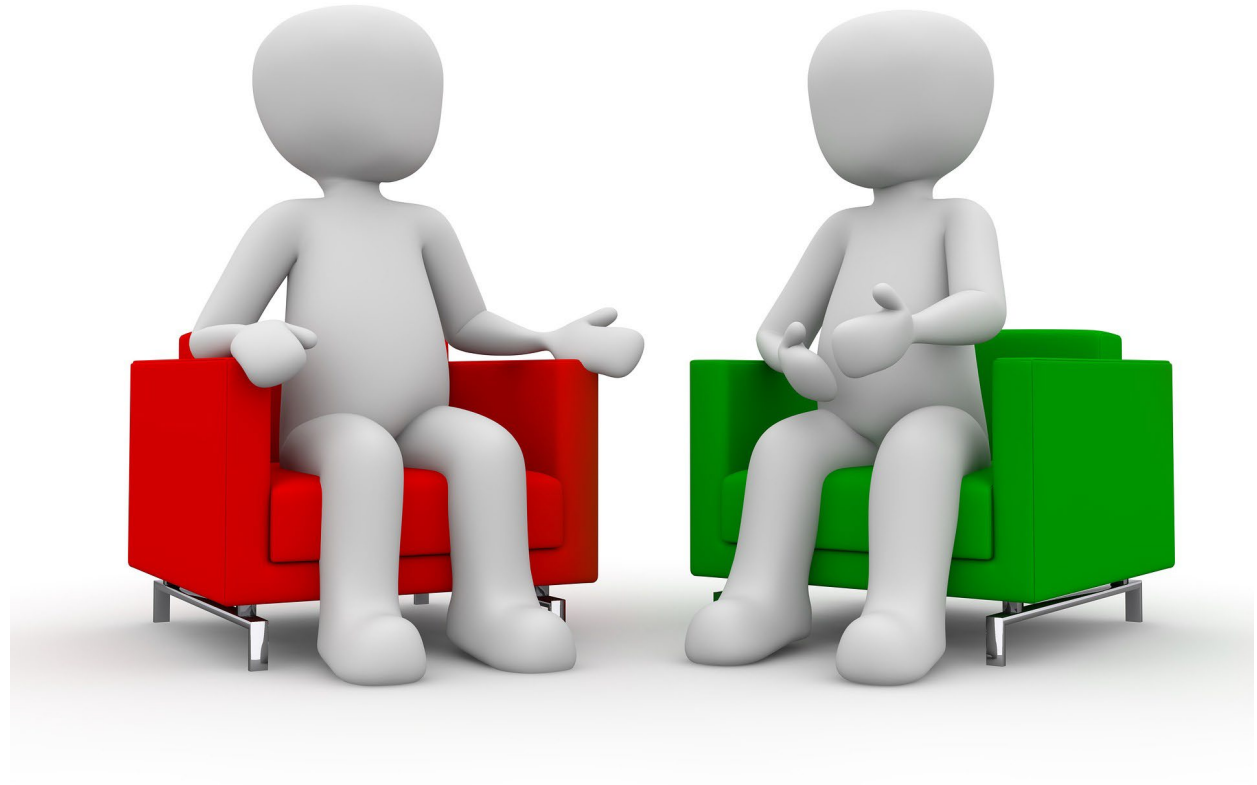


Difficult Conversations



Conversation



Keys to Civil Dialog

- Listening
- Pausing after someone speaks
- Don't focus on your response before someone is done talking
- Take turns – e.g. hand raising
- Ask Questions to learn and understand
- Tone of voice that is not hostile
- Awareness of hearing deficits
- Awareness of cultural and language differences

Dialog continued

- Respecting someone's courage to offer a different viewpoint
- Body language – non-threatening; stay engaged - eye contact, stay off phone, etc
- Use “I” language instead of “you” language
- Group size – if a large group may work better to split into smaller groups for discussion
- Position relative to one another – avoid power imbalance
- Be open to having your position changed
- Find ways to gracefully withdraw when agreement can't be reached

Potential Pitfalls



Logical Fallacy versus Bias



Fallacy versus Bias

- A logical fallacy is an error in reasoning
- A bias is the way your brain takes in and processes information – it's like a shortcut that keeps every decision from using too much energy
- Either one can be in play in a debate or argument



Common Logical Fallacies

- Ecological Fallacy or fallacy of division – because something is on average true for a group, it must be true for an individual in the group. E.g. – median income for electricians is about \$60,000 so the electrician across the street from me must make \$60,000

Common Logical Fallacies

- False dichotomy – only two possible options to a given problem. E.g. in immigration we either have totally closed borders or we're letting violent criminals invade the country

Common Logical Fallacies

- Ad hominem fallacy – attacking the person rather than their argument

Common logical fallacies continued

- Strawman – grossly misrepresenting a person's position. For example saying someone advocating for immigration reform wants completely open borders

Common logical fallacies continued

- Mistaking correlation for causation – because something happened after an event, the event must have been the cause. Example - ice cream consumption is higher in the summer. Car break ins also increase in summer so ice cream consumption must lead to car break ins.

