TEN WAYS TO FIGHT HATE

A COMMUNITY RESOURCE GUIDE

SPLC Southern Poverty Law Center

PRAYING
FOR
ORLANDO
NEVER FORGET
WHO YOU ARE AND
WHAT YOU REPRESENT!
#LOVE NOT HATE
STAND

TEN WAYS TO FIGHT HATE

Hate in America has become commonplace. A presidential candidate wins election after denigrating Muslims, Latinos, women and people with disabilities. A young white man opens fire and kills nine African Americans who welcomed him into Bible study at a church in Charleston, South Carolina, telling his victims, "I have to do it." A Muslim woman is seated on a bench in front of a coffee shop in Washington, D.C., when a woman begins screaming anti-Muslim epithets. A swastika and other anti-Semitic graffiti appear at an elementary school in Stapleton, Colorado. A lone gunman carrying an assault rifle and a handgun storms a well-known gay club in Orlando, Florida, killing 49 people and wounding 53 others. What can we do to STOP THE HATE?

Bias is a human condition, and American history is rife with prejudice against groups and individuals because of their race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or other characteristics. As a nation, we've made a lot of progress, but stereotyping and unequal treatment persist.

When bias motivates an unlawful act, it is considered a hate crime. Most hate crimes are inspired by race and religion, but hate today wears many faces. Bias incidents (eruptions of hate where no crime is committed) also tear communities apart and can escalate into actual crimes.

Since 2010, law enforcement agencies have reported an average of about 6,000 hate crime incidents per year to the FBI. But government studies show that the real number is far higher — an estimated 260,000

TODD ROBERTSON (COVER); SAMUEL CORUM/ANADOLU AGENCY/GETTY IMAGES (ORLANDO VIGIL)

per year. Many hate crimes never get reported, in large part because the victims are reluctant to go to the police. In addition, many law enforcement agencies are not fully trained to recognize or investigate hate crimes, and many simply do not collect or report hate crime data to the FBI.

THE GOOD NEWS IS ...

All over the country people are fighting hate, standing up to promote tolerance and inclusion. More often than not, when hate flares up, good people rise up against it — often in greater numbers and with stronger voices.

This guide sets out 10 principles for fighting hate in your community.

1 ACT

Do something. In the face of hatred, apathy will be interpreted as acceptance by the perpetrators, the public, and — worse — the victims. Community members must take action; if we don't, hate persists. **page 4**

2 JOIN FORCES

Reach out to allies from churches, schools, clubs, and other civic groups. Create a diverse coalition. Include children, police, and the media. Gather ideas from everyone, and get everyone involved. **page 7**

3 SUPPORT THE VICTIMS

Hate crime victims are especially vulnerable. If you're a victim, report every incident — in detail — and ask for help. If you learn about a hate crime victim in your community, show support. Let victims know you care. Surround them with comfort and protection. **page 8**

4 SPEAK UP

Hate must be exposed and denounced. Help news organizations achieve balance and depth. Do not debate hate group members in conflict-driven forums. Instead, speak up in ways that draw attention away from hate, toward unity. **page 10**

5 EDUCATE YOURSELF

An informed campaign improves its effectiveness. Determine if a hate group is involved, and research its symbols and agenda. Understand the difference between a hate crime and a bias incident. **page 13**

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Do not attend a hate rally. Find another outlet for anger and frustration and for people's desire to do something. Hold a unity rally or parade to draw media attention away from hate. **page 17**

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Promote acceptance and address bias before another hate crime can occur. Expand your comfort zone by reaching out to people outside your own groups. **page 22**

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1

ACT

Do something. In the face of hatred, apathy will be interpreted as acceptance by the perpetrators, the public and — worse — the victims. Community members must take action; if we don't, hate persists.

"A hate group is coming to our town. What should we do?"

"I am very alarmed at hate crimes. What can I, as one person, do to help?"

"I find myself wanting to act, to show support for the victims, to demonstrate my anger and sorrow. But I don't know what to do or how to begin."

If you've opened this guide, you probably want to "do something" about hate. You are not alone. Questions like these arrive daily at the Southern Poverty Law Center. When a hate crime occurs or a hate group rallies, good people often feel helpless. We encourage you to act, for the following reasons:

Hate is an open attack on tolerance and acceptance. It must be countered with acts of goodness. Sitting home with your virtue does no good. In the face of hate, silence is deadly. Apathy will be interpreted as acceptance — by the perpetrators, the public, and — worse — the victims. If left unchallenged, hate persists and grows.

Hate is an attack on a community's health. Hate tears society along racial, ethnic, gender, and religious lines. The U.S. Department of Justice warns that hate crimes, more than any other crime, can trigger community conflict, civil disturbances, and even riots. For all their "patriotic" rhetoric, hate groups and their imitators are really trying to divide us; their views are fundamentally anti-democratic. True patriots fight hate.

Hate escalates. Take seriously the smallest hint of hate — even what appears to be simple name-calling. The Department of Justice again has a warning: Slurs often escalate to harassment, harassment to threats, and threats to physical violence. Don't wait to fight hate.

Volunteers clean up a Jewish cemetery in University City, Missouri, after it was vandalized in 2017.

MICHAEL THOMAS/ GETTY IMAGES

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

» Pick up the phone. Call friends and colleagues. Host a neighborhood or community meeting. Speak up in church. Suggest some action.

» Sign a petition. Attend a vigil. Lead a prayer.

» Repair acts of hate-fueled vandalism, as a neighborhood or a community.

» Use whatever skills and means you have. Offer your print shop to make fliers. Share your musical talents at a rally. Give your employees the afternoon off to attend.

» Be creative. Take action. Do your part to fight hate.

