

Break down your biases, become more accepting



We live, work, and learn among diverse social groups, and accepting others is important for everyone's well-being. Yet, most of us are unaware of our biases, stereotypes and prejudices about those who are different from us, shaped by our background, experience, media and family and friends. These unconscious biases can trigger unintentional, but hurtful, attitudes or behaviors. **Here are some ways to become aware of your biases, break them down, and become more accepting:**

Be aware of distasteful first impressions. Tune into your reactions. Maybe you've laughed at an insensitive joke or felt discomfort when sharing a space with someone of a different ethnicity. Take a moment to consider whether your negative stereotypes are in play.

Make an intention to be friendlier and more inclusive. Invite those you would not usually talk to into a conversation. Acting more open and friendly helps you to feel more comfortable with others.

Tune into media that exposes prejudice. Listen to podcasts, documentaries or follow friends on social media who share these resources.

Expose yourself to different experiences, so it becomes more familiar. Make an effort to go to restaurants and events that attract people from different social groups. Soon, you will begin to see the people from these groups as individuals, rather than part of a stereotypical group.

Practice mindfulness. Learning to be accepting of the present moment without judgement increases an awareness of your emotions, thoughts, and surroundings. This helps to create a sense of acceptance and non-judgment of others.

Be patient and give yourself—and others—time. It may have taken time to build your biases, and it can take a long time to break them down.

Need Support? Whether you want to learn acceptance or are a target of prejudice, your Health Advocate EAP professional can help with relationship and communication-building skills as well as a range of personal, school and work-related issues. There is no charge, it's confidential, and in a crisis, we're here 24/7.



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