



Malton Women Council

DISCRIMINATION

TIP SHEET



Funded in part by
the City of Brampton's
Advance Brampton Fund



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What is Discrimination?

Discrimination involves the differential treatment of individuals based on their age, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, abilities, socioeconomic status, etc. Discrimination involves negative, hostile, and injurious treatment of members of other groups. Discrimination can occur at the individual and institutional/structural level.



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- Individual Discrimination refers to the behaviors of individual members of a specific racial/ethnic/gender group that are intended to have a differential or harmful effect on individuals belonging to another racial/ethnic/gender group.
- Systemic or Institutional Discrimination refers to the attitudes, behaviors, policies, and practices part of the social or administrative structure of an organization or sector that create or perpetuate disadvantages for individuals belonging to a specific identity group, such as individuals with disabilities. These attitudes and policies may appear neutral, but can have adverse and exclusionary effects.

According to the Region of Peel's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan, systemic discrimination is one of the top three focus areas impacting community safety and well-being.



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Examples of Discrimination

Systemic Discrimination can arise across various sectors, from healthcare to housing to the justice system. Some examples of systemic discrimination are listed below:

- Low-income individuals in Peel are less likely to have access to a family doctor or medical care than high-income individuals.
- Black and Indigenous individuals are overrepresented in the Canadian Justice system.
- 2SLGBTQ+ individuals face greater gaps in housing and income.
- Black students are overrepresented in suspensions and expulsions in the Peel District School Board.
- Youth with disabilities, mental health issues, and those from low-income and racialized backgrounds experience systemic barriers to employment.



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Additional examples of discrimination in everyday life include:

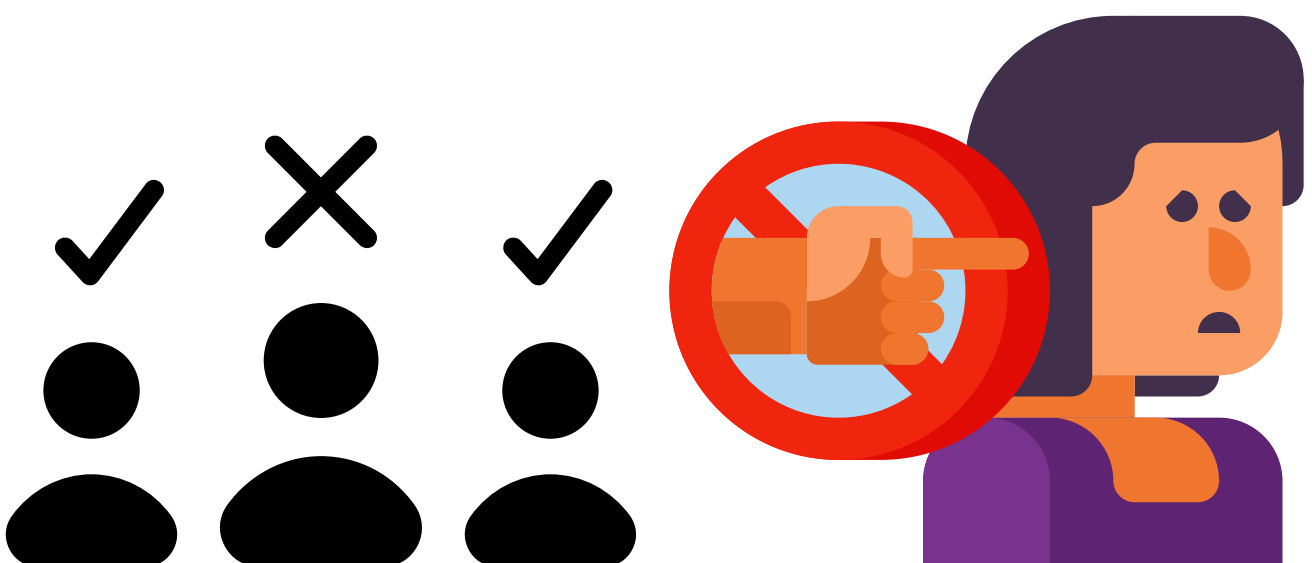
- Students bully a child, telling him to go back to his home country.
- In a job interview, an employer asks inappropriate questions about a woman's marital status and child care arrangements.
- A landlord does not rent her place to people under the age of 25, claiming they are too noisy.
- A man swears and utters threats at an immigrant man.
- A woman tells a BIPOC person that they speak English well.
- A man assumes a woman is a nurse (not a doctor).
- A teen assumes an older person is not technologically savvy.



