

Implicit Bias in Disability Disclosure

CRWDP Webinar Series



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Agenda

1. Disability disclosure and managerial prejudice
2. Work from home as a form of disability accommodation
3. How can we make work from home arrangements beneficial?



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Disability Disclosure & Managerial Prejudice



Why It's Important to Talk about Disability Discrimination?

- Lower employment rates
- Negative attitudes, lower performance evaluations
- Aging populations & growing rates of disability

When Does Discrimination Happen?

- Discrimination at all stages of the employment cycle (Bonaccio et al., 2019)
- Research focuses on either recruitment stage or experiences while at work
- Less is known about the return-to-work context



Brain Teaser

- A FATHER and his son are in a car accident. The father is killed and the son is seriously injured. The son is taken to the hospital where the surgeon says, “I cannot operate, because this boy is my son.”

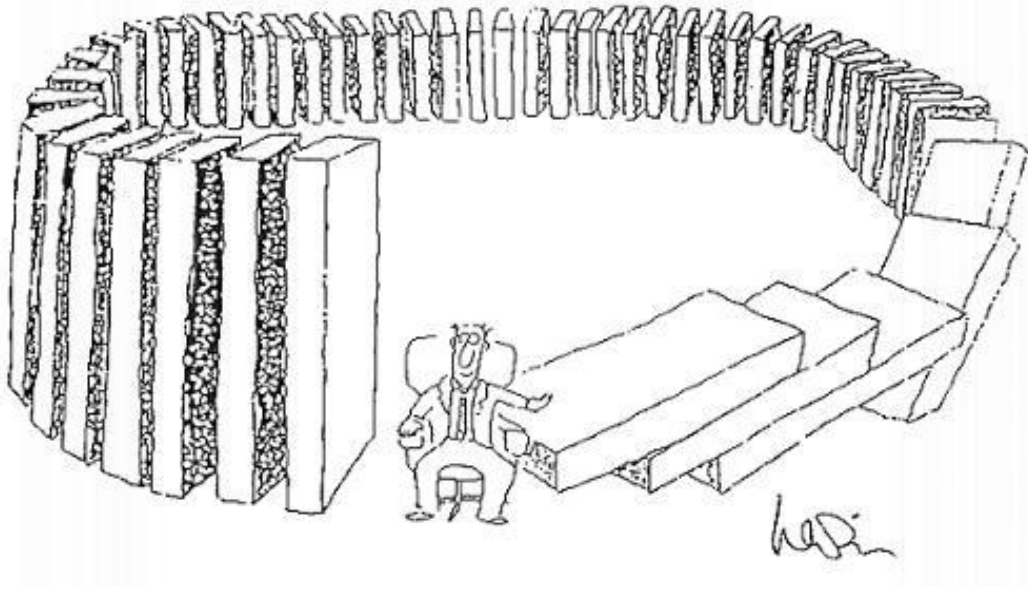


Why Does it Happen?

Implicit bias

a form of automatically activated associations reflecting prejudice or stereotypes that affect decision-making and behavior toward members of a social group.

How Does it Happen?



- Not all disability are the same
- Labels used in describing a disability diagnosis prompt stereotyping
 - generalized beliefs about members of a particular category (Jones et al., 1984).
- Cognitive categorization reduces information processing demands, but there are unintended negative consequences

Return-to-Work Context

- A large portion of employees acquire a disability while being employed

Queen Elizabeth Health Center
Medical Specialists Clinic
Tel. (123) 456-7890

Surname: _____
First Name: Pat

R

Unable to work for
indefinite period of time due
to psychiatric condition

Repeat: -1- -2- -3- -4- -5- NR

Dr. [Signature]

