



How Individuals and Organizations Can Reduce Interpersonal Discrimination

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Abstract

Individuals do not always face overt, unambiguous forms of discrimination that often have legal repercussions. Rather, the current paper introduces the construct of *interpersonal discrimination*, a set of behaviors (e.g., increased interpersonal hostility, decreased eye contact, abbreviated interactions) that has negative implications for both individuals and organizations. For individuals, interpersonal discrimination may result in consequences such as lowered performance (2009, doctoral dissertation, Rice University). For organizations, this type of discrimination may lead to negative bottom line consequences (*Journal of Applied Psychology*, **91**, 2006, 579–592). Individuals and organizations can both take steps to combat this discrimination and in this article, we review these strategies. While research on some individual-level strategies in reducing interpersonal discrimination is showing success, the research on other strategies (from allies and organizations) is sparse, and we end by encouraging such future research.

Research shows that people belonging to stigmatized groups (e.g., women, racial minorities, obese individuals, gays/lesbians) are treated more negatively in the workplace than those in higher status groups (e.g., men, Whites, thin, and heterosexual individuals). For instance, women make less money than men for performing the same job (Drazin & Auster, 1987), Black workers report more daily mistreatment than do White workers (Deitch et al., 2003), heavy employees are less likely to be hired and receive promotions than thin employees (Roehling, 1999), and gay/lesbian employees report more discrimination in the workplace than heterosexual employees (Badgett, Lau, Sears, & Ho, 2007). Although discrimination may occur on a systemic level (e.g., a company knowingly using selection tests that are biased against women), researchers typically document it more on a personal level (i.e., one or more persons act negatively toward an individual from a different group). In this chapter, we focus on the latter, or discrimination that happens on a more individual and personal level.

Despite the continued prevalence of discrimination (see also Cohn, 2000; Croteau, 1996; Dipboye & Colella, 2005), there has been an overwhelming change in the expression of how discrimination is manifested, such that it involves less overt negative acts and the presence of more subtle negative acts. In the literature, a recent distinction between these two forms is that of *formal* discrimination and *interpersonal* discrimination (Hebl, Foster, Mannix, & Dovidio, 2002). In workplace settings, formal discrimination refers to acts that are illegal (e.g., denial of a job, access, resources, and/or promotions based on protected characteristics) or overtly prohibited by the job requirements (e.g., refusing to assist customers on the basis of protected characteristics); while interpersonal discrimination refers to acts that are not illegal and often tend to be more interpersonal in nature (e.g., snide remarks, decreased positivity). Interpersonal forms of discrimination have been given other terms by other researchers such as subtle discrimination, incivilities, racial

micro-aggressions, and microinequities (Cortina, 2008; Deitch et al., 2003; Rowe, 1990; Sue et al., 2007). In this paper, we are not interested in differentiating how interpersonal discrimination is different from these other terms – in many cases, we would argue that they are not. Rather, we are interested in examining how these terms differ in their appearance and implications from formal discrimination. We retain the label interpersonal discrimination because of our own past research using this terminology and because we are particularly interested in the discrimination that is exchanged within the *interpersonal* context of a social interaction between stigmatizer and target. Although displays of interpersonal (versus formal) discrimination are sometimes less explicit, they should not be considered benign, as they have been shown to have insidious interpersonal and organizational consequences (e.g., King et al., 2006), and hence, deserve social and organizational attention.

The purpose of this chapter is to focus on interpersonal discrimination. We begin by considering interpersonal discrimination and examples of it in the workplace. We then discuss the negative impact of interpersonal discrimination on job applicants, employees, and organizations as a whole. We then focus on ways individuals and organizations can act to reduce the occurrence of interpersonal discrimination and its destructive consequences.

Interpersonal Discrimination

In America, overt displays of discrimination, particularly toward those from protected classes, were very visible prior to the Civil Rights Act, in which examples include job advertisements that stipulated ‘Whites only’ or separate seating areas assigned for ‘Coloreds.’ There are still recent examples of very overt types of discrimination (e.g., the restaurant chain Denny’s refusal of service, forcing Black customers to wait longer and pay more than White customers; Adamson, 2000; the home improvement retail store Home Depot’s overt preferences for men over women in hiring positions, job assignments, promotions and compensation; Selmi, 2005); but for the most part, such overt displays are much less common and tend to be isolated incidences. Such changes may be due, in large part, to legislative action as well as changing social norms, pressures to appear politically correct, and changing attitudes.

