

Crimes of Hate/Bias

The [U.S. Department of Justice](#) defines hate crime as “the violence of intolerance and bigotry, intended to hurt and intimidate someone because of their race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, or disability.” Forty-one states and the District of Columbia have laws against hate crimes. This means that if bias is involved, a crime such as vandalism, assault, or murder is also a hate crime, and the penalty is more severe than it would be otherwise. People commit hate crimes for many reasons:

- They are ignorant about people who are different from themselves (and terrified of the difference)
- They need to be able to look down on others in order to compensate for their own low self-esteem
- They have been brutalized themselves (though not by their victims) and therefore see brutalizing others as fair game.

Hate crime is a serious societal problem: the FBI reported 7,722 incidents of hate crimes in 2006, of which about 52 percent were directed at people because of their race; 19 percent, because of the victims’ religion; 16 percent because of their sexual orientation; and 13 percent because of their ethnicity or national origin.

Tips

- Start an advocacy group for people who come together around an identity that they share (such as shared gender, sexual orientation, or religion).
- Start a peer education program to teach teens or younger children about bias awareness.
- Organize “days of respect” in which all members of the school or community can share strategies about bias awareness and hate crimes.
- Have a teen weekend exchange with a teen of a different culture. Go to each other’s home for an afternoon, evening, dinner, or perhaps a weekend.
- Visit an elderly person of a different culture on a regular basis.
- Adopt a Little Brother or Little Sister of a different culture.
- Actively recruit and include youth from diverse backgrounds in group activities.
- Peer-tutor English as a second language.
- Expose your child to different cultures. Go out to eat at an ethnic restaurant. Visit the local library, and check out a book on folk stories from around the world.

- Include your child in a variety of home activities. Have your daughter help with yard work or repairs. Have your son help prepare dinner or care for a sibling. This will help prevent your children from developing gender-based stereotypes.

This information is advisory in nature. No liability is assumed by reason of the information in this document. This information was taken from [The National Crime Prevention Council website](#). For more information and to watch the available public service announcements, please visit [NCPC](#).