

What Happened and Why? A Peer-Led Case-Based Curriculum for Pre-Clinical Medical Students to Address Bias and Discrimination

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Introduction: The literature clearly documents the impacts of bias and discrimination among health care providers on patient outcomes. Health professional training programs should prioritize curriculum on bias and discrimination. “What Happened and Why?” is a peer-led case-based curriculum for pre-clinical medical students to address bias and discrimination along multiple axes of identity.

Methods: The curriculum was developed by medical students with faculty mentorship. The objectives were for learners to recognize, consider the implications of, develop strategies and list resources to address acts of bias and/or discrimination. Learners started with a large group didactic session discussing the importance of bias in health and healthcare. They then moved into small groups with senior medical students serving as facilitators supported by a faculty member. Small group discussions addressed cases of students who experienced bias on campus. After this session, students re-convened in a large group to discuss strategies to address acts of bias and/or discrimination and campus resources. Qualitative open-ended evaluations were completed by learners.

Results: The evaluation received 184 responses. Many learners expressed a sentiment of increased insight/awareness of bias and/or discrimination (n=81), and/or feeling empowered to confront bias and/or discrimination (n=61), including knowledge of school resources. Very few (n=4) students expressed negative reactions toward the program. A few students were disappointed with the school’s responses (n=2) within the cases or felt more unsafe (n=3) knowing these cases occurred in the past year.

Discussion: This curriculum is effective in increasing student recognition of and willingness to engage with acts of bias and discrimination.