While instances of formal discrimination seem to be reduced, *interpersonal discrimination* persists. This type of discrimination is often more subtle and consists of non-verbal (e.g., avoiding eye-contact, grimacing), verbal (e.g., dismissive language), and paraverbal behaviors (e.g., tone of voice) that occur in face-to-face interactions. While formal discrimination is illegal in most cases, instances of interpersonal discrimination usually are not. One of the biggest problems with interpersonal discrimination is that it is often very subtle and often goes unrecognized by members that are not historically targets of discrimination (Sue et al., 2007).

In one of the first studies to distinguish between formal and interpersonal discrimination, Hebl et al. (2002) examined research confederates who applied for jobs at Texas retail stores wearing a hat that read either ‘Texan and proud’ (non-stigmatized condition) or ‘gay and proud’ (stigmatized condition). The confederates were unaware of which hat they were wearing and after the interaction, they and two independent raters provided ratings of both formal and interpersonal types of behaviors. Results showed that those in the stigmatized condition experienced more interpersonal (e.g., less smiling, shorter interactions, more grimacing) but not formal discrimination (e.g., all were allowed to fill out applications, both groups received the same job callback rates).

The pattern found in Hebl et al. (2002) study was replicated in other studies with diverse stigmas and additional paradigms. For instance, visibly pregnant (versus non-pregnant) (Hebl, King, Glick, Singletary, & Kazama, 2007), Arab (versus non-Arab) (Derous, Nguyen, & Ryan, 2009), and Muslim (versus non-Muslim) (King & Ahmad, forthcoming) job applicants received more hostile interpersonal (but not formal) behaviors when applying for jobs. Similarly, female obese (versus non-obese) received more interpersonal discrimination when seeking customer service from retail personnel (King et al., 2006). Most recently, Hebl, Ruggs, and Williams (2010) revealed that male obese (versus non-obese) applicants and customers also received more interpersonal discrimination.

In still other research, women reported receiving higher levels of benevolent interpersonal discrimination (e.g., less challenging assignments) that led them to be less prepared for leadership roles and organizational advancement than did men (King, Hebl, George, & Matusik, 2010). In addition, Schreer, Smith, and Thomas (2009) assessed the reactions that Black and White shoppers received when they asked store personnel to remove the security label from a pair of sunglasses before trying them on. These researchers found that the Black shoppers were the recipients of more interpersonal discrimination (e.g., staring and following) from store personnel than were White shoppers. None of the shoppers in the Schreer et al. study received formal discrimination (i.e., they were all allowed to try on the sunglasses without the security label).

Although it may seem that formal discrimination would be much more personally and professionally harmful than interpersonal discrimination, recent research suggests that both can be very damaging. For instance, Singletary (2009) found that experimentally inducing interpersonal discrimination resulted in lower performance scores on an in-basket task and an attentional resources (Stroop) task. These detriments in performance were significantly higher than when no discrimination occurred *and/or* when formal discrimination occurred. This evidence suggests that in certain job contexts, interpersonal discrimination has a significantly more negative impact on job-related performance than does formal discrimination. Singletary (2009) found support to suggest the negative effects of interpersonal discrimination on performance were partially mediated by attentional resources. Those who faced interpersonal discrimination were more likely to allocate attention to trying to figure out if and why coworkers didn't like them and/or were being negative to them. In similar research, Word, Zanna, and Cooper (1974) found that those targeted (versus not) with interpersonal discrimination performed worse in job interviews (see also Pager, Western, & Sugie, 2009). It is likely that the interpersonal discrimination provides individuals with a chilly climate that reduces employees' potential (and desire) to perform optimally.

In addition to harming applicants and employees, interpersonal discrimination also has been shown to negatively affect organizations. For instance, King et al. (2006) found that the bottom-line for organizations is disrupted with the presence of interpersonal discrimination. Specifically, actual shoppers who reported experiencing interpersonal discrimination indicated that they were less likely to (i) spend as much money in the store as they had originally intended, (ii) return to that store in the future, and (iii) recommend the store to others. Few studies have yet to empirically document other organizational impacts of interpersonal discrimination; however, we believe these consequences extend to loss of talent; decreased diversity, creativity, and productivity; and more negative workplace outcomes such as lower organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and performance.

