

Unit 6: Hate and Bias

What Is Hate and Bias Crime?

Hate and bias crimes are motivated by hostility and prejudice against a person based on his or her race, religion, sexual orientation, disability, or ethnicity/national origin. Most victims of these crimes are targeted because they represent a particular group rather than because of any personal conflict or problem.

A hate or bias crime is not a separate offense. The motivation of the offender is what determines whether the act is considered a hate or bias crime. Crimes include assault, destruction of property (arson, vandalism, or other property crimes), sexual assault, robbery, and homicide. Both the victim and the victim's community are affected by a hate crime.

While most property crimes involve taking something of value from the victim, hate- or bias-motivated property-crimes usually destroy value—the offender does not gain financially. The idea instead is to make a

When he was kicking me, I looked up from the ground and all I could see was the hate in his eyes.

—Hate crime victim

statement against this particular person or group. Offenders often target specific places or locations: places of worship; locations of particular importance to a community such as memorials or cemeteries; or organizations and places of business. Attacks on religious and spiritual symbols affect people in more powerful ways than other acts of vandalism.

Hate and bias crimes are more likely than any other kind of personal attack to cause serious injury or death. Furthermore, these crimes have many psychological and social consequences that are extremely destructive to the victim, the victim's family, and the community. From the victims' perspective, the crime is very personal: they were targeted because of their appearance or the group with whom they associate. Hate and bias crime victims often fear repeat attacks because their sexual orientation, religion, or national origin is not going to change and may be easily visible.

Victims of hate crimes may stop associating with "like" people because of fear and vulnerability. For example, they may stop worshipping with their faith community; move away from their family, friends, and loved ones; and/or avoid attending social functions with people who share like characteristics. Even people who have not been victimized by hate crimes may feel vulnerable. They, too, may stop associating with "like" people or their community after hearing about a hateful incident.

Words To Know

- Bias
- Ethnicity
- National origin
- Religion
- Sexual orientation
- Gender identity
- Gender expression
- Transgender
- Gender transition
- Gender dysphoria

Common Motivations for Targeting Groups

- Bias
- Gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender individuals
- Religious groups (e.g., Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu)
- National origin (e.g., Africans, Iranians, Americans, Japanese, Mexicans)
- Race/ethnicity (e.g., White, African American, Hispanic American, Asian American, American Indian)
- Disability (e.g., individuals who are deaf and hearing impaired; blind; use a wheelchair, cane, or crutches; or have a cognitive impairment)



In the News: Hate and Bias Crime Trends

Unlike victims of crimes involving financial loss, hate crime victims may not be as likely to report the crime for fear of retaliation or because they don't want to draw attention to the situation. Read the facts below. Imagine that one of these facts affected a family member. How would you feel?

- Most hate and bias crimes are violent crimes against a person (assault, sexual assault, robbery, homicide).
- A large number of victims are targeted because of their race.
- Most hate- and bias-motivated property crimes are acts of destruction/vandalism.
- An estimated 60 percent of hate crime victimizations are not reported to police⁴.
- A total of 92 antidisability hate crimes were reported to the police in 2012. Of these, 18 were motivated by bias against persons with physical disabilities and 74 by bias against those with mental disabilities⁵.

Examples of Hate and Bias Crimes

The Federal Hate Crimes Statistics Act of 1990 defines hate/bias crimes as crimes motivated by "hatred against a victim based on his or her race, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or national origin." The following are five examples of hate and bias crime. As you read each story, consider the impact on the victim.

Vandalism: Race/Ethnicity Bias

In a local Jewish cemetery, many gravestones have been vandalized—swastikas and six-pointed stars have been painted on them in feces and blood.

Who has been affected by the vandalism and how?

They didn't take anything from my store, but the vandalism is too much to repair. I'll have to sell my business.

—Hate and bias crime victim

Vandalism: Sexual Orientation Bias

John and his husband, Bill, moved into a new neighborhood. Within a few weeks, they came home to find that some of their windows had been broken and anti-gay slurs had been painted on the garage door. The next morning, they found that the tires on one of their vehicles had been slashed. A note was left under the windshield wiper that said they should move out of the neighborhood to "be with your own kind."

How might John and Bill react?

I understand having a different belief, but why destroy our place of worship . . . why do this to people you don't even know?

—Arson victim

⁴ <https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/2014/december/latest-hate-crime-statistics-report-released>

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Assault: Race/Ethnicity Bias

While waiting for a bus, George, an elderly white man, was confronted by four Hispanic youth who shouted racial slurs and demanded that he get off the bus stop bench so they could sit down. George ignored them and one youth punched him in the head, stomach, and back.

