

>> And happy Friday, everyone. Thanks for joining us.

>> All right. I see our participants are pretty much in, so let's go ahead and get started. Good morning, good morning or good afternoon, depending on where you are. To everyone joining us today, we are super excited to be here and to be able to present this material to you folks. I just want to thank and acknowledge just the tremendous amount of work that has gone into making this conference happen. I know CADRE is a small and mighty team, and it's been a lot of hard work getting this thing accomplished, and it's been really incredible. I don't know how many of you have been able to participate in other sessions, but they've all been fantastic. So I just feel really fortunate to be included and to be able to be here with you all and spend the next little hour we have together growing and learning with you. And so I am Diana Cruz. I see a lot of familiar names and some faces. I am currently a PhD student at the University of Northern Colorado, but a few might know me from when I used to work here at CADRE. I just actually left CADRE in May and joined the Oregon Department of Education as an education specialist. But I am here today in my capacity as a student presenting to you with my colleague Tracy, and I'll let Tracy go ahead and introduce herself.

>> Hi, everyone. It's so good to see so many familiar faces from all over. I know our CADRE family is tightly connected, and it's nice to be able to connect virtually even though it's not in-person. Thank you, CADRE, for doing such an amazing job putting this together. So I'm really happy to be here with Diana. We're going to be talking about mindfulness, bias, cultural competence and conflict and where all that falls in. I am a professor of special education at UNC where I've been here in Colorado since for a long time now, and it's great to be back here presenting at CADRE.

>> Thanks, and so we just want to remind you that we have the functionality in place so that you can share your camera if you choose to share your ... or unmute yourselves when you want to participate, but for now if everybody can please just mute your mics. That way we have a quiet background, and then we will have plenty of opportunities to engage. Okay, so like Tracy said, today we're going to be talking about bias, culture and conflict and kind of the interplay of all three. We're going to talk through some mindfulness strategies that have been shown to help mitigate some of that. And so let's get going here. This is just a quick run-through of we're going to cover in our time together. We're going to talk through the different forms of bias, and there's three in particular that we're going to cover, kind of the ones that seem to show up most frequently. And then we're going to talk about how bias impacts our relationships not only with our colleagues and families, but in particular with families or colleagues that are from a different culture than us or identify with a different culture than we do. And we're going to talk about how that can lead to conflict, how those cross-cultural misunderstandings can contribute to conflict in special education in particular. And then I'm going to share with you the results of three really interesting studies. They implemented mindfulness as an intervention and collected just some really interesting information that we're going to dig into. And then finally we'll talk through the potential areas for implementation in our day-to-day and barriers that exist because I think that is key is overcoming those barriers. And we have a couple of resources for you at the end in case you want to dive a little bit deeper. And so with that, let's start our discussion around bias. And so, before we are actually going to use some breakout rooms for this. And you can feel free to participate, or if this is just too deep, too much, you don't want to, you just want to listen, that's fine. You can leave the breakout room. We want everybody to be comfortable. But what we're going to do is run through these questions in small groups and breakouts. There's going to be five of you in a group, but again you guys can opt in or opt out. And I would love for you guys to think through these questions. We want to think about what is bias and why is it important to understand. And then in your groups, we would like you to talk about how often bias is discussed in your home, in your work or in your social settings. And then share with each other just what discourages those conversations around bias and what encourages that. And then we'll come back in. If you finish before the 5 minutes, feel free to just share any breakout, any takeaways into the chat, and then we'll review those as a group. So without further delay, we're going to go ahead and break you into breakout groups.

>> And ...

>> Diana, this is Kevin. There are a few people who have come in after we started the breakout session, so there's a handful of you. So if you don't mind, I'll just assign those randomly just to get them in and participate.

>> Perfect.

>> And I know some people have come back from the room, so ...

>> Thank you.

>> Just to let you know, that actually might be happening quite a bit. We had a cancellation of a session at the last minute. She was having difficulty with connecting.

>> Oh, okay.

>> And so they're being filtered probably into this session.

>> Okay.

>> Okay.

>> So we might be having some latecomers.

>> I'll just look for some of the rooms that maybe don't have as many people in and try and fill in the blanks a little bit. Okay, so everybody that's still left in this main session at one point was in the room and probably decided to come back.

>> Okay, perfect. And for those of you that are hanging out here with us, just you can ponder these on your own. Can everybody see my screen again?

>> Diana, you're free to share that content into all the breakout rooms too, if you want that to show up for everybody.

>> Oh, yeah. I don't even know.

>> You'll have to start a new share.

>> Okay.

>> And it'll be in the advanced app.

>> Hold on. There's my control panel. Okay, advanced.

>> And at the bottom there, I think it says, "Share content to breakout rooms."

>> It's okay. I think they'll ...

>> Okay.

>> It will be okay.

>> I found my way back.

>> Welcome back.

>> We missed you.

>> I was like, so we need to put the recording in, the PowerPoint slides.

>> Oh, right. Thank you for reminding me. Yes, I will do that right now. Hold on. Let me ...

