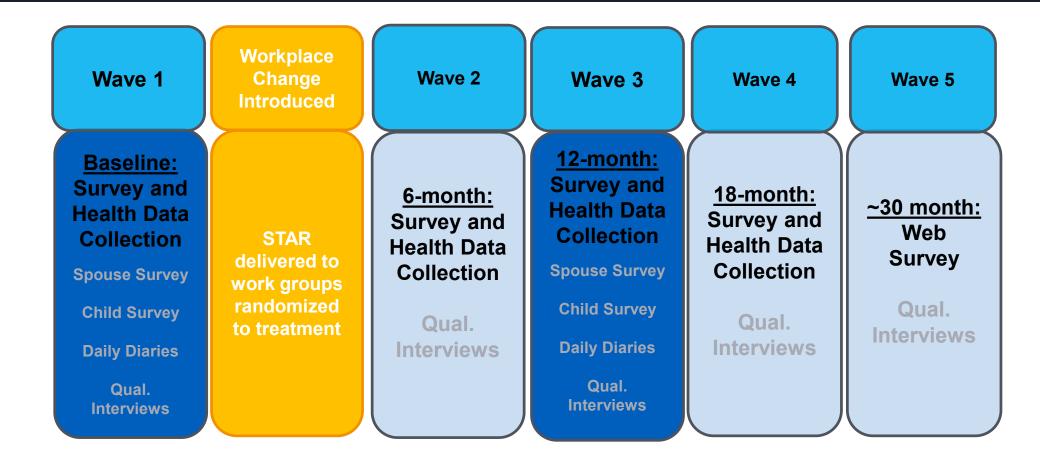
- Increased work at home
- Increased flexibility in schedule (both occasional adjustments and some shifts in regular hours)
- New coordination practices: Fewer meetings? Fewer attendees?
 New team dashboards?
- New communication practices: Off-line (no chat) blocks of time?
 Clarify escalation plans and urgency norms?
- Shift the culture so individuals decide when, where, and how to work, in consultation with their teams
 - Shift in decision rights (control), supported by managers



DID IT WORK?

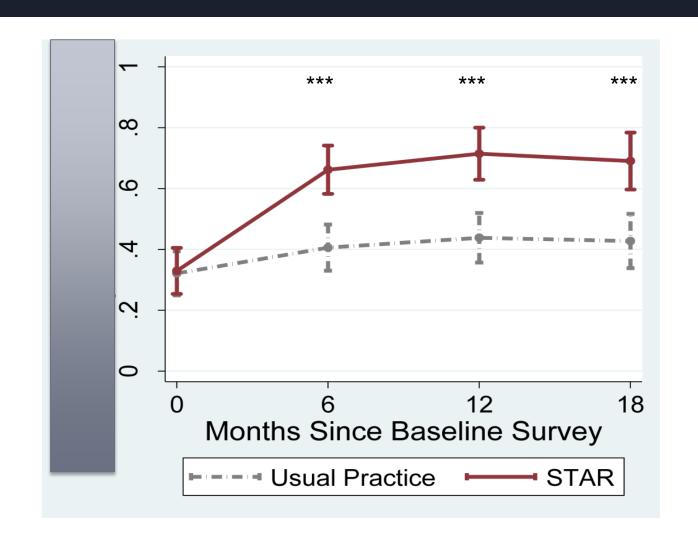


Study Design: Group Randomized Trial



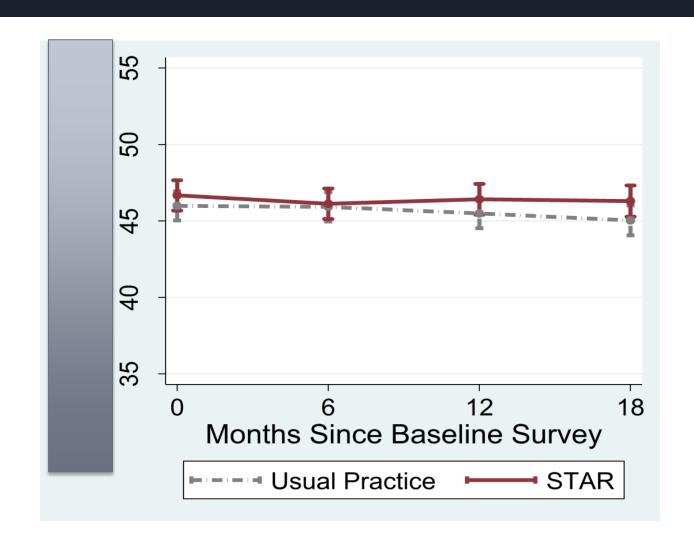


Analytic Strategy STAR Increases [Sample Outcome 1]





