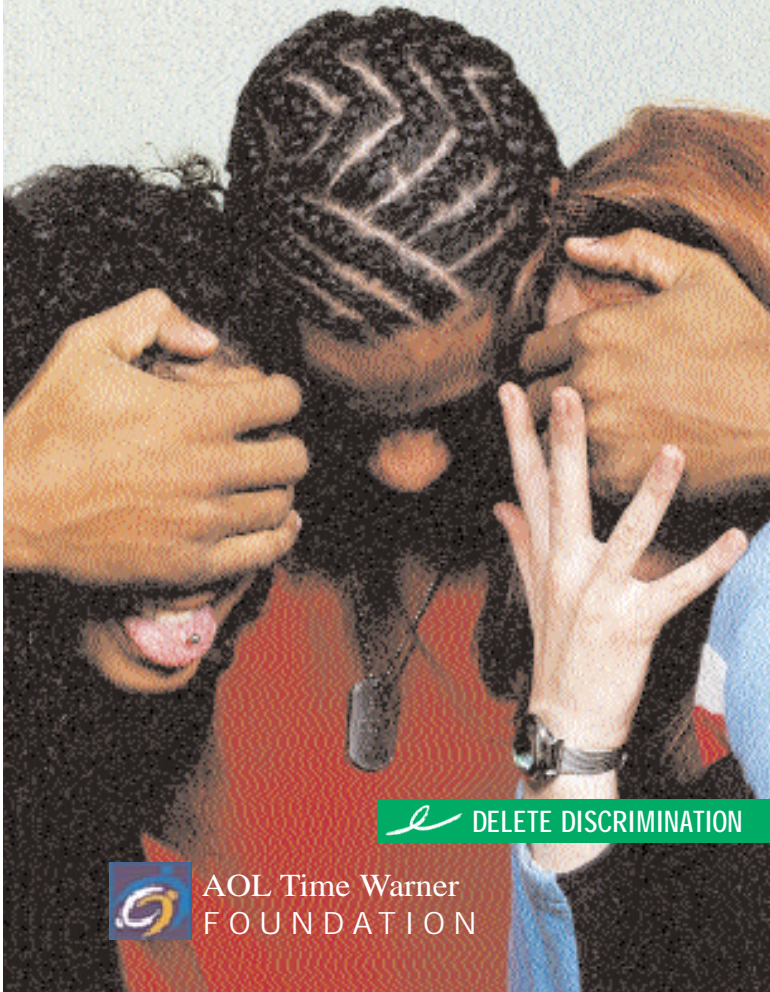




**fight for your rights:  
take a stand against discrimination**



*e* **DELETE DISCRIMINATION**



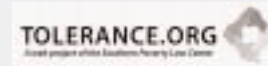
**AOL Time Warner  
FOUNDATION**

90% of young Americans say discrimination is a serious problem affecting everyone.

Almost no one thinks that they are part of the problem.

Make any sense?

About this guide:



This guide was co-produced and developed with the AOL Time Warner Foundation, and co-written with the Anti-Defamation League, the National Conference for Community and Justice, and the Southern Poverty Law Center.



The mark that runs throughout this booklet is traditionally a proofreading symbol to delete an item or signal an error. We've chosen to adopt this symbol to signal the deletion of discrimination from our lives.

Photography: Terence Miele

## STEREOTYPE (an IDEA)

A stereotype is a generalization about a person or group of people without regard to individual differences. Even seemingly positive stereotypes that link a person or group to a positive trait can have negative consequences.

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## PREJUDICE (a FEELING)

Prejudice is prejudging or making a decision about a person or group of people without sufficient knowledge. Prejudicial thinking is frequently based on stereotypes.

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## DISCRIMINATION (an ACTION)

Discrimination is the denial of equal treatment (by individuals or institutions) in many arenas, including employment, education, housing, banking and political rights. Discrimination is an action that can follow prejudicial thinking.



Stereotypes lead to prejudice, and prejudice leads to discrimination. Too often discrimination reinforces stereotypes, and the entire cycle is repeated.