>> ... that right before we broke off, and I was like, "Ah!" because I saw people asking.

>> Can you guys see my screen now again? Okay, and I'll go ahead and do that next.

>> For some reason it won't let me ... I was trying to share the file, but it wouldn't let me. I don't know why.

>> Hmm. And, Tracy, just I think you missed it. You were still in a breakout session, but I guess there's a couple more people filtering in because there was a last-minute cancellation of a different session. So we have people joining us kind of midway, which is great.

>> Welcome, welcome.

>> Welcome, friends. And I just ...

>> So, Diana and Tracy, a couple of the rooms signaled for some help. They actually didn't get the instructions. Are you able to open up the breakout tab? It may be under more ...

>> Okay.

>> And just chat that to them. You can broadcast message to all if you open up the breakout window.

>> The breakout window. Tracy, are you getting that? I'm not finding that.

>> I'm looking. You know, why don't we bring everyone back and we can just start talking because we didn't really want ...

>> Okay.

>> Yeah.

>> All right. Well let me go ahead and bring them back.

>> Okay.

>> It's going to take a minute because I had set a timer just to make sure they didn't get yanked back without knowing.

>> Okay.

>> So they'll be back here in 1 minute, and they've also got the option to come back on their own, so ...

>> Perfect.

>> Perfect.

>> Thanks for your help, Kevin.

>> Absolutely.

>> And you'll advance the slides ...

>> Yeah.

>> ... when I'm ready? Yeah, perfect. Hi, everyone, who's joining us.

>> Welcome back.

>> So if anyone's joining, we're just waiting for the breakout rooms to come back to talk more about our topic. Welcome back, everyone, starting to see the numbers climb up.

>> Excellent. Okay, sorry about the confusion there. We thought you would be able to see the questions when you left, and I couldn't get it together quick enough to post them for you. So any big takeaways about the discussion about bias? Go ahead and post in the chat if you had an opportunity or you had an a-ha moment about what you think encourages or discourages conversations about bias. Please feel free to drop it in the chat. Also in the chat, I wanted to let you all know the slide deck is in there in a PDF form, so if anybody is looking for that, I just posted it again. And we're going to go forward.

>> All right. So does anyone ... Let's see if anyone's dropping any comments in there, lack of self-reflection, openness to others' views. That's really good to share. Thanks. Anyone just kind of keep dropping it in. When we think about bias, what are some of those thoughts that we have? We think of defensiveness. I can see uninformed, people feel that they're inundated with biased information. There might be negative assumptions. There's a lot of different thoughts. We have this visual of walking on thin ice, or is it not thin ice? So if any of you have ever attempted this or watched a movie where someone's attempted it, you're sitting on the edge of the seat, or if you're in the actual ... Hopefully you're not sitting when you're doing that, but we know that when you see a frozen pond there might be areas that are completely frozen and people ice skate on them. And then there's other areas where you take one step and you can fall right through. And in some ways when it comes to talking about bias, we feel like a lot of people have those conversations or they'll say those types of descriptions is it feels like "I don't know where to go. I don't know what to say." I might say something that will offend someone, and so a lot of people will immediately say, "Oh, I don't have bias. Bias doesn't exist. I was raised very openly." But the reality is we all have bias, and one of the most important things is to identify it, understand it. And then that way we can be more productive and collaborative when we work forward, and there are all forms of biases as we're seeing in the chat box, which is what Diana and I are going to talk a little bit more about. So when we think about the word bias, one of the first things we always do ... I'm a qualitative researcher, and one of my favorite things to do is always look up what's the definition, right? So where has this been defined either in a dictionary or through collective research, and the common definition that we found with bias is it's a particular tendency, trend, or inclination, or feeling or an opinion. And it's especially one that is preconceived or unreasoned, and there's a reason behind that. And we're going to talk more about that, unpackage that a little bit more.

>> And so most of our biases, they come from our own culture and how we were raised within our family dynamics, within our communities. It's based on our life experience, and typically it shows up around things that we may not even be conscious of. And so I think it's another really important thing is to be able to name where it comes from, just like Tracy said, and what it looks like in ourselves. And so, growing up it took me a long time to separate out and kind of do some digging internally of why it is I believe certain things and where those beliefs come from. And a lot of it just traces back to the environments in which I grew up and what my parents taught me, what they wanted us to value and what they wanted us to strive for, plus the community that I grew up in. I grew up in a pretty diverse neighborhood with the majority of my life, and it wasn't until I was well into most likely 30s that I experienced living in a place that was not as diverse. And so I think a lot of those things color our view and shape where our biases come from. And so today, we're going to talk about three particular types of biases, and these are the most common forms that we see having a direct impact on special education. There are more, but these are the ones that we're going to focus on for today. And so we're going to go forward with these three, the correspondence bias, negativity bias and self-positivity bias. And we'll give you some examples and share some stories that are both special education related and maybe some that are just personal just to share our experience with you. And so let's dive into the first one. So, correspondence bias ... And to me, the way I remember these is just like what I summarized really easily is being judgmental, right? What it essentially means is that when something goes awry, when an event happens that doesn't meet our expectations, somebody does something that we don't like or whatever, we're living in correspondence bias is when we attribute that negative event to a personality trait and the other person rather than an influence of the factors around them. And so let me give you an example because I didn't get that out very easily. But let's say you have a student whose parent is suddenly concerned about their progress, right? Their academic progress is slipping, so she sends you an e-mail, and she's just like, "I want to have a meeting to discuss this. I'm really worried about my child's progress." And you say, "Okay, great." You do your due diligence. You find a time. You talk with the teachers. You arrange the scheduling and coverage and all of the things, right? You send the invite home and you're ready to go. And then on the day of the meeting, the parent doesn't show up. So if you're acting or functioning within your correspondence bias, what might be some character assignments that we give based on that scenario?