Common logical fallacies continued

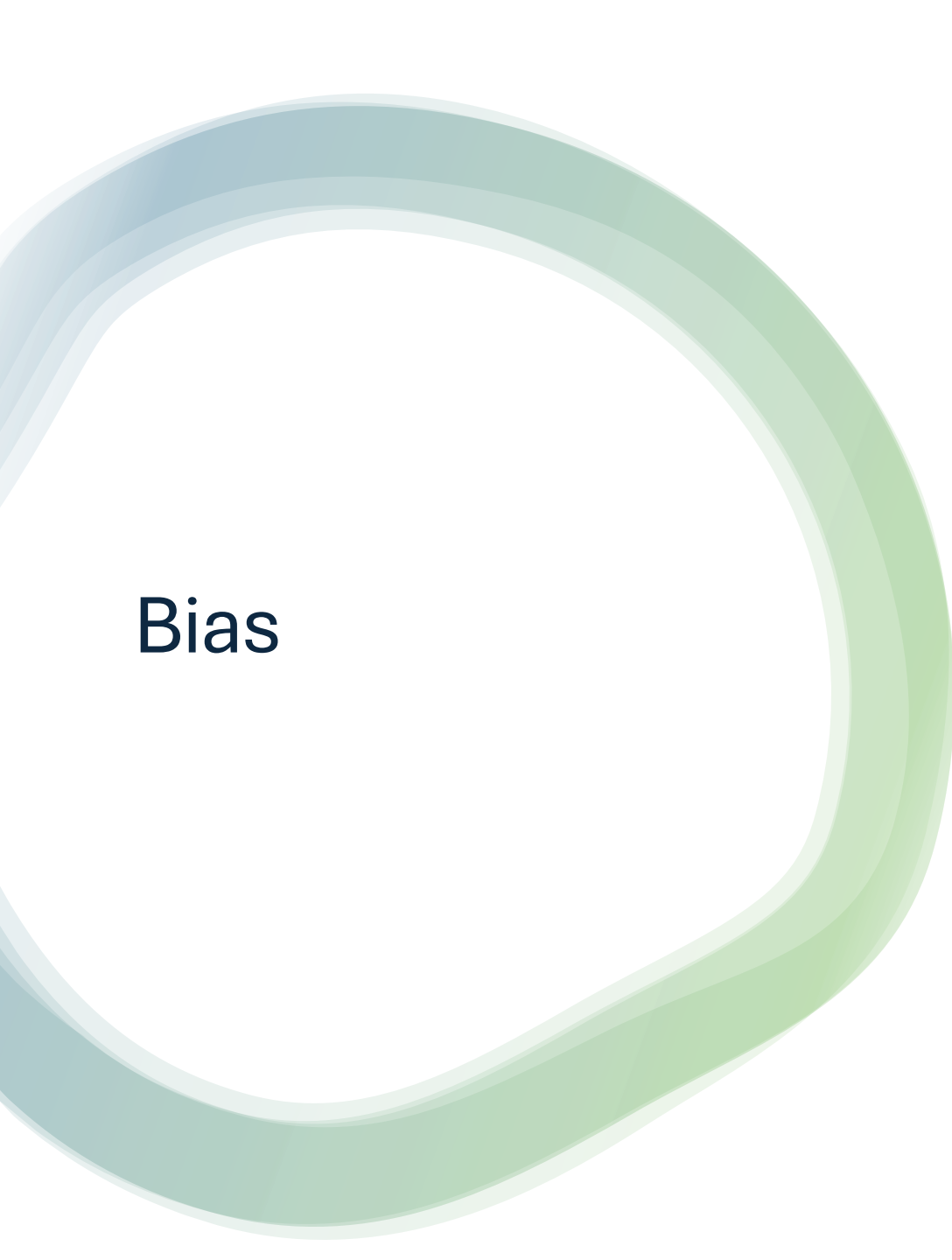
- False equivalent – comparing two things as equivalent when there's a vast difference in magnitude or motive or other characteristic

Any others?



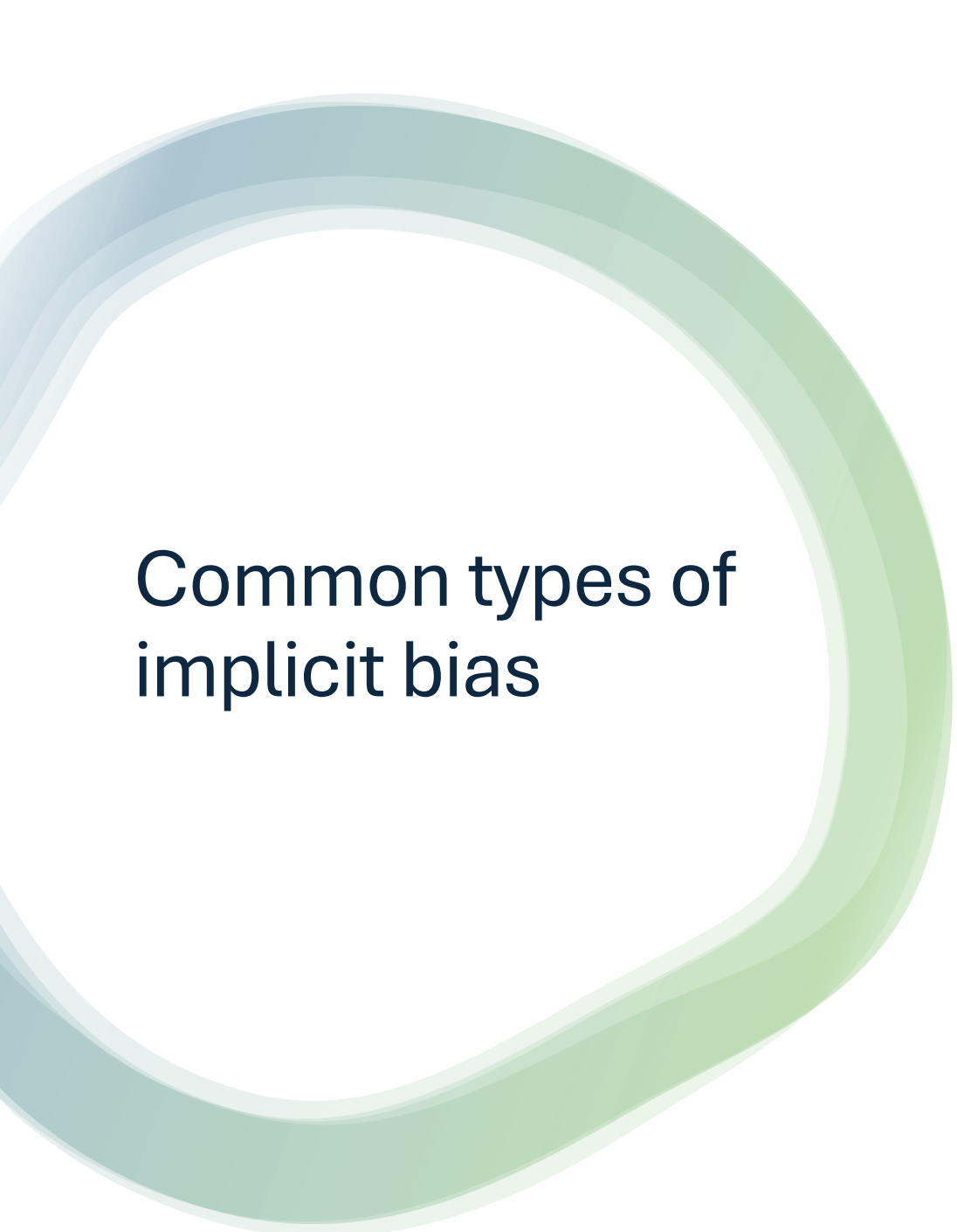
Bias

What are some types of bias?



