

Types of Discrimination

RACISM

Discrimination based on race.

(i.e. American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander)

SEXISM

Discrimination based on gender and gender expression.

HAIR DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination based on hair type *(i.e. curly, coily, straight, wavy, kinky), typically showing favor for straight hair.*

ABLEISM

Discrimination based on a person's disability.

COLORISM/ SHADEISM

Discrimination based on skin tone, *typically among people of the same ethnic or racial group.*

SIZEISM

Discrimination based on size. *(especially weight)*

Case Study #1: Veronica

+

01

“

Here it is, the week I have been waiting for. I'm so excited yet feeling uneasy. I don't know what it is about running for student council that feels so daunting. I've been told by my friends that this would be a perfect position for me. I think I can change things to make it better for students. Unfortunately, that has gotten me in trouble a few times. It sometimes seems that being assertive or fighting for what is important isn't a trait that is appreciated for females, as it is seen as being bossy and aggressive. How is it that the same decisions made by the males in student council are looked at differently? Maybe that's why they are viewed as the better candidate? I have to keep reminding myself of the things I have accomplished that would make me a strong candidate, even if they have gone unnoticed or even ignored. The students in our school deserve to have someone that supports and acknowledges everyone, regardless of gender.

”



Case Study #1: Veronica



01

What type of discrimination is present in the case study?
Highlight one. Use the handout for help if you need it!

02

How could/does this type/these types of discrimination affect the
person's body confidence and/or make their life difficult?

03

How can a middle schooler support a person experiencing this discrimination?

04

What's wrong with the system that's creating this problem?

