

Education Glossary Terms

The following terms and definitions are often associated with and provide a common, working language for ADL's educational anti-bias programs and resources. The definitions are written for older youth to adult reading levels, unless otherwise specified, and some include age-appropriate versions for younger ages.

A-B

C-D

E-G

H-L

M-P

Q-R

S-W

A

Ability: Having the mental and/or physical condition to engage in one or more major life activities (e.g., seeing, hearing, speaking, walking, breathing, performing manual tasks, learning or caring for oneself).

Ableism: The marginalization and/or oppression of people who have disabilities, including temporary, developmental, physical, psychiatric and/or intellectual disabilities.

Activist: Someone who gets involved in activities that are meant to achieve political or social change; this also includes being a member of an organization which is working on change.

- *Elementary school version:* A person who uses or supports actions such as protests to help make changes in politics or society.

Ageism: The marginalization and/or oppression of older people based on the belief that older people are inferior, incapable or irrelevant. Ageism also describes the marginalization and/or oppression of people who are too young to have social independence.

Aggressor: Someone who says or does something harmful or malicious to another person intentionally and unprovoked.

- *Elementary school version:* Someone who says or does hurtful things to another person on purpose and over and over.

Ally: Someone who speaks out on behalf of or takes actions that are supportive of someone who is targeted by bias or bullying, either themselves or someone else.

- *Elementary school version:* Someone who helps or stands up for someone who is being bullied or the target of bias.

Anti-Bias: An active commitment to challenge bias within oneself, others and institutions.

Anti-Immigrant Bias: The marginalization and/or oppression of people who are of immigrant origin, transnational or outside the dominant national identity or culture. *(Other related terms include xenophobia to describe a fear to anyone or anything that is perceived to be foreign or strange.)*

Anti-Muslim Bias: The marginalization and/or oppression of people who are Muslim based on the belief in stereotypes and myths about Muslim people, Islam and countries with predominantly Muslim populations. *(Often called*

Islamophobia to describe a fear of anyone or anything that is perceived to be of Islamic religion or culture. Anti-Muslim bias is supported by racism, anti-immigrant bias and religious bias. People who are not Muslim may be racialized as Muslim and experience prejudice and/or discrimination.)

Antisemitism: The marginalization and/or oppression of people who are Jewish based on the belief in stereotypes and myths about Jewish people, Judaism and Israel.

Anti-Trans Bias: The marginalization and/or oppression of people who are transgender and/or non-binary (identifying as neither a man nor a woman) based on the belief that cisgender (gender identity that corresponds with the sex one was assigned at birth) is the norm. *(Often called transphobia to describe a fear of anyone who is perceived to be transgender. Other related, specific terms include cissexism, transmisogyny and binarism.)*

B

Bias: An inclination or preference either for or against an individual or group that interferes with impartial judgment.

- *Elementary school version:* A preference either for or against an individual or group that affects fair judgment.

Bigotry: An unreasonable or irrational attachment to negative stereotypes and prejudices.

- *Elementary school version:* Prejudice and/or discrimination against a person or group based on stereotypes.

Bisexual: A person who is emotionally, physically and/or romantically attracted to some people of more than one gender.

Bullying: Repeated actions or threats of action directed toward a person by one or more people who have (or are perceived to have) more power or status

than their target in order to cause fear, distress or harm. Bullying can be physical, verbal, psychological or any combination of these three. Bullying behaviors can include name-calling, obscene gesturing, malicious teasing, rumors, slander, social exclusion, damaging a person's belongings, threats and physical violence.

- *Elementary school version:* When a person or a group behaves in ways—on purpose and over and over—that make someone feel hurt, afraid or embarrassed.

Bystander: Someone who sees bias or bullying happening and does not say or do anything.

Considerations

All forms of bias can be both explicit (aware, voluntary and intentional) and implicit (unaware, involuntary and unintentional). All manifestations of bias and discrimination can be both personal (an individual act of bias, meanness or exclusion) or systemic (policies and practices supported and sanctioned by power and authority and that benefit some and disadvantages others).

The specific, pervasive systems of oppression and marginalization described in some of these definitions are upheld by institutionalized, cultural and historical ideologies and discrimination. These systems exist simultaneously, compounding the harm to individuals with multiple marginalized identities. Individual acts of prejudice and discrimination are informed by and perpetuate these systems, which exist regardless of individual prejudices and interpersonal acts of bias.