While interpersonal discrimination has been shown to have negative consequences for both individuals and organizations, there are ways in which this discrimination can be reduced, which we will discuss in the following sections.

Individual-Level Strategies for Reducing Interpersonal Discrimination

One line of defense for combating interpersonal discrimination involves individual employees in an organization. We consider four strategies employees can enact to reduce the interpersonal discrimination they receive.

Strategies for stigmatized employees

There are many reasons employees might want to reduce interpersonal discrimination. Experiencing interpersonal discrimination and other sorts of incivilities are related to poorer performance (Singletary, 2009; Word et al., 1974), feelings of isolation and negative health outcomes (James, La Croix, Klenbaum, & Strogatz, 1984; Karlsen & Nazroo, 2002; Krieger & Sidney, 1996; Lim, Cortina, & Magley, 2008); and stress, threat, and anxiety (e.g., Ickes, 1984; Mendes, Blascovich, Lickel, & Hunter, 2002; Stephan & Stephan, 2000).

There are undoubtedly a number of strategies that stigmatized individuals might adopt in attempting to remediate discrimination. While we do not review an exhaustive list of such strategies, we describe the potential utility of several strategies that have been the focus of recent empirical attention. The success of each strategy likely depends on a number of factors, such as the individual engaging in them and the situation in which the individual finds him or herself. Thus, one particular strategy might not work for everyone and should be enacted after careful consideration of the potential personal and professional consequences – both positive and negative – that might result from each.

Acknowledgment. One strategy involves bringing attention to, or acknowledging already apparent stigmas (e.g., body size, physical disability). As early as 1961, acknowledging one's stigma was hypothesized to break through barriers to successful interactions caused by distracting stigmatizing characteristics (Davis, 1961). Readily apparent stigmas can cause interpersonal ambiguity and tension (Jones et al., 1984) because it is not always clear how to interact with the stigmatized individual. For instance, an interviewer faced with an applicant that relies on the assistance of a wheelchair for mobility can be distracted by non-job related thoughts (e.g., 'what accommodations will they need?', 'how do I interact with this person?'). There is evidence that potential employees who acknowledge their disability are preferred to those who do not (Hastorf, Wildfogel, & Cassman, 1979; Hebl & Skorinko, 2005; Mills, Belgrave, & Boyer, 1984). Interpersonal tension caused by ambiguity in how to interact with stigmatized others is undesirable and uncomfortable; thus, non-stigmatized individuals might distance themselves from stigmatized individuals in order to avoid these tensions (see Albrecht, Walker, & Levy, 1982; Hebl & Kleck, 2002).

Showing support acknowledgment, Singletary and Hebl (2009) found that gay/lesbian applicants were treated much more favorably on interpersonal dimensions when they acknowledged (versus did not acknowledge) their sexual orientation, which was already known to store managers. Similarly, Barron, Hebl, and King (forthcoming) found that when individuals acknowledged their ethnicity (e.g., Black, Hispanic, Irish), they also faced decreased interpersonal discrimination.

We encourage future research that looks at additional characteristics associated with reductions in interpersonal discrimination. The perceived controllability (i.e., whether self-inflicted or uncontrollable) of the stigmatizing characteristic may be particularly important. For instance, Hebl and Kleck (2002) found that when perceivers thought that

a stigmatizing characteristic (either physical disability or obesity) was controllable they rated targets lower than when it was thought to be uncontrollable. Not only should the controllability of the stigmatizing characteristic be taken into account, but so too, should the timing (Hebl & Skorinko, 2005), content (King, Reilly, & Hebl, 2008), and delivery (Belgrave & Mills, 1981). Thus, although acknowledgment may work in some situations, it is likely not effective in all circumstances. In addition, some stigmas (e.g., obesity; Hebl & Kleck, 2002) may be taboo, and bringing attention to them may actually increase negative reactions.

