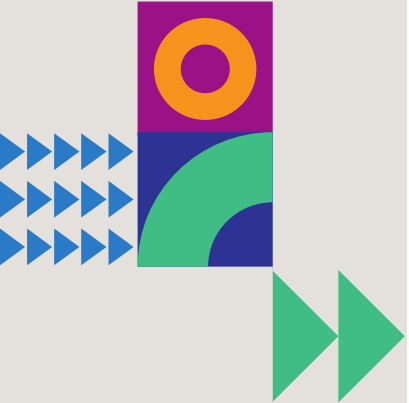
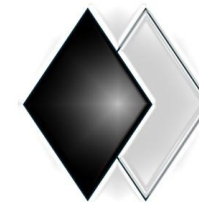




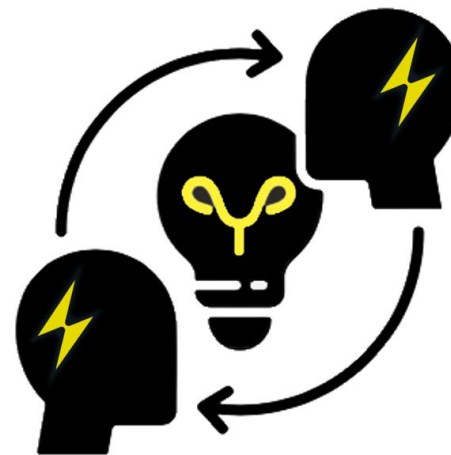
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SHADES of BIAS

Reflective case study template



SYNERGY SESSIONS

RECIPROCAL COLLABORATION

EPISODE 5 - “When they try to deny us, resist with **Shades of Bias!**”

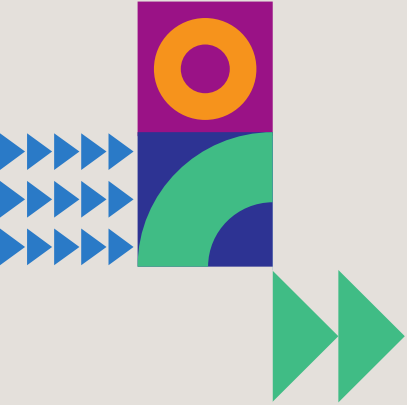
Frequently used acronyms

- Black and Ethnic Minority Professionals Symposium – BPS
- British Association of Social Workers – BASW
- Neil Thompson's PCS model - Personal, Cultural and Structural (PCS) analysis
- Personal Cultural Structural (PCS) model
- Professional Capabilities & Development group – PC & D group
- Professional Capabilities Framework – PCF
- Social Work Education Anti-Racist Network – SWEARN

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What is Shades of Bias (SoB)?

Shades of Bias (SoB) is a versatile case study template designed to enable critical reflection on how discrimination, oppression and racism manifests in social work and beyond. It is a simple process for documenting, analysing and addressing instances of bias, whether it is experienced directly, observed or perpetrated (by the person/people responsible). SoB embraces intersectionality and is underpinned by the protected characteristics (age, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion etc) of the author (as per the Equality Act 2010). The template also captures more nuanced and multi-layered discrimination such as: classism, microaggressions, neurodiversity, sexism etc. Based on anti-discriminatory, anti-oppressive and anti-racist values and ethics, SoB helps to create a culture of accountability, inclusion, self-expression and systemic change.

SoB is more than just a tool for documenting racism. It is a multidimensional framework for healing, self-examination and transformation across policy, practice and education. SoB provides cathartic and therapeutic benefits, which empowers people to analyse and respond to experiences of bias and various forms of discrimination. By validating lived experiences, SoB is both a self-help resource and practical tool, giving it unique emotional and strategic functions aimed at hearts and minds. It is intended for SoB to become *the* standardised framework for documenting discrimination and exposing harmful systemic patterns that are often ignored.

bias

noun

UK  /ˈbi.əs/ US  /ˈbi.əs/

bias *noun* (PREFERENCE)

Add to word list 

 [C usually singular, U]

the action of supporting or opposing a particular person or thing in an unfair way, because of allowing personal opinions to influence your judgment:



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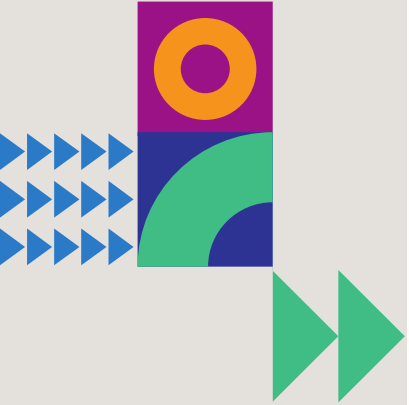
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SoB serves 3 different groups:

A. Victims/survivors of discrimination/oppression/racism: *Cathartic and therapeutic*

For people who have experienced discrimination/oppression/racism, SoB offers a way to process and validate their experiences - reducing the fear of dismissal or gaslighting. Writing about these incidents can help release emotional distress, allowing people to articulate their feelings in a constructive way. It helps victims/survivors make sense of what happened, recognise patterns of discrimination and regain a sense of control over the narrative. By documenting their experiences, individuals can create a tangible record of injustice, which can be used to seek accountability, support and/or systemic change. This approach reduces isolation, as individuals see their experiences reflected in broader structural patterns, rather than as personal failures or isolated incidents.

