

# Healing the Hate: Innovations in Hate Crime Prevention

The National Network of Violence Prevention  
Practitioners Summit '99

Toward a National Voice: Maximizing Our  
Effectiveness

San Antonio, Texas  
Friday, July 9

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# Hate Crime Definitions -- General

HATE CRIME: Any criminal act to which a bias motive is evident as a contributing factor.

HATE INCIDENT: Any act - whether consisting of conduct, speech, or expression - to which a bias motive is evident as a contributing factor, regardless of whether the act constitutes a crime.

- Hate incidents are reported by advocacy groups or human rights organizations.

# Legal Definitions of Hate Crime

## **The FBI defines a hate crime as:**

A criminal offense committed against a person or property which is motivated, in whole or in part, by the offender's bias against a race, religion, disability, ethnicity/national origin, or sexual orientation (FBI Training Guide for Hate *Crime Data Collection*).

## **Federal Hate Crime Statistics Act:**

Crimes motivated by “hatred against a victim based on his or her race, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability, or national origin”

## **Hate Crime Sentencing Enhancement Act:**

“A crime in which the defendant intentionally selects a victim, or in the case of a property crime, the property that is the object of the crime, because of the actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, gender, disability, or sexual orientation of any person.”

## State Hate Crime Laws

As of the end of 1998, 41 states plus the District of Columbia have hate crime penalty-enhancement laws.

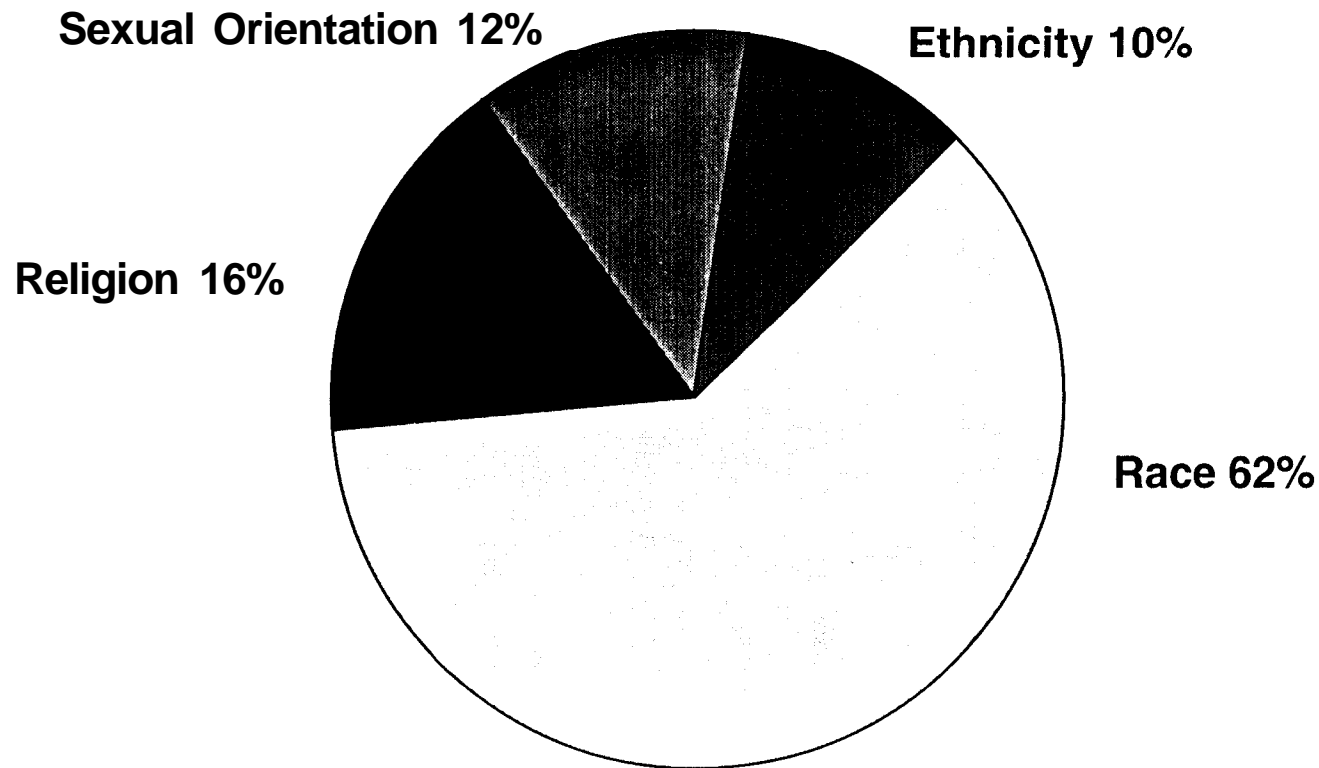
Race, religion, ethnicity:	39 states*
Sexual orientation:	20 states
Gender:	19 states
Disability:	21 states
Political affiliation:	3 states
Age:	3 states

(District of Columbia includes all categories)

\*Texas and Utah do not specify categories of bias

# Bias motivation (1993-1997)

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Source: FBI, Uniform Crime Reports, 1997.

