

Bias and Assumption Pause Card

A 30-second pause to catch an assumption before it shapes a decision. Use it when you are about to write a plan, make a call, or judge a situation.

Content

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Pause and ask yourself:

- Whose way of doing this am I treating as normal, and have I checked whether it fits this person?
- What am I assuming about their abilities, family, language, or culture that I have not confirmed?
- If I am wrong about that assumption, who gets harmed?
- What is one question I could ask instead of guessing?

That is it. You do not have to solve bias forever — just slow down long enough to notice one assumption and test it. Done often, this small habit changes outcomes more than any single training.

This is a pause, not a verdict. Noticing an assumption does not make you a bad person; not noticing is how good people produce unfair results.

Ask: Whose way of doing this am I treating as normal, and have I checked whether it fits this person?

Ask: What am I assuming about their abilities, family, language, or culture that I have not confirmed?

Ask: What is one question I could ask instead of guessing?

Choose the relevant guidance, verify fit and currency, and apply it to the work product using Bias and Assumption Pause Card.

Confirm the current purpose, audience, and decision authority before using Bias and Assumption Pause Card to choose the relevant guidance, verify fit and currency, and apply it to the work product.

Choose the sections of Bias and Assumption Pause Card that match the situation; do not apply unrelated guidance as a blanket rule.

Document the action taken from Bias and Assumption Pause Card, the people affected, unresolved questions, and the responsible follow-up owner.

For all staff, use Bias and Assumption Pause Card to choose the relevant guidance, verify fit and currency, and apply it to the work product; use the guidance in the immediate task, check impact and access, and ask for help when authority is unclear. Start by ask: Whose way of doing this am I treating as normal, and have I checked whether it fits this person?

Do not replace official legal, policy, clinical, supervisory, program, or Tribal authority.

Do not infer an individual's identity, preferences, needs, or experience from group-level information.

State uncertainty, use current authoritative sources, and escalate when the decision exceeds the user's role.

A 30-second pause to catch an assumption before it shapes a decision. Use it when you are about to write a plan, make a call, or judge a situation. Step 1. Ask: Whose way of doing this am I treating as normal, and have I checked whether it fits this person? Step 2. Ask: What am I assuming about their abilities, family, language, or culture that I have not confirmed? Step 3. Ask: What is one question I could ask instead of guessing? Step 4. Choose the relevant guidance, verify fit and currency, and apply it to the work product using Bias and Assumption Pause Card. Step 5. Confirm the current purpose, audience, and decision authority before using Bias and Assumption Pause Card to choose the relevant guidance, verify fit and currency, and apply it to the work product. Step 6. Choose the sections of Bias and Assumption Pause Card that match the situation; do not apply unrelated guidance as a blanket rule. Step 7. Document the action taken from Bias and Assumption Pause Card, the people affected, unresolved questions, and the responsible follow-up owner.