Analytic Strategy STAR Has No Effect on [Sample Outcome 2]





Study Design: Group Randomized Trial

Workplace Wave 1 Wave 2 Wave 3 Change Wave 4 Wave 5 Introduced **12-month: Baseline:** Survey and Survey and 18-month: 6-month: ~30 month: **Health Data Health Data** Survey and Survey and Web Collection Collection STAR **Health Data Health Data** Survey delivered to **Spouse Survey** Collection Collection **Spouse Survey** work groups randomized Qual. **Child Survey Child Survey** Qual. Qual. to treatment Interviews **Daily Diaries Interviews Interviews Daily Diaries** Qual. Qual. Interviews **Interviews Merger Announcement Merger Implementation**



Benefits for Employees and Managers

- More...
- Control over when & where work
- Manager support for personal life
- Family time (time with teens, perceive "enough time" w/ family)
- Sleep (small increase in duration, better quality)
- Job satisfaction*

- Less...
- Work-life conflict
- Burnout*
- Stress*
- Psychological distress*
- Cardiometabolic risk

* indicates positive effects found for those who started STAR before the merger announcement.



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- Teens: Healthier sleep patterns
- Teens: Better emotional health

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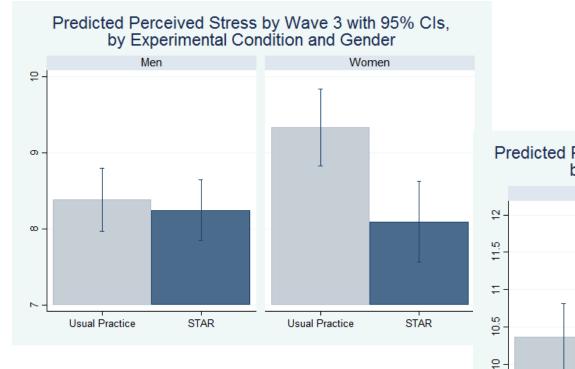


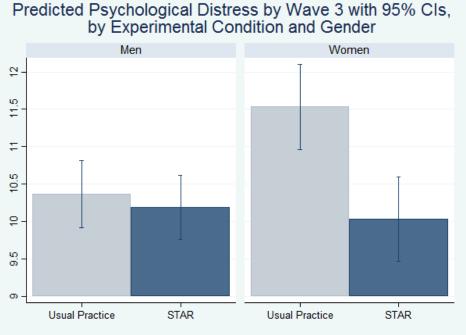
Gender Differences?

- Women in this sample working similar hours, work patterns
- But women report greater overload, stress, psychological distress
 - True in many other studies, populations too
 - More willing to admit in a survey?
 - Greater workload (paid + unpaid)?
 - More worried about work affecting home life?
 - Less likely to have spouse who is not working
- Most STAR effects are the same for women and men but...



STAR Impacts Women's Stress, Psychological Distress More







Benefits for Organization

One story from Sherwin, a developer and dad: I'm able to actually **stay more focused**...with the STAR program, it allows you to be able to **have more control** over it.

I'm constantly busy. I stay busy. But I don't feel overwhelmed. So that's huge."

From a year ago now [when STAR started], it's a **hundred percent less stress** on me than where I was even a year ago..._I feel sad for people in other companies that still work in that [pre-STAR] environment.



