

Alberta Hate Crime Awareness Day

Planning Guide

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Monday May 10, 2010



Alberta Hate Crime Awareness Day is sponsored by the Alberta Hate Crimes Committee (AHCC) and takes place as part of Alberta's Annual Crime Prevention Week (May 9-15, 2010).

The theme of this year's inaugural event is "**Report Hate Crime**". Hate crime is a "message crime" designed to strike fear and/or terror into the heart of a community. These types of crimes attack democracy, marginalize human rights, erode multiculturalism, crush equality, and steal freedom; indeed, hate crimes are oppressive to all communities and society as a whole.

Hate Crime Awareness Day invites individuals, businesses, schools and communities to rally together to send the message that hate crimes will not be tolerated in their community. We invite you to help us mark and celebrate this important day by organizing an event, discussion, or activity in your community as part of Crime Prevention Week.

What is a hate or bias crime?

Any criminal offence committed against a person or property which is motivated in whole or in part by the suspects' hate, prejudice or bias against an identifiable group based on real or perceived race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation or any other similar factor.

Hate crimes include: *graffiti or vandalism; threatening phone calls and destruction of religious symbols.*

What is a hate and bias incident?

Hate/bias incidents can include: name calling; racial slurs; homophobic bullying; distributing or promoting material which endorses hate/prejudice; racist or offensive mail or emails and other prejudicial actions. Not all of these incidents may have the necessary elements required to prove a crime; however, they can be gateway behaviors leading to increasingly violent acts.

Did you know?

- Approximately, 14 per cent of Alberta's population is comprised of visible minorities; over 454, 000 Albertans are not Caucasian.
- Research estimates 1 in 10 Albertans are sexual minorities (gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender).
- By 2017, Alberta will see increasing numbers of allophones, persons whose mother tongue is neither English nor French, more visible minorities in their communities, and people of diverse religious faiths. The face of Alberta is changing rapidly.

- Statistics Canada indicates youth are the number one victims *and* number one perpetrators of hate crimes in Canada.
- In 2007, youth ages 12 to 17 accounted for 32% (1/3) of all individuals accused of hate crimes in Canada.
- Only 1 in 10 hate crimes are ever reported to authorities.

Who are the targets of hate and bias crime?

In Alberta, hate and bias crime are strongly motivated by race and religion. Hate crimes in Canada have one of three primary motivations: race or ethnicity accounted for 6 in 10 incidents in 2007 (Blacks are targeted most often followed by those with multiple ethnicities and those with East or Southeast Asian backgrounds); religion, sexual orientation predominantly homosexuality.

Taking Action Against Hate and Bias Crime

Actions INDIVIDUALS can take:

Every person has the power to take action. We encourage individuals to take action in their communities; suggestions are below.

- Encourage your local City Council to proclaim May 10th as Hate Crime Awareness Day.
- Organize a walk, run, or community activity to promote awareness about hate and bias crime.
- Develop a local planning committee which includes municipal government, police authorities, schools, Ethnocultural organizations, businesses and community groups.
- Organize a public activity to stand up against hate. Invite the media to attend (see the Crime Prevention Week Guide for more tips on media releases).
- Help citizens in your community understand and appreciate the value diversity brings to our society (see Culture and Community Spirit's Help Make a Difference Guide: www.helpmakeadifference.ca). Brainstorm activities to highlight and celebrate the diversity that exists within your community.

Actions BUSINESSES can take:

Businesses are not immune to racism, prejudice, hate or hate incidents. We encourage Alberta businesses to address incidents in the workplace before they escalate to potentially violent situations. There are many actions business owners can take; a few suggestions are outlined below.

- Partner with other local business and service agencies/Ethnocultural organizations to jointly host an event to indicate that hate is not a value that will be tolerated in your business or community.
- Hold mandatory diversity training and increase cultural competencies in the workplace.
- Create a hate prevention, healthy workplace and conflict management policy for your workplace.
- Make your business a hate-free zone!

Actions PARENTS/CAREGIVERS and FAMILIES can take:

Children learn behaviors, attitudes and expressions from their parents. It is critical parents take the lead role in helping children to develop conflict resolution and critical thinking skills by teaching them that even subtle forms of hate and prejudice are inherently wrong and will not be tolerated or supported. Several actions parents and/or caregivers and families can take are outlined below.

