

Coaching a staff member who has exhibited bias is an opportunity to build connection while holding them accountable to organizational values.*

- Choose a time when you are likely to be at your best
- Use “I” statements
- Start with a recognition of shared values
- Identify the individual’s strengths
- Share specific observations
- Ask questions
- Clearly define acceptable behavior
- Offer guidance & clear next steps
- Act decisively but without using intimidation

PLAN YOUR MEETING	EXAMPLE:
Start with a recognition of shared values and the staff member’s strengths (be sincere and specific)	<i>Good morning, Michelle. Thank you for agreeing to meet with me. I want to start by saying that I very much appreciate your dedication to this work. I have noticed that you always keep your records up to date. The overall tone of your reporting shows your understanding of our shared organizational values. I have seen you demonstrate respect, inclusion, and the ability to balance personal views with professional values..</i>
Identify the incident, sharing observations on specific behaviors and their impact	<i>That is why I want to bring a specific incident to your attention. Yesterday, during the placement meeting for Andre, I heard you say that you were concerned about placing a gay boy in a home with two dads. Although it was clear from the home-study that they would be a good match for Andre, you said that you were worried that Andre would be at risk of sexual abuse. I could tell that it was hard for you to balance your personal views and values with your professional responsibilities in this instance. I want to remind you that the idea that gay men are predators is a myth. I am concerned that if other workers had not advocated for this couple, it could have hurt Andre in the long run.</i>
Ask questions and allow the individual to respond	<i>What are your thoughts about what I am saying?</i>
Have clear objectives and next steps (what will you ask the individual to do/change?)	<i>Thank you for sharing your thoughts. I want to reiterate that as, Social Workers, it is our responsibility to ensure that our biases don't impact our clients negatively. I am going to ask that you review the LGBTQ 101 training that was offered last year, especially the section on myths and stereotypes.</i>
Know when you will ask the individual to return for an update	<i>Let's meet again a week from today to talk about what you got out of training review.</i>
Close with the recognition that the individual can succeed in changing the behavior	<i>Bias reduction and attention to our shared values takes continued attention for all of us who do this work. You have demonstrated your ability to put your own views aside in the interest of your clients in other areas; I know you can do it with regard to LGBTQ issues as well. Thanks very much. I look forward to talking with you again next week</i>

*Clear and strong organizational values and policies that hold staff accountable to recognizing and undoing their own bias are an essential component of this work. They are necessary to set supervisors up for success. For more on this, visit hrc.org/acaf.