Disclosure. A similar strategy to acknowledgment is disclosure, which is relevant when one's stigma is not readily apparent to others (e.g., being gay or lesbian, having epilepsy, having a prison record). Although such employees can 'pass' without revealing their identity (see Goffman, 1963), there can be negative consequences for having to constantly manage secret identities (see Wegner & Lane, 1995). Several researchers have found that disclosing in the workplace is related to positive workplace-related outcomes such as increased (i) job satisfaction, (ii) commitment to the organization, (iii) satisfaction with coworkers, (iv) engagement on the job, and (v) person-organization fit; and decreased (i) turnover intentions, (ii) anxiety on the job, (iii) role ambiguity, and (iv) psychological strain (Day & Schoenrade, 1997; Ellis & Riggle, 1996; Griffith & Hebl, 2002; King et al., 2008; Martinez, 2010; Ragins, Singh, & Cornwell, 2007; Tejada, 2006). Disclosure also can help alleviate tensions in interpersonal situations overall. For example, a common reason for not having diversity/inclusion initiatives in place for certain groups is the (often incorrect) assumption that 'we don't have any of those people working here.' By disclosing in the workplace, stigmatized individuals can assert themselves as a presence within their organization, a necessary first step toward improving diversity climate and culture.

A study by Griffith and Hebl (2002) revealed that disclosures reduce interpersonal discrimination. That is, researchers found that if gay/lesbian employees were able to disclose their sexual orientation and receive favorable feedback from coworkers, they were more likely to report increased job satisfaction and decreased job anxiety. Such findings suggest that building interpersonal trust and having favorable co-worker interactions can protect targets of discrimination against negative workplace outcomes.

While there are benefits to disclosing, we emphasize that the decision to disclose is important and should be undertaken with careful consideration of both the benefits (e.g., reduction of psychological strain) and risks (e.g., possibility for greater amounts of discrimination and alienation) associated. A cost-benefit analysis might reveal, in some cases that disclosing may not be most beneficial for those facing interpersonal discrimination.

Increased positivity. Another strategy stigmatized employees can adopt is to increase the positivity and agreeableness with which they present themselves to others in interpersonal situations. Three studies have independently shown evidence for this. First, overweight women who thought they could be seen by their interaction partners (versus not seen) were rated higher in likability and social adeptness by their partners and rated themselves higher in these traits as well (Miller, Rothblum, Felicio, & Brand, 1995). While a microanalysis of the behaviors was not conducted, it is clear that heavy women were successful in altering the positivity of their interpersonal behavior in order to avoid discrimination.

Second, Shelton, Richeson, and Salvatore (2005) found that when Black students were primed to expect racial prejudice from their interaction partner, they were subsequently

rated as more engaged and likable than those who were not primed to expect prejudice. Like the Miller et al. (1995) data, Shelton and colleagues' data also suggests that the students altered their behavior in order to compensate for possible prejudice. Third and finally, Singletary and Hebl (2009) found that stigmatized job applicants who smiled more than usual and made efforts to 'appear pleasant, positive, and generally upbeat' (pg. 800) received less interpersonal discrimination than similarly stigmatized applicants who did not use this strategy.

Increasing positivity likely is effective because these agreeable behaviors can compensate for negative responses to the stigma, however it is important to note that increased positivity can lead to emotional fatigue. For instance, Burke and Richardsen (1996) found that employees who must vigilantly control their emotions while at work (e.g., customer service personnel must be friendly) were more likely to experience stress and burnout, especially if the emotion was incongruous with their true feelings.

Individuating information. Another strategy is to provide individuating information, or personal information that extends beyond category membership (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990; Swim, Borgida, Maruyama, & Myers, 1989). If no other information is available, judgments about individuals are likely made based on stereotypical information cued by group membership (Kunda & Sherman-Williams, 1993; Nieva & Gutek, 1980). By providing extra information that individuates one from their group, stigmatized individuals can free others from having to rely on these stereotypes. For example, an overweight employee may be stigmatized as 'the fat guy' to those who do not know him, but those who have more information can form more complex evaluations of him such as, 'Jim who has two kids and is active in his church – and also happens to be heavy.' Providing information that is counterstereotypical (i.e., a gay male indicating that he was once in the military) may be particularly useful in reducing discrimination. Although most of this research has focused on reducing formal discrimination, a recent study on gay/lesbian job applicants shows evidence that interpersonal discrimination can also be reduced by providing individuating information (Singletary & Hebl, 2009).

Providing individuating information may not be beneficial in all circumstances. For example, providing information that is too personal can make others feel uncomfortable, exacerbating the negativity that may result from the stigma.

