

Worksheet: Understanding & Avoiding the Availability Heuristic

Part 1 — Warm-Up: Your Intuition

1. Are there more English words that begin with R or have R in the third position?
2. In the U.S., which group is larger: librarians or farmers?
3. Which causes more deaths: homicide or diabetes-related diseases?

Part 2 — Why Your Answers Might Be Wrong

Reflection 1: What examples came to mind more easily?

Reflection 2: Which do you hear about more often in media—homicide or diabetes?

Part 3 — Actual Answers

1. More words have R in the third position.
2. Farmers outnumber librarians.
3. Diabetes causes more deaths than homicide.

Part 4 — Training Activities

Activity 1 — Word Recall Challenge

List five words with R in the third position:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Activity 2 — Occupational Base Rates

List three reasons why farmers may outnumber librarians:

1. _____
2. _____

3. _____

Activity 3 — Media vs. Reality

List three medical conditions more common than homicide:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Part 5 — Strategy Training

Strategy 1 — Ask for Base Rates

How will you apply this? _____

Strategy 2 — Consider the Opposite

How will you use this? _____

Strategy 3 — Separate Media from Reality

Example from your life: _____

Part 6 — Application Exercises

A. Which causes more property damage: tornadoes or floods? Why? _____

B. Which kills more: sharks, coconuts, or car accidents? Why? _____

C. Which is more common: plane crashes or car crashes? Were you influenced by memorability?

Part 7 — Reflection

Describe a time you overestimated something because it was easy to recall:

How will you apply this training in decision making?