License No.: Q2746-13

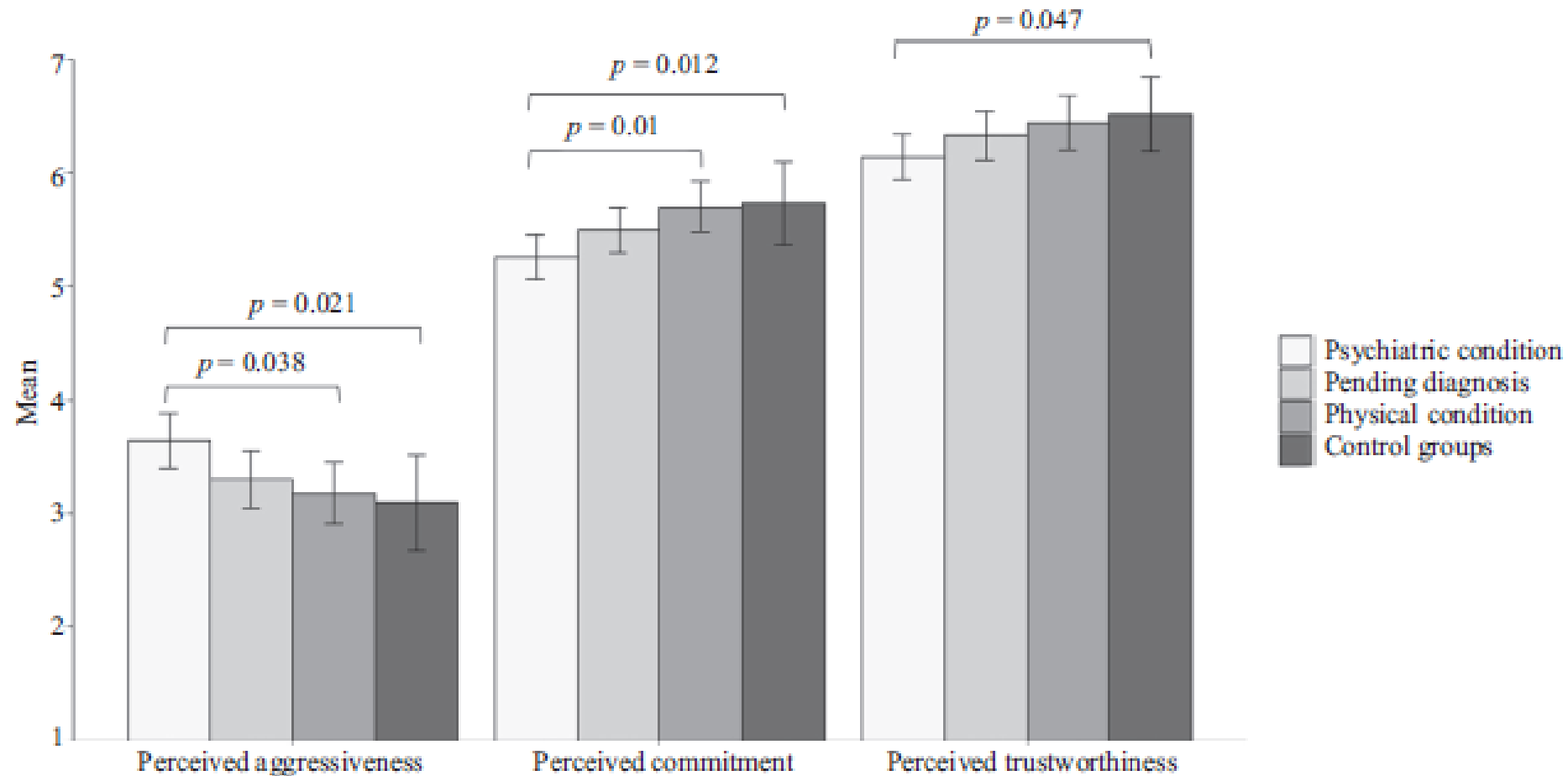
Research Goals

- Question 1: How do different 'labels' affect managerial evaluations in the return-to-work context?
- Question 2: Is there a 'label' that does not trigger categorization?

Methods

- **Sample:** Managers (n = 287)
- **Design:** Randomized vignette experiment
- **Manipulation:** a realistic-looking medical note from a healthcare provider requesting a graduated return-to-work schedule
 - Psychiatric disability condition
 - Physical disability condition
 - Pending diagnosis condition
 - Control (i.e., no information about disability)

Results



Source: Lyubikh, Z., Turner, N., Barling, J., Reich, T., & Batten, S. (2020). Employee disability disclosure and managerial prejudices in the return-to-work context. *Personnel Review*, 50(2), 770-778.