# Hate Crime Statistics, 1997

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- 9,861 hate crimes reported in 1997
- 60 % racial bias (42 % of *all* hate crimes are anti-black)
- 15 % religious bias
- 14 % sexual orientation bias
- 11 % ethnic bias
- 0.1 % disability bias

Source: FBI Uniform Crime Reports 1997

Web site: [www.fbi.gov/](http://www.fbi.gov/)

## Convergence of Issues

Issues that may result in increased hate crimes:

1. Demographic changes
2. Increase in immigrant population/new waves of immigration
3. New family structures
4. Cultural changes
5. Political issues (referendum /ballot questions)
6. Growing levels of religious intolerance
7. Economic factors



## Bias Indicators

- Racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, or cultural differences, whether real or perceived
- Bias-related comments, written statements, or gestures were made by the offender
- Bias-related drawings, markings, symbols, or graffiti
- Representation of organized hate groups
- Previous existence of hate crime or incidents
- Victim/witness perception
- Motive of suspect

- Location of incident
- Lack of other motives

## **BIAS CRIME INDICATORS**

### **Racial, Ethnic, Gender, and Cultural Differences**

- Racial, religious, ethnic/national origin, disability, gender, or sexual orientation group of victim differs from that of offender
- Victim is a member of a group that is overwhelmingly outnumbered by members of another group in the area where the incident occurred.
- Victim was engaged in activities promoting his/her group.
- Incident coincided with a holiday or date of particular significance to the victim's group.
- Victim, although not a member of the targeted group, is a member of an advocacy group that supports the victim group, or the victim was in the company of a member of the targeted group.
- Historically, animosity exists between the victim's group and the suspect's group.

### **Comments, Written Statements, Gestures**

- Bias-related comments, written statements, or gestures were made by the offender.

### **Drawings, Markings, Symbols, and Graffiti**

- Bias-related drawings, markings, symbols, or graffiti were left at the scene of the incident.
- Bias indicators need not establish that the predominant purpose of an offender's actions was motivated by hatred or bias. It is sufficient for classification of an incident as a bias crime that an offender was acting out of hatred or bias, together with other motives, or that a bias motive was a contributing factor, in whole or in part, in the commission of a criminal act.

### **Organized Hate Groups**

- Objects or items that represent the work of organized hate groups were left (e.g., white hoods, burning crosses, hate graffiti)
- There were indications that a hate group was involved. For example, an organized hate group claimed responsibility for the crime or was active in the neighborhood.

### **Previous Hate Crimes or Incidents**

- Victim was visiting a location where previous bias crimes had been committed against members of the victim's group.

- Several incidents occurred in the same area, and the victims were members of the same group.
- Victim has received previous harassing mail or phone calls or has been the victim of verbal abuse based on his/her affiliation with a targeted group.

**Victim/Witness Perception**

- Victims or witnesses perceive that the incident was motivated by bias.

**Motive of Suspect**

- Suspect was previously involved in a similar incident or is a member of, or associates with members of, an organized hate group.
- The victim was in the company of, or married to, a member of a targeted group.
- The victim was perceived by the offender as violating or breaking from traditional conventions or working in nontraditional employment.
- The offender has a history of previous crimes with a similar modus operandi, and there have been multiple victims of the same [race, religion, ethnic/national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or gender].

**Location of Incident**

- The victim was in or near an area or place commonly associated with or frequented by a particular [citizenship, race, religion, ethnic/national origin, handicap, sexual orientation, or gender] (e.g., a gay bar).
- The incident occurs at or near a house of worship, religious cemetery, or a home or establishment of a group considered a minority or "outsider" in a given neighborhood (e.g., a Korean store owner in an African American neighborhood, a gay bar, or an African American family in a predominately Irish American neighborhood).

**Lack of Other Motives**

- No clear economic or other motive for the incident exists.