Case Study #2: Skyler

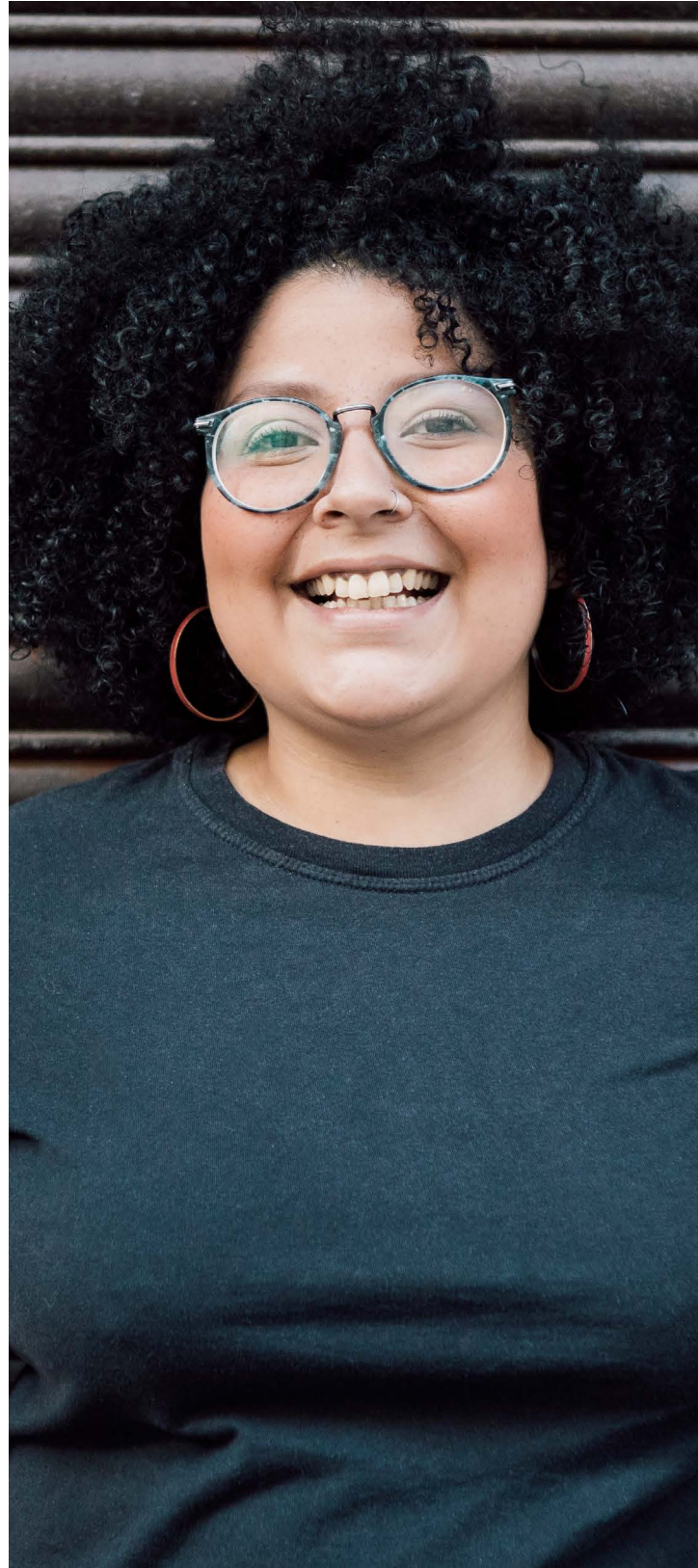
+

02

“

I'm a bigger kid...well actually I'm a BIG kid. I'm bigger than literally everyone in my school, even the teachers.! I definitely stand out in my grade and even in my school; I'm tall and kind of wide. My parents say that I'm "big-boned" whatever that means... I know they're just trying to make me feel better. All I know is that I can't hide...ever...everyone knows where I am, but at the same time, I can't buy clothes or shoes at a regular store. How does this make sense??? You can't miss me, but I can't find anything to fit me. Everything that fits me is made for adults, but I'm just a middle schooler. Ya know what else? Bathroom stalls at school are the worst. It's like they crammed as many possible toilets into the bathroom as possible and then put some walls and doors up. I don't fit...literally. Just because I'm a big kid means I have to either squeeze myself into the stall or go to the nurse's office just to use the restroom. It's a pain.

”



Case Study #2: Skyler



01

What type of discrimination is present in the case study?
Highlight one. Use the handout for help if you need it!

02

How could/does this type/these types of discrimination affect the
person's body confidence and/or make their life difficult?

03

How can a middle schooler support a person experiencing this discrimination?

04

What's wrong with the system that's creating this problem?

Case Study #3:

Bodhi

+

03

“

I do watch and read the news sometimes and I catch reports here and there. I did read about the wrestler who was required to cut their locs in order to compete during a match. I wear my hair in locs. I asked my mom if I could grow them when I was in third grade. A lot of people in my family and neighborhood wear locs or other natural styles. Anyway, it's a cultural thing. My locs are kinda long, since I'm in middle school and it's been a few years since I began my journey. How would I feel if I was told I had to cut my locs to compete? Especially if I had them all season long. What do I do? What about my team and school? What about my cultural expression? This kid had been tying them up and putting them under a cap all season. Nobody said anything. Wrestlers also wear protective headgear. They cut all of the wrestler's locs off. Years of cultural expression. It's a hairstyle. The apology afterward would not have meant much to me. If the rule or policy says everybody has to have shoulder-length or above hair, I get it. Why wasn't the rule enforced all season long? Why did they cut all of the wrestler's locs off? I just don't get it. Locs represent who I am. I follow rules. This seemed kinda mean. ”



Case Study #3: Bodhi



01

What type of discrimination is present in the case study?
Highlight one. Use the handout for help if you need it!

02

How could/does this type/these types of discrimination affect the
person's body confidence and/or make their life difficult?

03

How can a middle schooler support a person experiencing this discrimination?

04

What's wrong with the system that's creating this problem?

Case Study #4:

Jada

+

04

“

I was so excited when I made the cheerleading team. I have always wanted to be in front of a crowd cheering at all the football and basketball games. But lately I find myself trying to come up with excuses to quit. Don't get me wrong, I love cheering, the reason is some of the girls on the team keep complaining that my makeup and skin shade doesn't "match" the other girls. Let's not even talk about what they say about my hair. Do they not realize that there is absolutely no foundation out there that matches my dark skin tone? That I have to buy 3 or 4 bottles of foundation to mix to come close to what my real skin tone is, and even then it's not a perfect match. In fact more often than not it looks fake. I have to make the decision, a face that looks fake, or blemishes left uncovered. It is so embarrassing and at times shameful to hear the comments from the girls.

”



Case Study #4: Jada



01

What type of discrimination is present in the case study?
Highlight one. Use the handout for help if you need it!

02

How could/does this type/these types of discrimination affect the
person's body confidence and/or make their life difficult?

03

How can a middle schooler support a person experiencing this discrimination?

04

What's wrong with the system that's creating this problem?

