



British Columbia's  
**Office of the Human Rights  
Commissioner**

Introduction to Human Rights series

# **Systemic discrimination**

## **Educator pack**

### **Introduction**

This guide has been prepared to assist groups, organizations, and Grades 10-12 classrooms explore themes in the “Introducing Human Rights” video series. In this video, we are introduced to Systemic Discrimination. Use the questions provided to explore the film’s themes in a group setting.

# Getting started

## Take steps to ensure that participants feel safe and comfortable to express themselves

**1** Going through this learning session may be emotional or challenging for people who have experienced systemic discrimination. Pausing for tea, snacks or movement can help people take a break for self-care. Highlight that creating a safe space does not mean that the space will be comfortable for everyone. Discussing this video may lead to some discomfort if participants are considering, for the first time, the devaluing of Black history and Canada's role in anti-Black racism. Tell participants that it is okay to feel this discomfort because it can help us reflect on attitudes and actions and contribute to positive change.

**2** The purpose of this discussion is to listen to and learn from one another. Ask participants to help develop a community agreement to create a space where people show mutual respect and listen attentively to what others share. Examples may include listening actively, being present, respecting confidentiality, and centring the voices of those with lived experience. Once the community agreement is developed, the group can come up with ways to ensure that the guidance is followed and respected. For more information and examples, consult the community agreements resource at the end of this guide.

**3** Identify ways for everyone to participate and to be heard. For example, consider taking turns speaking around a circle or pausing from time to time to invite those who have not yet spoken to contribute.

# Pre-viewing activity

Have group members take a few minutes on their own to list what Belonging means to them. Bring the group back together and share answers, brainstorming any new ideas that emerge from the group.



# Open the conversation

## Choose three questions that speak to you:

- What did you think about the video? What did you notice?
- What feelings did you experience while watching the video?
- Did any of the examples surprise you?
- The video named and showed several examples of systems. What systems did you see in the video? What system do you engage with regularly?
- The video says that Systemic Discrimination “benefits some, and harms others.” The word *harm* is often used to describe when a person is physically wounded or injured. What other ways can people and groups be harmed?
- The words “human rights” are never used in the video. How is systemic discrimination related to human rights?

# Deepen the conversation

- The video mentions that it can be hard to see, or sometimes even believe, that systemic discrimination occurs. What do you think might stand in the way of seeing and believing?
- Why do you think some people don’t believe or acknowledge that systemic discrimination exists in Canada?
- Systemic discrimination “builds a world of injustice and inequity”. What examples of injustice and inequity did you see in the video? What impacts would those have on the people accessing those systems?
- The narrator of the video tells us that “While we don’t all experience the same barriers, we do all want the same thing – to belong, and to be treated equally and fairly.” What does the word “barrier” mean, in

this video?

- What systems have you seen, heard or been a part of, that “single some people out, and leave others behind”?
- Midway through the video, images and percentages pop up all across a map of BC. What do you think these images and numbers are meant to represent?
- Acknowledging systems that we are a part of can raise uncomfortable feelings. For example, people may have feelings of shame, guilt, or denial when they learn about systemic discrimination. Guilt, shame, and denial may show up as shutting down or being defensive. What are some ways to talk about challenging or confronting topics?
- What are the negative impacts of systemic discrimination on the individuals or groups inflicting it as well as those witnessing it and not taking action?
- What is Systemic Discrimination? How would you explain it to someone who hasn't seen this video?

## Bring the conversation to a close

- Are there any roles, communities, spaces or systems in your life where you feel like you belong? How can we create a society where everyone feels like they belong?
- The video mentions that “We all play a role in creating the world we want to build together. We can listen to voices that are left out, and we have the power to challenge and change these systems.” Name one thing you can do in the roles you hold and/ or communities and systems you are a part of.