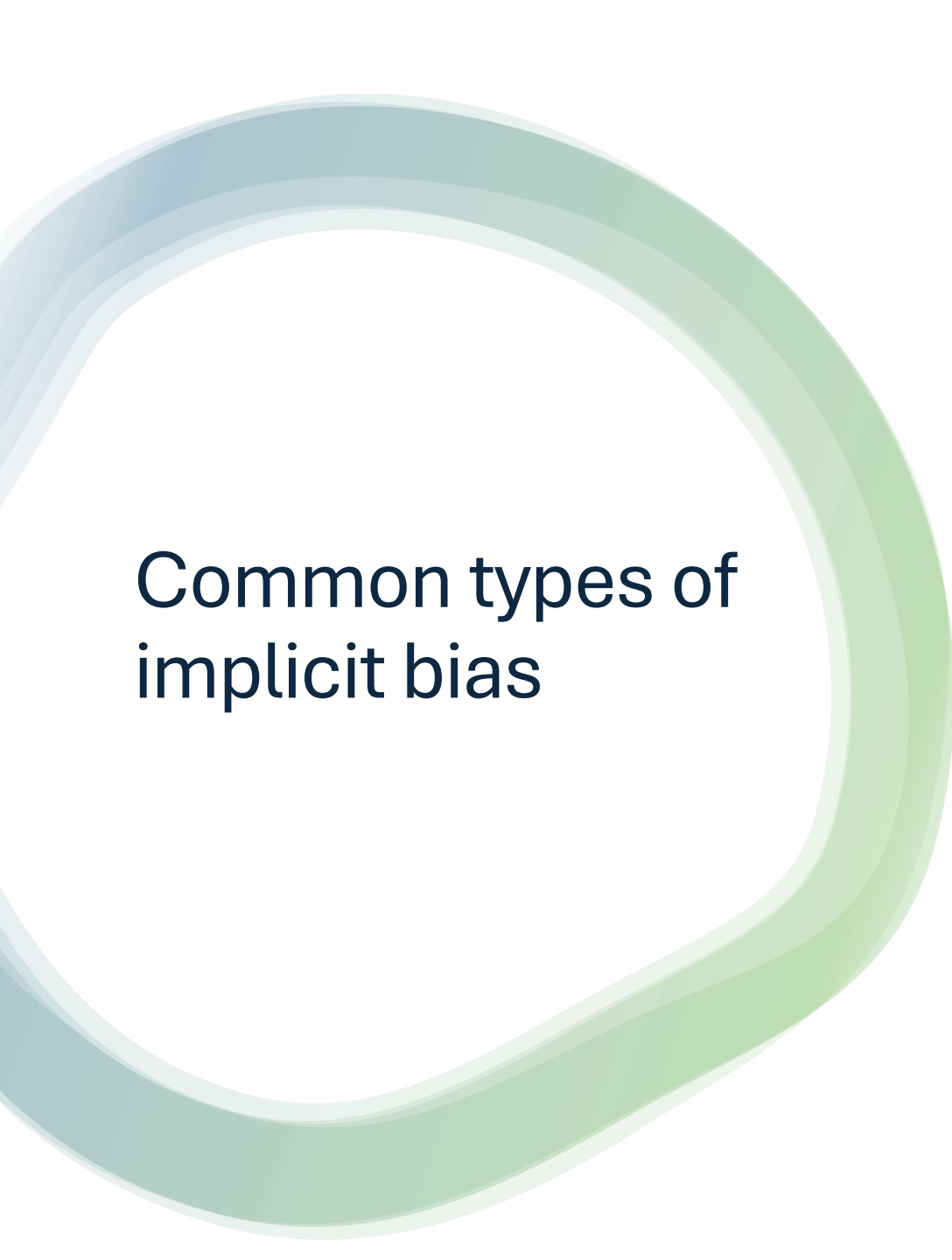
Bias

- Explicit – the person is aware of the bias and chooses it. For example, the belief that a black woman isn't capable of being a cardio-thoracic surgeon and can only get there with some sort of affirmative action.
- Implicit – a bias of which you're not really aware. For example, you encounter a black woman in scrubs in the hallway of the hospital and assume she's housekeeping or a CNA. Then you are surprised, even if you believe you are not racist, when she comes in and introduces herself as the surgeon who will perform your bypass surgery.



