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CHOOSE PREJUDICE REDUCTION

What is prejudice reduction?

Prejudice reduction refers to intentional efforts to challenge and change negative attitudes, stereotypes, and assumptions that people hold about others based on identity such as race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or ability. Unlike discrimination, which reflects behaviors, prejudice refers to biased thoughts and feelings. Reducing prejudice means cultivating fairness, empathy, and inclusion in place of fear or bias.¹

How do people learn prejudice reduction?

People learn prejudice reduction through education, reflection, and exposure to diverse perspectives. Schools, workplaces, and community organizations may provide opportunities for anti-bias education, intercultural exchanges, and implicit bias training.²

In structured settings, schools, workplaces, and community organizations provide opportunities such as:

- anti-bias or diversity education
- intercultural exchanges
- implicit bias awareness training
- dialogue programs that bring people together across lines of difference

These settings allow people to examine assumptions and learn new ways of relating to others.

Prejudice reduction also takes place in less formal ways. **In personal practice**, individuals develop prejudice reduction skills by:

- listening to others' lived experiences
- engaging in dialogue with people from different backgrounds
- seeking books, films, or media that challenge stereotypes
- practicing mindfulness and self-reflection to slow automatic judgments

¹ American Psychological Association. (2019). *Prejudice, discrimination, and stereotyping*. <https://www.apa.org/topics/racism-bias-discrimination>

² Dovidio, J. F., Hewstone, M., Glick, P., & Esses, V. M. (2010). *The Sage handbook of prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination*. SAGE Publications.

These learning pathways help people build empathy, slow automatic judgments, and reduce bias over time.³

How do people implement prejudice reduction?

Individuals implement prejudice reduction by using inclusive language, challenging biased remarks, and building authentic relationships across differences. Even small actions—like pausing to reconsider a stereotype, asking respectful questions, or speaking up when hearing a prejudiced comment—contribute to long-term cultural change.

Organizations can implement prejudice reduction by adopting diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) practices, offering training on unconscious bias, and promoting fair decision-making in hiring, promotions, and policy design.⁴ Leaders in schools, workplaces, and communities play a particularly important role by modeling inclusive behavior and setting expectations that bias and discrimination will not be tolerated.

In neighborhoods and communities, prejudice reduction may be encouraged through multicultural events, interfaith dialogues, and partnerships that highlight shared values and goals. These approaches foster belonging and demonstrate that communities thrive when differences are respected and celebrated.⁵

For what types of circumstances is prejudice reduction suited?

Prejudice reduction is suited for any environment where people interact—schools, workplaces, places of worship, neighborhoods, online spaces, and families. It is especially important in diverse settings where misunderstanding or bias can fuel tension.⁶

Prejudice reduction is also useful in conflict resolution and community healing, where recognizing and addressing bias builds trust and reconciliation. Whether in personal growth or policy reform, prejudice reduction equips people to cultivate more just and peaceful communities.

Does prejudice reduction work for preventing or controlling social distress?

Yes. Research shows that intentional prejudice reduction efforts can improve trust, increase cooperation, and strengthen group cohesion.⁷ Programs that bring people together across identity lines—especially those with equal status, shared goals, and

³ Devine, P. G., Forscher, P. S., Austin, A. J., & Cox, W. T. L. (2012). Long-term reduction in implicit race bias: A prejudice habit-breaking intervention. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 48(6), 1267–1278.

⁴ Paluck, E. L., & Green, D. P. (2009). Prejudice reduction: What works? A review and assessment of research and practice. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 60, 339–367.

⁵ Stephan, W. G., & Stephan, C. W. (2017). *Intergroup communication* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

⁶ Gaertner, S. L., & Dovidio, J. F. (2000). *Reducing intergroup bias: The common ingroup identity model*. Psychology Press.

⁷ Paluck, E. L., Green, S. A., & Green, D. P. (2019). The contact hypothesis re-evaluated.

support from leaders or institutions—are particularly effective at reducing bias and preventing hostility.⁸

Prejudice reduction prevents conflict and violence by promoting mutual respect, empathy, and inclusion. It also addresses systemic inequities by equipping individuals and groups to recognize and challenge policies or practices that reinforce bias. By addressing both interpersonal and structural prejudice, communities can reduce social distress and create environments where all people are valued and included.⁹

Where else might I go to learn more about prejudice reduction?

- [Learning for Justice](#) — Resources for educators on reducing prejudice and bias
- [Project Implicit](#) — A Harvard University collection of online tools for exploring hidden biases
- [Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity](#) — Research on implicit bias and structural inequality
- [Southern Poverty Law Center](#) — Advocacy and educational programs to challenge prejudice and hate
- [American Psychological Association](#) — Research and resources on prejudice and bias reduction

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If you have suggested additions to this information, send to inbox@peacethroughaction.org.

⁸ Allport, G. W. (1954). *The nature of prejudice*. Addison-Wesley.

⁹ Aboud, F. E., & Levy, S. R. (2000). Interventions to reduce prejudice and discrimination in children and adolescents. In S. Oskamp (Ed.), *Reducing prejudice and discrimination* (pp. 269–293). Lawrence Erlbaum.