

What you should know about HATE CRIMES

Hate crimes include threats, prejudice, property damage or any violence directed toward an individual based on their race, religion, ethnicity, national origin, gender or gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, or other group identity or affiliation.



“Matt is no longer with us today because the men who killed him learned to hate. Somehow and somewhere they received the message that the lives of gay people are not as worthy of respect, dignity and honor as the lives of other people.”

— Judy Shepard, mother of Matthew Shepard

Who are victims?

- Traditional targets have been people of color, GLBT people, Jewish people and more recently the Islamic community.
- In college, anti-Semitism motivates 57% of hate crimes, and 16% are based on sexual orientation (1998 FBI Report).

Feelings of victims:

- Reluctant to report hate crimes because victims fear possible repercussions from their perpetrators and worried about further discrimination.
- Unable to focus on academic studies due to feelings of isolation, fear and anger.
- Angry because victims feel victimized from the campus community.
- Withdrawn from the campus community and lack of involvement in student activities if their institution has no consistent way of preventing and addressing hate crimes.

Prevent hate crimes on your campus:

1. Call attention when your friends, relatives or classmates voice hate speech. For example, question why your friends use particular derogatory phrases in their regular vocabulary like “that’s so gay.” If such words go unchallenged then they can escalate from mere words to stronger words to threats and, finally, to violence.
2. Be brave and take action against attacks on someone’s identity by reporting incidents of hate to your proper authorities like the Department of Public Safety. Do not allow the perpetrators to make you feel guilty or embarrassed because fear empowers hate. Your actions will prevent future hate crimes from occurring on campus.
3. Spread the word and educate your friends about the injustices caused by hate crimes. Your message of acceptance means more to your peers than a message coming from an authority figure. Only you can persuade your peers to become advocates and speak out against hate.

4. Support peers who are victims of hate crimes and guide them to available counseling resources on campus. Having a support system will ease a victim's trauma and encourage them to report the incident.
5. Coordinate meetings open to the entire campus in which the president and other senior administrators state the institution's position against hate crimes.
6. Become familiar with peer counseling resources and multicultural educational centers within your campus.
7. Support peers who have been victims of hate crimes or hate speech.
8. Be an advocate condemning hate on your campus.

Affects of a Hate Crime for your institution:

- Hate crimes deprives your campus community from living and learning within an atmosphere free of fear and intimidation.
- Allowing intolerable speeches and actions to go unchallenged sends an often-unintended message that bias and prejudice is acceptable at your campus community. Some may interpret this message to mean that conduct that is more aggressive may also be acceptable.
- Campus members who are on the receiving end of degrading language or slurs will see themselves as victimized by the institution, which does not respond to the way they think it should. Those victimized may be students who will lose their ability to focus on their academic work as a result.