It is imperative that victims/survivors of discrimination/oppression/racism access appropriate wellbeing **networks** (such as BASW England's Mentoring Service, Professional Support Service, the Anti-Racist Movement or local peer support groups) and/or relevant **wellbeing resources** (such as: the Relational & Anti-racist supervision template, Eligibility for Advice and Representation Guidance, Professional working conditions & wellbeing campaign, the Black and Ethnic Minority Professionals Symposium (BPS) resources webpage and School of Shabs).

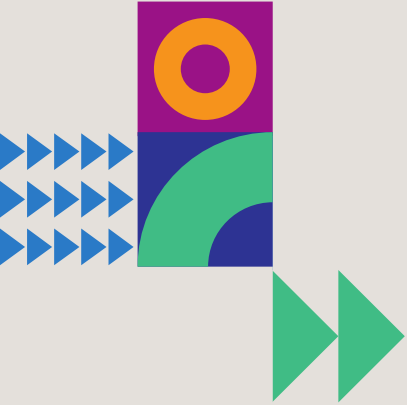


B. Witnesses and observers: *Empowering ethical accountability*

People who witness discrimination/oppression/racism often feel uncertain about how to intervene. SoB provides a proactive method to acknowledge and challenge effectively. Witnesses and observers can document incidents without putting themselves at risk, ensuring that discrimination/oppression/racism does not go unnoticed and/or become normalised. Observers can contribute to a growing body of evidence that reveals patterns of systemic injustice professionally and in wider society. SoB supports active social justice, helping witnesses move from silent and passive observance to meaningful action. For many witnesses, speaking up against discrimination/oppression/racism can be intimidating or professionally risky. SoB provides a safe, structured way to record and report incidents, making systemic change more achievable.

C. Person/people responsible for the bias: *A tool for accountability, critical reflection & growth*

Even well-intentioned people can exhibit [bias](#). SoB provides a logical, non-punitive method for people to reflect on their own actions, inactions and biases. People responsible for the bias are encouraged to analyse their decision-making and behaviours, recognising how instinctive and impulsive biases can influence professional judgment. By completing the template from their own perspective, people can confront how and why they perpetuated discrimination/oppression/racism and commit to learning and change. This process aims to convert guilt into being responsible and shame into taking accountability - cultivating a culture of growth rather than defensiveness. This approach helps to shift from a blame culture to a learning culture, where people actively deconstruct bias and commit to authentic and holistic social justice.



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SoB has the following self-explanatory sections:

1. Case study title

A brief descriptive title

2. Background and context

Whose perspective is this case study written from?

Date of the incident (approximate or exact)

Location. For example: workplace, university, professional event, online etc

Setting. For example: team meeting, supervision, face-to-face interaction, training session etc

People involved. For example: anonymised service-user/ lived experience/ expert by experience, manager, colleague etc)

Relevant policies/ protocols. For example: anti-racism policy, EDI framework, complaints process etc)

What prior experiences or organisational culture may have influenced the incident?

Were there any signs or indicators that the incident might occur? If so, what were they?

3. Nature of the incident

Describe the incident as clearly and factually as possible

Was the racism covert (microaggressions, exclusion, unconscious bias) or overt (racial slurs, harassment, direct discrimination)?

Was the racism internalised, interpersonal, institutional, medical and/ or structural?

Were any other forms of discrimination/ oppression present from an intersectionality perspective?

What was the immediate impact on you or others involved?

How did the incident affect the dynamics within the team or organisation?

Were there any specific phrases or actions that stood out as particularly harmful or impactful?

How did the incident reflect broader societal issues related to race, discrimination and oppression?

What emotions did you and others involved feel before/ during/ after the incident?

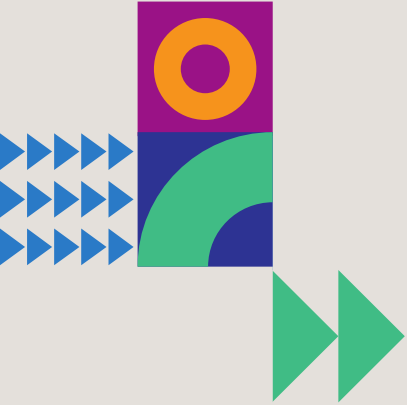
How did the incident affect your professional relationships?

Did you notice any changes in team morale or cohesion following the incident?



SHADES of BIAS

Reflective case study template



4. How was the situation handled?

Who responded to the incident (if anyone)?

