

HATE CRIMES AND HATE SPEECH

At its annual meeting in 2019, the League of Women Voters of Lane County adopted hate crimes/speech as one of the topics to study for informational purposes during the 2019-2020 year.

We all remember the Charleston church shooting on June 17, 2015 in which nine African Americans were killed while praying at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church, the Charlottesville attack on August 12, 2017 where one person was killed and 28 injured when a car deliberately ran into a crowd of people who had been peacefully protesting the Unite the Right rally, the Pittsburgh Tree of Life Synagogue shooting on October 27, 2018 where 11 people were killed and several injured during prayer services, the shooting in El Paso on August 13, 2019 where 22 people were killed and 24 injured at a Walmart and most recently the Jersey City killings at the JC Kosher Supermarket where three people were killed. These horrific hate crimes are not anomalies but part of a larger problem - each year, across America, an average of 250,000 people are victimized by hate crimes.

League of Women Voters Positions

“The League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) believes that the federal government shares with other levels of government the responsibility to provide equality of opportunity for education, employment, and housing for all persons in the United States regardless of their race, color, gender, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation, or disability.”

In the 106th Congress (1999-2001), LWVUS used this position to support federal legislation targeting hate crimes.¹

Additionally, in 2017 the League of Women Voters of Oregon (LWVOR) convention voted to adopt by concurrence the following position from LWV San Luis Obispo, California: “Promote civil discourse through action and education for all government bodies, staff, and citizens for the purpose of improved public policy decisions and processes. Civil discourse means, at a minimum, mutually respectful, courteous, constructive, and orderly communication.”²

Hate Crimes

The FBI’s Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program defines hate crime as a committed criminal offense which is motivated, in whole or in part, by the offender’s bias(es) against a race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender, or gender identity.³ Examples of hate crimes include:

- Acts which result in injury, even if the injury is minor
- Threats of violence that could be carried out
- Acts resulting in property damage
- Any criminal act or attempted criminal act, including property damage, directed against public or private agencies.

Non-criminal hate incidents include biased or bigoted acts that target a group of people, individuals or property that are not classified as crimes. Non-criminal hate activity often is protected by free speech and can include rallies, offensive signs or t-shirts, leafleting and flier distribution and group meetings. Attempts to regulate speech face substantial constitutional hurdles.⁴

It is estimated that only 25 to 42 percent of hate crimes are reported nationally, as reported in the October 24, 2019 edition of *The Register Guard*. The FBI reported that hate crime violence in the

country is at a 16-year high, violence that was motivated in part or in whole by racial, ethnic or religious bias, as well as discrimination against gender and sexual orientation.⁵

FBI data also indicate that hate crimes in Oregon are up by 40 percent from 2016 to 2017. The data show 146 hate crimes reported in 2017, compared to 104 in 2016. But there are limits to the data. In Oregon, of the 214 agencies that participate in the FBI's hate crime tracking program, just 29 agencies submitted incident reports for 2017. It is widely understood that hate crimes go underreported nationwide, and Oregon is no exception.

The data also show almost half of all hate crimes in Oregon occurred in Eugene, which has the most robust process for documenting hate crimes in the state and perhaps the country. City officials say that process accounts, in part, for the high numbers. Springfield is initiating in 2019 a new reporting system that includes a category for hate crimes.⁶ According to the City of Eugene 2018 *Annual Hate and Bias Report*, "race is the leading motivating factor of hate crimes reported in Eugene." The report shows that the top three most impacted groups were anti-African American (eight cases), anti-homosexual male (seven cases) and anti-Jewish (seven cases). Both criminal and non-criminal hate and bias activity in Eugene tend to be concentrated in the downtown and Bethel neighborhoods. Actual hate and bias crimes are those that result in injury, threaten violence or result in property damage.

