



THURSDAY, AUGUST 12, 2021

## SESSION PREVIEW

# Bringing Consciousness to One's Biases

BY ERIC GILKEY

Imagine walking into a lawyer's office for a deposition and seeing a well-dressed Black woman waiting expectantly. What assumptions does your mind begin to make? Do you assume the woman is a court reporter? A legal assistant? The host attorney? What information are you using to support these assumptions and draw conclusions about the situation?

According to Rebekah Ratliff, JAMS ADR, it's still common for many to assume the woman would be serving an administrative role and address the woman as such without gathering information to support their assumptions. In today's session, "Effects of Unconscious Bias on Investigation, Negotiation, and Litigation," she hopes she and her co-presenters can shed light on how unconscious biases like these can affect industry operations and communications, and also offer strategies for neutralizing those biases.

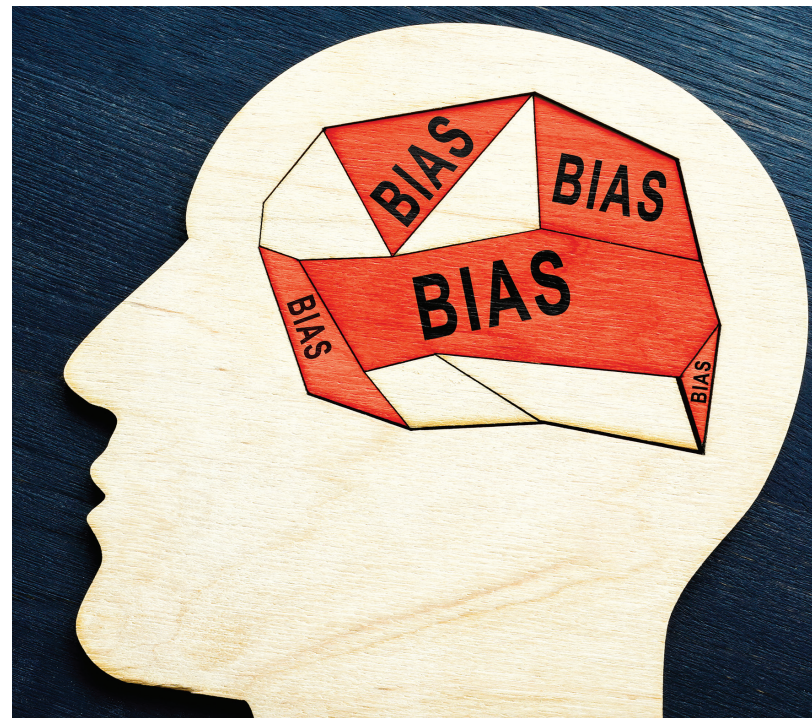


Rebekah Ratliff

"We will explore some origins of bias and how various cultures process words and actions differently," says Ratliff. "We will discuss the importance of self-awareness and why that skill is critical to our work. With recent industry initiatives to recruit talent in diverse categories, our panel will touch on methods of increasing self-awareness and conduct a discussion about the power of cultural competency, microaggressions, and best practices. Finally, we will inform and empower attendees with tips on how the awareness of biases can improve our investigations, negotiations, and mediation skills."

Joining Ratliff on the roundtable will be Bert Dizon, Gallagher Bassett Services Inc.; Dwight Geddes, Metro Claims & Risk Mgmt; and Joe Hassinger, Gallo-way. Together, they hope to ensure attendees walk away understanding that conversations about unconscious biases are critical to building industry relationships.

"We hope that participants will



learn that we all have unconscious biases, and the way to eliminate certain biases is to be willing to have tough conversations that enlighten and empower us towards equitable inclusivity," says Ratliff. "These discussions inspire questions and answers that move the needle forward. Colleagues who are allies or aspiring allies appreciate a safe space to have these constructive conversa-

tions to encourage and enable better understanding. It is imperative that our industry continue to advance initiatives to enable employee resource groups to create a sense of belonging for the retention of valued seasoned professionals, especially for the next generation."

Want to learn more about the effects of unconscious biases? Head to A706 at 11:30am this morning. ✨