Benefits for Organization

- Higher job satisfaction
- Less interest in leaving firm
- Fewer voluntary exits in 3 years after launch
 - 7.6% of employees in STAR
 - 11.3% of employees in control group
 - Similar effects for women and men, across generations
- ROI of ~ 1.6



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- Fewer voluntary exits in 3 years after launch
 - 7.6% of employees in STAR
 - 11.3% of employees in control group
- ROI of ~ 1.6
- Null effects on productivity:
 - Hours worked, self-rated productivity
 - Internal metrics (note: mix of STAR and control employees involved in most products, applications)



Summary

- Overload is the underlying issue
 - High demands and running lean +
 - Tech availability encourages 24/7 attention +
 - Insecurity (globalization, automation / AI)
- Beyond a work-life framing to Dual Agenda Work Redesign
 - Smart and sustainable ways of working
 - Countering pressure to be always-on and available requires a collective process
 - Consider changes in when, where, & how work is done and how performance is evaluated
- Broad appeal and positive impact for employees and managers (all genders), their families, and the firm



WHAT CAN WE IMAGINE TOGETHER?

<u>elkelly@mit.edu</u> @_elkelly www.workfamilyhealthnetwork.org



MANAGEMENT SLOAN SCHOOL

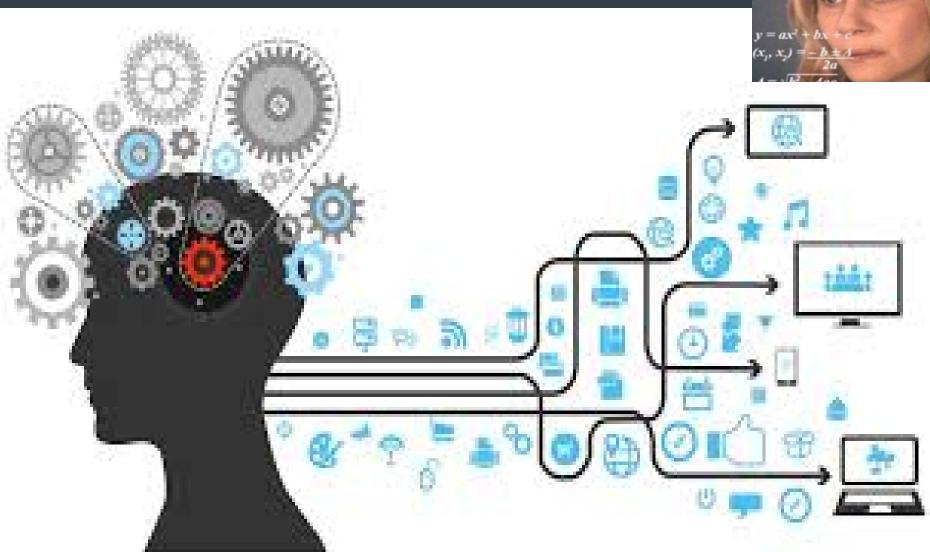
FIGHTING UNCONSCIOUS BIAS IN THE QUEST FOR AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP

Moderator: Renée Richardson Gosline, Senior Lecturer & Research Scientist, MIT Sloan School of Managemer Anita D. Carleton, EMBA '18, Software Solutions Division Director, Software Engineering Institute, Carnegie Mellon University

Rebecca Kirk Fair, MBA '02, Managing Principal, Analysis Group Vincenza Nigro, EMBA '12, Global VP of Medical Affairs, Hansa Biopharma

COGNITIVE BIAS AUTHENTICITY **EMPOWERMENT**

1. COGNITIVE BIAS & BEHAVIO





COGNITIVE BIAS, GENDER & STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

- Role Incongruence
- Confirmation Bias Bias Blind₁Spot
- Affinity Bias



Q: HOW DO WE COMBAT UNCONSCIOUS BIAS TO CHANGE THE WAY OTHERS VIEW US...

AND THE WAY WE VIEW OURSELVES?

2. AUTHENTICITY



Christiana Amarachi Mbakwe @Christiana1987

If you work with a black woman it's likely she's censoring herself most of the day. Everything from her hair, attire, tone of voice, hand gestures, accent etc is being internally policed. Most of us don't get to be ourselves at work.

- Close to 50% of black and Latina scientists were mistaken for janitorial or administrative staff
- African-American women have reported facing discrimination at corporate workplaces if they come to work with their natural hair.

Q: AUTHENTICITY: WHAT IS IT TO YOU? CAN WE BE LEADERS WITHOUT IT?