Hate instills fear and distress among its victims. Victims of hate crimes are twice as likely to experience fear, difficulty sleeping, anxiety, panic attacks or depression compared with victims of non-hate motivated crimes.⁷

Hate Groups

According to Matthew Lyons, author of *Insurgent Supremacists*, the common thread amongst the majority of hate groups is white supremacy and its offshoot white nationalism. White supremacy can either refer to the system of white racial oppression or to white supremacist ideology.

White racial oppression is the web of social, economic, political, and cultural institutions and practices whereby people identified as "white" hold privilege and varying degrees of power over other people. This system has been central to the US social order since the colonial period, and for most of that time has involved the explicit and legal subordination and exclusion of people of color. Today, formal racial discrimination is mostly gone, but less explicit forms of racial oppression and violence are still the norm in policing, employment, education, housing, healthcare, and many other areas.

White supremacist ideology says that racial categories are natural and fundamental to human experience; that white people are genetically superior, better and more important than other races; and that whites should hold social, economic, and political power over others. Most white supremacists believe that Jews constitute a race of their own—a race with parasitic and evil roots. White supremacy is fundamentally an ideology of violence, in that it justifies and promotes both direct physical attacks and systemic harm against people of a non-European descent.

White nationalism is a form of white supremacist ideology that focuses on racial identity as the basis for nationhood. It is a belief that white people should have a homeland of their own and run a white nationalist state. White nationalism is at odds with the continued existence of the United States in its current form.

Over time, white supremacist ideology evolved to reflect the new social and political reality. Essentially, many white supremacists changed their frame of reference from fighting to maintain white dominance to fighting to prevent white extinction. It became increasingly a commonplace among white supremacists that whites were being drowned by a rising tide of color—controlled and manipulated by Jews.

Most white supremacists do not belong to organized hate groups, but rather participate in the white supremacist movement as unaffiliated individuals. Unaffiliated or independent white supremacists far outnumber white supremacists who belong to specific organizations. In particular, the tremendous growth of the Web has allowed many white supremacists to engage with like-minded people without actually having to join an organization. White supremacist discussion forums like Stormfront allow huge numbers of white supremacists to network and converse with each other. It is easy for white supremacists to connect, even on a one-to-one basis, on social media platforms like Facebook. These interactions need not be solely virtual, as on-line interactions often lead white supremacists to meet-ups and interactions in the real world. Some of the violent acts conducted or plotted by white supremacists in recent years originated with on-line interactions. White supremacists engage in a wide variety of activities online to promote their ideas and causes or to cause fear in their enemies.

Among domestic extremist movements active in the United States, white supremacists are the most violent, committing about 83 percent of the extremist-related murders in the United States in the past 10 years and being involved in about 52 percent of the shootouts between extremists and police. White supremacists regularly engage in a variety of terrorist plots, acts and conspiracies and involvement with traditional forms of criminal activity as well as ideologically-based criminal activity.⁸

Hate Groups in Oregon

The *Oregonian* published the Southern Poverty Law Centers (SPLC) 2017 list of Hate Groups in Oregon (*Oregonian*, Douglas Perry, February 2018). Oregon, with its population of just over four million, has a large number of hate-based organizations within its borders.

- **The American Front**, one of the oldest continuously existing racist skinhead groups in the United States, is described by the SPLC as a “particularly violent element of the white supremacist movement and have often been referred to as the ‘shock troops’ of the hoped-for revolution.” Active statewide.
- **ACT for America**, the SPLC writes, “anti-Muslim groups are a relatively new phenomenon in the United States,” but their numbers have grown dramatically in the years since the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. This group, SPLC states, has a chapter in Silverton, Oregon.
- **Asatru Folk Assembly**, a Neo-Völkisch organization organized around ethnocentricity and archaic notions of gender. Active statewide.
- **Black Riders Liberation Party**, the black-nationalist group, writes Extremist Watch, views “all of the United States as a white supremacist entity.” In 2016, Jeelani Shareef, head of the party's Portland chapter, told the *Portland Mercury*, “At the end of the day, no one else is going to save our people but us.”
- **Crew 38**, primary focus is the production and promotion of white power rock music. Active statewide.
- **The Daily Stormer**, a white-supremacist news website, which the SPLC categorizes as a key part of neo-Nazi groups that view “ ‘the Jew’ as their cardinal enemy and trace social problems to a

Jewish conspiracy that supposedly controls governments, financial institutions and the media." Active statewide.