How would you feel if you were George?

I moved to the United States thinking I would be free of religious persecution.

—Hate and bias crime victim

Assault: Age/Disability Bias

Jess, a 75-year-old man, is walking down the street using his white cane that identifies him as having a vision impairment. A group of teens surround him, knock him to the ground, and take his cane.

How might Jess’s life change because of the assault?

It was wrong for them to try to kill anyone, but I’m not even gay . . . they just thought I was.

—Attempted murder victim

Homicide/Attempted Murder: Race/Ethnicity Bias

Three 16-year-old members of the Texas white-supremacist group, Confederate Hammer Skins, were out cruising in the predawn hours in search of an African American to kill. They found two African-American men sitting on a flatbed truck enjoying a beer after work. One man was killed with a shotgun blast; his friend was severely injured.

How were the victims and their families affected by this crime?

What Is the Impact of Hate and Bias Crimes?



The following lists outline some examples of how hate and bias crimes affect financial, physical, emotional, and religious/spiritual areas of victims' lives. Add your own examples below.

<p>Financial</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insurance costs • Security system purchases • Medical bills • Wage loss • Job loss • _____ 	<p>Physical</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term medical problems (e.g., brain damage; loss of sight, hearing, movement) • Headache • Loss of sleep • _____ • _____
<p>Emotional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear • Anger • Insecurity • Alienation • Embarrassment • Depression • Vulnerability • _____ 	<p>Religious/Spiritual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questioning the goodness of others • "Why did my 'higher power' let this happen to me?" • Issues about forgiveness/payback • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____





Victim Impact: Listen and Learn

After viewing the OVC *Victim Impact: Listen and Learn* DVD clip about hate and bias crimes, answer the following questions:

What was the physical impact?

How did the victim's sister, Jee Young Ahn, react emotionally to the attack?

What could these assailants do (or have done) to be held accountable for their crimes?



Being Accountable for Your Crimes

Some people are victimized for no reason other than the color of their skin, their religion, where they were born, or their sexual orientation. Victims of hate and bias crimes suffer serious and long-lasting traumatic stress. Not only is the individual who is personally harmed by these offenses victimized, but everyone in the community is affected.

No one has the right to victimize another person or another person's property because of his or her race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, or disability.

Additional Activities

Activity A – Hate and Bias Crime

Write indepth answers to the following questions:

How do most victims of hate or bias crimes feel and why?

Who might blame the victim and why?

What extra issues may gay or lesbian victims have to deal with?

What extra issues may noncitizens deal with?

Activity B – Victim Impact

Objective: Participants develop more understanding of how a victim’s life is changed by a hate crime.

They have already watched the video clip on “Dong and Jee” and answered the discussion questions. Replay the video, stopping and pausing if necessary. Stop the video and leave Jee’s face on the screen. Have participants list all of the out of pocket expenses that Dong and his sister Jee will have—

- During the first 6 months after the crime
- After 6 months

Write a story as if they were Dong, the victim, and it has been 5 years since the hate crime attack occurred.

Write a story as if they were Jee, his sister, and it has been 5 years since the hate crime attack occurred.

Activity C – Victim Impact Statement

Two weeks ago I received a phone call that my place of worship had been burned down. What a shock! It is extremely difficult to put into words what I think and how I feel.

I still cannot believe that someone would even think about destroying a place of worship, a place where people gather to seek comfort, a place where people come together, where people work on community issues together.

Our place of worship hasn't been in the community for generations, but we have had thousands of ceremonies like weddings, funerals, and social functions. We have, or used to have, a food pantry and clothing closet, daycare, a kids' sports program, and a music program. This was a very special place for individuals and for families. Maybe that's why it was burned down.

There was a lot of vandalism to the inside before the building was set on fire. I was shocked when I saw the damage. Musical instruments were destroyed, religious statues were smashed, and our books were torn up and thrown in a pile.

Beer cans were thrown around. I was devastated when I saw that the old, old stained glass windows were smashed. We all used to love to sit and look at the sunlight streaming through the beautiful windows. We had only been able to afford the windows by having individuals, families, and businesses sponsor a window. A local craftsman donated his time to make them.

The police say that they don't want to define this as a hate crime just yet. They said they can't arrest someone for hate, that certain laws determine whether this was an actual hate crime. Well, I don't care what the laws say. It is so hateful to destroy the property of others, especially if it is a place where they come to worship and to do good. This is not the first time we have had problems; it's just the first that it's been so bad.