What action(s) were taken at the time? For example: reported to HR, challenged informally, ignored, escalated, etc.

Did the organisational policies/processes support an adequate and fair response?

Was trade union advice and/or representation provided?

What was the final outcome? For example: no action, disciplinary response, mediation, etc.

Were there any barriers that prevented a more effective response to the incident?

If you could change one aspect of how the situation was handled, what would it be and why?

5. Reflection and learning

What could have been handled differently? For example: by you, colleagues, others involved or the organisation)

How did this incident affect your professional confidence, mental health, or sense of belonging in the workplace?

Has there been any follow-up action or commitment to change? If so, what?

What structural/systemic issues contributed to this incident?

Has the organisation taken any long-term corrective actions since the incident?

Is there a timeline/deadline for implementation, investigation, resolutions and/or review?

Key takeaways or recommendations for BASW

What personal biases or assumptions did this incident reveal in yourself or others?

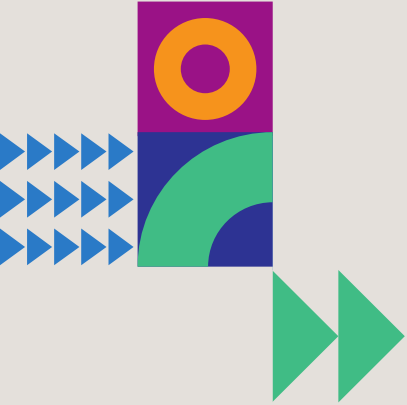
Could your own practice be adjusted to avoid similar incidents in the future?

What role does self-care play in your response to incidents of racism, and how can it be prioritised?

Was there any resources or specific support that was helpful to you?

What advice would you give to someone encountering a similar situation in future?





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6. Reflection and learning (for the person/people responsible for bias)

What was your initial rationale, justification or motivation for your action/inaction?

How has this incident changed your approach to discrimination, racism and oppression?

How do you think your actions were perceived by the victim(s) and others involved?

Have you since recognised any unintended consequences of your actions?

What steps will you take to repair harm and/or prevent future incidents?

Is there a timeline/deadline for implementation, investigation, resolutions and/or review?

Were your actions shaped by wider workplace culture, policies, or expectations? If so, how?

Are there systemic or structural factors that may have enabled your behaviour?"

What have you learned from reflecting on this incident?

What concrete steps will you take to change your approach to discrimination, racism and oppression moving forward?

7. Other comments or reflections

SoB is a practical, structured and reflective tool that empowers and equips people. Unlike many reports that merely outline problems or recommend solutions that are not implemented, SoB is a universal template to document, analyse and support people in real-world scenarios.

If social workers (victims/survivors/witnesses/people responsible) would like to share their completed case study with BASW England for collation and potential (anonymous) publication in the future, they can send completed submissions to wayne.reid@basw.co.uk or keep it private for personal use.



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Reflective case study template

PURPOSE



Document and reflect on experiences of discrimination, oppression and racism related to the Equality Act 2010



PEOPLE

Victims/survivors – cathartic and therapeutic benefits

Witnesses – acknowledge and challenge discrimination

People responsible for bias – critical reflection and learning

PROCESS



- Case study title
- Background and context
- Nature of the incident
- How was the situation handled?
 - Reflection and learning
- Reflection and learning (for the person/people responsible for bias)



PROVISION

Policy, practice and education

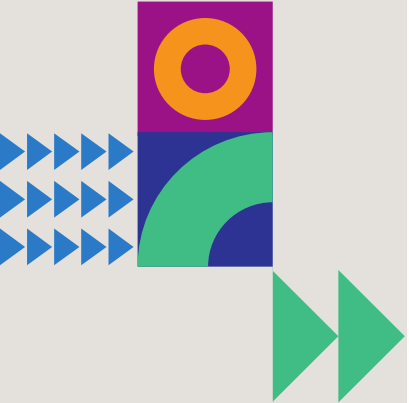
Supports anti-discriminatory, anti-oppressive and anti-racist approaches

Encourages systemic accountability



SHADES of BIAS

Reflective case study template



What are the origins of SoB?

The Shades of Bias (SoB) case study template was developed by Wayne Reid (BASW England Professional and Social Worker), the Black and Ethnic Minority Professionals Symposium (BPS), Professional Capabilities and Development (PC & D) group, Anti Racist Movement (A.R.M) and School of Shabs following concerns raised by Black and Global Majority BASW England members including:

- Practice Educators - who reported racism with students and organisational practices
- Students - who reported racism in social work placements and academic settings
- Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSWs) - who encountered racism in recruitment, everyday practice, career progression and workplace cultures

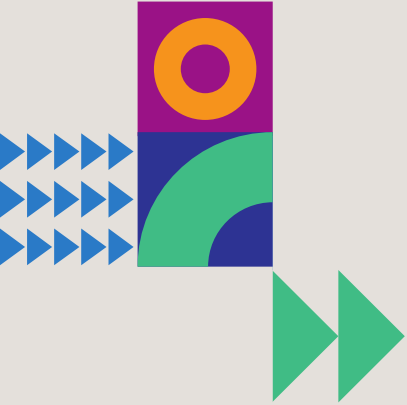
These concerns were escalated through BASW (British Association of Social Workers) and representations made to key stakeholders and partners, highlighting systemic racism in social work education, early career pathways and relevant regulatory frameworks.

