

Lesson 14: Systemic Discrimination

💡 **Opening Thought:** Systemic discrimination is baked into policies, procedures, and structures — creating inequity even when no one individual “intends” to discriminate.

📝 **Reflection** Think about your workplace systems:

- Which policies or practices might unintentionally disadvantage certain groups?
- Who has the power to change them?

📌 **Activity: Spot the System** Review these examples. Which ones reflect systemic discrimination? Circle the ones you’ve seen in your workplace and add your own examples:

- A company hires through word-of-mouth referrals, leading to a less diverse workforce.
- Safety gear is only ordered in men’s sizes.
- Performance reviews rely heavily on subjective “likeability.”
- Promotions require working late evenings, disadvantaging caregivers.



📖 **Case Example: Apprenticeship Access** A trade union requires applicants to have family connections for entry into apprenticeship programs. This limits opportunities for women and people of color who don’t already have industry ties.

- How is this systemic, not just individual?
- What impact does this have on workforce diversity?
- How could access be widened?

💬 **Discussion Questions**

- Why is systemic discrimination harder to recognize than individual bias?
- What workplace systems (hiring, promotion, pay, training, discipline) could be checked for bias?
- How can leaders involve employees in reviewing and revising systems?

🌟 **Action Step**

One way I will look for systemic barriers in my workplace is: