

Words About Wellness

A Book Review: *Thinking, Fast and Slow***Submitted By: Karla Thompson, PhD**

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The term “implicit bias” is used to describe unconscious and automatic or involuntary attitudes that can influence our emotions, behaviors, and thinking. These are attitudes or beliefs that we may not even be aware that we harbor. They can be useful heuristics that improve cognitive efficiency, or ways of thinking that may not be entirely consistent with our consciously held attitudes and beliefs. Implicit biases are one potential factor that may account for disparities in how health care providers treat patients from under-represented minorities, can cause patients to react negatively to clinicians, and may even be an unrecognized source of tension in workplace.

In a recent Racial Equity Institute (REI) workshop sponsored but the School of Medicine, the facilitators referenced Daniel Kahneman’s book, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, in talking about how to understand unconscious biases. Kahneman is a renowned psychologist and winner of the Nobel Prize in Economics, and the book review below is from the author’s page on Amazon, ([link here](#))

“In *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, Kahneman takes us on a groundbreaking tour of the mind and explains the two systems that drive the way we think. System 1 is fast, intuitive, and emotional; System 2 is slower, more deliberative, and more logical. The impact of overconfidence on corporate strategies, the difficulties of predicting what will make us happy in the future, the profound effect of cognitive biases on everything from playing the stock market to planning our next vacation -- each of these can be understood only by knowing how the two systems shape our judgments and decisions.

“Engaging the reader in a lively conversation about how we think, Kahneman reveals where we can and cannot trust our intuitions and how we can tap into the benefits of slow thinking. He offers practical and enlightening insights into how choices are made in both our business and our personal lives -- and how we can use different techniques to guard against the mental glitches that often get us into trouble. Winner of the National Academy of Sciences Best Book Award and the Los Angeles Times Book Prize and selected by *The New York Times Book Review* as one of the ten best books of 2011, *Thinking, Fast and Slow* is destined to be a classic.”