The development of SoB coincided with the publication of The Child Safeguarding Review Panel "It's Silent": Race, racism and safeguarding children report, which highlighted a lack of accountability in addressing racism in safeguarding practices.

SoB is informed by BASW's Code of Ethics, Social Work England's professional standards and the Social Care Workforce Race and Equality Standards (SC WRES).

SoB is a logical progression from the 'Anti-racism in Social Work' activities across the UK (between 27/05/20 – 26/09/21) report.

The lack of tangible reforms on 'Anti-racism in Social Work' underscores the need for a practitioner-led tool that empowers individuals to document and challenge all forms of discrimination in all settings – hence the conceptualisation of the template. SoB is part of wider "hearts and minds" campaign to promote social justice in Social Work.



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How can SoB be utilised more widely in policy, practice & education?

Students

Studies
Placements
Supervision
Peer learning / group work
Continuous professional development
Support for complaints & disciplinary contexts
Wellbeing, emotional processing & ethical integrity

Practitioners

Direct practice
Team meetings
Supervision
Support for complaints & disciplinary contexts
Peer learning / Group work
Continuous professional development
Organisational influence
Wellbeing, emotional processing & ethical integrity

Managers

Team leadership
Supervision & staff support
Promotion of inclusive culture
Support for complaints & disciplinary contexts
Continuous professional development
Recruitment & retention
Multi-agency working
Wellbeing, emotional processing & ethical integrity

Heads of Service

Strategic leadership
Workforce oversight
Supervision & senior management meetings
Support for complaints & disciplinary contexts
Promotion of inclusive culture
Recruitment & progression
Multi-agency & political engagement
Continuous professional development
Wellbeing, emotional processing & ethical integrity

Academics

Teaching & curriculum design
Student supervision & support
Research
Continuous professional development
Support for complaints & disciplinary contexts
Institutional life
Sector influence
Wellbeing, emotional processing & ethical integrity

Training & Workforce development

Improved educational and learning practices
Support for learning and development
Continuous professional development
Confidence in addressing bias
Safe environment for reflection (and confidentiality if needed)
Support for complaints and disciplinary contexts
Promotion of inclusive culture
Wellbeing, emotional processing & ethical integrity

Policy development

Policy analysis
Strategic decision-making
Supervision & team reflection
Stakeholder engagement
Continuous professional development
Organisational & sector influence
Wellbeing, emotional processing & ethical integrity

Personal use

Personal reflection & enhanced self-awareness
Witness / observer insights
Person responsible for bias insights
Navigating complaints
Navigating disciplinary proceedings
Intersectional analysis
Confidentiality & safety
Wellbeing, emotional processing & ethical integrity

