



## Bias

Prejudice, discrimination, and stereotype are all common words in Diversity and Inclusion. Often times, these words are used interchangeably, but they quite different in action. The one thing they all have in common is that they are rooted in Bias. Let's take a minute to break down some of these words and look at what can be done to counteract them.

A bias is favouring one things over another usually in a way that is usually unfair. There are two main types of bias: conscious and unconscious. Conscious biases are the ones that we actively think about and are aware of. Unconscious biases are those we form outside of our awareness through a lot of different experiences. This short (3.5 min) [video](#) outlines some information on unconscious bias. It is well worth watching! For a scientific and more detailed review (1.5hrs), go [here](#).

The other words mentioned, prejudice, discrimination, and stereotype are results of our biases.

*Prejudices* are our emotional biases; our feelings of dislike directed against an individual or group.

*Discrimination* are our behavioural biases. The unjust or different treatment of against an individual or group.

*Stereotypes* are the cognitive biases. These are our beliefs about a group of people.

Left unchecked, our biases (conscious and unconscious) can grow and lead to some very damaging and hurtful situations.

By taking time to check our biases, especially unconscious biases, we can interrupt our own patterns and perspectives to halt our own prejudices, discriminating, and stereotyping.

Sources:  
<https://diversity.llnl.gov/about/bias>  
<https://www.ualberta.ca/folio/2018/05/how-to-check-your-unconscious-biases.html>  
<https://nobaproject.com/modules/prejudice-discrimination-and-stereotyping>

## Ableism

One bias that many people have is ableism. Ableism takes forms in bias, prejudice, discrimination, and stereotypes against people with disabilities or other health related issues. Generally, ableism is based on beliefs that those with typical abilities are superior. At the core, ableism is rooted in an assumption that people with disabilities are in need of "fixing" and people are defined by their disability.

Ableism can take many forms, for example: segregating students in schools; buildings without braille on signage; lack of ramps to buildings or other failures in building plans.

Ableism in an 'everyday' form can look like: choosing inaccessible venues for community events; wearing scented products in a scent-free environment; using the accessible stall in a washroom if you don't need it; talking to people with disabilities differently than you talk to other adults.

For more information on ableism, watch this [video](#). Note: There is language and humour in this video that may not be suitable for all.

During your days, take a look around your surroundings and consider what could hinder somebody with various impairments (mobility, dexterity, sight, memory, etc.). Then imagine how they could be supported. If you have trouble coming up with ideas, take time to go through the new [Region of Queens Municipality Accessibility Plan](#).



## Now What?

You will hear in talks about discrimination the phrase "check your bias". And you have started to check your biases by taking time to start educating yourself about yourself. So, from here, FLEX. FLEX, as pictured below is a method on how to decrease your unconscious bias.

**F** - Focus within - acknowledge that you have biases and learn what they are.

**L** - Learn - Take those biases and learn about the group you have them about.

**E** - Engage in dialogue - Talk about your biases. This is very challenging for some, so if you want to talk in a trusted environment, go see Eric.

**X** - eXpand - Consider ways to overcome your biases and change!

For more information on FLEX, go to: <https://diversity.llnl.gov/about/bias>

"If you do not intentionally, deliberately, and proactively IN-clude, you will unintentionally EX-clude"