

Bias Assessment and Response



The Bias Assessment and Response Team (BART) is a nimble, far-reaching, comprehensive committee with the necessary specialties, talent, and knowledge to respond to the emergent needs of the Rensselaer student community as it relates to incidents of bias, hate, or other marginalizing acts.

**CONTACT
INFORMATION**

**Bias Assessment and
Response Team**



Report a Bias Incident »

Students may use this link to report a bias-related incident they have experienced or observed. Reports can be made anonymously.



Reporting for Staff & Faculty »

Faculty and/or staff may report incidents of bias, discrimination, or harassment either through this link above or by contacting Human Resources directly via email at hrmail@rpi.edu or by calling [518-276-6302](tel:518-276-6302). Faculty and/or staff may refer to the [Employee Handbook](#) regarding policies and procedures that apply to all Rensselaer employees.

Academy Hall, 4th Floor
Suite 4629
P: [\(518\) 276-6266](tel:(518)276-6266)
E: BART@rpi.edu
In case of an emergency,
contact Public Safety
[\(518\) 276-6611](tel:(518)276-6611) or Dial
911

110 Eighth Street
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(518) 276-6000

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Bias Assessment and Response

Bias Definition

An incident of bias typically involves a person or group being harmed or threatened (i.e., physical injury, psychological pain or distress, emotional unrest, inequitable practices that impact one's ability to perform, etc.), by the alleged offender's bias, which could reasonably and prudently conclude is motivated, in whole or in part, by an actual or perceived aspect of identity:

- Age
- Race/Color
- Ancestry/Ethnicity
- National Origin
- Citizenship Status
- Religion/Beliefs

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- Sex
- Transgender Status
- Gender Dysphoria, Identity or Expression
- Sexual Orientation
- Pregnancy
- Disability
- Marital or Civil Union Status
- Domestic Partnership Status
- Domestic Violence Victim Status
- Familial Status
- Relationship with or Association with Member(s) of a Protected Class
- Genetic Information or Predisposition
- Military or Veteran Status

Bias acts are often disruptive to the community and harmful to individuals or groups of people. Some incidents may be in violation of criminal, civil, or Institute policy. Incidents which are a violation of civil or criminal law may be reported and responded to by law enforcement authorities. Incidents which may violate Institute policy, will be reviewed and responded to by the appropriate designees. Incidents

that are not in violation of law or Institute policy, but may affect other members of the Institute community, may warrant an informal and educational response through the Bias Assessment and Response Team.

MICROAGGRESSIONS

Subtle, verbal and non-verbal insults, indignities and denigrating messages, often automatically and unconsciously, directed toward an individual(s) due to their marginalized identities. Usually stated by well-intentioned people who are unaware of the hidden messages committed, the impact of their statements and the unintentional connection to the institutional, interpersonal and internalized manifestations of bias.

"The power of microaggressions lies in their invisibility to the perpetrator, who is unaware that they have engaged in a behavior that threatens and demeans the recipient of such a communication." ([Sue, 2010](#)).

Below are a few examples of the varying expressions or statements made that are considered to be microaggressions.

+ RACIAL/ETHNIC MICROAGGRESSIONS

Examples: "When I look at you, I don't see color."

Reason: A statement like this can deny the individual as a racial/cultural being and subtly expresses that their lived experiences as a person of color are not real. These types of microaggressions may also express that people from marginalized cultures must assimilate or acculturate to the dominant culture.

+ NATIONALITY MICROAGGRESSIONS

Examples: "No, I know where you live, but where are you REALLY from?" or "Your English is really good."

Reason: These statements can isolate a person to feel they are not welcomed nor have a place within the community they are in based solely on their physical appearance or accent. In another context, these statements may also exude negative stereotypes about people that may appear to be foreign based on their physical appearance or an accent, regardless of where the person was born and/or raised.

+ SEXUAL/GENDER MICROAGGRESSIONS

Examples: "How do you know if you've never even been in a relationship?" or "Wow, You don't look trans!"

Reason: These statements often occur with the use of assumptive or heterosexist terminology. These statements also convey that one's non-heterosexual or gender identity is less-valuable than the standards set forth by heteronormative constructs. Lastly, using improper terminology or misgendering (saying "She" or "He" to someone who may be female-to-male or male-to-female transgender or non-binary) are also forms of sexual or gender microaggressions.

+ ABELISM MICROAGGRESSIONS

Examples: "Ugh, I can't read. I'm totally dyslexic today." or "Oh, you look so normal."

Reason: These type of statements are assuming that a disability equates to an inability to perform a task or action that people without disabilities perform every day. Also, making statements that express "shock" or "surprise" is belittling or condescending to the person with the disability. We all must be mindful about our implicit biases of how we perceive a person with visible and invisible disabilities, such as mental health illnesses. Lastly, using any disability or challenge that a person lives with in order to portray a feeling or temporary situation is highly demeaning and can further promote stigmas.

UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

Also known as implicit bias, refers to our attitudes, perceptions and stereotypes that influence our understanding, actions, and behavior when interacting with various identities. These preferences, which can be for or against groups, are developed through an exposure to stereotypes and misinformation informed by our upbringing and life experiences. Residing deep in the subconscious, these biases are different from known biases that individuals may choose to conceal for the purposes of social and/or political correctness.

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Bias Assessment and Response

Reporting and Response Process

If you experienced or witnessed an incident of bias, we encourage you to use our [reporting tool](#) in order for our team to assess and respond to incidents of this nature. Remember, acts of bias are perpetrated physically, verbally, through various forms of media and/or other actions. An incident of bias typically involves a **person or group** being **harmed** or **threatened** (ie: physical injury, psychological pain or distress, emotional unrest, inequitable practices that impact one's ability to perform, etc.), by the alleged offender's bias (that one could reasonably and prudently conclude is motivated, in whole or in part, by an actual or perceived aspect of **identity**).

Bias incident reports are routed to the Bias Assessment and Response Team (BART), and are reviewed in partnership with the appropriate

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responding office within one to two business days. If not anonymous, the reporter will receive an automatic confirmation of receipt from the online reporting tool via email upon submission. Some reported incidents may require additional information and therefore the Chair for the Bias Assessment and Response Team will contact the student reporter, if not anonymous.

Investigations and referrals for resolution of reported incidents may take place within other offices such as Student Rights and Responsibilities, Human Resources, the Department of Public Safety and/or outside law enforcement agencies, if appropriate. BART will intervene accordingly once one of the aforementioned offices determines what level and type of response are appropriate.

Incidents that are an emergency, should be reported immediately to [Department of Public Safety](#) (24/7/365 emergency line) at 518-276-6611 or Dial 911 for local law enforcement.

Reports submitted **anonymously** will not prevent Rensselaer from beginning the assessment and investigation phase, but may limit our efforts in resolution.

BART will follow up with impacted parties, monitor the status of the response, and communicate with our campus community about reported incidents as appropriate (if the incident is not isolated and campus-wide notice serves to protect the campus community). BART will assist in providing campus partners preventative measures and aid in developing practices for increased diversity, equity and inclusion.

For any questions or concerns regarding our process, please email

BART@rpi.edu.

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