- **Hell Shaking Street Preachers**, a far-right street protest group in Portland, Oregon. They were known as the "Bible Believers USA," and are closely connected to Patriot Prayer. Active in Portland and Tillamook.
- **Identity Evropa**, a recently formed white-supremacist organization that reportedly seeks the "Nazification of America."
- **Israelite Church of God in Jesus Christ/Israelite School of Universal Practical Knowledge (ISUPK)**, The SPLC says these black-nationalist groups are "antiwhite." ISUPK's Natazar Ha Ahsh recently told *Willamette Week*: "We're a love group, so to speak; we love our nation. But the nation that opposes us loving each other will label us a hate group."
- **Northwest Hammerskins**, a white supremacist group. Active statewide.
- **Rense Radio Network**, identified by the Anti-Defamation League as disseminating antisemitic and pro-Nazi speech. Headquartered in Ashland.
- **American Patriot Brigade**, a white supremacist group. Active statewide.
- **Black Riders Liberation Party**, a black nationalist group. Active in Portland.
- **National Socialist Movement**, a nationwide white-supremacist group which the SPLC lists as including a Salem branch.
- **Oregon for Immigration Reform**, an anti-immigrant group based in McMinnville.
- **Pacific Coast Knights of the Ku Klux Klan**, the Klan, formed after the Civil War, is the oldest ongoing American hate group. The SPLC says it's in decline nationwide, suggesting younger white racists today prefer slick, 21st century white-nationalist branding rather than being associated with the Klan's white hoods and flowing robes.
- **Proud Boys**, far-right neo-fascist organization that admits only men as members and promotes political violence. Active in Portland.
- **True Cascadia**, a white nationalist group. Active in Portland. One tweet from True Cascadia: "Mother Nature is a White Supremacist. She has continuously shown favor to her mightiest children."
- **Vanguard America**, a neo-Nazi group which "romanticizes the notion that people with 'white blood' have a special bond with 'American soil,'" writes the Anti-Defamation League. James Alex Fields -- the man who allegedly drove his car into Charlottesville counter-protesters last year, killing a woman -- has been linked to the group.
- **White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan of America**, The Klan might be in decline overall, but the Pacific Northwest has at least two branches of the infamous group. This one is based in Vancouver, Washington.
- **Wolves of Vinland**, a white supremacists and alt-right group. Active statewide. "The group's members," *The Daily Beast* wrote in 2015, "appear to be all white, based on dozens of pictures they post to their Facebook page, and they ascribe to a brand of neo-pagan Norse theology that white supremacists often find appealing." Portland's Jack Donovan, who has been connected to the group, insisted in a 2017 essay that he is not a white nationalist.⁹

Who Joins a Hate Group?

A profile of who joins hate groups indicates that joiners are primarily disaffected young white men, who tend to be narcissistic, paranoid, aggressive and typically motivated by feelings of "insignificance." They tend to feel minority groups are responsible for their disempowerment. These

motivations could stem from feeling "humiliated" or "insignificant" at school, in relationships with loved ones, or by society at large. Arie Kruglanski, a social psychologist at the University of Maryland, said people become white nationalists for three reasons: a desire to feel significant, attribution of their lack of personal success to another group, and a sense of belonging with other white nationalists.¹⁰

Factors Causing Hate

Jennifer Jones-Patulli, a conflict management and leadership development consultant, identifies three main reasons why we hate others:

- We seek a specific and identifiable outlet for our generalized feelings of anger. Hate allows us to define clearly who is in our group and who is not. When an individual or group feels tension and they don't know how to resolve it, they seek out a scapegoat, express their hatred for it, and then expel it from their world. This is temporary until the next time tensions rise and a new scapegoat needs to be found.
- It is a simplified method for the difficult task of managing difference. For each of us, there are differences that matter to our community and to ourselves. In some cases it is religion, language, and race. When differences threaten our sense of self and our notions of group identity and when they coincide with trauma, violence, and or humiliation the experience of difference can shift from identity and pride to terrorism and hatred. Rather than accept the instability of a potentially unknowable difference, we choose to hate.
- Hate is energizing. When we feel helpless, frustrated, or disempowered hating another becomes a way to climb out of those difficult feelings. We can redirect our personal pain to an external well-defined target.¹¹

Researchers have found that hatred can become a group-based emotion more easily than other negative emotions. While an initial hateful incident toward a group or individual may become less emotionally charged over time, it is the character of the offenders that then becomes the sole reason for the retaliatory hate. Over time and over generations, hate can increase without interaction between the haters and the person or group that is the target of their hate. This lack of interaction becomes a very powerful driver of bias and hate and can lead to viewing members of another group as subhuman. This kind of terrorizing can occur physically, socially or symbolically.

Often the victims of hate are terrorized for who they are, not for anything they might have done. This creates feelings of hopelessness and powerlessness because there is nothing the victims can do to change the minds of the offenders.¹²

Federal Laws and Statutes on Hate Crimes

The Department of Justice enforces federal hate crimes laws that cover certain crimes committed on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or disability. The Department of Justice began prosecuting federal hate crimes cases after the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1968. The information below explains current federal hate crimes laws.

1. The Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009, 18 United States Code (U.S.C.) § 249

The Shepard Byrd Act is the first statute allowing federal criminal prosecution of hate crimes motivated by the victim's actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. The Act makes it

a federal crime to willfully cause bodily injury, or attempt to do so using a dangerous weapon, because of the victim's actual or perceived race, color, religion, or national origin. The Act also covers crimes committed because of the actual or perceived religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or disability of any person, if the crime affected interstate or foreign commerce or occurred within federal special maritime or territorial jurisdiction.

2. Criminal Interference with Right to Fair Housing, 42 U.S.C. § 3631

This statute makes it a crime to use or threaten to use force to interfere with housing rights because of the victim's race, color, religion, sex, disability, familial status, or national origin.

3. Damage to Religious Property, Church Arson Prevention Act, 18 U.S.C. § 247

This statute prohibits the intentional defacement, damage, or destruction of religious real property because of the religious nature of the property, where the crime affects interstate or foreign commerce, or because of the race, color, or ethnic characteristics of the people associated with the property. The statute also criminalizes the intentional obstruction by force, or threat of force of any person in the enjoyment of that person's free exercise of religious beliefs.

4. Violent Interference with Federally Protected Rights, 18 U.S.C. § 245

This statute makes it a crime to use or threaten to use force to willfully interfere with a person's participation in a federally protected activity because of race, color, religion, or national origin. Federally protected activities include public education, employment, jury service, travel, or the enjoyment of public accommodations. Under this statute, it is also a crime to use or threaten to use force against those who are assisting and supporting others in participating in these federally protected activities.

5. Conspiracy Against Rights, 18 U.S.C. § 241

This statute makes it unlawful for two or more persons to conspire to injure, threaten, or intimidate a person in any state, territory, or district in the free exercise or enjoyment of any right or privilege secured to the individual by the U.S. Constitution or the laws of the U.S.¹³

On December 11, 2019 President Trump issued an executive order that would extend Title VI Civil Rights Act protections to Jews. It prohibits discrimination in programs receiving federal support on the basis of race, color, or national origin. By doing this it is essentially defining Judaism as a race or national origin, not just a religion.