>> They don't care.

>> Yeah, very good. Exactly. That was one of the first things that popped into my head when I was working through that. They don't care, or they don't respect your time or they make a big fuss right now and then they're going to disappear again. You can see how easily that we can fall into that pattern of assigning it as a character flaw. When we're in that space, instead of assuming or being curious about what the external circumstances may have been, maybe her car broke down, or maybe she had some other transportation issues, or maybe somebody got sick or childcare stuff that pops up all the time. There's a ton of different factors that could influence why somebody doesn't show up to a meeting. But when we're in correspondence bias, we assign it as a personality flaw. This person is this. If you do something bad or you do something that doesn't meet my expectations, that's because there is something inherently bad in you. And that is essentially that big summary of what correspondence looks like. And if we think about that in a broader scale, we could very easily assign a whole cultural group, right, a whole social group a particular trait, right? And I don't think anything is really more apparent now than if we look at our current sociopolitical status right now that we're living in. No matter which side you're on, the other side has a bunch ... I'm sure you can come up with a list of traits that you assign to that other group, right? And it's not necessarily a situational or circumstantial event. We don't consider those. We just say, "You are this, and so you've done this thing and therefore you are this thing." And I think when we think about how we interact with our families, or colleagues or even our own families, like our own relationships within our own family, this shows up. And so we'll talk later about some evidence of how mindfulness can help with this, but I don't want to get ahead of myself. So for the next one, negativity bias, what this one essentially just means that brain tends to hold on to the negative experiences and gloss over all of the good ones. And so, I'm sure a lot of you can relate to that one, but I'll just give you a quick story to highlight. It's actually pretty funny. So I spent a lot of time in South Florida, and when I had my son, as a Florida resident you get a discount when you go to Disneyland ... Or Disney World. I'm sorry. I just got converted to the West Coast suddenly. But anyway, we spent a lot of days at Disney World before my son turned three because he was free, and they used to give all kinds of discounts. And so he must have gone about ... I don't know, 20 times before he turned 3 years old. And one particular trip, it was July. It was super hot, and he was dead set on getting his picture with Goofy. That was like his absolute favorite character. And so we wait in this hour-and-a-half-long line in the baking sun, and as luck would have it he fell asleep right before it was our turn. And so we're like, "Whatever, we'll take his pictures." We have a really cute picture of Goofy like, "Shh, quiet while he's sleeping." And as soon as we walk out, he wakes up and just devastation ensued, tears, the screaming, the whole thing. He was devastated. And he's almost 11 now, and this was before he was 3, and if you ask him about Disney, he has gone 20 times, the only thing ... He doesn't remember the magic. He doesn't remember the Micky ice creams that were like \$30 each. All he remembers is that he didn't get a chance to get his picture with Goofy still to this day, and that is just the prime, prime example that I could come up with of what negativity bias looks like in real life. But when you think about it in a less silly kind of scenario there, think about what that does and what that could set you up for in a future scenario in working with families. If you have a family that it's their first experience in an IEP meeting, whether it be a preschooler just coming in, or somebody who'd just been made eligible or I had a situation where a foster parent just got a child in their custody for the very first time, and if they walk in and their first IEP meeting is awful. They leave feeling confused, concerned, dismissed, whatever those feelings might be, what does that do to their ongoing expected anticipation about

future IEP meetings, right? They're going to walk in the door with heightened emotion already, and what we know about conflict is that is not a good place to be when you're trying to be in a place of collaboration and engage in a problem-solving process, which the IEP meeting is. Oh, if we can have everybody mute their ... Thank you. But, yeah, so just think about what that can do in terms of emotionality and setting you up for ongoing conflict or ongoing tension if you walk in with negatively bias. And so I think it's a really important one. We're going to focus on that one later on with the research as well, but I just wanted to highlight that. And I will pass it to Tracy for this one.