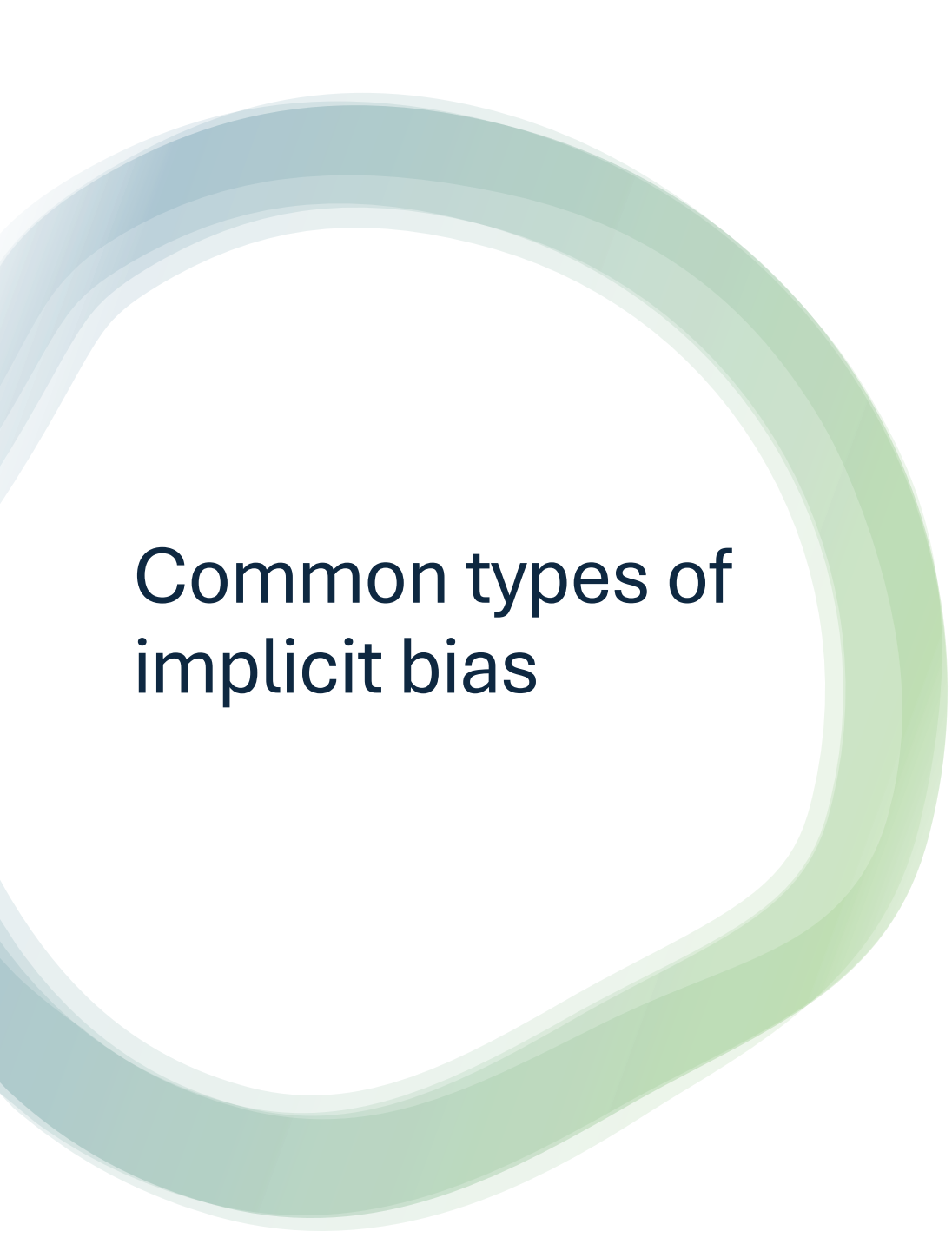
Common types of implicit bias

- Stereotyping (like the surgeon)



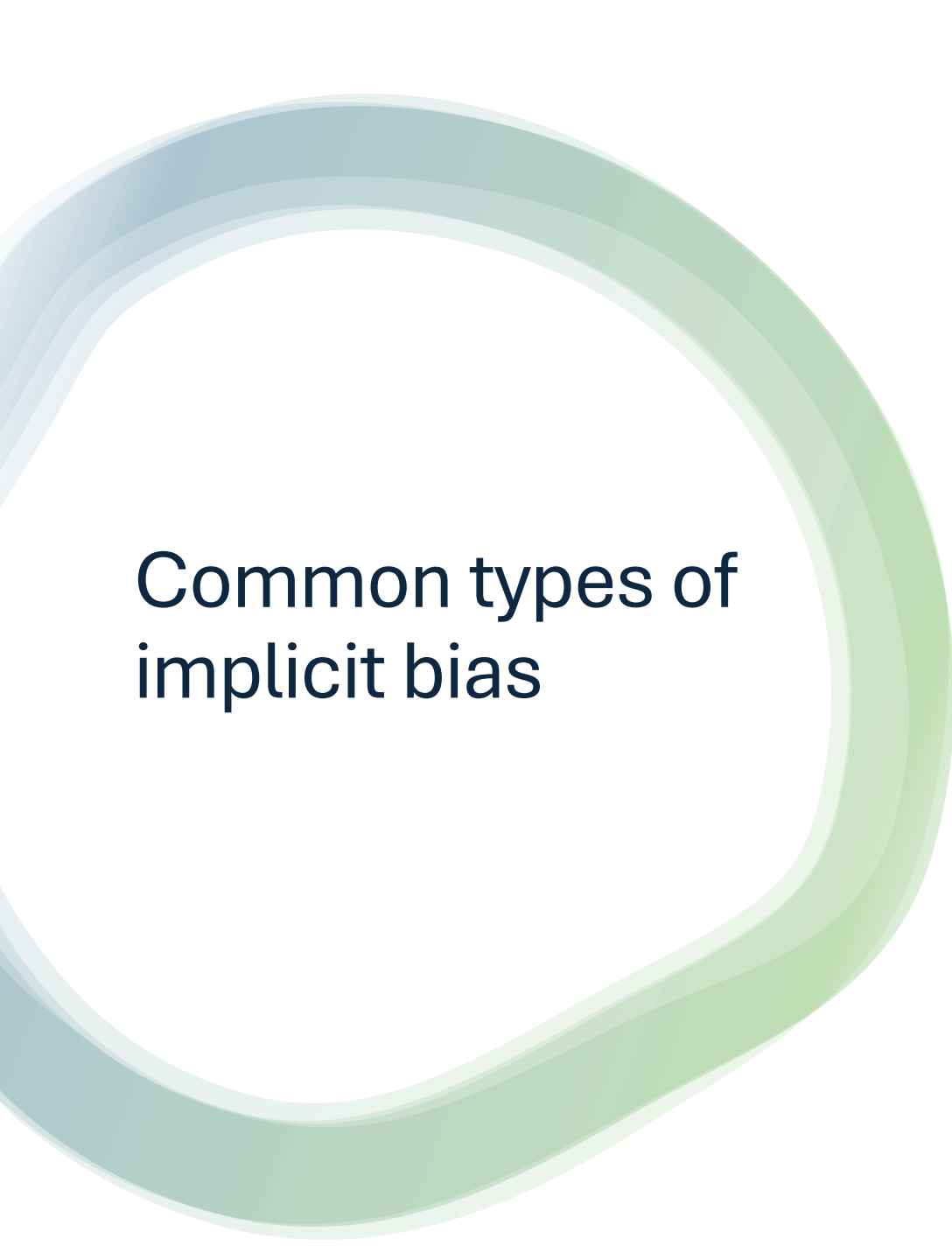
Common types of implicit bias

- Confirmation bias – you are drawn to that which you already believe – you reject or simply don't see things that contradict your beliefs
 - A special category: Algorithm bias. Social media algorithms figure out what you gravitate towards and show you more of that and less that contradicts



Common types of implicit bias

- Affinity or community bias – you tend to believe what others who are like you say.