## listen to this:

"When I was little, I remember my mother being asked for ID whenever she used her credit card. My mom would get so disgusted. And forget about mom getting any service. Questions like 'Are you being helped?' always sounded more like, 'Are you sure you can afford this?' and came with a look that said, 'I'm watching you.' Later, my mom would warn me that this was just a part of being black. But still, I've never gotten used to the nerve-wracking feeling of walking into a store. I pay attention to how I'm dressed (tennis shoes are asking for trouble), how I look (my natural hair makes people nervous), and how I walk (mom always taught me poise). But it's never enough. Plus, the fear of being accused of taking something always makes me tense – maybe that's what the clerk sees: a tense black girl watching her watch me..."

## think about this:

- Do you ever question your own bias and prejudice?
- How would you feel if someone of another race or ethnic background pointed out ways in which your attitude and behavior may be insensitive?
- Do you ever notice character stereotyping in TV, music or movies that is based on race?

## statistics:

- African-American motorists are 6 times more likely to be stopped than white motorists. (Source: National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, NAACP)
- While people of color are numerically a minority in the United States, they make up 90% of the world's population. (Source: Southern Poverty Law Center)
- People of color have become the majority in California; it is estimated that by the year 2060, non-Hispanic whites will be the minority population in the United States. (US Census Bureau)

**To learn more about the many forms of racism and ways you can get involved in ending them, contact one of the following organizations:**

Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics, Inc.	<a href="http://www.leap.org">www.leap.org</a> 213.485.1422
National Association for Multicultural Education	<a href="http://www.nameorg.org">www.nameorg.org</a> 202.628.6263
National Council of La Raza	<a href="http://www.nclr.org">www.nclr.org</a> 202.785.1670
National Italian American Foundation	<a href="http://www.niaf.org">www.niaf.org</a> 202.387.0600
National Urban League	<a href="http://www.nul.org">www.nul.org</a> 212.558.5300
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People	<a href="http://www.naacp.org">www.naacp.org</a> 410.521.4939
Native American Rights Fund	<a href="http://www.narf.org">www.narf.org</a> 303.447.8760
Rainbow Push Coalition	<a href="http://www.rainbowpush.org">www.rainbowpush.org</a> 773.373.3366



### listen to this:

"In a country founded on the notion of religious freedom, it's just amazing how I grew up believing that there was something wrong with anyone who wasn't a Christian. There was a Jewish family who lived down the street and I remember the ugly comments my grandparents made about them – people they had never even met. I used to think that I was different from my grandparents, but recently an Islamic group wanted to build a mosque in our neighborhood and I found myself resenting it for no apparent reason. I hate to admit it, but I guess my grandparents had more influence on me than I thought."

### think about this:

- As you were growing up, did you have contact with people of different faiths?
- Are you aware of your own attitudes and behavior towards people of different religions?
- Are you willing to take unpopular stands to support the rights of all people, not just people in the groups you belong to?

### statistics:

- There are 6 million Muslims in the United States. Contrary to popular belief, however, only 33% of Arab-Americans are Muslim. (Source: National Conference for Community and Justice)
- Buddhism is now the fastest growing U.S. religion with approximately 750,000 members. (Source: National Conference for Community and Justice)
- There are approximately 800,000 Hindus in the United States. (Source: National Conference for Community and Justice)
- In 1999, 39 states and the District of Columbia reported 1,547 anti-Semitic incidents to the Anti-Defamation League. (Source: Anti-Defamation League)

For information on ending religious discrimination in your area or to find out about ways you can get involved, contact one of the following organizations:

Anti-Defamation League	<a href="http://www.adl.org">www.adl.org</a> 212.885.7970
Southern Poverty Law Center	<a href="http://www.tolerance.org">www.tolerance.org</a> 334.264.0286
Leadership Conference on Civil Rights	<a href="http://www.civilrights.org">www.civilrights.org</a> 202.466.3311
The United Religions Initiative	<a href="http://www.united-religions.org">www.united-religions.org</a> 415.561.2300



**fight for your rights:**  
**take a stand against discrimination**



To learn the many ways you can take a stand against all forms of discrimination, log onto [FightforYourRights.MTV.com](http://FightforYourRights.MTV.com) or contact the following organizations:

