

Bias, Stereotype, Prejudice, and Discrimination

Baseline Definitions

Bias, stereotype, prejudice, and discrimination all live under the same roof. In order to examine them and explore their ramifications, it is necessary to have baseline definitions.

Bias

A bias is a tendency to lean in a certain direction, often to the detriment of an open mind. Bias is an inclination toward one way of thinking, often based on how you were raised. To truly be biased, it means you're lacking a neutral viewpoint. Sprouting from cultural contexts, biases tend to take root within an ethnic group, social class, or religion.

Stereotype

A stereotype is an exaggerated belief, image or distorted truth about a person or group—a generalization that allows for little or no individual differences or social variation. Stereotypes are based on images in mass media, or reputations passed on by parents, peers and other members of society. Stereotypes can be positive or negative.

Prejudice

Prejudice is a feeling toward a person based solely on their affiliation with a group. It often casts an unfavorable light on someone simply because they're a member of some family, church, or organization.

Discrimination

Discrimination comes into play when one starts acting upon an inherent prejudice they possess. Discriminatory behavior, ranging from slights to hate crimes, often begins with negative stereotypes and prejudices.