

Unconscious Bias



Heddlu Police
DYFED-POWYS



Learning Outcomes

- Understand how unconscious bias develops, how it influences decision making, and how to mitigate its impact in operational policing.



Unconscious Bias – What is it?

They are our **unintentional people preferences** where we assign **positive and negative value**

Fact 1 - *It is a normal and necessary process that helps us make sense of the world*

Fact 2 - *It is the way our brains are designed to work*

Fact 3 - *They are informed by our socialisation and experiences (including our exposure to the media)*



What causes Unconscious Bias?

Implicit biases develop and are maintained from;

- our **upbringing**,
- our **experiences** and
- from the **media** we absorb.





You will see 7 images of different people.

Please note down:

- What do you think this person does for a living?
- Would you trust them?















What did you base your judgements on?

REFLEXIVE SYSTEM

Fast • Automatic

Fast

Automatic

Emotional

React

“Quick Decision –
No Thinking!”

REFLECTIVE SYSTEM

Slow • Deliberate • Logical

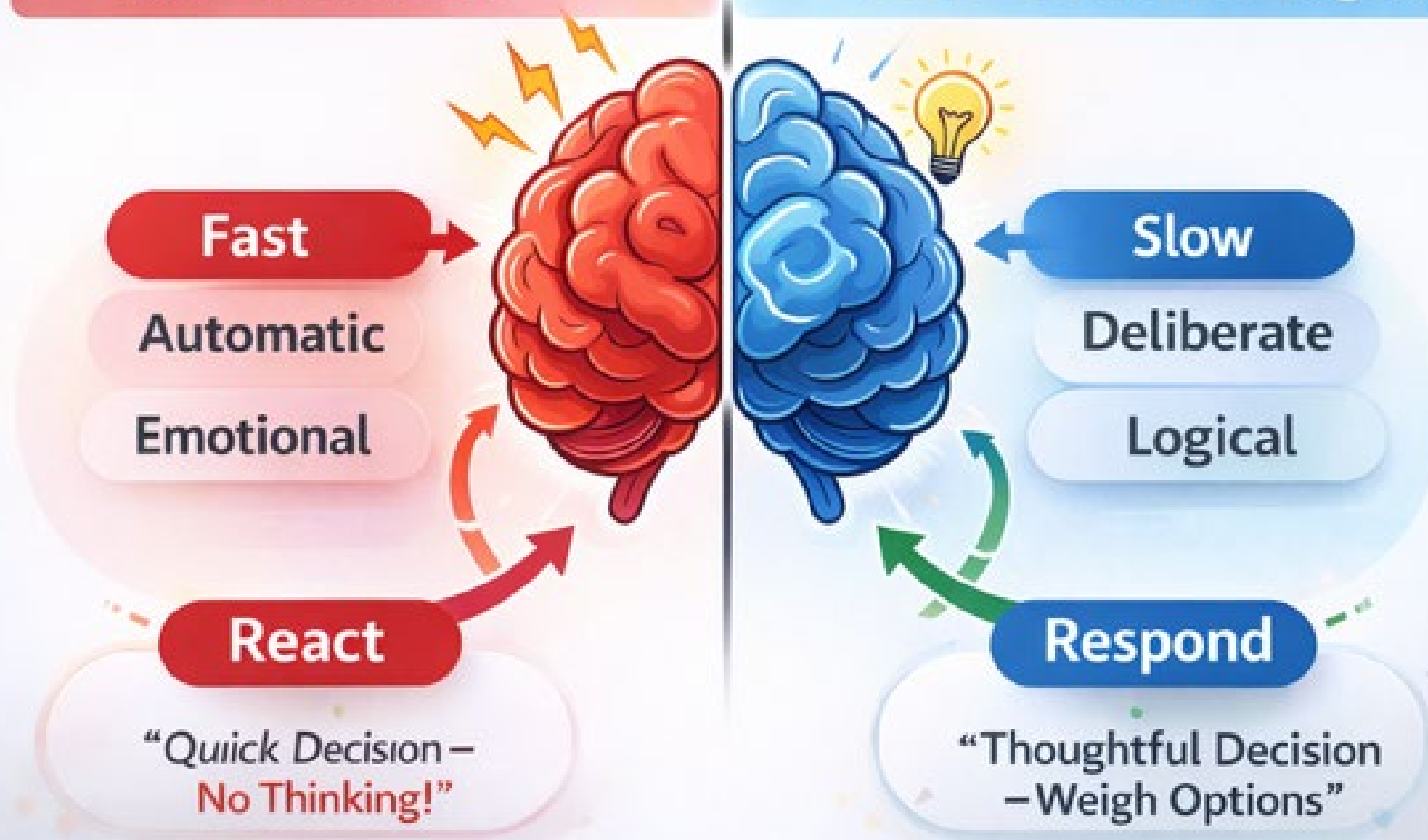
Slow

Deliberate

Logical

Respond

“Thoughtful Decision
– Weigh Options”