Moving From Individuals to Organizations

We now turn to organizational initiatives to reduce interpersonal discrimination. While it is relatively obvious why individuals would want to remediate interpersonal discrimination, it may not be that obvious why organizations should also be vested. There are a number of reasons that organizations might want to reduce the incidence of interpersonal discrimination and we consider these reasons first and then describe particular strategies.

Loss of valuable employees

First, interpersonal discrimination may cause companies to lose or miss out on talented employees that could have been an asset to the organization. If applicants perceive interpersonal discrimination they may be less attracted to the company from the start. For those who do interview, the experience of interpersonal discrimination in employment interviews leads to deficits in interview performance (see Word et al., 1974). Furthermore, organizational climates that reflect gender inequality (and involve components of

interpersonal discrimination) have been shown to be positively related to women's intentions to quit (King et al., 2010). Also, failing to assign individuals to certain projects due to interpersonal discrimination can also result in productivity loss and/or lack of tapped potential (Goldman, Gutek, Stein, & Lewis, 2006). Thus, interpersonal discrimination may result in the loss of what is typically the most valuable resource to organizations: the employees themselves.

Loss of profit

Second, interpersonal discrimination may negatively impact the bottom-line for organizations. Empirical research has shown that interpersonal discrimination is related to customer spending patterns, return spending, and store referrals (King et al., 2006). These direct effects of interpersonal discrimination shown in a customer service paradigm are likely found throughout the entire employment cycle. That is, if applicants and employees perceive interpersonal discrimination from their interviewers, coworkers, and superiors, they may be less likely to be committed to the organization and work productively. Recently, Lim et al. (2008) found that workplace incivility (which is similar to interpersonal discrimination) resulted in lower levels of work satisfaction, which were in turn related to these greater intentions to quit. These intentions are strong predictors of actual turnover (Tett & Meyer, 1993), which in turn is strongly linked with loss of profit (Joinson, 2000; Waldman, Kelly, Arora, & Smith, 2004; see also Dess & Shaw, 2001). Ultimately, the occurrence of interpersonal discrimination can cause organizations to lose profits in a number of different ways.

Equity

Third, combating interpersonal discrimination is the right thing for organizations to do. Organizations have a social imperative to protect individuals from experiencing discrimination (King & Cortina, 2010). King and Cortina (2010) further contend that organizations should act justly toward their stakeholders and rectify any harm done to them. Thus, organizations should want to protect the rights of their employees and ensure for them healthy, equitable, and optimally satisfactory working conditions, which are environments that are devoid of interpersonal discrimination. Organizations can promote equity by explicitly discussing equitable treatment and respect toward individuals of various stigmatized groups in policies and ethics codes (Cortina, 2008).

Organizational-Level Strategies for Reducing Interpersonal Discrimination

In short, the deleterious effects of interpersonal discrimination can negatively impact organizations. Now we turn to discussing strategies organizations can engage in to ameliorate some of these negative effects. It is critical to note that empirical attention focusing on the direct link between organizational policies and the reduction of interpersonal discrimination is still in its infancy, thus in addition to describing past research, we also describe initiatives that we think might be highly conducive to decreasing interpersonal discrimination. We hope future research continues focusing empirical attention on these strategies.

Diversity-minded recruitment, selection, and placement procedures

One way organizations can combat interpersonal discrimination is by having a recruitment process that promotes diversity. This strategy sends the message that the organization

supports diversity, which can serve as a deterrent to potential employees who do not hold these values. This strategy alone is not enough to combat interpersonal discrimination, however, because it is possible (and likely) that some current employees may engage in discriminatory behavior. Thus, recruiting diverse employees may be an organization's first line of defense in minimizing interpersonal discrimination.

Although minority job applicants may be enticed to apply due to diverse recruitment strategies, they may experience interpersonal discrimination in the selection process. One of the most successful organizational strategies at reducing selection bias involves the use of structured (rather than unstructured) employment interviews.

Unstructured interviews are characterized by free-form discussions, while structured interviews are more regimented in terms of what questions are asked, the order in which they are asked, and whether follow-up clarification is allowed. Use of highly structured interviews leave stigmatized individuals less vulnerable to interpersonal discrimination and has been shown to result in fewer racial differences in ratings than unstructured interviews (Arvey & Faley, 1988; Huffcutt & Roth, 1998). Providing structure has been shown to directly reduce interpersonal discrimination because it provides non-stigmatized interviewers with a behavioral script that lowers their anxiety in interviews with stigmatized individuals (Avery, Richeson, Hebl, & Ambady, 2009).