Case Study #5:

Sam

+

05

“

Just one more time. I am so sick of this. Like a favorite role model says, “I am so tired of being sick and tired of being sick and tired.” I live in a largely Asian community in a very nice city. I was born and raised in the United States, though you would not think so from the unkind comments received from peers. You know, schoolmates, classmates, friends! Strangers in the mall, etc. Kids just like me. You see my parents are immigrants. Naturalized citizens. My grandparents live with us, too. We live in an area where there are mostly immigrant and American born Asians. Though I was born and raised in the city where I was born, I have a bit of accent because of the influence of my relatives and immigrant neighbors. I have classmates who think it is funny to “pick on” how I speak. I have been told to go back to my country. That wouldn’t be fair, since this is my country. Or even if I did come here to live from another country like other classmates it is an unkind thing to say. I have been accused of causing a disease. I suppose I may be guilty of spreading a cold or two, but I’m sure that’s not what they mean. Most I’m sure are only repeating what adults have said around them. The bigger hurt comes from the kids that are supposed to be my friends. They are cool when it is just us, but when they have an audience, they suddenly say mean, unkind, biased, racist, or prejudiced words about people who look like they are from another country to me or about me. My appearance. My features represent my connection to my family. My speech represents my community. Who I am represents the United States. I need people who say they are good people to really be who they say they are.

”



Case Study #5: Sam



01

What type of discrimination is present in the case study? Highlight one. Use the handout for help if you need it!

02

How could/does this type/these types of discrimination affect the person's body confidence and/or make their life difficult?

03

How can a middle schooler support a person experiencing this discrimination?

04

What's wrong with the system that's creating this problem?

Case Study #6: Dakota

+

06

“

Each week my teacher rotates students by desk, first seat to last seat, last seat, one up and so on. The classroom has desks in the center and is surrounded by tables used as workstations. Every week I participate in the weekly seat move, but somehow, I never end up in the front desk. I decided to pay closer attention to how this was happening. My parents have said, if I do not understand something to respectfully ask a question. I asked the teacher why I never rotated into the first seat, after having just landed in the second seat the week before. I asked this question when once again, I was told to rotate to the last seat. Instead of answering my question, the teacher said one of my classmates could use some peer help in this class, so I would sit where that student was. It was suggested that because we were of the same race, the student would work with me better than anyone else in class. What?! I've been in school with most of the other students since elementary school. This student is new this year and I hardly know them. I looked around the room at my middle school classmates and realized there were only two students of a different race – the other student and me. Come to think of it, this student never made it to the first seat either. When I asked them later, they said they didn't like the first seat. Any other seat was fine. I wondered! The teacher decided we should stay in the rear seats so we could work without disturbance. Really?! I could name other students who were better suited to help this student. I approached the teacher about the situation. The response was as I expected – kind of vague and avoidant. However, I was not headed back to the rear and I wasn't going to tutor this student anymore. I wasn't really a great help to them, and I wasn't letting the teacher off the hook for this micro aggression. There is an underlying issue here and I do not like it. It's time to talk to the adults in my life – at home and here in school.

”



Case Study #6: Dakota



01

What type of discrimination is present in the case study?
Highlight one. Use the handout for help if you need it!

02

How could/does this type/these types of discrimination affect the
person's body confidence and/or make their life difficult?

03

How can a middle schooler support a person experiencing this discrimination?

04

What's wrong with the system that's creating this problem?

Case Study #7:

Pax

+

07

“

My family recently moved and I had to switch schools. I was so excited to go to my new school and to make new friends, but I feel like I don't belong. I used to enjoy going to school but not anymore. I wish I could go back to my other school. Everyone treats me differently here. I use a wheelchair to get around which makes navigating the narrow halls hard to begin with...and I don't know the building yet so that makes things even more difficult for me. In the morning, I can't even get through the school doorway without my wheels getting caught. I am always late for one particular class because I have to take the long way around; the direct route to this class is just too narrow for my chair when all of the other kids are there, too. In this classroom, my teacher said she likes to seat me in the front right-side of the classroom closest to the doorway so I won't disrupt the class since I am always late. My teacher also thought it would be a good idea to seat me there just in case I have to go to the bathroom. She thought it would save me time getting to the bathroom being close to the doorway. This teacher needs to be a bit more open-minded and see me for who I am, not just that I use a wheelchair. Could this person ASK me what I need or want instead of just assuming? This teacher even said that they didn't think I would attend the upcoming school dance because I wouldn't be able to dance. I feel misunderstood, mistreated and like an outcast -- I feel marginalized. Why does everyone, especially one of my teachers, treat me this way? Why can't I be treated as a normal human being? I feel like I don't belong here.

”



Case Study #7: Pax



01

What type of discrimination is present in the case study?
Highlight one. Use the handout for help if you need it!

02

How could/does this type/these types of discrimination affect the
person's body confidence and/or make their life difficult?

