

What is racism and discrimination?

Racism is when people think that one group of people is better or worse than others because of their physical appearance (skin colour), origin or religion. Racism can be found in everyday life (work, housing, neighbours, etc.). It takes different forms (hurtful words, insults, attacks, exclusions, etc.). Racism is rooted in our society and our institutions. It is linked to our centuries-old history.

What is racism?

Racism is when people think that one group of people is better or worse than others because of their physical appearance (skin colour), origin or religion.

Racism is about power. It is used to make some groups of people weak and keep others strong.

Racism is present in many areas of everyday life, such as work, finding accommodation and relationships with neighbours.

Racism can take different forms: insults, attacks and exclusion.

Racism is not always deliberate or conscious. It is deeply rooted in our society, our institutions and our social habits. For example, anti-black racism is linked to our history with colonialism and slavery.

Discrimination

Discrimination is when a person or a group of people is treated unfairly because of their physical appearance (skin colour), origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation or level of impairment.

Racial discrimination is when people suffer because of their physical appearance (skin colour), origin or religion.

The different forms of racism

- Interpersonal racism (racism between people): this is prejudice or a closed and aggressive attitude towards other people because of their origin or physical appearance (skin colour). It may take the form of hurtful words, insults, discrimination or violence.
- Cultural racism: this is when some cultures are belittled or disrespected because of racist stereotypes. A stereotype is when someone thinks “all Africans or all Asians are ...”. Stereotypes can be reinforced in films, art or cultural depictions.
- Structural racism (racism in structures): this is when racism and inequalities are embedded in the rules and organisation of a society.

Very often, this leads to discrimination, even if nobody directly wishes it.

- Institutional racism (racism in institutions): this is when inequalities and discrimination are embedded in important social institutions such as schools or the world of work. Institutional racism is not always visible. It's hidden. From the outside, you can't see anything, and everything looks normal.

Additional information (links, addresses, information sheets, brochures)

www.bonjour-jura.ch/en/racism-and-discrimination/what-is-racism-and-discrimination