3. EMPOWERMENT?

THE U.S. SOCCER PAY GAP

#EQUALPLAYEQUALPAY

	MEN	WOMEN
EXHIBITION GAMES PER YEAR	20	20
PLAYER PAY FOR GAME WIN	\$17,625	\$1,350
PLAYER PAY FOR GAME LOSS	\$5,000	\$0,000
PLAYER PAY FOR MAKING WORLD CUP TEAM	\$68,750	\$15,000
TEAM PAY FOR WORLD CUP PERFORMANCE	\$9 MILLION (FOR LOSING IN THE ROUND OF 16)	\$2 MILLION (FOR WINNING WHOLE THING)
QUALITY OF TEAM	PRETTY O.K.	OFF THE F#@KING CHARTS

NEVERTHELESS...

Research shows that diverse groups are beneficial:

- ✓ Challenge assumptions & automatic thinking
- ✓ Increase productivity when paired with pay equity
- ✓ Can increase profitability
 - ✓ E.g., 2016 survey of 22,000 companies worldwide by the Peterson Institute: companies with at least 30% women in senior management had 15% higher profits.
- √ Women score higher on 17 of 19 top leadership skills
- X Can trigger threat among dominant group

Q: EMPOWERMENT: HOW DO WE LEAD AUTHENTICALLY?

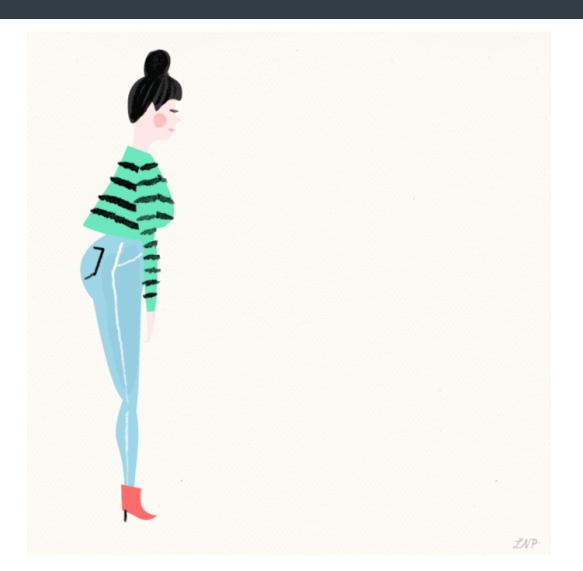
SOLUTIONS & THE WORK AHEAD

STRATEGIES

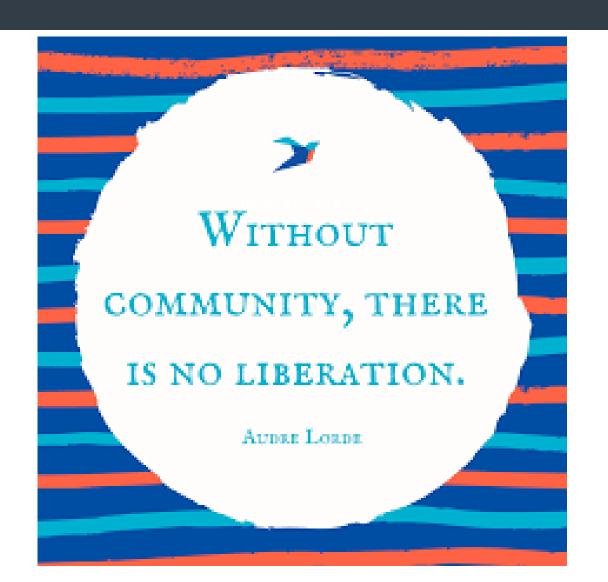
Using Behavioral Science to combat unconscious bias for Inclusive Leadership:

- High Standards must be paired with Inclusion for performance.
- Make the Unconscious Conscious to Combat Bias.
- Get Comfortable with being Uncomfortable.
- Champion processes that decouple Ideas and Status.
- Deliberately embrace Inclusivity as part of your Leadership style.
- Seek different kinds of support and connections
- Maintain intersectionality inclusivity is interdependent. Hold the door open.

GO FORTH!



THANK YOU!



MANAGEMENT SLOAN SCHOOL