03

How can a middle schooler support a person experiencing this discrimination?

04

What's wrong with the system that's creating this problem?

Case Study #8: Taylor

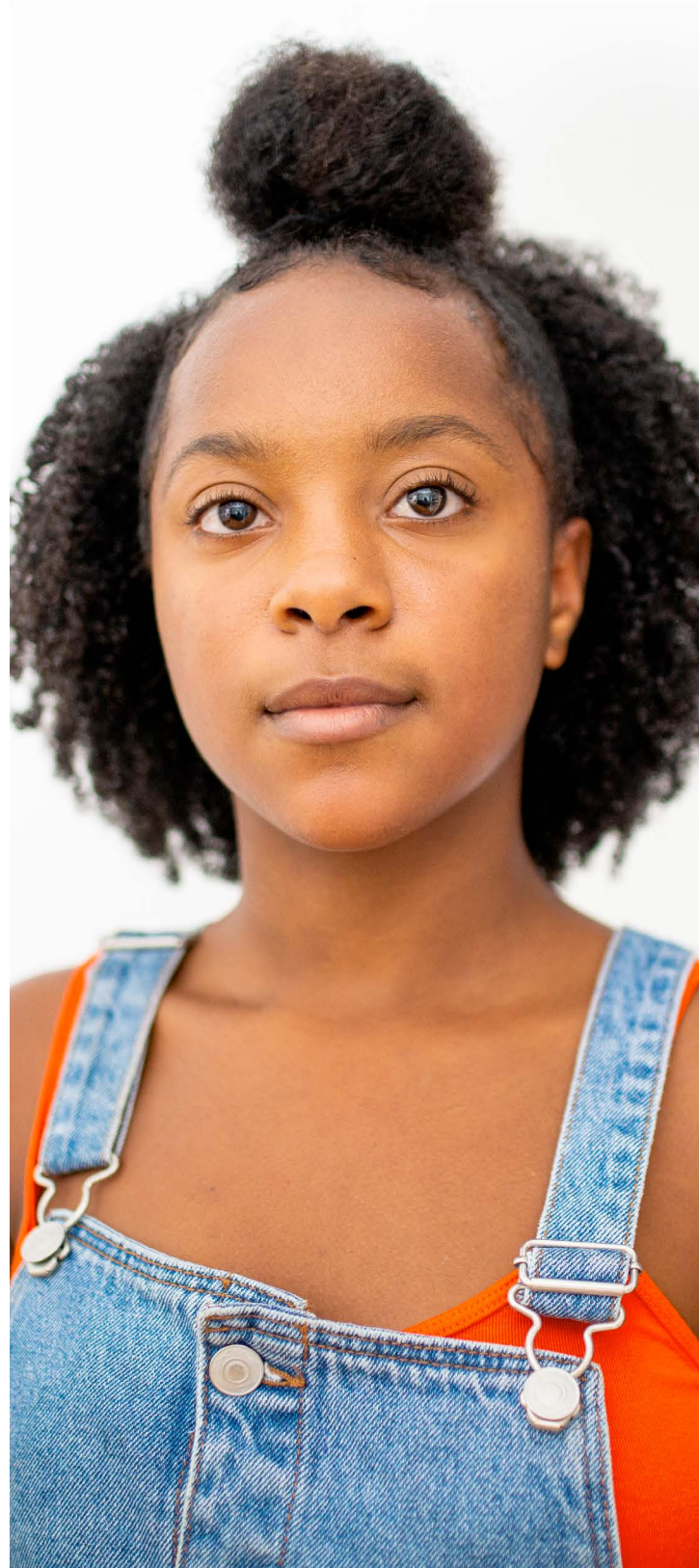
+

08

“

Most of my friends love the end of the winter season. Everyone associates spring with warm weather and tank tops. Not me, I want nothing to do with the sun. To me it means PE outside. Why is it that one of the most common chemicals to prevent skin cancer is white? If I do go out, I have several options. Wear sunscreen and look ashy, or wear nothing and the scars from my acne get darker. I wish PE wasn't mandatory. My PE teacher won't even allow me to stay inside and workout. I would rather not change for class and lose points than have to worry about my skin.

”



Case Study #8: Taylor



01

What type of discrimination is present in the case study?
Highlight one. Use the handout for help if you need it!

02

How could/does this type/these types of discrimination affect the
person's body confidence and/or make their life difficult?

03

How can a middle schooler support a person experiencing this discrimination?

04

What's wrong with the system that's creating this problem?