TYPES OF BIAS

AFFINITY BIAS



CONFIRMATION BIAS

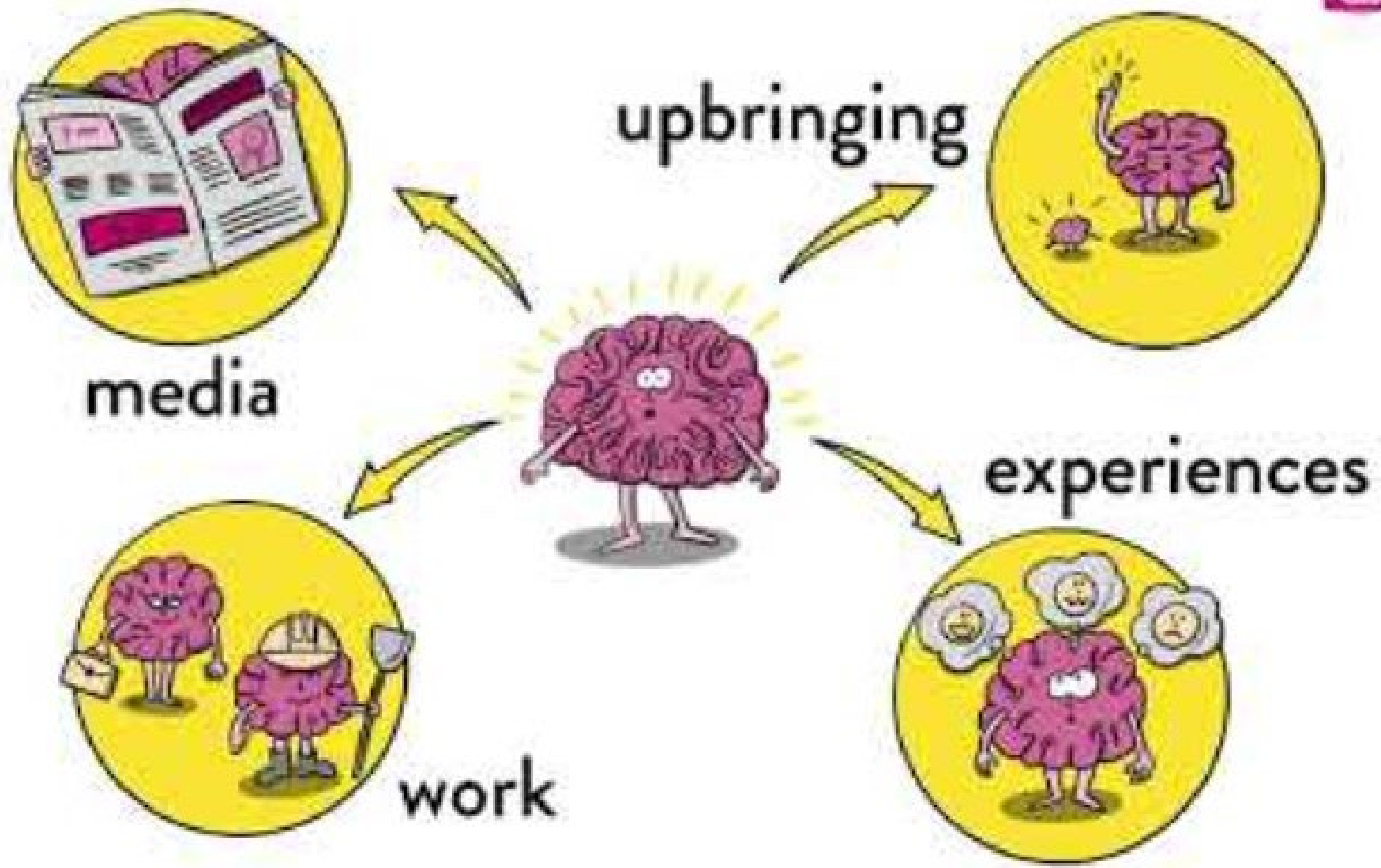


SOURCE BIAS



HALO / HORNS BIAS





Group Work

In your group, review the headlines and discuss:

1. Which words create the strongest emotional reaction? Why?
2. Are the headlines presenting fact, opinion, or speculation?
3. What language suggests blame or threat?
4. How might imagery and font size influence perception?
5. Would the impact change if softer language was used?





Discuss:

1. How could exposure to messaging like this influence officer perceptions?
2. What risks could this create in decision-making?
3. How might bias affect victim/witness engagement?
4. What impact could it have on use of powers (e.g. stop & search)?
5. How do we guard against media-influenced assumptions operationally?