## Indicator Cautions

- Need for Case-by-Case Assessment of the Facts
- Misleading Facts
- Feigned Facts and Hoaxes
- Offender's Mistaken Impression
- Changes in Findings of Bias

## Victim Trauma

Victims of attacks motivated by bias are three times more likely to need hospitalization than victims of other attacks. This is particularly true when gay men and lesbians are the target-- of the 151 homicides of gay men and lesbians reported to the Horizons Anti-Violence Project, nearly 60% were labeled "overkill." Overkill refers to murders that involve multiple gunshot wounds, more than four stab wounds, repeated use of blunt objects, or dismemberment/mutilation. (Illinois Council for the Prevention of Violence. (1995-1996, Winter). *Violence Prevention News*. Chicago, IL: Illinois Council for the Prevention of Violence. Vol. 1 No. 9.)

Hate crime victims must not only endure the primary physical injuries incurred during the crime, they are often also victims of **secondary injury**. Secondary injury occurs when the victim feels rejected by or is denied support from the community. The impact of victimization on bias crime victims is compounded in several ways:

- ❑ There may be additional fear of repeated attack for bias crime victims because they were not chosen completely at random, the attack was deeply personal even if the perpetrator was not known to them.
- ❑ Thirty percent of hate crimes occur at the victim's residence. The victim is reminded of the crime on a daily basis and must contend with the knowledge that they are not safe even in their own home.
- ❑ Terror may be exacerbated if the community or society in general is slow to respond to a bias crime, denies that the crime had bias motives or diminishes it because of societal stereotyping, prejudice or institutional indifference.
- ❑ Grief may be more intense if victims lose their sense of community or feel betrayed by the American system.

- ❑ Because the basis for their attack is their identity, victims may experience an emotional crisis.
- ❑ Victims may reject that aspect of themselves that was the target for the attack.
- ❑ Hatred is less easy to explain or forgive than a crime motivated by economic factors or a completely random act.
- ❑ Victims may become afraid to associate with other members of their group, participate in group events or seek needed services-- believing that these actions increase their vulnerability.
- ❑ Stress and vulnerability may be heightened or prolonged and assumptions about life or human nature may be shattered.
- ❑ Shattered assumptions regarding the life/world view may be especially painful if the victim's world view is different from that of the dominant culture.
- ❑ The victim may have a significant distrust of all persons who are like the attacker. Since the attacker is likely to have been a member of a majority group, the victim will probably need to interact with members of this group during the process of seeking services and redress for the crime.
- ❑ Victims of any crime can be additionally traumatized by the necessary recounting of events to police and court personnel. Media attention and the voyeuristic aspects of some news reporting can exacerbate this trauma.

## ***Community Impact***

Although all crime, particularly violent offences, influence the community and the Nation, the impact is generally felt beyond the victim's immediate circle only when crime rises to an alarming level. Different communities and regions of the country may have significantly distinct concepts of what constitutes "alarming," but prevention strategies are not typically instituted unless individuals, community groups, and government officials are distressed by the crime rate. This truism also applies to hate crime, but the level of alarm is much deeper and often felt

after only one incident. While hate crimes occur somewhat less frequently than other crimes, hate crimes are unique in that individual incidents have a much wider impact on the community and the social order than other crimes.

Hate crimes can be particularly traumatizing because they often occur while victims are going about their daily lives. Almost a third of hate crimes occur at the victim's residence, by far the most common place. Twenty-one percent take place on or near a roadway, including sidewalks. Twelve percent occur in places of business and 9% in other public areas. Schools or colleges are the site of 11% of hate crimes and 3% occur in places of worship. Bias crimes occur in what should be the safest places-- at home, driving to and from work, shopping, the schools where they children are sent to learn, and the places of worship. When any group in a community is in such state of constant fear, the whole community suffers. Hate crime also impacts the community in other ways:

- Other members of the victim's group identify with his or her trauma and may go through a similar process of secondary victimization.
- The hate incidents may spur retaliatory crimes or riots, increase existing intergroup tensions, or erode tenuous good relations,
- Individuals and groups may be less likely to participate in community activities and become involved in community life.
- They community may require increased law enforcement and court attention, as well as security at schools, churches, businesses, and homes.
- Groups targeted by the violence, other minority groups, and anyone concerned about personal safety may be reluctant to move into the community, and these individuals may want to move away.
- The community may lose tourist trade and have reduced real estate values and resources to apply to prevention or positive programming.
- The community may become the object of intense national scrutiny, including media attention.