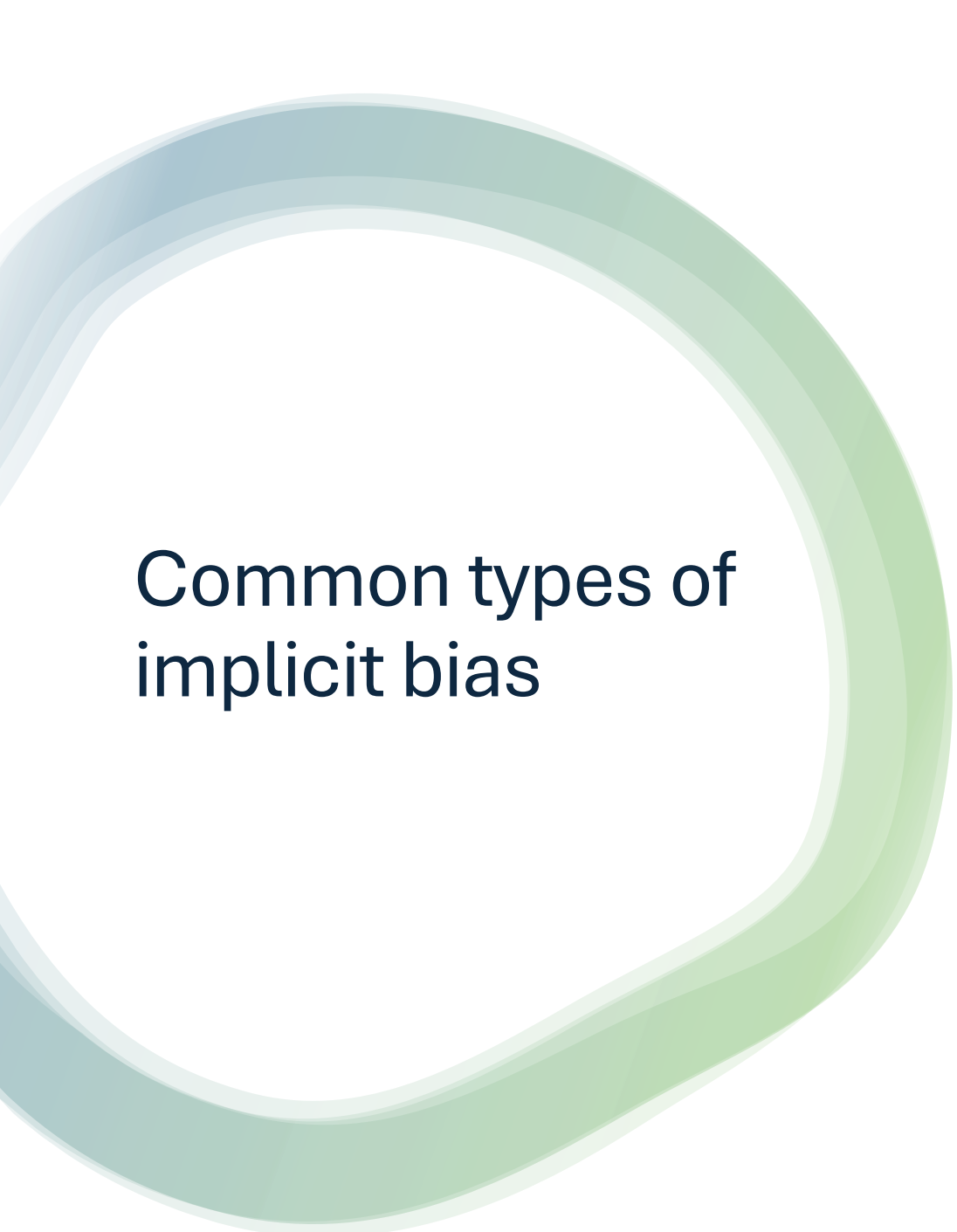


Common types of implicit bias

- Complexity bias – the tendency to accept simple but wrong answers versus more complex but true answers

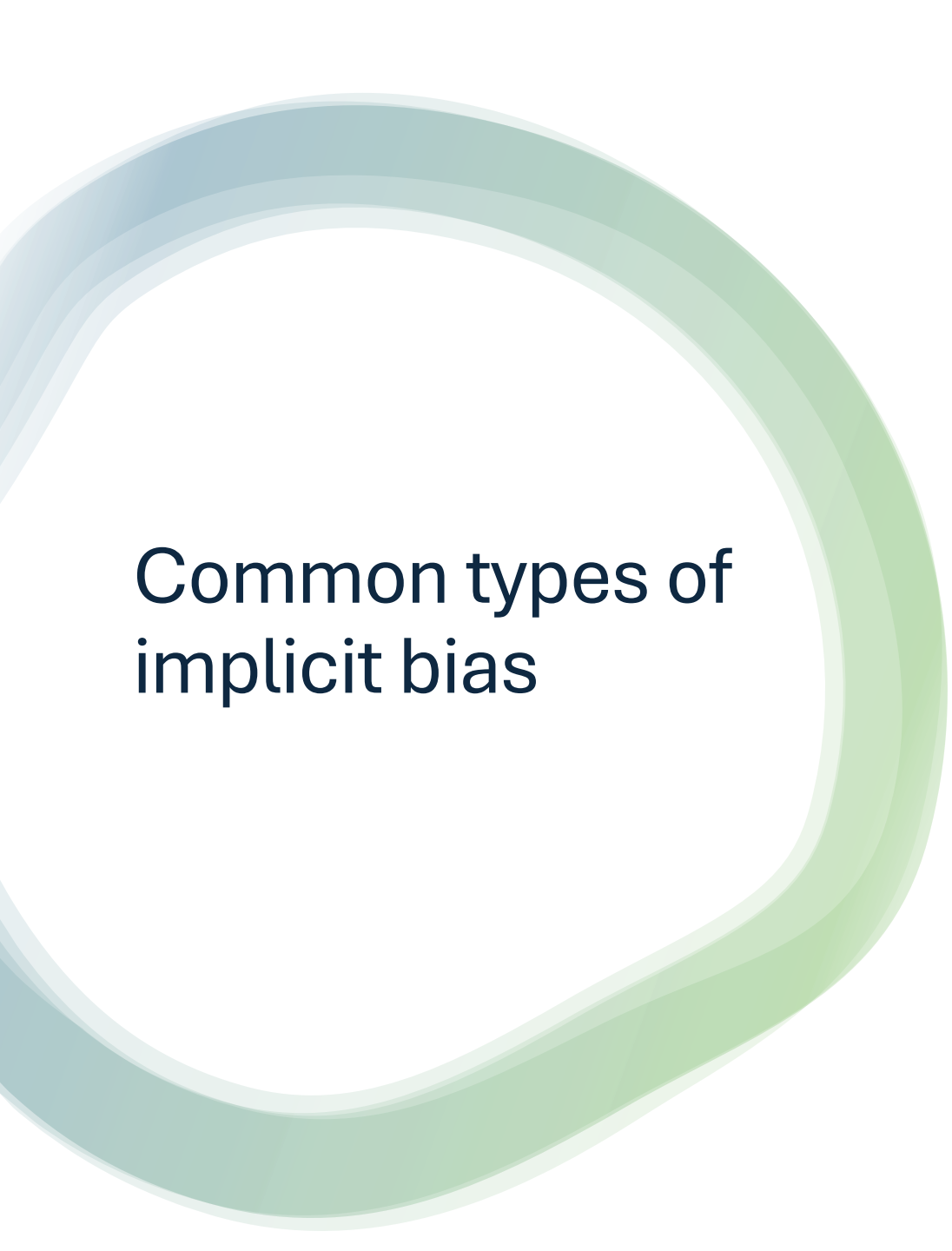
“For every complex problem, there is an answer that is clear, simple, and wrong“