>> Self-positivity bias. This is one of my favorites because I think we get caught up in this a lot as experts in our particular field and our training. And it's natural, right? We spend years of our time and our effort learning about specific strategies or interventions, and we become part of our trade. And sometimes that self-positivity bias, it's that Ron Burgundy, if you've seen that movie, "It's not me, it's you," where we hold positive views of ourselves in comparison to others. So very common when it comes to conflict as our own sort of actual defense mechanism. It's hard to hear feedback about ourself, so sometimes it's very easy to be like, "Oh, it's not because of me, it's because of them." Well, clearly it's something because I have this expertise with me." So the self-positivity bias looks like when you have positive experiences or outcomes saying they're due to those personal attributes. So, "It's because of me not because of our team working together as a group to come up with a solution for Johnny's behavior, but I came up with this because I have this background." And likewise, negative experiences or outcomes tend to be the result of an external factor, not a personal flaw. So this is the age-old, "It's not me, it's you," and we've got that quote up there where it's really ... And I really like to caution the students where I work at UNC, I train a lot of behavior analysts or certified behavior analysts, and unfortunately one thing that's very prominent in the field of ABA and BCBA's is there are quite a few that kind of walk around like they know everything. And although they are very well versed in their trade like we all are, they are one of many on a team. And so it's really keeping that perspective there's no I in team kind of thing, but it really goes a long way when it comes to conflict. And so we'll be talking more about how we can kind of shake off some of those biases or at least deal with them and address them when it happens. So the next slide is when we're sort of what I like to talk about is value glasses. And so we started out our session talking about and having you have really brief conversations about bias, and what does that look like, and when do I see it and does it exist. And so really all of this to say that we're going to talk about some specific strategies that involve taking off our value glasses, acknowledging what our value glasses are that we wear and then taking them off and really looking at how are we representing ourself. And so there are biases that we naturally lean toward in the nature that we ... If we go back to that biased definition, it's a particular tendency, or a trend, or an inclination or a feeling that we lean toward, and it's not one that we necessarily set out to do. It's just the way that we see and view the world. So Diana is going to talk about some of those things that shape our value glasses, but I want to really emphasize and we want to emphasize it's more than culture when it comes to our value glasses and our perceptions of experiences. I think old-school way ... And I think by culture I think we really need to look at it from a very broad sense as well, is back when I was a kid it was, "We're having culture day," which was everybody bring a food from their heritage, which back then that was maybe when we were getting ready to acknowledge it. But now we realize there's so much more that we wear in our culture, and that is are we raised by a large family? Do we have an extended family? Do we've got a single parent? Are we in an inner city? Are we in a more small town where everybody's raising me? Do I have parents that believe something specifically about a certain practice? All of these different lenses fall into our own so that we have a lot that we come with. And so we'd like to challenge you to really think about your value glasses, maybe later on today or this weekend or when you have time to ponder what makes you you. What are some beliefs that you strongly believe in? What are some judgments that you hold, and where did those come from? Acknowledging them first and foremost is the step to being able to be more mindful in our practice. These are things we can't ... That have been rooted in us in many ways, some in just our upbringing or generational. And so it's

not to say we're going to rid ourselves of them, but that we're going to know what they are. We're going to acknowledge them and then we're going to go from there.

>> Excellent, and we are going to briefly before we move on just take a quick poll of the audience talking about acknowledging our own bias. Let's see which one we think shows up the most. So go ahead and self select. Nobody's going to get identified here, so don't feel badly. And let us know what you think. Ooh, it's pretty neck and neck.

>> Yeah! Okay.

>> The negatively bias is pulling away with the lead.

>> Yep. Very common, and what we talked about is there's many other forms of biases, but these are the ones we see the most. As you can think about correspondence, think about how many times you've heard the term, "Oh, they're a millennial," right? That's part of that thinking. Or, "Well, it's a teen parent," or, "They live in XYZ situation." So, yeah, okay, so negatively bias ...

>> Negatively bias wins. All right.

>> Yeah.

