

Positive Stereotypes. A halo effect where members of a group are presumed to be competent or bonafide. Such a member receives the benefit of the doubt. Positive achievements are noted more than negative performance, and success is assumed.

Provincialism. Similar to cloning, this is undervaluing something outside your own province, circle, or clan. For example, trusting only reference letters from people you know.

Seizing a Pretext. Hiding one's real concern or agenda (e.g., excessive weight) behind something trivial, or focusing on a few negatives rather than the overall performance.

Self-Fulfilling Prophecy. Some call it 'channeling,' where we structure our interaction with someone so we can receive information congruent with our assumptions, or avoid information incongruent with our assumptions.

Elitism. Wanting to feel superior through certain attributes or selectivity that highlights how we characterize more positive stereotypes (accents, schools, dress, ratings).

Wishful Thinking. Opinions rather than facts and evidence. Examples are assumptions that we, and certain other institutions, run on objective meritocracy, or we are colorblind.



Common Cognitive Errors*

Momentum of the Group. It is difficult to resist consensus when the majority seems to be heading one way without a full hearing on other considerations

Premature Ranking/Digging In. Rush to use numbers, as if they are objective, to drive a decision.

Extraneous Myths and Assumptions. Undermining the careful collection and analysis of information, such as we can't get a person like that to come here, or we have all of them we need.

Raising the Bar. Related to negative stereotypes, when we require members of certain groups to prove that they are not incompetent by using more filters or higher ones for them.

The Longing to Clone. Devaluing someone who is not like most of 'us' on the committee, or wanting someone to resemble, in attributes, someone we admire and are replacing.

Negative Stereotypes. "A stereotype can be defined as a broad generalization about a particular group and the presumption that a member of the group embodies the generalized traits of that group." Negative stereotypes are negative presumptions such as presumptions of incompetence in an area, or presumptions of lack of character or trustworthiness.

First Impressions. Drawing conclusions in a matter of seconds based on our personal likes/dislikes.

Good Fit/Bad Fit. While it may be about whether the person can meet the programmatic needs for the position, it often is about how comfortable and culturally at ease we will feel.

Character over Context, or Attribution errors. For example, failing to recognize the context of a situation—was it social, late in the day, outside of the professional arena, or an attribution of responsibility for a situation that is misplaced on one person rather than others.