H.L. Mencken



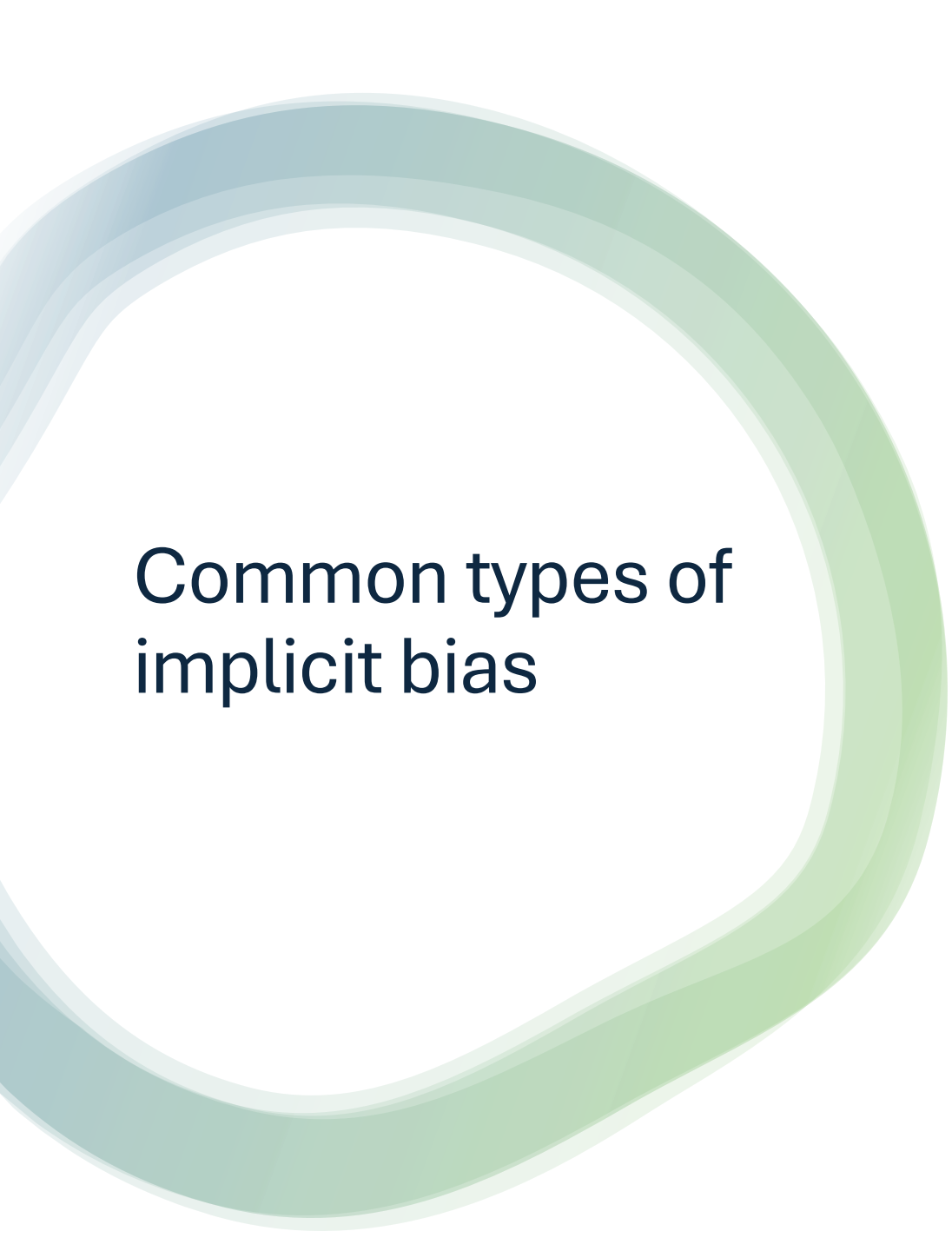
Common types of implicit bias

- Dunning-Kruger effect – grossly overestimating how much you know about something