A recent study also provided direct evidence that structured interviews significantly reduce interpersonal discrimination against minority applicants (Madera, Hebl, & Beal, 2010a). In particular, White interviewers were less likely to avoid (measured by physical distance) Black applicants when structured interviews were in place. According to Avery et al. (2009), then, organizations might reduce interpersonal discrimination by integrating meetings that have some degree of structure in formal business situations (i.e., new employee orientations or annual diversity trainings) that allow employees to get to know one another without feeling anxiety or discomfort caused by ambiguity. These dyadic meetings should give employees a script or conversational guide (e.g., 'discuss three things you find interesting about your role in the organization').

It is also possible that interpersonal discrimination may be remediated through the use of diversity-minded placement policies. This may involve increasing the number of stigmatized group members within work groups as opposed to having lone stigmatized individuals spread out in different work groups (Pettigrew & Martin, 1987). This method may be effective in reducing interpersonal discrimination because it removes the tokenism (i.e., being the lone representative of one's group) status that may be associated with being the single stigmatized individual within a workgroup. While it is possible that diversifying workgroups can have positive benefits for stigmatized individuals, little empirical research has supported this theory. It is possible that this strategy may backfire by creating faultlines between groups of individuals and further damaging intergroup relations (King, Hebl, & Beal, 2009). It is also possible that placing people by group status as opposed to expertise may create some inefficiency within an organization, as employees' skills may not be fully tapped.

Identity-conscious hiring policies

A third strategy organizations can use is to develop 'identity-conscious' staffing policies as opposed to 'identity-blind' policies. Identity-conscious policies allow for decisions to be made with consideration to minority applicant information such as gender, age, race, and religion; whereas, identity-blind policies refer to those in which selection decisions are made without regard to minority applicant characteristics (Konrad & Linnehan, 1995).

The latter approach is intended to provide equal opportunity for all applicants; however, research has shown that minority applicants experience higher amounts of interpersonal discrimination when identity-blind as opposed to identity-conscious policies are adopted, particularly in the absence of structured interviews (Madera et al., 2010a), and minorities are more likely to apply to organizations that use identity-conscious (as opposed to identity-blind) recruitment strategies (Highhouse, Stierwalt, Bachiochi, Elder, & Fisher, 1999). This strategy is likely effective in reducing interpersonal (as well as formal) discrimination since it specifically targets minority applicants and protects them from discriminatory hiring practices of any kind.

Improve organizational diversity culture through formal policies

Organizations can further mitigate interpersonal discrimination by enacting formal policies regarding diversity and inclusion. Having formal policies communicates a clear message that organizations simply do not tolerate discrimination in any form. Barron (2009) revealed that interpersonal discrimination was less likely to be displayed in both a laboratory and field setting when organizational policies were in place to protect stigmatized individuals (in the case gay and lesbian employees). Specifically, in the field study gay and lesbian job applicants (independent coders also recorded) were much more likely to experience positive interpersonal interaction dynamics when applying for job in locales that offered legal protection versus those that did not. Thus, having formal consequences in place for breaches in non-tolerance social norms can discourage such behaviors (see Allport, 1954).

Inclusive diversity training

Diversity training may also be a valuable tool in reducing interpersonal discrimination. This training should focus on various stigmatized groups (e.g., women, ethnic minorities, gay/lesbian employees). Diversity training should incorporate strategies that help employees become more understanding of and have more positive attitudes about people from stigmatized groups. One such strategy is to have employees set diversity goals during training. A recent study that examined attitudes toward sexual orientation diversity before and after diversity training found that individuals who set sexual orientation diversity-supportive goals were more likely than those who did not set goals to engage in positive behaviors such as actively trying not to use sexually-oriented words (e.g., 'gay') in derogatory ways (Madera, King, & Hebl, 2010b). Another potential strategy is to include perspective-taking exercises that allow employees to take on the perspective of a stigmatized individual. This method has been shown to be effective in reducing discrimination against stigmatized groups such as the elderly (Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000) and non-native speakers (Weyant, 2007). While there has not been a direct empirical test of the impact of perspective-taking in interpersonal discrimination situations, this exercise may reduce the onset of occurrence of interpersonal discrimination because individuals are likely to think about others' feelings before acting.