>> All right. People are playing along with us. Okay. We're going to shift a little bit here. Tracy kind of introduced it a little bit. We want to talk about culture and the different elements that make up culture and kind of our cultural identity. And so, I really wanted to start with the break down of my understanding of how my understanding has evolved throughout the years in the hopes that maybe some of you will identify with my journey. When I was younger, I remember thinking that culture was pretty one-dimensional, very much like Tracy said. It was tied to my ethnicity. Raised in ethnicity was how I defined culture. And so my family was Puerto Rican, or we were part of the Latinx community, and that was it. That was my culture, and it showed up in the language we used at home, Spanish was spoken in our home, our traditions in terms of how we celebrate holidays, and birthdays and food. We loved food, and music and all of that. That's how I identified with my culture, and I think a lot of people default there still to that racial or ethnic understanding, that broad understanding of what it means to have culture. And it wasn't really until I got a little older and started kind of moving physically, geographically moving throughout the country where I noticed how my culture started to show up in different ways. And it was kind of based on my understanding of life at whatever point I was at and situational events, circumstances, experiences that I had. As they changed the way I thought about things, it changed the way I identified in my culture. And so everything started to shift. And so just to highlight that, when I had my first child, I remember all of the sudden gender became really important to me. The fact that I was a mother, the culture of motherhood became really, really important all of the sudden, whereas earlier in my life I never really showed up that way. I wouldn't say that as a younger person being a woman was really all that important an aspect of my culture, but it did change. And it became so, especially during that particular part of my life, right? Later on, when my son was diagnosed with a disability, that showed up. Being a parent of a child with a disability, being that mama bear became a very important piece of who I am and how my culture showed up as well as my family. And again, I think during different context, during different social and political settings, it's highly influential to how I show up in my culture. And what that does is it makes it a very, very tricky thing to navigate cross-cultural relationships for two main reasons really. One I think as humans we're very quick to kind of do that physical scan of somebody and assign them a culture based on what we can see or observe about them, and that's dangerous because, like I said, it's not a static thing and it's multifaceted. It's made up of so many different factors and different groups of things that can influence your identity. And so you can present yourself pretty differently depending on your circumstances. So within culture, we've listed a couple of things here that can influence, or impact culture or a piece of your cultural identity, but I left the others box in there just for that reason because there's so many more things. I think now in this current climate that we're in with COVID-19, I think about the culture of being an educator. And all of the sudden that is a huge part of our identity. At least as a special education teacher, I feel like that is something that is really in the forefront of a lot of educators' identities right now, and same thing for parents. Navigating virtual school and having students that may or may not have been able to access their services, that was a ... Being a parent of a child with a disability right now is a really big factor that's influencing a lot of people and how they're reeling things and their cultural identity. So it's very much dependent on our context, and I think that's the real takeaway that you want to have here is that we want to make sure that we all have kind of a shared understanding that culture is not one piece or one thing and it's not static. It's not going to show up the same way every time even within the same person. It changes with the context. And so

why that's important really does have to do with the impact that culture has on our perspective, like Tracy was sharing earlier. If we think about culture as another way that we have ... like another variable that we have to identify when we're working with others, we can see how it shows up. It impacts our views, and depending on our culture, our views disability, our views of just education and educators in general are different, how we view conflict and how we approach disagreement are all heavily ... Can't talk this morning, influenced by our culture. And it's ... My norms, my cultural norms and the way that I expect people to react, if that doesn't match up with how somebody reacts based on their cultural norms, and if my expectations are not being met, then that lays the groundwork for conflict. And I'll share another really quick story, I like stories, about a situation I had when I was working in a school. There was a colleague of mine that shared with me that she was feeling just really intimidated by a person, a parent of one of her students. Like every time at drop-off or if he caught her in the hallway, he was like ... "He gets really, really close. He likes gets physically very close to me, and I feel like he's trying to intimidate me. He's trying to scare me, and he's just really aggressive." And I was like, "Oh, that's really interesting. What ... Is he angry?" And she's like, "No, but he's just all in my space and getting all close and making me feel very uncomfortable." And it turns out long story short after we did some digging that in his culture being close, like physical proximity, is a sign of respect and a sign of, "That this conversation that we're having is really important to me, so I am going to get really, really close." And there was actually a saying that something about, "The respect is only as good as the smell of the other person's breath." You have to be that physically close to show that you're being respectful. And so she was ready to call the SRO and have the guy escorted from campus, and in reality it was just a misunderstanding. It was that different perspective, different view showed up in a very real way. And so want to invite you to think about that, think about some missteps maybe that made in your own life. I know I have made them as well as we continue to work through. And so I'll pass it back to Tracy.

>> Yeah, so let's think about ... And just briefly, if you have time, and I love seeing all the information that's being dropped into our chat. So as you all think about what we've been talking about so far, we've got a great group of people here with a lot of backgrounds. Let's hear from you about what impact do our biases have on our relationships with families. What do you think? What are some examples you might have seen in your day-to-day lives where our biases can impact our relationships as well as our culture? So I'll look forward to seeing anything dropped in there. In the meantime I'm going to talk about our next ... our model where we kind of look at where all of these merge together. And so that was a really good example, Diana, that you just provided. There's a lot of examples that we can think of when we see these three together. And one thing I want to really encourage is, so we're talking about identifying our bias, identifying the ways in which we see things, understanding our own culture and what makes us who we are, and then also ... So we talk about how that can sometimes lead us into conflict. And I come from also a conflict prevention framework very much so. I think likewise we can use that preventively, proactively so that instead of us jumping to, "Okay, wow, we're in conflict because of this, why don't we get to know our own biases? Why don't we get to know our teams' biases as well as their culture and our own? That way we're able to be more meaningful." And so we see some of those conversations when we talk about strategies a little bit later, some of those strategies fall within what we see in facilitate IEP practice or mediation, where we take a step back and it's that tip of the iceberg versus the bottom that we know about, right? We get stuck on that tip, but if we go to the very bottom of the iceberg that so many of you who are mediators are probably very familiar with that analogy and that image, that bottom of that iceberg is the culture, the bias that wraps us in our framing as to why we're standing maybe in a position about a particular topic. So an example with ... I love this example of a conflict that happened between a family member and a district IEP team, they had a lot of issues going on where the student was getting ready for postsecondary planning and there was a lot of conversations going on. And the school was very much trained in there, as we all are with postsecondary planning, is student ... We want the student to lead. We want to know what the student's strengths are, what their areas of interests are in employment and their skill set and all of those things we want to create a meaningful program for them. And so in this situation, the school district was coming with that perspective, and the parent had a very specific agenda. They wanted their child to go to college. Now, that student did not want to go to college. That student actually really liked an area of trade that the district found to be really meaningful and ultimately something that would help this individual be successful in life. But the parent came from a background where no one had gone to college yet, including the mom. And the mom was a single mom, and she wanted college more than anything for her child. And when the team was able to finally take a step back and look at the deeper part of the iceberg, they realized this parent had with them a bias of, "You're not going to make it in life if you don't go to college. You're not going to have enough money," that type of thing because she had her own experiences of struggling. And she attributed much of that to not having a college degree. And then likewise she came from a family that really valued going to college. That was a very important part of her culture that she was always told should happen, but she didn't. Ultimately, they all wanted what was best for the child, for the student, but they came together with very different backgrounds, and so it's really that bias and that culture and understanding how they all merge where we see the conflict. So we can either prevent it once we know that information ahead of time, use that as a proactive strategy, or when we're in the moment. And we'll talk about some of those