- Reading books aloud is an excellent way to prompt discussion about the diversity of cultures, traditions and lifestyles in our society.
- Cartoons, the Internet, magazines, movies, entertainment shows and television news provide great opportunities for critical and age appropriate discussion.
- Understand and explain the various manifestations of hate throughout our nation's history so your child can learn to recognize it in contemporary society.
- Use available resources like www.helpmakeadifference.ca to make your own neighborhood and home more welcoming and inclusive.
- Speak out, model inclusive behavior and send a clear message against hate!
- Encourage your child to recognize instances of prejudice, discrimination and stereotyping and discuss appropriate responses to such attitudes and behaviors when you encounter them.
- Ask your child if they are being bullied in school or if they know of instances of bullying, harassment or intimidation being undertaken by other children in their school.
- Ask your child's school if they have a School Based Hate Prevention Program or a Hate Prevention Policy in place. If not, write your school board as they are electable and accountable to the communities they serve.
- Teach your children that even subtle forms of hate and prejudice are inherently wrong and will not be tolerated or supported.

ACTIONS Alberta SCHOOLS and SCHOOL BOARDS can take:

Schools are a mirror of society; they are not immune to intolerance and violence. Teenagers and young adults are not only the ones directly impacted as victims but account for 1/3 of all individuals accused of hate crimes.

Hate-motivated behavior, whether in form of bullying, name calling, ethnic conflict, harassment, intimidation and graffiti **is often apparent on schools grounds**. Since children learn these attitudes, it is possible for schools, families, law enforcement and communities to work together to prevent and dismantle the development of prejudiced attitudes and violent behavior which may lead to hate crimes.

We know Alberta schools are already working to:

- Instill in children an appreciation and respect for each other's differences (e.g. Seeds of Empathy Program in Alberta).

We invite Alberta schools to continue to take action by:

- Inviting children and students to create posters and artwork recognizing the importance of diversity and denouncing hate and discrimination.
- Organizing a walk, run, or educational activity to promote awareness about hate and bias crime.
- Hosting educational workshops, seminars, or speakers to discuss the issue of hate and discrimination and its impact on the community.

We encourage schools to:

- **Develop** an effective **School-Based Hate Prevention Program** where:
 - ✓ Prejudice and hate-motivated behavior, incidents and crimes are not accepted.
 - ✓ Diverse and differences are celebrated and the expression of diverse viewpoints in your school and curriculum are permitted.
 - ✓ **A hate prevention policy** is created and clearly communicated to all students, parents/guardians/caregivers and staff. The policy is distributed to every student, every student's family and every employee of the school board.
- **Provide:**
 - ✓ Hate and bias prevention training to all staff, including teachers, administrators, school security personnel and support staff.
 - ✓ Structured opportunities for integration where young people can begin to interact across racial, ethnic and sexual identity lines through school supported organizations and activities such as the creation of gay-straight student alliances, diversity and social justice clubs.
- **Develop:**
 - ✓ Partnerships with families, community organizations and law enforcement agencies (hate crime prevention cannot be accomplished by schools alone!).
 - ✓ A range of corrective actions for those who violate school hate-prevention policies such as restorative justice and conflict resolution programs.

- **Ensure:**
 - ✓ All students receive hate prevention training through age-appropriate classroom activities, assemblies and other school-related activities.
- **Collect and use:**
 - ✓ Data to focus province-wide hate prevention efforts.

Actions MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS AND COMMUNITIES can take:

- Consider hosting a town hall meeting to discuss how your community will become a hate free zone.
- Set up displays or information booths at local malls, recreation centres, or community gathering points.
- Hold diversity training and increase cultural competencies in the workplace.
- Hold a parade celebrating the diversity in your community.

WHO CAN HELP ME?

For more information on hate crime, hate incidents or reporting hate crimes please see the website: www.albertahatecrimes.ca (***website currently under development***).

For additional community supports, please call 211 if you are in Edmonton or Calgary. Alternately please see the Edmonton website www.211Edmonton.com and Calgary website 211Calgary.ca.

For Seeds of Empathy information, please visit:
<http://employment.alberta.ca/Immigration/5783.html>
<http://www.seedsofempathy.org/>

For help with bullying or bullying prevention information, please visit:
<http://www.bullyfreealberta.ca/>
<http://www.b-free.ca/home.html>

For more information about safe and caring schools in Alberta, please visit:
<http://www.sacsc.ca/>

Help Make a Difference information:
<http://www.helpmakeadifference.ca>

For details on other Crime Prevention Week activities, please visit:
www.crimeprevention.gov.ab.ca.