Anti-Defamation League*	<a href="http://www.adl.org">www.adl.org</a> 212.885.7970
Leadership Conference on Civil Rights	<a href="http://www.civilrights.org">www.civilrights.org</a> 202.466.3311
National Conference for Community & Justice*	<a href="http://www.nccj.org">www.nccj.org</a> 212.545.1300
Southern Poverty Law Center*	<a href="http://www.tolerance.org">www.tolerance.org</a> 334.264.0286
Simon Wiesenthal Center	<a href="http://www.wiesenthal.com">www.wiesenthal.com</a> 1.800.900.9036

To volunteer for Fight for Your Rights efforts in your area, contact:

Rock the Vote	<a href="http://www.rockthevote.org">www.rockthevote.org</a> 310.234.0665
SHiNE (Seeking Harmony in Neighborhoods Everyday)	<a href="http://www.shine.com">www.shine.com</a> 877.SHINE.65

If you or someone you care about has been a victim of a hate crime, call the National Center for Victims of Crime at 1.800.FYI.CALL.

If you would like to order another copy of the action guide, please call: 1.866.265.1777  
\*Co-authors of this guide

## listen to this:

"Last summer I worked at this company that I was planning to work for when I graduated from college. When I first met the company's executives, I wasn't really surprised to see that all of them were men. I was surprised, however, to see how they treated women. It was always women they asked to get them coffee, and they even commented on coworkers' tight sweaters. Despite the fact that the women at this company were some of the most qualified professionals in their fields, our male co-workers were still unable to see us as equals. It makes me wonder how far we really have come."

## think about this:

- Are you aware of your generalizing about persons based on their gender?
- Do you assign certain emotions and characteristics such as crying, aggressiveness, strength or weakness to a particular gender?
- How would you feel if someone of the opposite sex pointed out ways in which your behavior may be offensive?

## statistics:

- Surveys indicate that almost half of all working women have experienced some form of harassment on the job – a number that has not changed since the early 1980s. (Source: National Women's Law Center)
- Women hold only 5% of senior management positions in the private sector. Among Latina, Asian, and African-American women, that number is less than 1%. (Source: US Department of Labor)
- Generally, women earn 76 cents for every dollar men earn. (Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1998)



To find out more about sex-based discrimination and ways you can get involved, contact the following organizations:

National Organization For Women

[www.now.org](http://www.now.org) 202.628.8669

National Women's Law Center

[www.nwlc.org](http://www.nwlc.org) 202.588.5180

American Association of University Women

[www.aauw.org](http://www.aauw.org) 1.800.326.AAUW



### listen to this:

"Last weekend my girlfriend and I went to see a movie at the mall. We have been together a couple of months, yet I still can't figure out how to hold her hand in public. I hate being stared at: it's that look that says, 'Oh, those two girls, they're like that.' What is like that? I just want to hold her hand."

"Gays are everywhere now. They are in sitcoms and in the movies. I really don't have a problem with gay people, and sometimes they're kinda funny, especially in the movies. I just don't really want it shoved in my face all the time. It's okay to be gay, but why do they always have to be so public about it?"

### think about this:

- What would it feel like if you were always teased because you were gay?
- How would you feel if your best friend told you she was a lesbian or he was gay?
- Are you aware of ways in which gay people are stereotyped?

### statistics:

- At least 4-6% of the U.S. population is gay. (Source: Voter News Service Surveys)
- Lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth are 4 times more likely to commit suicide than their straight peers. (Source: National Gay and Lesbian Task Force)
- In a study of lesbian and gay youth in a major metropolitan area, 41% reported suffering violence from their families, peers, or strangers. (Source: Hunter J., "Violence Against Lesbian and Gay Male Youth," J Interpersonal Violence, 5(3), 1990, Sage Publications)

To find out more about discrimination towards gays and lesbians and ways you can get involved, contact:

Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network	<a href="http://www.glsen.org">www.glsen.org</a> 212.727.0135
Human Rights Campaign	<a href="http://www.hrc.org">www.hrc.org</a> 202.628.4160
National Gay and Lesbian Task Force	<a href="http://www.nglftf.org">www.nglftf.org</a> 202.332.6483
Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays	<a href="http://www.pflag.org">www.pflag.org</a> 202.467.8180
Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation	<a href="http://www.glaad.org">www.glaad.org</a> 1.800.GAY-MEDIA



## listen to this:

"My girlfriend has been in a wheelchair for about 9 months now. She was in a car accident that left her paralyzed from her waist down. This has been the hardest 9 months of our lives. We've had to go about our regular routines in different ways. It's kind of weird but even when I'm not with her, I've noticed that I walk the handicap ramps instead of going through the revolving doors. The accident has given me a whole new perspective about life and what it means to live with a person with a physical disability."

"When my roommate and I moved into our room at school, she told me that she suffered from depression – although I never would have known it just from looking at her. At times, she is the most fun person to be around; other times I can't motivate her to do anything. I never really thought of mental illness along the same lines as other disabilities, but I do now. She struggles with it as part of her everyday life. I realize that mental illness can be just as difficult for people as other disabilities."

## think about this:

- How do you feel when you encounter people who have mental and/or physical disabilities? What is your reaction?
- Have you ever thought about what it might be like if you had a disability?
- Do you react the same way toward people wearing eyeglasses as you do toward people with hearing aids or other physical aids?

## statistics:

- The total number of disabled people in the U.S. is estimated to be 54 million – almost one-fifth of the nation's population. (Source: National Organization on Disability)
- The first comprehensive civil rights legislation ever passed for people with disabilities was in 1990 and is called The Americans with Disabilities Act. (Source: Presidential Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities)

To find out more about discrimination against people with disabilities and ways you can get involved, contact:

Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund, Inc.

[www.dredf.org](http://www.dredf.org) 510.644.2555

Leadership Conference on Civil Rights

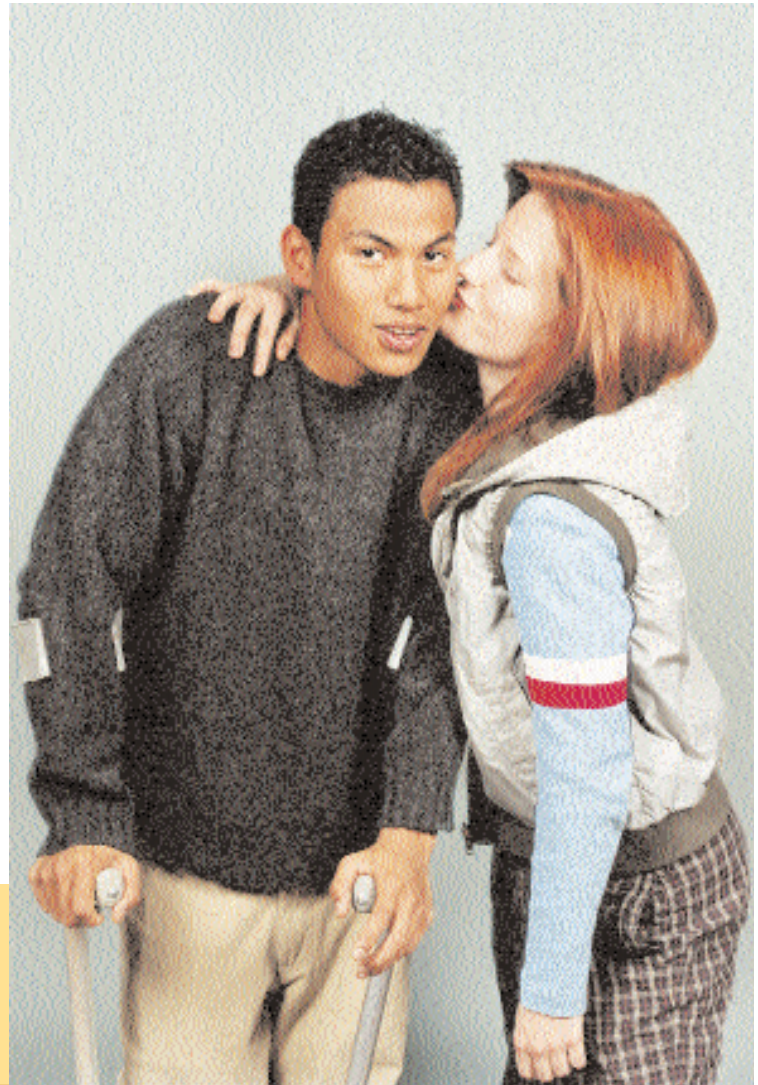
[www.civilrights.org](http://www.civilrights.org) 202.466.3311