Responding to Discrimination

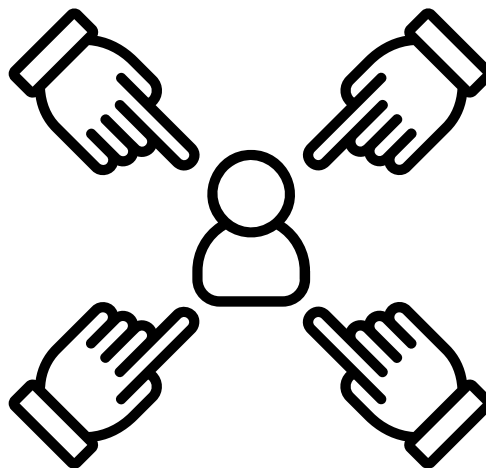
If you are the target of discrimination:

- Practice positive self-talk and avoid dwelling on the situation.
- Speak to friends and family, including those with similar lived experiences.
- Seek therapy to help process the discrimination.
- Decide what is right for you. In some situations, you may decide to speak up against unfair behavior. In others, you may find it best to step away and focus on healing.
- Speak to someone in authority if required to report the situation.



If you witness discrimination:

- Do not leave the person being discriminated against alone with the aggressor. Even if you stay on the sidelines, it is helpful for you to remain in the vicinity.
- Stay calm.
- Support the person experiencing discrimination in the moment or after the aggressor leaves.
- If the conflict is not violent, step in gently without escalating the situation. Calmly explain the situation without escalating.
- Allow the person being targeted to speak for themselves if they can.
- Take detailed notes of the incident, including dates, times, and names. If appropriate, speak to someone in authority.
- Empathize with the person who is being targeted.





Strategies to Address Systemic Discrimination

- **Collect numerical data.** Data alone cannot prove systemic discrimination, but it can serve as a red flag. For example, too few racialized individuals represented in positions of leadership.
- **Review and adapt policies, practices, and decision-making processes.** Formal policies can create barriers, while informal ones are open to bias. Ensure policies are designed to consider individual differences.
- **Review and rebuild organizational culture.** Internal cultures can marginalize individuals from specific identity groups. For example, an organization's communication style may be based on the dominant culture and undervalue an equally effective communication style used by a racialized person.



- **Engage people with lived experience in decision-making.** Engage racialized individuals, religious minorities, and women in decisions on programs and services that impact them.
- **Work to eliminate barriers.** This may include reducing barriers in the hiring process, implementing workplace diversity programs, promoting interventions for youth at risk, or revising old policies.
- **Build Awareness and Change Attitudes.** Provide anti-racism training, help people learn to notice and identify their biases, teach effective communication strategies, and organize groups where diverse individuals can get together.



Resources

- Canadian Human Rights Commission: <https://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/>
- Ontario Human Rights Commission: <https://www3.ohrc.on.ca/en>
- Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario: <https://tribunalsontario.ca/hrto/>
- Canadian Race Relations Foundation <https://crrf-fcrr.ca/>





References

- Systemic Discrimination
<https://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/systemic-discrimination>
- YWCA Types of Racism
<https://www.ywcaworks.org/blogs/ywca/types-racism>
- APA Discrimination <https://www.apa.org/topics/racism-bias-discrimination>
- Forms of Discrimination <https://www3.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-ableism-and-discrimination-based-disability/6-forms-discrimination>
- <https://www.csuchico.edu/freespeech/assets/documents/access/pincus---discrimination-definitions.pdf>
- Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan Peel
<https://peelregion.ca/sites/default/files/2024-03/cswb-plan-2020-2024.pdf>
- <https://www3.ohrc.on.ca/en/racism-and-racial-discrimination-systemic-discrimination-fact-sheet>





- Jed Foundation: How to Respond to Discrimination and Bias
<https://jedfoundation.org/resource/how-to-respond-to-discrimination-and-bias/>
- University of Washington Coping with Discrimination
<https://wellbeing.uw.edu/mental-health/mental-health-resources/anti-racism-resources/coping-with-discrimination/>
- CultureAlly Microaggressions
<https://www.cultureally.com/blog/understanding-microaggressions-and-impact-in-the-workplace>
- Covert vs Overt Discrimination
<https://www.cultureally.com/blog/overtvscovertracism>
- National Association of Japanese Canadians Examples of Discrimination
<https://najc.ca/human-rights-guide/what-are-some-examples-of-discrimination/>
- Canada Anti-Racism Strategy:
<https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/combating-racism-discrimination/anti-racism-strategy-2019-2022.html#a4>