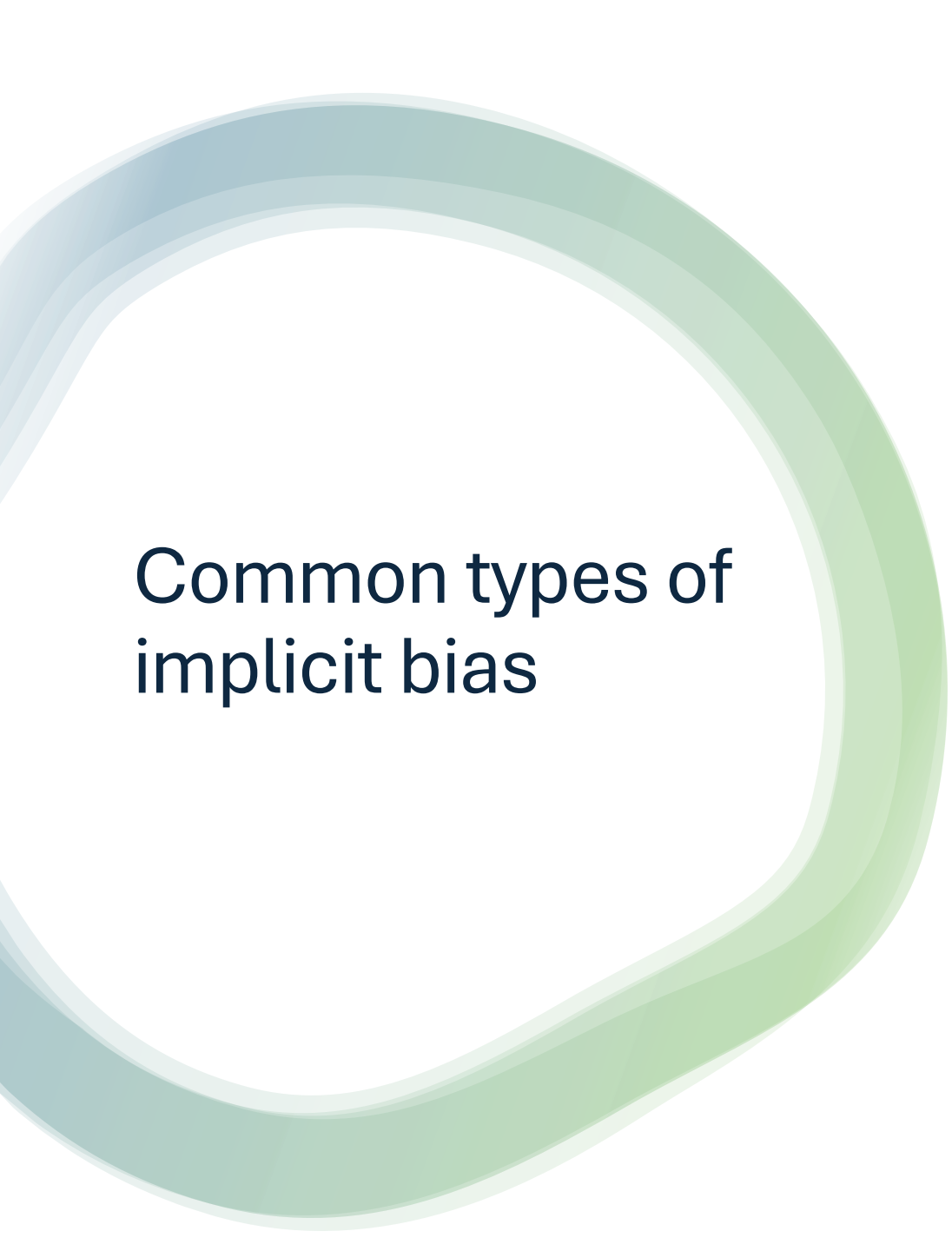
Common types of implicit bias

- Self-serving bias – the tendency to reject that which might make you uncomfortable or make you give up something



Common types of implicit bias

- Confidence bias – accepting a position just because it is given with great confidence. Another biggie on social media



Common types of implicit bias

- Expert bias – the tendency to accept the position of experts without question (or sometimes reject the position of experts)



Using the Bible to discuss contemporary issues

Can the Bible be used as a straightforward answer book for current geopolitical conundrums?

Why or why not?

In what ways can the Bible be helpful for such discussions?

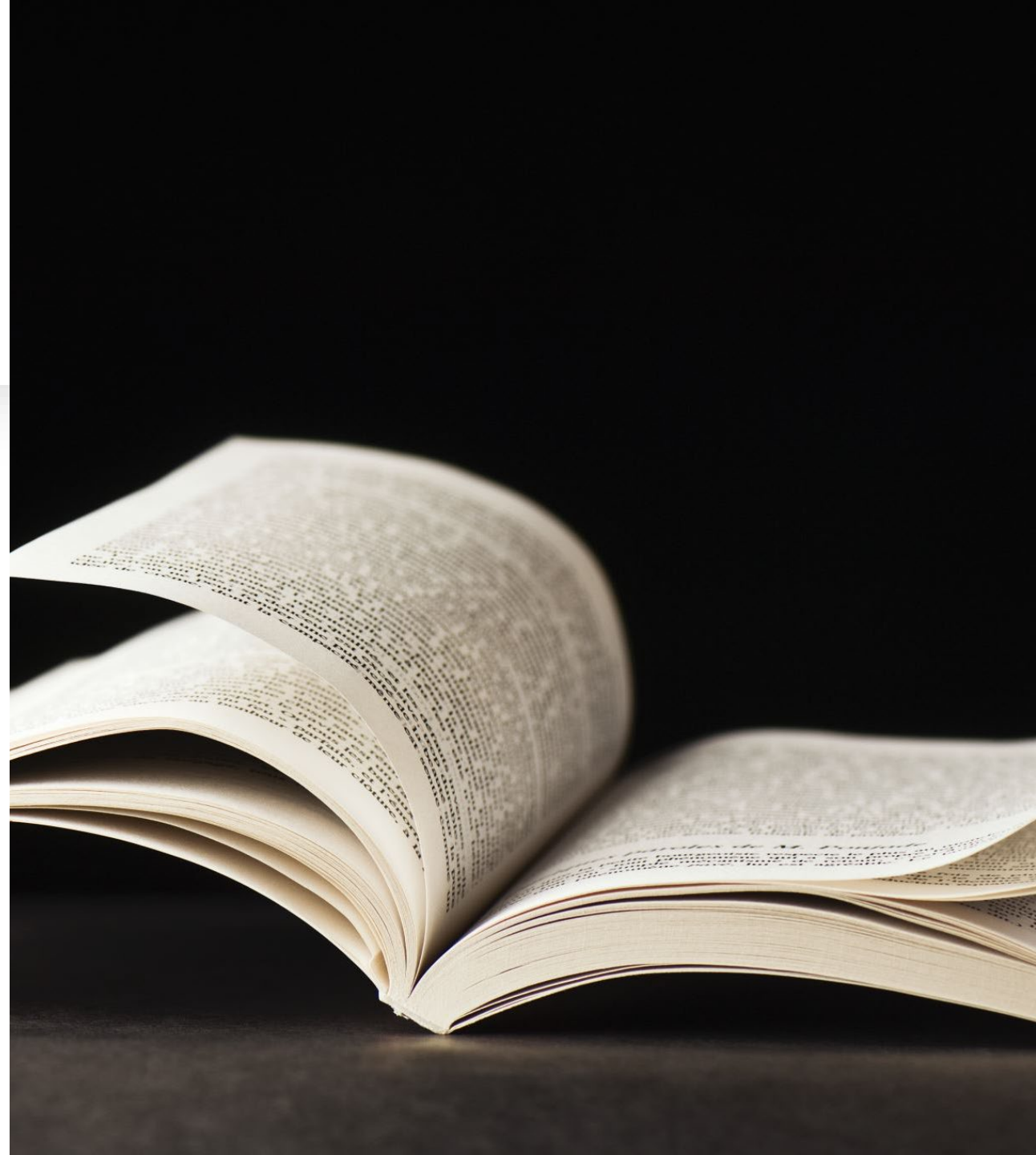
How do ELCA Lutherans interpret the Bible? (as it pertains to discussing current events)