Proposed Federal Legislation on Hate Crimes

In the 116th Congress (2019-2020), H.R. 223 Hate Crime Victim Assistance Act of 2019, was introduced on 01/03/2019 and is currently in the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security. This bill establishes new grant programs to support state and local efforts to combat hate crimes and assist hate crime victims. Specifically, the Department of Justice (DOJ) must award grants for the following: (1) hate crime information and assistance websites and hate crime hotlines; and (2) education and training programs to solve and prevent hate crimes. Additionally, DOJ must establish, in the Office of Victims of Crime, a grant program to support programs and activities for victims of hate crimes.¹⁴

State Initiative

The Attorney General's Hate Crimes Task Force brought together a broad range of stakeholders focused on the experience of victims. The resulting bill, SB577, passed on August 8, 2019, improves

the state's response to victims of bias crimes and incidents by connecting victims to services, even if the incident cannot be prosecuted. SB577 makes clear that transgender people are protected by the law by adding gender identity as a protected class. The bill also requires Oregon's law enforcement agencies to collect data pertaining to bias crimes and bias incidents across the state.¹⁵

The Law and Hate Speech on Social Media

Hate speech has proliferated on the internet where users can mask their identity with screen names or use encrypted platforms. A person can run afoul of the Interstate Communications Code when that person transmits an interstate or foreign communication that threatens to kidnap or injure another, which can result in a fine or imprisonment, or both (US Code Section 875). In the first case involving threats on social media, *Elonis v United States*, "the Court held that the proper legal test for determining whether someone made a threat is an objective one: whether reasonable people hearing the comment would perceive it to be a threat."¹⁶

Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act 1996 gives social media platforms considerable protections. It states that their service is not to be treated as a publisher of any information provided by another information content provider. They are not liable for most of their user-generated content and are protected even if they try to moderate content.¹⁷

In April of 2019 in the wake of the Christchurch terrorist attacks, Australia passed legislation threatening huge fines for social media platforms and jail for their executives if they do not rapidly remove "abhorrent violent material." The fines include 10 percent of annual company profit and up to three years in prison for the responsible employees. Critics of the law state that it will be extremely difficult for platforms with billions of users to be able to remove abhorrent content expeditiously since banned posts often tend to linger online and are not always easy to identify. Another consequence of such a law could be increased censorship causing companies to leave to avoid this new responsibility.

Social media platforms seem to be moving in the direction of abiding by international human rights laws where there are due diligence assessments and more global agreement of standards.¹⁸

What Can We Do?

In the Schools

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights reported that the highest percentage of all reported hate incidents since the 2016 election were in elementary and secondary schools. White nationalist and alt-right movements are intentionally recruiting young people. The editor of a neo-Nazi web site has written that he designs his web site to recruit children as young as 11 years old because their views and opinions about the world are not fully formed and they can be more easily persuaded. A report on PBS, November 19, 2019, titled *How These Oregon Teachers Are Fighting Back Against White Nationalism*, discusses a toolkit that is being used to combat this trend. The toolkit, *Confronting White Nationalism in Schools*, published by the non-profit Western States Center, provides context and guidance around the issue of white nationalism and alt-right recruitment of young people, and provides scenarios that might happen in a school community. From the toolkit, "It's for every stakeholder in a school community. If a student encounters a flyer taped up in the bathroom, here's what she can do. If a teacher hears about something from one of her students, here's what she can do ... on up through a parent finding something or hearing something from their kid."

The toolkit describes several categories of incidents, from anonymous use of hate symbols or speech — such as swastikas — to students organizing white nationalist activity inside or outside school. Every category contains recommended actions for each type of stakeholder, as well as pointers on what *not* to do. According to the toolkit it's critical to engage the whole school community so that they are able to openly talk about issues of white nationalism, white supremacy, racial justice, while reinforcing values that include everyone. There have been more than 5,000 requests for the toolkit from educators around the world.¹⁹

