

DIVERSITY, INCLUSION & ACCESS

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Diversity Moment: Performance Bias

She's Leading

How to use this Lean In card in a group setting:

- Read the situation on the front of the card aloud, including “Why it Matters”
- Discuss times when people in the group have witnessed or experienced this situation and possible actions to take to address it. *We strongly recommend anonymity and confidentiality when sharing stories.*
- Flip the card over and read “What to do” and “Why it Happens” aloud
- Encourage people in the room to think of one thing they will do when they see bias at work, or one thing they learned that they’re going to share with others. Take turns, go around the group and share.

Performance bias: Deep-rooted and incorrect assumptions about women and men’s abilities. Tendency to underestimate women’s performance and overestimate men’s.

Front side of card

SITUATION EVERYDAY INTERACTIONS SET 2

Your team is led by a woman, but a colleague from another department assumes that a man on your team is the leader.

WHY IT MATTERS

When this happens, it reinforces the idea that women aren't leaders. It can also undermine your team leader and her standing in the group.

LEAN IN

Reverse side of card

WHAT TO DO

Jump into the conversation to correct the record: "[Name] is our team lead." You can also say something that underscores her leadership abilities or accomplishments—for example, "She heads all our biggest sales efforts."

WHY IT HAPPENS

Rooted in performance bias

People tend to assume men are more senior than the women around them.²³ This is in part because we unconsciously associate men with leadership more strongly than we do women.²⁴ It's also because in many companies, men outnumber women in leadership positions, so this view becomes the norm.²⁵

Keep in mind: Bias isn't limited to gender. People can also experience biases due to their race, sexual orientation, a disability, or other aspects of their identity.

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Reference:

50 Ways to Fight Bias, *LeanIn.Org and McKinsey & Company's Women in the Workplace Study, 2015.*