strategies in a bit. Then we can actually use those to react and be able to react in a meaningful way so that we're able to address the conflict and the issue and not the disagreement between everyone. So we'll talk about that with mindfulness. So before Diana talks a little bit about some of the research we know about mindfulness, I want to emphasize that this is not just some catchy, sexy, hot topic right now on social media, which it is, but it's also very meaningful. There's research to show it. We know that it's originally practiced in mediation, and that's where much of it has come from. But really very simply it's a practice of being in the moment, becoming aware and centering our brain and our thoughts into our emotions, our thoughts, surroundings, our bodies and being aware and identifying our triggers. It's using nonjudgmental and accepting language verbal and nonverbal language, and it really helps difficulties when it comes to our own management of our emotions. And so Diana is going to talk a little bit more about the research we know about that, and then we'll talk about some strategies that fall under mindfulness when you're in conflict.

>> All right. And so, how can mindfulness help us? That's the big question. There's a lot of research, and I was actually really intrigued when I started digging in to find out that there's a ton of benefits to mindfulness and practicing mindfulness, especially when you do it consistently, and it doesn't have to be a huge investment of time. You don't even necessarily have to be good at it actually I learned because I'm terrible at it. But you still receive the benefits of mindfulness. And so I'm going to talk you through three different studies that were conducted and talk about the results and how that's important and the impact it has on bias on top of reducing bias and prejudice behavior. And, like I said, there's a ton of other benefits. There's health benefits, and you're less anxious. You sleep better. You're more focused. There's all kinds of great stuff, but we're going to focus in just on the stuff that has to do with conflict and bias here. And so now I'm a big believer. Just in prepping for this presentation I have really bought in, and that's something for me because I was one of those pretty skeptical people before I really read the research. But anyway, okay. So the first study was ... And you don't have to worry about trying to write down the names. It's on the slide at the end, so don't worry about which study is which. You'll see them listed later. But the first one is by Tim Hopthrow and some colleagues. And what they did was really interesting. They had a brief mindful eating exercise, which I was like, "Sign me up." Anything that has to do with food, I am down. But what they did was, they had two groups. They had a control group that did nothing mindful. They just did the activity, and then they had a group that practiced a 10-minute mindful eating exercise, just literally focusing on the food as they ate it. And then they presented both groups with an essay. Somebody wrote an opinion piece, okay? And what they did is the group, they compared the results of how people assigned the author of like a value judgment, or they said, "This person believes x, so he is this." They rated how easily each group was able to do that, and it was really interesting, significant results. The group that participated in the mindfulness, the 10-minute eating exercise, had way ... They were way less likely to attribute the author's opinion writing as his personal belief system and personal trait. And so that was just a ... And meanwhile the control group, they we reviewed basically like, "Well, this guy is a jerk," because the guy chose the controversial side of a very controversial topic. And so just in that 10 minutes, it was really interesting how beneficial that mindfulness exercise and what an impact it had on their behavior. And that's the key. It's like we all have our biases. They're all going to show up, and the difference is how we act on them. So this is very behaviorally based, this one, and it was a huge impact. So good high points for mindfulness based on that study. Another study was by a Nerissa Ho and her colleagues, and this one had to do with associations and how easily groups were able to assign positive feelings with positive photos, like pictures of smiling babies and rainbows and stuff. And the negative photos with ... I mean negative emotions with negative photos, like natural disasters, and injury and things like that. So, again, it was two groups. They presented them with these photos after a mindful exercise, and again with a significant difference, the group that participated in the mindfulness exercise before they were shown the photos were able to assign the positive photos with positive feelings much easier, and then the opposite was true with the negative photos. They didn't hold on to those negative emotions the same, so this one was really targeted at that negativity bias we were talking about. And just again in 10 minutes they saw a huge difference between the two groups. And then finally, the Logie article there that I reference at the end, there is another study here where the participants received ... This was a three-group study. So there was three different groups, and the participants received either a 15-minute talk about mindfulness, so they didn't actually participate in it, they just