Remember:

- We unconsciously favour people who look sound and behave like us (**Affinity Bias**)
- We unconsciously compare ourselves to others - this is driven by the need to see ourselves as better than others (**Social Comparison Bias**)
- We unconsciously look for evidence to confirm our perceptions and discount evidence that challenges us (**Confirmation Bias**)
- We may filter what we share because we don't feel safe



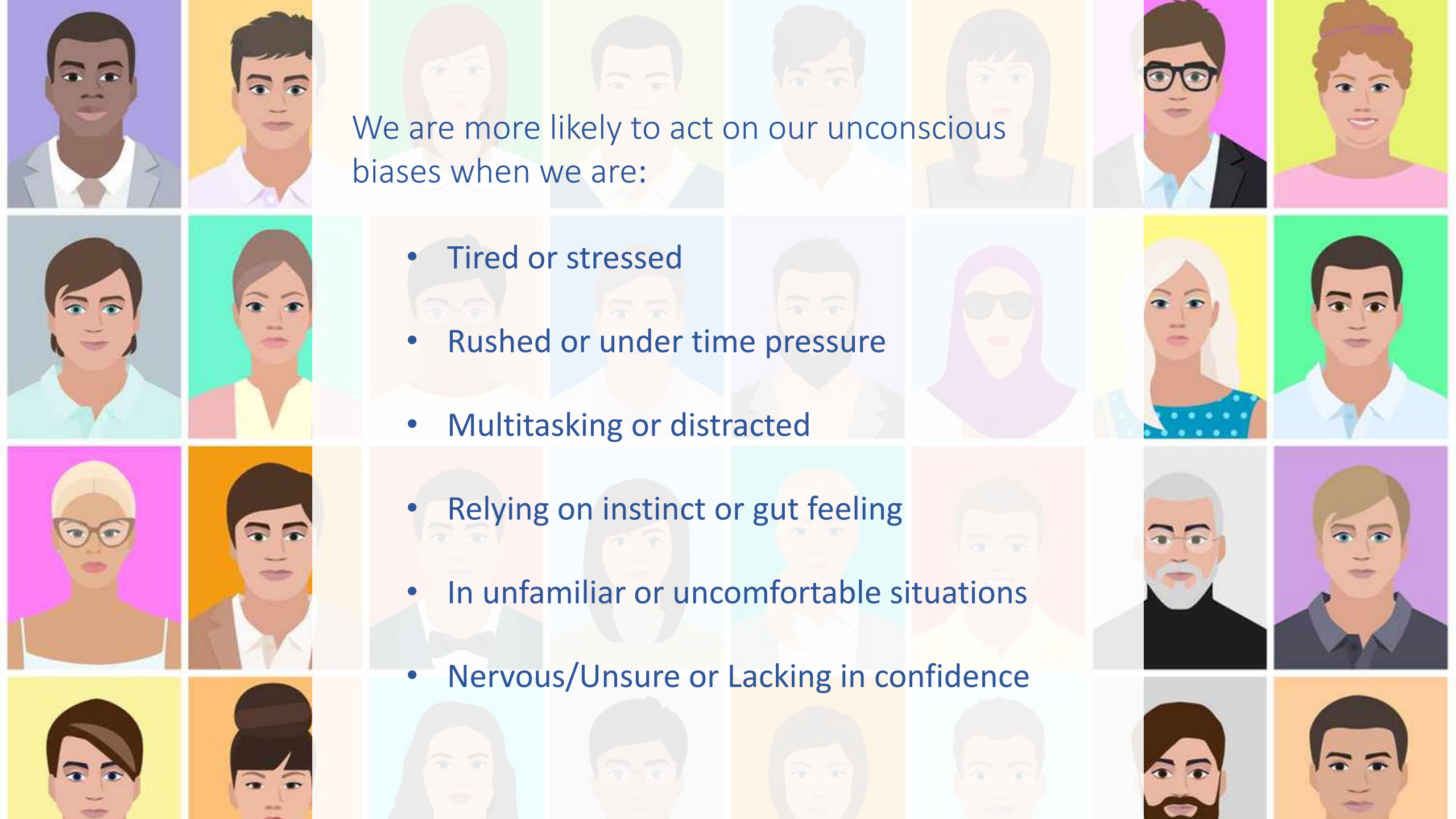
Acting on our biases affect decisions in relation to:

- Who we spend time talking to
- Whose ideas we listen to
- Who we engage with and how
- Who we include/exclude socially and professionally
- Who we provide with development opportunities
- Who we take formal disciplinary action against
- How we use our police powers



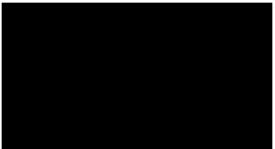
Bias - individuals and groups

- Ignoring or paying less attention
- Not seeking or valuing contribution
- Being less friendly or inclusive in conversations etc
- Showing less empathy or interest
- Not including in discussions, banter or jokes
- Consistently disagreeing or challenging
- Avoiding or minimising contact



We are more likely to act on our unconscious biases when we are:

- Tired or stressed
- Rushed or under time pressure
- Multitasking or distracted
- Relying on instinct or gut feeling
- In unfamiliar or uncomfortable situations
- Nervous/Unsure or Lacking in confidence



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