Summary



SHADES of BIAS

Reflective case study template

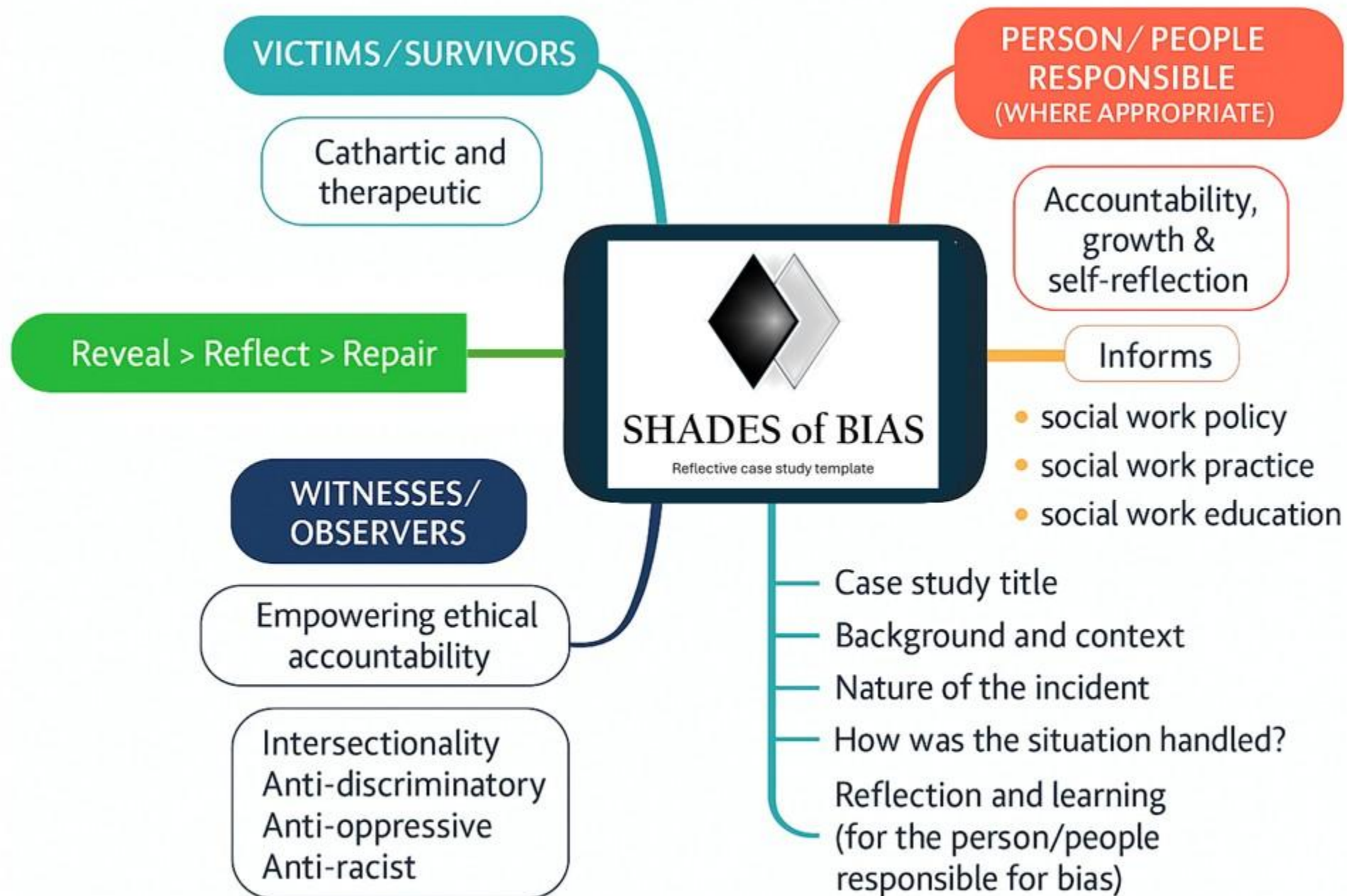
SoB is a reflective framework for humanising people's lived experiences, promoting accountability and growth and informing policy reforms. By embedding SoB in policy, practice and education discussions, we can challenge discrimination, oppression and racism; amplify marginalised voices and create a profession that is truly committed to social justice.

The hope is that SoB becomes conventional and always useable during incidents of social injustice.

Visit the Shades of Bias webpage here: <https://basw.co.uk/shades-bias-sob>

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SHADES of BIAS

Reflective case study template



REVEAL > REFLECT > REPAIR
#CRUSHINGSTEREOTYPESDAILY 🧠💡💡

Shades of Bias chronology



SHADES of BIAS

Reflective case study template

- 09/05/25 - Irish Association of Social Workers pre-launch event 🎥
- 29/05/25 - Shades of Bias official launch 🔗
- 30/05/25 - Decolonising Social Work Field Education Podcast | “Decolonise and Rehumanise Social Work Field Education” 📺
- 03/06/25 - Professional Social Work magazine publication 🔗
- 25/06/25 - Diverse Educators / Belonging Effect publication 📖
- 26/06/25 - Social Work Today publication 🔗
- 10/07/25 - The Social World podcast 🎧
- 14/07/25 - Community Care publication 📖
- 17/07/25 - Alcohol and Drug Service (ADS Hull) event 🎥
- 29/09/25 - London Innovation and Improvement Alliance (LIIA) | Pan-London ‘Realising Potential Leadership Programme for Black & Global Majority Leaders’ event
- 30/09/25 - Shropshire Council event
- 03/10/25 - Collaboration with Research in Practice 🎥 📖
- 14/10/25 - Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council event 🎥 📖
- 15/10/25 - London Association of Directors of Adults Social Services (ADASS) Principal Social Worker Network presentation 🎥
- 21/10/25 - Somerset Council – Carnival of Practice 2025 🎥
- 21/10/25 - Gateshead Council event 🎥
- 22/10/25 - BASW England Conference session 1 (chaired by Valerie Chopamba) 🔗
- 24/10/25 - Forward Assist publication 📖
- 05/11/25 - Haringey Council event