talked about it, or a 15-minute mindfulness meditation was the second group, or the third had a 15-minute loving-kindness meditation. And the differences there between the two types of mediations doesn't really matter for our purposes today, but this one was focused on self-positivity bias. And so they were shown ... After they engaged in the activity, they were shown arrays of photos of themselves and strangers, and they tested how easily they were able to assign positive words with themselves and negative words with strangers. And so it was testing that self-positivity bias, and guess what? I know this is going to be shocking, but the two groups that participated in the mindfulness activity had a significant less self-positivity bias show up. And again, this was in 15 minutes one time. So I think at the end of the day here, the data is pretty clear. And again, when I was digging in to all of this, I did not know much about mindfulness initially, and so I of course then fell down the rabbit hole of reading all of the research about it, and a lot of it comes from psychology and medical fields. But it is just astounding how a really short, minimal effort has a pretty enormous impact in terms of our behavior in a way that bias shows up in our day-to-day. And so, again, those are referenced on the last slide if you want to dig in and read them yourself. They're pretty fascinating. So, as we know, if we think about this overlap of mindfulness and what leads to special education conflict, when I've been entrenched in some of my more difficult cases and conflict ... I was a dispute resolution coordinator, and it was the fifth largest district in the country before I joined CADRE and then now in my current role. But some of those more difficult ones, I did notice in myself, I did notice that I became a little bit more judgmental, a little bit more arrogant in my position. I was sure I was right, especially the longer the conflict carried on or the case carried on. I was much more emotional. I was primed and ready, like anxiety through the roof. And I was just ready. I was primed for conflict, right? That's what happens when we're in these entrenched conflicts. And I remember having to deal with a case that I had that lasted over 2 years. It was bad. It was like 13 due process cases total by the end of the day and just a very ugly situation. And by the end of it, I was like, "Oh my God, just thinking about scheduling a meeting would make my blood pressure shoot through the roof." I was like, "Oh my gosh." So emotional reactivity and deciding all these things that I had decided about the family as a result of the conflict that we were engaged in. I'm not proud to it. It's not flattering, but I'm just going to be honest and share my truth with you all. That's what happens when you're engaged in an ongoing, long, contentious conflict. It gets emotional. It gets personal, and we get judgy and our bias shows up. And so when we think about mindfulness as a strategy to combat that, it is so clear how that would impact the way we engage in conflict with families. We can become less emotionally reactive. We can be less likely to pigeonhole people, right. We're not going to have that correspondence bias show up as often. We'll be less judgmental, and ultimately we will behave more like the kind of people we strive to be, right, out of that bias and into just the now and the realities. And so that really is the crux of the question is how? How do we do this, and let's think that through together.



>> So I'm going to talk about some mindfulness strategies, and I also just put in the chat box just a link to one of many references. This one is just a little. It's [pocketmindfulness.com](http://pocketmindfulness.com). There's some good stuff in there. And I do want to just point out some really great topical ... some really great points being made in our chat. So if you haven't had a chance to take a look there, go ahead and look at what some of the things people are saying. But I do want to bring up that, Sandy, you shared some people use the term practicing presence because mindfulness can have some connotations that can be challenging to some people, and that, to Diana, your point, no one is ever really good at mindfulness necessarily because it's always practice, right? And I love that you brought that up, Sandy, because the best way to remind everybody about this ... We all do this. How many of you have been driving somewhere, probably it's a route that you're very familiar with, maybe you commute to your work or somewhere driving kids to school or what have you, and you're three quarters of the way there and you are in your brain thinking about who knows what? It could have been a dream you had. It could have been something you have to do. You're planning something. You are literally in another place and time, but you're driving your car. Sounds kind of scary, but we've had so many automatic responses that we tend to just keep driving. So sometimes we can be like that in meetings. When we're sitting there and we're in this meeting that we have been in ... Raise your hand if you've been in one too many, a lot of IEP meetings in your life. Not one too many. They're important meetings, but we've been in a lot, right? So you kind of can get caught up in that practice of, "I'm doing my commute. I'm doing this IEP meeting, and I've got another one after that." And the teacher culture is real. We have a lot of things we're challenged with, and educators, administrators, all of us. So some strategies that can help us stay centered and focused are first and foremost pause and settle your breath, practice the pause. We've heard that in many different ways, but being mindful during conflict, during a meeting or it doesn't have to be conflict. It just can be how can you be mindful during an IEP meeting, or during a particularly important meeting where conflict could happen or at anytime conflict can happen when you have more than one person because although ... I've seen conflicts with myself as well. So we can do it alone as well. I think we can all agree on that, but it's incompatible goals, right? It's when somebody has something different they're thinking. So sometimes practicing the pause can help us pause and think before we respond. Also doing a brief body scan. "Where am I? Am I annoyed right now because I'm tired, and I'm hungry and I haven't eaten yet? Or, "I have had to go to the bathroom for the last 2 hours, or more," which is very common for us in our schools, right? So let's do a body scan. Is something going on within our body that's making us particularly leaning toward one way or another? Are we not being open to listening to everybody's ideas because I'm feeling tense, or how am I nonverbally coming across? And then, let's name our emotions, identify them and name them. So if somebody is sharing something during a meeting and I'm starting to get really kind of bothered by that. Something is happening within me, I'm going to stop and try to be mindful, and think, "What's going on in my body, and why is this happening and how can I do something to change that?" Being aware of our verbal and our body language, I think we've all heard about this on more than once occasion, but even looking at your watch ... And we have to be careful all of us wearing Apple watches, which so many people do because we get text messages on our Apple watches now, and we get meeting alerts on our Apple watches and we get every ... We get motivational quotes on our watches. And whatever we want, we want. It tells us to stand up. And sometimes we can be looking at our watch, and what that nonverbally says is, "Yeah I'm ... There's something here that's more important to you." So we have to be really careful