# Hate Crime Offenders

- Most are not members of organized hate groups or militias.
- Most hate crimes are committed by small groups of young people who are not formally associated with organized hate groups (although they may be influenced by the literature of these groups).
- Majority are young males ages 16 to 25

# Offender Typology

## *Thrill-seeking:*

- Most prevalent kind of hate crime perpetrated by juveniles.
- Offender is motivated by a social or psychological thrill and by the approval of peers.
- Generally no precipitating incident on the part of the victim.
- Offender usually seeks out victim in victim's setting or neighborhood.

- Targets of the attack are interchangeable -- any “different,” vulnerable victim identified as a member of a particular group is subject to attack.

Levin, J., & McDevitt, J. (1993). *Hate Crime: The Rising Tide of Bigotry and Bloodshed*. New York, NY: Plenum Press.

## Offender Typology (cont.)

### ***Reactive:***

- Motivated by perpetrator's perception that an "outsider" poses a threat to his community, livelihood, or way of life.
- Typically occur in the offender's own neighborhood, school, or place of work.
- May begin with acts designed to intimidate, and then escalate into physical violence if the victim does not retreat.

Levin, J., & McDevitt, J. (1993). *Hate Crime: The Rising Tide of Bigotry and Bloodshed*. New York, NY: Plenum Press.

## Offender Typology (cont.)

### ***Retaliatory***

- Motivated in response to another incident or crime, especially incidents perceived to be motivated by prejudice
- Incident-specific; triggered by a specific event
- May involve large group activity or even rioting
- Demonstrates what can happen if hate crimes do not receive a swift response by the community

Levin, J., & McDevitt, J. (1993). *Hate Crime: The Rising Tide of Bigotry and Bloodshed*. New York, NY: Plenum Press.

## Offender Typology (cont.)

### ***Mission:***

- Rarest form of hate crime
- All members of despised group are targeted for elimination
- Offenders believe they are on a mission to eliminate members of inferior group
- May believe they have been instructed by a “higher power,” or may perceive a conspiracy of being perpetrated by targeted groups.
- Sense of urgency about the “mission”
- May suffer from mental illness

Levin, J., & McDevitt, J. (1993). *Hate Crime: The Rising Tide of Bigotry and Bloodshed*. New York, NY: Plenum Press.

## **Spectrum of Prevention**

- Strengthening Individual Knowledge/Skills
- Promoting Community Education
- Educating Providers
- Fostering Coalitions and Networks
- Changing Organizational Practices
- Influencing Policy and Legislation

**Strengthening Individual Knowledge and Skills**

Programs and practices which are directed to specific individuals at risk, encouraging them to change their behavior

**Promoting Community Education**

The goal to community education is to reach the greatest number of people possible, and to build a critical mass of people who support the message. Community education aims to change behavior. Mass media reaches the broadest community.

**Educating Providers**

This strategy reaches an influential group of individuals who have daily contact with large numbers of at-risk people. These professionals, para professionals, and community activists who work in health and other community services become advocates of prevention. Providers also contribute to community education, change policies within their institutions and advocate for legislation. In addition to health care workers, political, religious, civic and other community leaders can advocate for prevention.

**Fostering Coalitions and Networks**

Community organizations, policymakers, businesses, health providers and criminal justice professionals need to work together to conduct more broad-based efforts in the community. Joint planning and coordination allows for system-wide problem-solving, and leads to successes that an individual program can not achieve alone. Programs share ownership, build skills and avoid duplication

**Changing Organizational Practices**

By changing its own policies, an organization can affect the safety of its members and influence the community as a whole.

**Influencing Policy and Legislation**

Legislation and policy initiatives represent the possibility for the strongest and broadest changes to the environment that contributes to violence. Both formal and informal policies affect large numbers of people, by improving the safety of the environments in which they live and work and by encouraging them to change their behavior.



# Strategies Implemented By Violence And Prejudice Reduction Programs

## 1. Individual level:

- Cognitive behavior
- Social skills training
- Cognitive-behavioral training for “high-risk” youth
- Mentoring

## 2. Interpersonal S/S terns:

- Parent education
- Peer mediation

# Strategies Implemented By Violence And Prejudice Reduction Programs (cont.)

## 3. Social systems/education:

- Curriculum development and infusion programs
- Changing teacher practices
- Changing school climate
- Student motivation
- Changing community and youth worker knowledge and practice
- Changing institutional practices
- Recreational

4. Initiatives:

- Memorandum of agreement
- Codes of conduct
- Protocols
- Model policies

- Preventing association with anti-social, violent, or prejudiced peers
- Shifting peer group norms
- Shifting peer group perceptions