- Central is the idea of reading all of scripture through the lens of Christ. The Bible tells one overarching story of God's work to bless and save the world, in which Christ's life, death, and resurrection are the fulfillment



The PC(USA) and Biblical Interpretation

- Emphasizes the importance of reading in the historical and literary context
- Passages need to be interpreted in the context of the broadest biblical themes – how does this passage help the reader fulfill the highest command to love God and love your neighbor as yourself?



- Neither the ELCA nor the PC(USA) hold to biblical inerrancy. The PC(USA) says it this way:

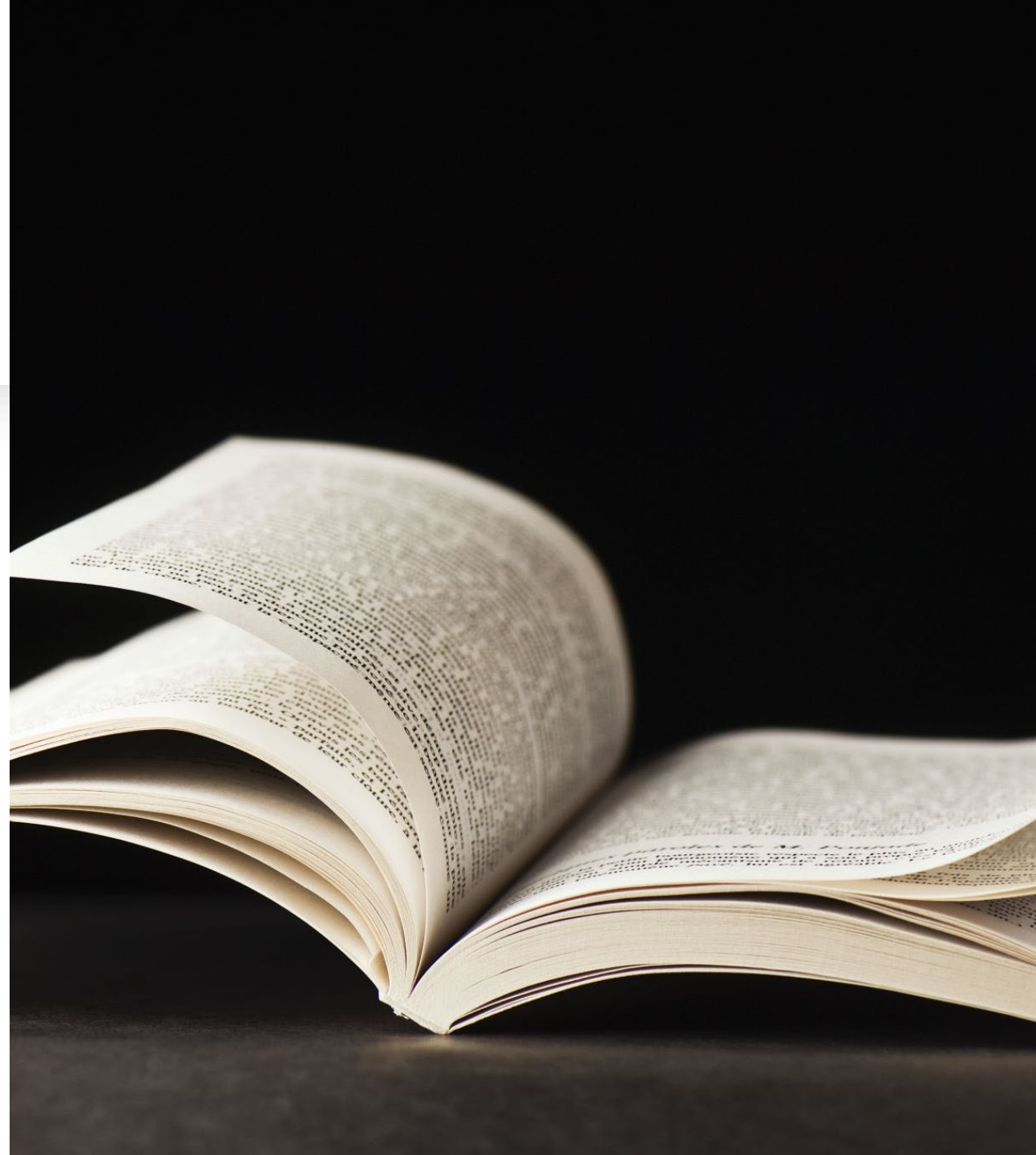
[The doctrine of biblical inerrancy] implies strict factual and scientific accuracy in a way that does not fit how Scripture was written or intended

For neither denomination does that mean we think the Bible is full of errors or is not true. But we don't limit truth to verifiable fact.



The implication for both interpretive cores is that not all scripture is weighted equally.

This tends to be at the heart of arguments when the Bible is used to debate current events.



Questions