In the Community

At the community level there are multiple approaches to combating hate. The Rural Organizing Project (ROP) is a state-wide organization that supports a multi-issue, rural-centered, grassroots base in Oregon. They work to build and support a shared standard of human dignity: the belief in the equal worth of all people, the need for equal access to justice and the right to self-determination. Their mission is to “strengthen the skills, resources, and vision of primary leadership in local autonomous human dignity groups with a goal of keeping such groups a vibrant source for a just democracy.” The ROP is currently comprised of a network of 63 all-volunteer, autonomous groups representing 30 counties across the state. The groups in Lane County include: Community Rights Lane County, Cottage Grove Community United, Springfield-Eugene SURJ, Deadwood Resists, Community Alliance of Lane County, Springfield Alliance for Equality and Respect, Blackberry Pie Society, and Stand for Peace/Occupy Cottage Grove.²⁰

What happened in Cottage Grove in 2018 is instructive in how ROP works: A banner in an empty storefront that used to house a local museum announced a new business, Wolfclan Armory. The store, previously located in the neighboring community of Creswell, sells knives and survivalist gear, but more importantly has been used as a gathering place for neo-Nazis across the I-5 corridor. It is owned and run by the Laskey family, including Jake Laskey, who is said to lead the American Front, a long-standing neo-Nazi skinhead gang. While most towns would welcome new businesses to occupy previously shuttered storefronts, the banner announcing Wolfclan Armory's arrival rang alarm bells for folks in Cottage Grove. Shocked after doing their own research and looking at Wolfclan Armory's social media, locals jumped into action, gathering and organizing in classrooms, businesses, and living rooms to assess and plan next steps.

In response, concerned teachers, business owners, and community members formed Cottage Grove Community United (CGCU), an ROP group, and immediately shared information so the entire community could take action! CGCU created Cottage Grove Community United Against Hate signs that downtown businesses put in their windows, printed shirts with their logo to send a visible message of unity and to start conversations around town about the community's values, worked with the school board to formally condemn neo-Nazi activity in Cottage Grove, and hosted a standing-room-only community forum on Creating Hate-Free Communities featuring faith leaders from across the county. A shared plan of action came together:

1. Call the building's landlord, share that the community will support her to get Wolfclan Armory out of the building,
2. Call the Cottage Grove Chamber of Commerce to cheerlead its support for the landlord and other businesses surveying the possible options for getting Wolfclan Armory out of town,
3. Combat fear and isolation by sharing information with the community,
4. Promote Cottage Grove as a community where everyone can feel safe and welcome,

5. Work with the school board and teachers to build curriculum covering the Holocaust and explore what happens when we “other” our neighbors. (Jake Laskey authored a book denying the Holocaust),
6. Design and distribute posters to put in downtown business windows that uphold Cottage Grove’s aspirations to be a welcoming community for all.

Another example of ROP mobilization occurred in Corvallis. Corvallis community members formed Rapid Action Community Response (RACR) after neo-Nazis began interrupting local events. Over the last year, RACR has shown up to peacefully challenge neo-Nazis rallying at Oregon State University for a white nationalist hoping to be re-elected to a student body position, educated their neighbors about local white supremacist activity, and provided watchful hospitality at community events to keep everyone safe. Across Oregon, rural people are building stronger communities to fiercely resist and creatively counter white nationalist organizing. The ROP organizes through neighbor-to-neighbor conversations, knocking on doors, writing letters, marching, walking out, and other person-to-person activities.

Another approach in a totally different vein is the Kindness Campaign. “Kindness is at the core of humans’ ability to cooperate with one another,” is a belief promoted by Darnell Hunt, dean of UCLA’s social sciences division and administrator of the Bedari Kindness Institute. The Institute opened September 2019 with a \$20 million gift from the Bedari Foundation. Its goal is to fund research on what provokes kindness and how that can empower everyday people. Research has already been done at UCLA on how kindness can reduce heart disease and depression.²¹

On November 3, 2019 a citizen’s initiative to create a culture of kindness in Eugene and Springfield was proclaimed. The purpose is to counteract hate. This campaign is based on the work done in Anaheim, California under the leadership of former Mayor Tom Tait. Mr. Tait ran for mayor of Anaheim on a platform of community kindness and served two terms. As mayor, he used every opportunity to advocate for an increase in kindness, and over time the community changed. The greatest measure of changes occurred in schools: juvenile crime dropped dramatically and school suspensions dropped in half. The citywide focus was on hope and possibilities, with an emphasis on homelessness and service projects.