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Shades of Bias chronology



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- 07/11/25 - [Walsall Council event](#)
- 19/11/25 - Kingston-Upon-Thames Council event
- 09/12/25 - [Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust](#)
- 09/01/26 - West Midlands ADCS Network
- 17/02/26 - [Portsmouth City Council event](#)
- 20/02/26 - [Nationwide Association of Fostering Providers \(NAFP\) event](#)
- 20/02/26 - East Riding Council event
- 03/03/26 - East London NHS Foundation Trust event
- 12/03/26 - University of West England event
- 19/03/26 - [North East Lincolnshire Council event](#)
- 20/03/26 - Worcestershire County Council event
- 07/04/26 - Skills for Care & Social Care Workforce Race and Equality Standards (SC WRES) partners presentation
- 09/04/26 - Inclusion in the [Quality Assurance Agency \(QAA\) Subject Benchmark Statement for Social Work](#) document 2026
- 13/04/26 - [University of Derby event](#)
- 21/04/26 - [Midlands Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust event](#)
- 21/04/26 - Professional Standards Authority event
- 08/05/26 - [Siobhan Maclean in conversation with Wayne Reid on Shades of Bias](#)
- 18/05/26 - BASW North Yorkshire & West Yorkshire branches joint event with the University of York
- 04/06/26 - National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum Practitioners' South event
- 09/06/26 - [CoramBAAF, Racial Justice Family Network \(RJFN\) & BASW joint event](#)

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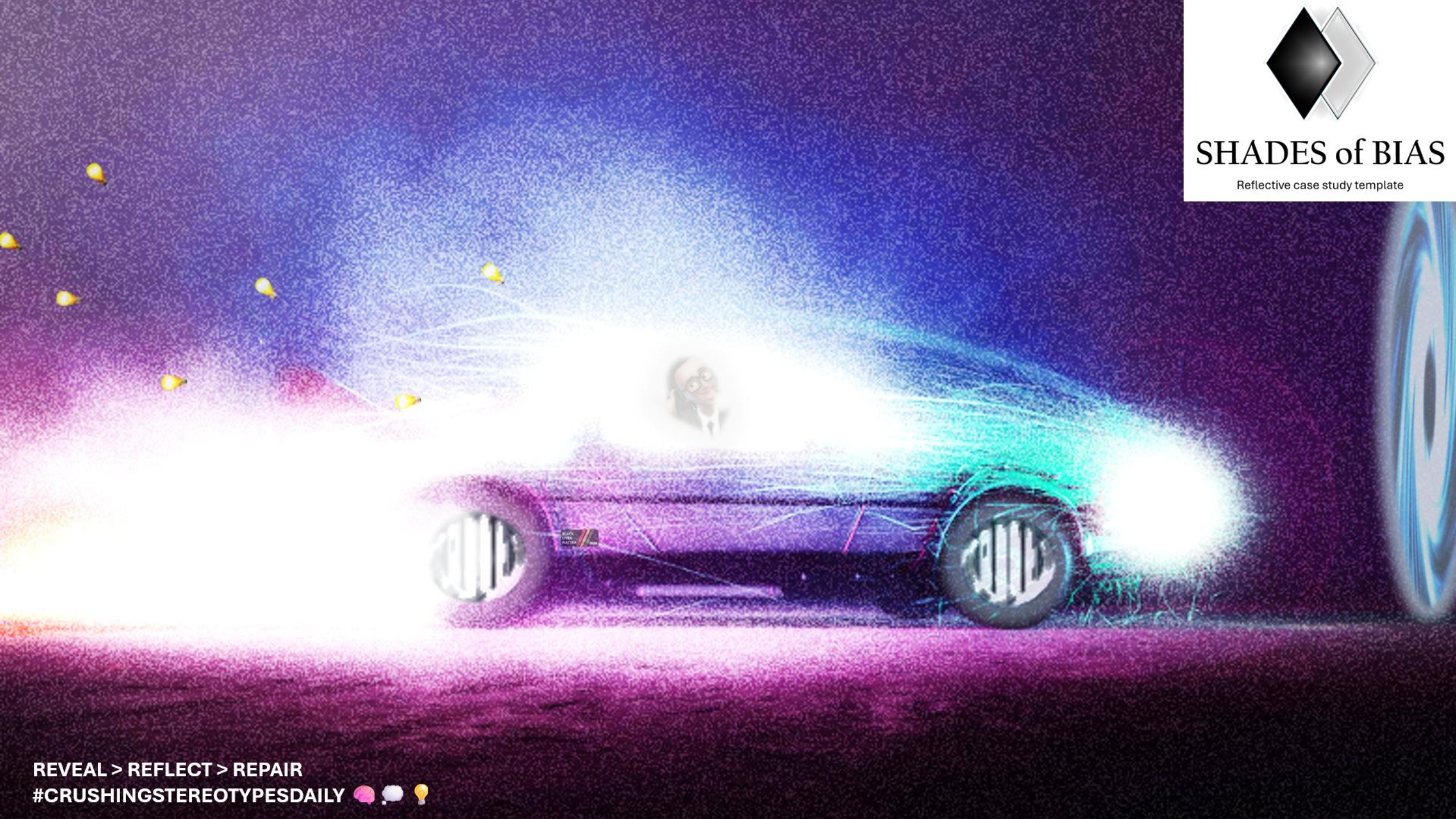
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Reflective case study template



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SYNERGY SESSIONS
RECIPROCAL COLLABORATION

EPISODE 5!



SHADES of BIAS

Reflective case study template

I hear the new **Synergy Sessions** (episode 5) is focused on **Shades of Bias (SoB)**.

