

WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Read the scenario and tell us what you think

While in the lab, a postdoc got a call from the nursery manager, ***Your youngest isn't feeling well and needs to be picked up.***

The postdoc went to the GL to explain, ***I need to leave early to pick up my toddler from the nursery. I can come in early tomorrow if I need to.***

Well ok, the GL replied. ***Just check if the technician can finish running your experiment before you head off. I hope it's nothing too serious.***



Thanks for coming over so quickly! said the nursery manager. ***It's probably just a virus but we don't want others getting sick.***

Oh dear, sighed the postdoc. ***I hope a good night's rest sorts it out. I can't spend a lot of time at home this week.***

This story wasn't just about work-life balance, it was also about unconscious bias. Did you assume the postdoc was female and the GL was male? You weren't the only one.

An **unconscious bias** is a social stereotype about a certain group, for example a specific gender or ethnicity. It happens automatically for everyone and reflects the associations we learn from the culture we grow up in. It also limits people's potential, which is why can be a particular problem in the workplace.

Here are some things you can do to counter unconscious bias:

- test your own unconscious biases with the Harvard Implicit Association Test
- spread awareness of the issue
- do unconscious bias training, especially if you are a manager
- push for better gender balanced representation
- use inclusive language

If this exercise made you think, why not have a conversation about it today?

Look out for our upcoming unconscious bias seminar!