Findings & Implications

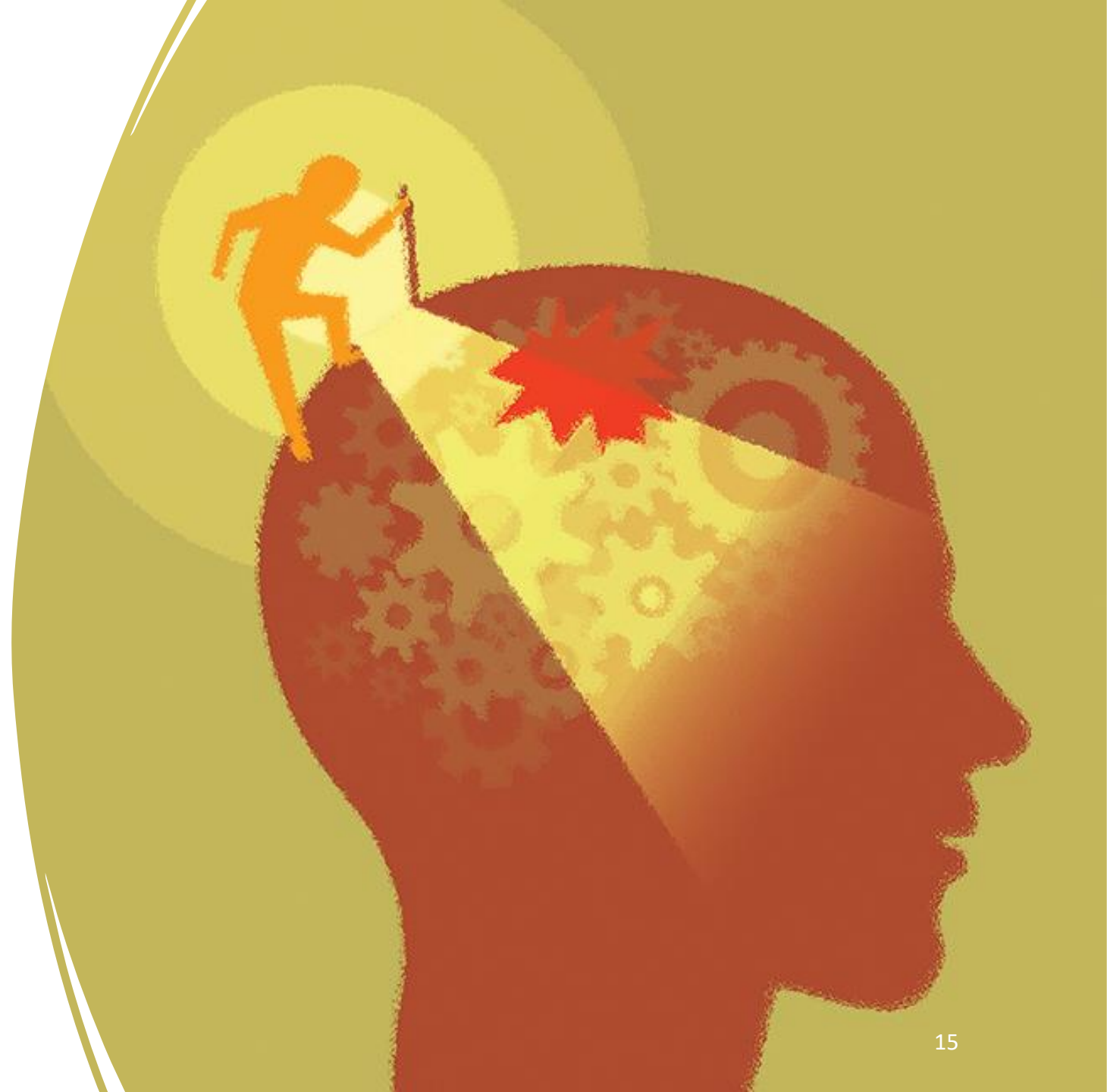
- Consequences of bias go beyond hiring decisions or performance evaluations
- Not all disability types are evaluated equally
- “Pending” label might provide protection against bias

Why Disclose at All?



Would Implicit Bias Training Help?

Source: Forscher, P. S., Mitamura, C., Dix, E. L., Cox, W. T., & Devine, P. G. (2017). Breaking the prejudice habit: Mechanisms, timecourse, and longevity. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 72, 133-146.



What Organizations Can Do to Combat Implicit Bias?

- Assume Bias of Crowds
 - “a social phenomenon that passes through the minds of individuals, but exists with greater stability in the situations they inhabit”
- Structure Social Content:
 - Blind review
 - Decision criteria upfront
 - Increase visibility of marginalized groups

Source: Payne, B. K., & Vuletich, H. A. (2018). Policy insights from advances in implicit bias research. *Policy Insights from the Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 5(1), 49-56.

Make decisions in
settings that
minimize fatigue,
hurry, and
distraction



Work from Home



Working from Home Benefits

Greater autonomy

Increased performance

Opportunity to take more frequent breaks

Increased ability to focus and less distraction

Ability to remain close to medical equipment

Potential downsides

- Social isolation
- Professional isolation
- Fewer learning opportunities
- Negative career consequences (out of sight, out of mind)



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Mitigating potential downsides of work from home arrangements



How to Make it Work?

- Provide opportunities for social interactions
- Regular communication
- Inclusive policies with explicit guidelines regarding training, promotion, and career development
- Focus on outputs (instead of “visibility” and “presence”)

Thank you!

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