DISCRIMINATION

What is discrimination?

- Discrimination is the unfair treatment of someone based on their race, religion, age, gender, sexuality, socio-economic status, where they live, or mental and physical abilities.
- Discrimination is caused by myths and misconceptions about people who belong to certain social groups.
- Discrimination devalues and renders inferior particular groups of people.
- Discrimination is shaped by various historical, social, political and economic factors.
- Discrimination is frequently based on a fear of difference.
- Discrimination is a serious abuse of human rights.

TYPES OF DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination can be **direct** or **indirect** in nature.

Direct discrimination is the unfair or unequal treatment of a person or group (e.g. someone not being hired for a job because of their cultural background). This type of discrimination is typically deliberate.

Indirect discrimination appears equitable on the surface, but in practice disadvantages people from particular groups (e.g. an activity where everyone is required to wear a uniform that exposes their arms and legs could prevent some religious or cultural groups from participating). Indirect discrimination can occur even when there is no intention to discriminate.

Types of discrimination include:

**Interpersonal Discrimination**

Interpersonal discrimination refers to directly perceived discriminatory interactions between individuals, whether in their institutional roles (for example, between employer and employee) or as public or private individuals (for example between shopkeeper and shopper).

Examples of interpersonal discrimination include bullying, harassment, rudeness, name-calling, over-checking, verbal/physical abuse, providing bad service, following around shops, hiring/firing biases in employment, and jokes and teasing.
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As blatantly discriminatory behaviour has become increasingly socially unacceptable, discrimination may be expressed in more subtle and passive ways. Although people may not be bullied, they may be ignored or excluded from event; they may not receive bad service in a shop, but they may not be actively helped either; they may not be called names but they may find that others avoid sitting next to them in school or on public transport. VicHealth (2009).

Systemic or Institutional Discrimination

Systemic discrimination is discrimination that is structured into political and social institutions and discriminates either directly or indirectly against particular social groups. Systemic discrimination occurs when requirements, conditions, practices, policies or processes result in unfair inequalities across groups. These seemingly normal ways of doing things may directly or indirectly consciously or unwittingly, promote sustain or entrench differential advantage for others.

Systemic discrimination in critical areas such as education, employment and housing can lead to social disadvantage for those experiencing it and in turn contribute to intergenerational disadvantage.

Internalised Discrimination.

Internalised discrimination occurs when an individual accepts negative attitudes, beliefs or ideologies about the superiority of other groups and the inferiority of their own group. This can have an affect on how they regard and behave towards themselves, members of their group and those from other groups.


FACT SHEET
G21 Freedom from Discrimination Action Group 2012
G21 – Geelong Region Alliance