National Mental Health Awareness Campaign

[www.nostigma.org](http://www.nostigma.org) 1.877.495.0009

Presidential Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities

[www.disability.gov](http://www.disability.gov) 202.693.4939





## Five Ways to Fight Discrimination

1. **ACT:** Do something. Educate yourself about what you fear or don't fully understand. In the face of prejudice, discrimination or outright hatred, apathy is often interpreted as acceptance. Pick up the phone. Volunteer. Organize a meeting. Sign a petition. Stand up for victims of prejudice or hate. Lead a prayer. Pick up a paintbrush to cover offensive graffiti. Invite someone of a different background from your own to join your family for a meal or holiday.
2. **SPEAK UP:** You have First Amendment rights. Prejudice and discrimination should be exposed and denounced. Speak up when you hear offensive jokes or slurs. Let people know that biased speech is always unacceptable. Point out stereotypes in movies, TV shows and computer games. Learn another language – it could be a gateway to a different culture.
3. **UNITE:** Call some friends and organize a diversity club. Gather ideas from everyone, and get everyone involved. This may be the first time your friends have talked about race, homophobia or other forms of prejudice. You'll feel good that so many people want to act.
4. **TALK TO LEADERS:** Persuade teachers, principals, politicians and community leaders to take a stand. Ask them to take a stand against discrimination in housing, employment, and education. Encourage equal access to sports for boys and girls. Discourage the use of divisive school emblems. Urge leaders to promote respect for people of different cultures.
5. **DIG DEEPER:** Look at your own prejudices and stereotypes. Take a personal cultural inventory – how many friends do you have from cultures different than your own? Read about civil rights. Go to a concert, play, or club where you are in the minority. Examine issues that divide us: economic inequality, immigration, and gay rights.

## Definitions

**Ableism** - Ableism is prejudice and/or discrimination, either personally or institutionally, against people with mental and/or physical disabilities.

**Ageism** - Ageism is prejudice and/or discrimination, either personally or institutionally, against people because of their age.

**Anti-Semitism** - Anti-Semitism is prejudice and/or discrimination, either personally or institutionally, against Jews. Anti-Semitism can be based on hatred against Jews because of their religious beliefs, their perceived group mentality, and sometimes on the erroneous belief that Jews are a "race."

**Bias** - Bias is an inclination or preference either for or against an individual or group that interferes with impartial judgement.

**Bigotry** - Bigotry is an unreasonable or irrational attachment to negative stereotypes or prejudices.

**Classism** - Classism is prejudice and/or discrimination, either personally or institutionally, against people because of their real or perceived economic status.

**Diversity** - Diversity means different or varied. The population of the United States is made up of people from diverse races, cultures and places.

**Heterosexism** - Heterosexism is a prejudice and/or discrimination, either personally or institutionally, against people who are perceived to be lesbian, gay or bisexual.

**Homophobia** - Homophobia is the irrational fear of people who are believed to be lesbian, gay or bisexual.

**Multicultural** - Multicultural means many or multiple cultures. The United States is multicultural because its population consists of people from many different cultures.

**Racism** - Racism is prejudice and/or discrimination, either personally or institutionally, based on the social construction of "race." Differences in biological characteristics (e.g., skin color, hair texture, and eye shape) are suited to support a system of inequalities.

**Sexism** - Sexism is prejudice and/or discrimination, either personally or institutionally, based on gender.

These definitions were provided by and reprinted with the permission of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith.

