

#DEFYHATE NOW

Identity & Context



PREJUDICE AWARENESS

Societies across the globe are comprised of countries with different ethnic, religious or cultural groups and sometimes these groups feel like they do not fit together. This may be due to historical, colonial legacy or recent events. This leads to tension which in turn may lead to conflicts.

Identity based conflicts are hard to manage as identities are complex. We are aware of aspects of our identities targeted by a dominant group in society. We are predisposed to be prejudiced and hold biases towards groups of people we haven't interacted with beyond a certain level.

Our identities are not static, we negotiate them on a daily basis.

General Assumptions Regarding Prejudice (Cotton, 1993)

- Prejudice is learned and can be unlearned
- An effective method of addressing prejudice is to focus on the self and then to explore similarities and differences between groups
- People who feel good about themselves don't need to denigrate others
- Facts alone do not lead to improved intergroup relations. This requires education focusing on cooperative learning and critical thinking.

The impact of inter-group dialogue and communication initiatives can be enhanced where they receive public support from government and policy makers and religious leaders. Representative of different communities, in particular religious leaders and other community leaders, should be empowered to speak out in response to intolerance and discrimination.

This is particularly important where proponents of intolerance and discrimination portray themselves as representative of, or acting on behalf of, specific communities or interest groups. Religious and community leaders are well placed not only to refute these claims of representation, but also to substantively engage with and challenge an individual's position, and thus offer a persuasive counter-narrative.