




The *BIAS FREE* Framework for Research

TYPE OF HIERARCHY	MAIN PROBLEM TYPE	NATURE OF PROBLEM	SOLUTION	RESEARCH ELEMENT
 <p>Gender Disability Race/Ethnicity Age Class Caste Socio-economic status Religion Sexual Orientation Geographical Location Health Status (among others)</p>	<p>H - Maintaining an existing hierarchy</p> <p><i>Is dominance of one group over the other in any way justified or maintained?</i></p> <p><i>Situate the problem within a human rights framework, in which equality is an underlying value. Point out the discrepancy between this value and the inequalities among groups of people that result from the hierarchy.</i></p>	<p>H1 Denying hierarchy: Is the existence of an oppressive hierarchy denied/ignored in spite of widespread evidence to the contrary?</p>	<p><i>The existence of an oppressive hierarchy is acknowledged; its validation is questioned and rejected.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request for proposals • Research proposal • Literature review • Ethical review • Research question/hypothesis • Research design • Description of population to be studied • Staffing • Concepts • Theoretical framework/model • Research methods/instruments • Recruitment of participants • Data analysis and interpretation • Conclusions • Policy recommendations • Identification of audience • Abstract/Executive Summary • Language • Visual representations • Communication of Results
		<p>H2 Maintaining hierarchy: Are practices or views that are based on an oppressive hierarchy carried out and/or presented as normal or unproblematic?</p>	<p><i>Oppressive practices and views are documented, questioned, problematized and ultimately stopped when possible.</i></p>	
		<p>H3 Dominant perspective: Is the perspective or standpoint of the dominant group adopted?</p>	<p><i>The perspectives of non-dominant and dominant groups are obtained, acknowledged, and tested against principles of fairness and/or human rights and challenged when the principles are not upheld.</i></p>	
		<p>H4 Pathologization: Is the non-dominant group pathologized when it differs from the norms derived from the dominant group?</p>	<p><i>Challenge the norm on the basis of human rights principles and cease to pathologize the group.</i></p>	
		<p>H5 Objectification: Are people stripped of their intrinsic dignity and personhood and is this presented as normal or unproblematic?</p>	<p><i>Recognize that every human being has intrinsic dignity and human rights that are inviolable and must be protected, and conduct the activity accordingly.</i></p>	
		<p>H6 Victim-blaming: Are victims of individual and/or structural violence blamed and held accountable?</p>	<p><i>Victims are not blamed; individual and/or structural violence is identified; and those responsible are held accountable.</i></p>	
		<p>H7 Appropriation: Is ownership claimed by the dominant group for anything that originated from or belongs to the non-dominant group?</p>	<p><i>Original ownership is acknowledged and respected.</i></p>	

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		<p>F2 Decontextualization: Has the different social reality of dominant and non-dominant groups been considered explicitly?</p>	<p><i>The context with respect to dominant/non-dominant group membership is examined explicitly and differences following from this are identified, analysed and accommodated.</i></p>	
		<p>F3 Over-generalization or universalization: Is information derived from dominant groups generalized to non-dominant groups without examining if it is applicable to the non-dominant groups?</p>	<p><i>Information about the dominant group is acknowledged as such, information about the non-dominant group is obtained or conclusions are limited to the dominant group.</i></p>	
		<p>F4 Assumed homogeneity: Is the dominant or non-dominant group treated as a uniform group and is it recognized that there are hierarchies within hierarchies?</p>	<p><i>Differences within dominant and non-dominant groups are acknowledged and accommodated in a way that reduces oppressive hierarchies within and between groups.</i></p>	

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		<p>D2 Under-representation or exclusion: Are non-dominant groups under-represented or excluded?</p>	<p><i>Non-dominant groups are included unless it can be shown that it is not relevant to do so.</i></p>	
		<p>D3 Exceptional under-representation or exclusion: In contexts normally associated with non-dominant groups, but pertinent to all groups, is the dominant group under-represented or excluded in a way that reinforces the hierarchy?</p>	<p><i>Dominant groups are appropriately represented in issues of relevance to them that have been seen as being important only for a non-dominant group.</i></p>	
		<p>D4 Denying agency: Are non-dominant groups denied agency?</p>	<p><i>Examine and facilitate agency of non-dominant groups whenever possible.</i></p>	
		<p>D5 Constraining agency Is there recognition that there may be constraints on the agency of dominant groups depending on their placement within the hierarchy and/or the operation of other powerful hierarchies?</p>	<p><i>Recognize that there may be constraints on agency but problematize any actions that violate the dignity and human rights of others.</i></p>	
		<p>D6 Stereotyping: Are stereotypes of non-dominant/ dominant groups treated as essential aspects of group membership?</p>	<p><i>Treat stereotypes as stereotypes, not as truths.</i></p>	
		<p>D7 Exaggerating differences: Are overlapping traits treated as if they were characteristic of only non-dominant / dominant groups?</p>	<p><i>Recognize both the differences and the similarities between members of non-dominant and dominant groups and stop practices that continue to exaggerate the differences.</i></p>	
		<p>D8 Hidden double standard: Are comparable issues disguised or seen to be different by applying criteria that hide their similarities.</p>	<p><i>Look for underlying similarities, question the criteria that perpetuate different treatment, and adopt new criteria that result in same treatment.</i></p>	