because we used to say be careful of our phone. We're not looking at our phone, but now it's on our body. So being really aware of that, checking those value glasses. What bias might be present? Do I have some correspondence things going on? Am I judging because this parent hasn't shown up to any of my parent-teacher conferences or responded to any of my meetings, and now they have all of this to share? Why now? Am I being judgmental because of that? Am I negative about this? Did I already have a negative outlook before the meeting started? Am I being too much of a Ron Burgundy? Is there too much of that self-positivity going on? Do I need to take it back a bit? And we do that in some of those facilitated IEP skills where one of my favorite things is the introduction where we introduce our role and what we're going to bring to the table rather than who we are and what our background is. So I'm not Dr. Tracy. I'm Tracy, and I'm here to talk about behavior. And that sounds so much less intimidating than, "I'm Dr. Tracy with a board certified." That just sounds scary, so we talk about that. Naming and challenging your assumptions, knowing ahead of time if you're going to go into a challenging meeting, and also knowing you need to tap out. We'd use that skill with behavior as well. If you know that you and a particular parent or team member have really challenging personalities, it's okay to say, "You know what, I might need to take a breath." I know we're coming up on time here, so identifying the other perspectives, identifying that problem and removing the emotion from it, I always recommend when it comes to being mindful if we're going to be suggesting a solution, let's use pros and cons with it so that we're making sure that we're being present with everybody who's in the room and we're not doing any of these power struggles. And then always be aware of and respect those differences. It's really important that we know that differences exist and it's okay. It's what we do it that really makes the biggest difference.

>> And okay, so what we really want you all to think is some ideas about how we could put this into practice as a way to either reduce or prevent conflict or also to intervene when there is conflict. And I have not done this yet personally, and so really this is like, "Hey, maybe there's people in our audience that are far more informed about this topic than we are." I know that there are examples at school level where people use mindfulness intervention with students as part of their positive behavior support or whatever they do is a class-wide or school-wide behavior program, which I think is awesome. I have yet to see it being used kind of in this manner that we're talking about as an intervention or a prevention for a conflict during an IEP meeting, and honestly I think the easiest place to start is as an individual. I started practicing mindfulness. I downloaded this app, and it costs a couple of bucks, but there's a lot of free resources that are out there. The access that we have today to these kinds of supports and resources is probably at the highest that it's been. Mental health just in general the discussion is pretty prevalent now, and so our self-accessible resources. And so we just really want to think about how that would work. And we wanted to have time for discussion, but we are pushing it. So I'm not going to engage, but I do invite you to take this slide with you, talk about it with your colleagues, think it through. What would it look like? I think the biggest barrier, at least personally that I experienced, was overcoming that reputation that mindfulness is some kind of woo-woo hippie stuff, that it's only for those people that ... Whatever, don't ... I'm not even going to go there. But my bias almost slipped out, did you see that? But anyway, that is really ...

>> Good catch!

>> Thank you. That's the biggest challenge is helping people overcome those preconceived notions that they have about mindfulness and be willing to engage. Could you use it as the first 10 minutes of your staff meeting? Can you use it as the first 10 minutes of an IEP meeting maybe? Could you use it after really particularly horrible experience at an IEP meeting to kind of bring everybody back down? So these are just ideas. We'd love for you guys to continue the conversation on Discord. Thank you, Melanie, for reminding us about that.

>> And please, everybody, pull out that ... I want to make sure that I say this, it's really important that we have the evaluation filled out, so take the time to fill it out, grab it in the chat box. Molly dropped that for the session survey, and reach out to us. These are some resources.

>> Sorry, Diana. I just want to make sure that ...

>> No, thank you for that. Yes, and we put a couple of resources in here. That TED Talk is really great. There's also a ton on Spotify. I was in there this morning looking for a new podcast, and there was a gajillion mindfulness podcasts on Spotify that are available. So it is out there. It is available. Let's think together. Reach out to us. Our contact information is on the last slide. Let us know what you think. If you have ideas for implementation or anything like that, let us know because because we're dying to engage more with this. But we are out of time. Right on the dot, look at that!

>> Thank you, everyone.

>> Thank you, everyone. Thank you for coming.

>> Thanks, everyone, so much for coming.