



Dealing with prejudice

The meaning of prejudice is to pre-judge. It's to have a bias against a person or group without any real reason. This can be in regard to race, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, religion, age, disability, political leanings, and more. Forms of discrimination include hate crimes, racial profiling, and discrimination against certain job candidates, for example.

Know that it can be hard on your psyche to deal with ongoing discrimination. Even if you feel like you brush it off, it could be causing emotional stress. This can lead to problems in school, your work, or your relationships. What can you do if you, your family, or community become a victim of prejudice?

Build resilience

To start, take a look at what happened and what you need to make it better:

- Acknowledge that the event happened and that it is OK that it made you upset
- If it's an event that didn't happen directly to you, learn the facts before you take action
- Know that it's not really about you, but about the other person
- Take care of your mind and body

- Seek out groups or communities that petition for change
- Surround yourself with positive people in similar circumstances

Talk about it

Tell others what happened and how it made you feel. Your family and friends can offer support. Even if they don't get it, they will most likely want to support you. If you find it's hard to move past the event or that it is often on your mind, seek the help of a counselor, clergy, or other trusted person. If a loved one says something that hurts you, tell him. If your neighbor posts something online that is offensive, let her know offline. People often don't realize how words can hurt.

When you're speaking up, don't feel like you need to stand for everyone—that's a lot to take on. You just need to take care of you. If you don't know the person—or don't have the chance to talk with him alone—it's better to walk away. This is for your own safety and soundness of mind.

Take action

If there is the chance to reach out to people outside of your community, do so. Join groups or organizations that offer peaceful and thoughtful ways to combat prejudice. This will help you feel less alone. Even if you aren't a part of the minority or culture that is being labeled, you can still be an ally. Consider giving to or volunteering with organizations that are working to end prejudice. These include:

- [The Southern Poverty Law Center](#)
- [The Anti-Defamation League](#)
- [The Human Rights Campaign](#)
- [PFLAG](#)

Educate your kids

Kids often see prejudice or are victims of it. Let them know from an early age that there is prejudice in the world and why. Tell them how people are different and how they are the same. If they have questions based on activity around them or in the media, don't skirt around the issue. Be very clear in an age-appropriate way. Talk about prejudice and how it affects others when it happens. Be careful not to blame a bad thing on a whole group of people. All forms of discrimination are an unfortunate part of our world but can be lessened through education and an open heart. Your bolstered sense of self will carry you far.

Resources

Project Implicit | <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/aboutus.html>

Teaching Tolerance | www.tolerance.org

Disclaimer: This document is intended for general information only. It does not provide the reader with specific direction, advice, or recommendations. You may wish to contact an appropriate professional for questions concerning your particular situation.