Understanding Bias, Prejudice, Stereotyping, and Discrimination

We have reflected on unconscious bias, but it's helpful to understand what other beliefs, opinions and feelings we may hold and how these can lead to negative behaviours towards others.

Here are some definitions to consider:

**Bias:**The collection of individual learning and experiences which shape our perceptions and give us our own personal, subjective understanding of ourselves and others.

**Prejudice:** Unfavourable opinions or feelings formed beforehand or without knowledge, thought or reason, preconceived opinion or attitude, especially of a hostile nature toward a particular group or groups.

**Stereotype:** A preconceived or oversimplified generalisation involving negative beliefs about a group. Negative stereotypes are frequently at the base of prejudice. The danger of stereotyping is that it no longer considers people as individuals but categorises them as members of a group who all think and behave the same way. We may pick these up from what we hear others say, what we read or see in the media, or what people around us believe.

**Discrimination:** is treating a person unfairly because of their characteristics. When we act on our prejudices we engage in discrimination. Discrimination often involves keeping people out of activities or places because of the group to which they belong.