I heard that Kish Bhatti-Sinclair is in it. I'm so excited!

It's not just Kish - the BPS*, PC& D Group* and SWEARN* are joining the conversation too!

Wow! That's gone straight to the top of my must watch list!

All three groups together in one episode?! That's an impressive line-up!

I'm *definitely* watching that!



*BPS - Black and Ethnic Minority Professionals Symposium
*PC & D Group - Professional Capabilities & Development group
*SWEARN - Social Work Education Anti-Racist Network



REVEAL > REFLECT > REPAIR

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SHADES of BIAS

Reflective case study template

REVEAL > REFLECT > REPAIR

#CRUSHINGSTEREOTYPESDAILY



Advert 1 – The apology

This advert suggests that bias often manifests through denial, minimisation and insincerity.

The exaggerated nose (Pinocchio reference) symbolises:

- Dishonesty
- Self-deception
- Performative apologies
- Refusing to acknowledge harm

The speech bubble is significant because it demonstrates the beginning of repair:

“...you’ve been able to see how your comments were offensive and apologised...”

The emphasis is **not** on punishment. It is on reflection and the need for accountability. That aligns closely with the SoB philosophy.

Psychological messages

The advert encourages viewers to ask themselves:

- Was the apology genuine?
- Was learning demonstrated?
- Have attitudes actually changed?

It aims to shift attention from intention towards impact.



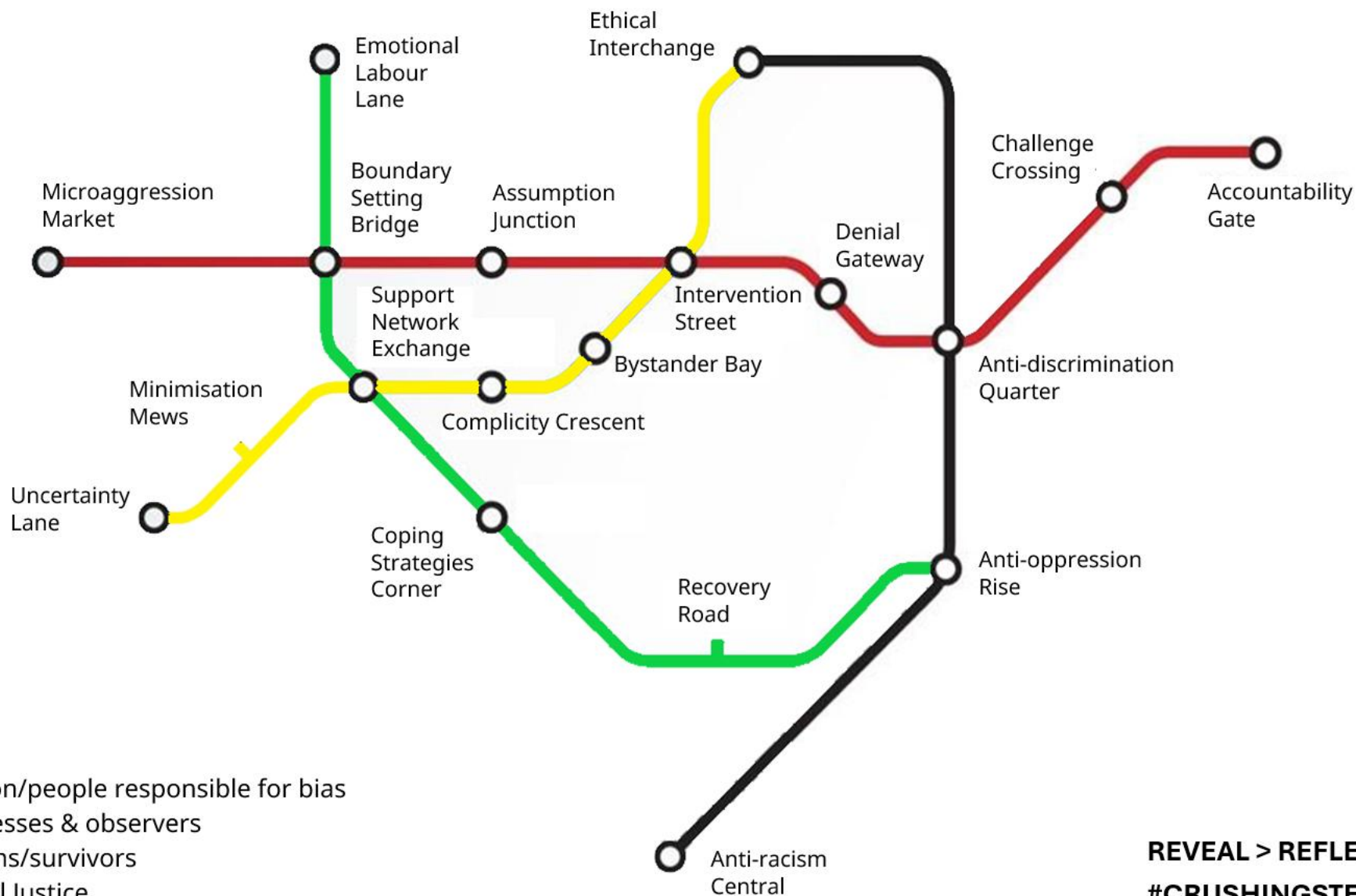


A MAP TO REVEAL > REFLECT > REPAIR



SHADES of BIAS

Reflective case study template



REVEAL > REFLECT > REPAIR

#CRUSHINGSTEREOTYPESDAILY



Advert 2 – A Map to REVEAL > REFLECT > REPAIR

Bias is presented as a journey rather than a single incident.