Management buy-in

Finally, organizations can reduce interpersonal discrimination by ensuring that leadership and management is truly and visibly committed to diversity initiatives. This strategy is particularly important for middle management or supervisors that have frequent interactions

(i.e., daily) with employees. One effective tool that supervisors can use in diversity training situations is goal-setting. Madera et al. (2010b) showed that when both subordinates and their superiors established goals supporting diversity toward sexual orientation, subordinates were particularly likely to report increases in positive interpersonal behaviors on short- and long-term measures. This suggests that supervisors have the power to reduce interpersonal discrimination; therefore, organizations should capitalize on this power by training leaders to (i) effectively set diversity goals for their subordinates and (ii) help subordinates effectively set their own diversity goals.

Conclusion

This review provides evidence that interpersonal discrimination is a set of behaviors that negatively impacts employees within the workplace context; however, we have outlined both individual- and organizational-level strategies that can be used to reduce this discrimination (see Tables 1 and 2). Individuals can reduce interpersonal discrimination by acknowledging readily apparent stigmas and disclosing stigmas that are not readily apparent. In social interactions, individuals can reduce interpersonal discrimination by providing individuating information so that others begin to see them apart from stereotypes that represent their group. Finally, stigmatized individuals can successfully reduce interpersonal discrimination by increasing the positivity and agreeableness of their own verbal and non-verbal behaviors when engaging in interpersonal situations with non-stigmatized individuals.

At the organizational level, steps can be taken to mitigate interpersonal discrimination throughout the entire employment cycle. Organizational policies starting with the staffing process should be evaluated and revamped if necessary to ensure that applicants experience a fair and diverse selection process. Current employees should be protected against interpersonal discrimination by cultures of acceptance and zero-tolerance policies concerning discrimination. Finally, organizations should select and train managers who are willing and able to maintain a diverse climate and implement effective diversity training for employees.

We cannot conclude this article without strongly urging and promoting the continuation of future research that focuses on individual and organizational strategies that reduce interpersonal discrimination. This article highlights much of the research that has been

Table 1 Overview of individual level-strategies to reduce interpersonal discrimination

Strategy	Benefits	Examples of practical use
Acknowledge stigma	Can reduce ambiguity and tension caused by stigma	Acknowledge that you have a stigma, but that you are able to perform well in spite of it
Disclose stigma	Can reduce psychological stress and alleviate interpersonal tensions caused by lack of knowledge	Tell coworkers about personal life in order to feel authentic at work and reduce tensions
Increase positivity	Positivity is contagious. Individuals are less likely to discriminate against one who is nice to them	Put a smile on your face. Behave in an agreeable manner
Provide individuating information	Individuals are less likely to rely on stereotypes when they know something specific about an individual	Provide extra information about yourself to out-group members

Table 2 Overview of organizational-level strategies to reduce interpersonal discrimination

Strategy	Benefits	Examples of practical use
Diverse recruitment process	Communicates that the organization supports diversity	Develop recruitment advertisements that depict diversity. Send diverse recruiters to career fairs
Structured interviews	Allows for standardization and reduces opportunity for ambiguity. Also allows for use of guided scripts, which can reduce cognitive taxation due to ambiguity	Develop structured interviews based on job-relevant information. This process should begin with a comprehensive job analysis of each job
Identity-conscious hiring policies	Emphasizes visible commitment to diversity in organizational decision-making	Keep explicit records for all employee outcomes based on demographic characteristics to ensure fair treatment
Create formal policies	Employees understand that discrimination in any form is unacceptable	Establish a zero-tolerance policy concerning discrimination
Offer inclusive diversity training	Will be seen as something everyone can benefit from, not just majority group members	Have employees set specific diversity-related goals during training
Develop managers who are committed to diversity	These individuals will set the standard for what is acceptable, and will not tolerate discrimination	Select and promote managers who are committed to diversity and train them to use effective diversity strategies

done in this area; however, researchers need to highlight the precise relations and boundary conditions of the remediation strategies that successfully reduce the incidence of interpersonal discrimination in organizations. We stress the need for research that extends beyond laboratory settings or relies on self-report data to examine the generalizability and effectiveness of remediation strategies in actual workplace settings. Such research is imperative for allowing each employee to optimally perform in the workplace and for organizations to function free from interpersonal biases that are not related to the job.

Short Biographies

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Endnote

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