The purpose of the Eugene-Springfield campaign is to create a culture of kindness by encouraging acts of kindness and giving greater visibility to the many acts of kindness that are already taking place, such as volunteering. Engaging in more conversations about kindness, listening to what kindness means to all segments of our communities, and to record one million acts of kindness this year are goals of the campaign. The campaign is working with schools, faith-based organizations, businesses, neighborhood associations, non-profits, and governmental agencies to share and increase their kindness stories and accomplishments. In a November 9, 2019 *The Register Guard* opinion piece, Rabbi Ruhi Rubenstein states that kindness needs to be accompanied by humility because we don’t always know what others need. It also needs to be accompanied by justice and generosity because kindness without justice and generosity fails in compassion.

The Choose Kindness campaign provided suggestions for ways individuals can show kindness:

- Respectfully help people who are in a difficult situation.
- To be your best self in all situations: Smile at people, contribute to our community, communicate respectfully, and commit to creating a better future.

- Celebrate gifts of kindness and connection that others offer.
- Promote a community of friends and neighbors based on the vision of positive possibilities, generosity, cooperation, and kindness.
- Volunteer at or support organizations that are making positive differences in our community.
- Assume that others' actions have positive intentions.
- Report acts of kindness.²²

Jamil Zaki, Stanford university psychology professor, believes there is a scientific basis why this can work. From his research over the past several years he believes empathy is not unalterable. It can be cultivated or tamped down. At Stanford he leads a class called Becoming Kinder. "It is designed to address the crisis of empathy and help people fight back against the increasing trend of polarization and disconnection." In his book, *The War for Kindness: Building Empathy in a Fractured World*, he states that empathy is a skill that we can build and that it is crucial for us as individuals and as a culture. There is a genetic component to empathy and kindness, but it is not hardwired in our brains; rather "There's lots of evidence that our experiences, our choices, our habits, our practices go a long way to predict how empathetic we become. So we can rewire our brains to become more empathetic." The more someone practices kindness toward others, the more likely they are to build long-term empathy.²³

Protocols for Reporting and Remediation

Hate crimes should be reported to the Eugene Police Department immediately by calling 911, and officers will come to collect all the relevant information. If a victim wants assistance after an incident or crime, the City of Eugene Human Rights Neighborhood Involvement (HRNI) gets involved. Sometimes there is a crime, but the victims, out of fear, only want it reported as an incident. Any hate crime is reported to the city manager, mayor, community relations manager and city council to keep them informed. If the crime is high profile enough, such as a shooting, the city will organize a response.

Hate incidents, which are non-criminal acts such as circulating offensive fliers and posting hate materials that do not damage property, should be reported to HRNI. HRNI follow-up protocols include:

- Maintaining an activity log to monitor hate and bias incidences, both criminal and non-criminal,
- Providing staff to work with victims to assess the situation and provide appropriate resources and
- Identifying whether the victim desires a city response and coordinating a response when appropriate.

Eugene's Rights Assistance Program provides assistance in accessing services, provides referrals to appropriate resources, ensures access to appeal and grievance processes and facilitates informal conflict resolution.²⁴

Conclusion



Discussion Questions:

1. Have you been a victim or witness to a hate crime?
2. Will the Kindness campaign make a difference?
3. What are ways we can bring people of diverse groups together to prevent fear of the other?
4. Should there be a separate League position on hate crimes and incidents?

Resources

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3. <https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2017/topic-pages/incidents-and-offenses>
4. *Hate & Bias Prevention and Response Toolkit*, City of Eugene Office of Human Rights & Neighborhood Involvement
5. Hate Crime Statistics, FBI Uniform Crime Reporting, <https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime>
6. www.opb.org/news/article/hate-crime-oregon-increase-fbi-eugene-portland-2017/
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24. City of Eugene *Hate & Bias Prevention and Response Toolkit*

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