Instead of stations representing physical locations, they represent psychological and ethical states.

This creates several simultaneous **metaphors**:

1. Everyone starts somewhere

- People occupy different points on the map
- Some remain at denial
- Others progress towards accountability

2. Multiple journeys exist

- Victims
- Witnesses
- People responsible for bias
- Social justice

...all travel different routes (some intertwine/overlap), which mirrors the 3 different perspectives within Shades of Bias.

3. Repair requires movement

- No-one arrives instantly.
- Reflection is presented as travel.
- Growth is incremental.

Hidden messages

SoB is positioned as a navigation tool to navigate complexity.

Not simply a reporting template.



"THE INESCAPABLE ALL-SEEING EYE"



SHADES of BIAS

Reflective case study template



AGE

DISABILITY

RACE

RELIGION

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

NOT AN EXHAUSTIVE LIST!

REVEAL > REFLECT > REPAIR

#CRUSHINGSTEREOTYPESDAILY



Advert 3 – The Inescapable All-Seeing Eye

The eye represents awareness.

The rays represent different protected characteristics including:

- Age
- Disability
- Race
- Religion
- Sexual orientation

The final category:

“Not an exhaustive list”

...extends the framework beyond the categories in the Equality Act 2010.

Meaning:

Bias is everywhere.

It can affect almost any aspect of identity.

The title:

“The Inescapable All-Seeing Eye” can be interpreted in multiple ways:

- Interpretation A - Bias is always present.
- Interpretation B - Reflection should always be present.
- Interpretation C - Society is constantly observing and judging people through multiple lenses.



Shared themes across all 3 Shades of Bias adverts

1. Accountability over blame

None of the adverts promote blame or punishment.

Instead, they promote:

- Acknowledgement
- Dialogue
- Learning
- Repair

That is an important distinction.

2. Bias is relational

- The adverts consistently highlight the importance of interactions between people.
- Bias is not presented as an abstract concept.
- Bias is shown as something experienced within relationships.

3. Reflection is active

- Reflection is presented as something people do.
- Not just something to simply think about.

4. Systems matter

- The Tube map especially implies that people and organisations have pathways that either facilitate or obstruct accountability.
- The adverts therefore move beyond individual prejudice towards societal and systemic thinking.

5. Optimism

- Despite addressing discrimination, the tone remains hopeful.
- Each advert suggests improvement is possible.
- No-one is portrayed as beyond learning.



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Educational value

Collectively, the adverts could be used as teaching prompts in supervision, classrooms, workshops or team discussions because each naturally invites questions rather than prescribing answers.

For example:

- What does a genuine apology look like?
- Where are you currently on the Tube map?
- Which “station” is hardest to move beyond?
- What identities are missing from the eye?
- What factors help people reach accountability?

That makes the adverts useful beyond marketing - they function as reflective learning resources in their own right.





SHADES of BIAS

Reflective case study template

Look, what I said in the team meeting was wrong... I've filled out a **Shades of Bias** template. Maybe you all should too?

Yawn. I've got bigger bones to chew!



REVEAL > REFLECT > REPAIR

#CRUSHINGSTEREOTYPESDAILY 🧠💡



I've had enough of this...
I'm going to fill out an
SoB form!



SHADES of BIAS

Reflective case study template

REVEAL > REFLECT > REPAIR

#CRUSHINGSTEREOTYPESDAILY



C'mon - I mean, you know that was just banter – don't you?



SHADES of BIAS

Reflective case study template



REVEAL > REFLECT > REPAIR

#CRUSHINGSTEREOTYPESDAILY 🧠💡



SHADES of BIAS

Reflective case study template

...So, I just said:
"Freedom of speech mate!
I can say what I want!"



For anyone & everyone.



SHADES of BIAS

Reflective case study template



VICTIMS/SURVIVORS



WITNESSES/
OBSERVERS



PERSON/PEOPLE
RESPONSIBLE
(WHERE APPROPRIATE)

REVEAL > REFLECT > REPAIR

#CRUSHINGSTEREOTYPESDAILY





SYNERGY SESSIONS
RECIPROCAL COLLABORATION

SHADES of BIAS
Reflective case study template



REVEAL > REFLECT > REPAIR
#CRUSHINGSTEREOTYPESDAILY