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2

JOIN FORCES

Reach out to allies from churches, schools, clubs, and other civic groups. Create a diverse coalition. Include children, police, and the media. Gather ideas from everyone, and get everyone involved.

Others share your desire to stand against hate. There is power in numbers. Asking for help and organizing a group reduces personal fear and vulnerability, spreads the workload, and increases creativity and impact. Coalitions can stand up to — and isolate — organized hate groups. You and your allies can help educate others as you work to eradicate hate.

A hate crime often creates an opportunity for a community's first dialogue on race, gender identity, or religious intolerance. It can help bridge the gap between neighborhoods and law enforcement. More people than we imagine want to do something; they just need a little push.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Not sure where to start? Here are some ideas:

» Call on groups that are likely to respond to a hate event, including faith alliances, labor unions, teachers, women's groups, university faculties, fair housing councils, the YMCA, and youth groups. Make a special effort to involve businesses, schools, houses of worship, politicians, children, and members of targeted groups.

» Also call on local law enforcement officials. Work to create a healthy relationship with local police; working together, human rights groups and law enforcement officials can track early warning signs of hate brewing in a community, allowing for a rapid and unified response.

AP IMAGES/EAST BAY TIMES, KRISTOPHER SKINNER

3

SUPPORT THE VICTIMS

Hate crime victims are especially vulnerable. If you're a victim, report every incident — in detail — and ask for help. If you learn about a hate crime victim in your community, show support. Let victims know you care. Surround them with comfort and protection.

Victims of hate crimes often feel terribly alone and afraid. They have been attacked simply for being who they are — for their disability, their ethnicity, their sexual orientation. Silence amplifies their isolation; it also tacitly condones the act of hate. Victims need a strong, timely message that they are valued. Small acts of kindness — a phone call, a letter — can help.

Often, hate attacks include vicious symbols: a burning cross, a noose, a swastika. Such symbols evoke a history of hatred. They also reverberate beyond individual victims, leaving entire communities vulnerable and afraid.

And because they may fear "the system," some victims may welcome the presence of others at the police station or courthouse. Local human rights organizations often provide such support, but individuals also may step forward.

IF YOU ARE A VICTIM

We urge victims of hate crime to report it to police.

Only you can decide whether to reveal your identity. But many victims have found the courage to lend their names to fighting hate. You can, too!

DREW ANGERER/GETTY IMAGES

Report every incident. If you are a member of a targeted group, harassment could continue. What began as egg-throwing at five black families in rural Selbrook, Alabama, escalated for 18 months until hate mail made it a federal offense. The story made the news, police patrolled and harassment declined.

Speak to the press. Your story, with a frank discussion of the impact on your family life, can be a powerful motivator to others. Copycat crimes are possible, but rare. More likely, you'll be encouraged by love and support. In Watertown, New York, a black minister talked about the vulgar hate mail he received. His community held a special unity rally. "Denying that racism exists, or not talking about it, will not cause it to go away," he said.

Research your legal rights. After enduring racial slurs, slashed tires, broken windows, the wounding of their dog, and a six-foot burning cross planted in their yard by a white neighbor, Andrew Bailey and Sharon Henderson of Chicago filed suit against the perpetrator. A federal jury awarded them $720,000.

4 SPEAK UP

Hate must be exposed and denounced. Help news organizations achieve balance and depth. Do not debate hate group members in conflict-driven forums. Instead, speak up in ways that draw attention away from hate, toward unity.

Goodness has a First Amendment right, too. We urge you to denounce hate groups and hate crimes and to spread the truth about hate's threat to a pluralistic society. An informed and unified community is the best defense against hate.

You can spread tolerance through social media and websites, church bulletins, door-to-door fliers, letters to the editor, and print advertisements. Hate shrivels under strong light. Beneath their neo-Nazi exteriors, hatemongers are cowards and are surprisingly subject to public pressure and ostracism.

DEALING WITH MEDIA

Some tips for an effective media campaign:

» News outlets cover hate crimes and groups. Don't kill the messenger. Consider hate news a wake-up call that reveals tension in the community. Attack the problem. Reporters will then cover you, too.

» Name a person from your group to be the main contact for the media. This keeps the message consistent and allows the press to quickly seek comment or reaction to events. Invite the press to public events you hold.

» The media like news hooks and catchy phrases, such as "Hate Free Zone." Propose human-interest stories, such as the impact of hate on individuals. Use signs, balloons, or other props that will be attractive to media photographers.

» Educate reporters, editors, and publishers about hate groups, their symbols, and their impact on victims and communities. Put them in touch

Children in Asheville, North Carolina, participate in a rally against racism in 2016.

JIM WEST/ALAMY

with hate experts like the Southern Poverty Law Center. Urge editorial writers and columnists to take a stand against hate.

» Criticize the press when it falls short. Remind editors that it is not fair to focus on 20 Klansmen when 300 people attend a peace rally.

» Do not debate hate group members on conflict-driven talk shows or public forums. Your presence lends them legitimacy and publicity. They use code words to cover their beliefs. And they misinterpret history and Bible verses in a manner that may be difficult to counter during a live forum.

A MESSAGE FOR THE MEDIA

Share this with media contacts you know, or simply photocopy it and mail it to an editor, anchor, columnist, or reporter:

A newsroom that covers race issues thoroughly and regularly sets an agenda for the community. Nuanced and thoughtful coverage — rather than shallow, reactive stories or stereotypical images — deepens our community's discussion and understanding of race.

Consider the following:

» The masked, mysterious Klansman, like his burning cross, is an emotional image loaded with historical associations. Don't let this cliché control the story. Include a serious look at the Klan's numbers and influence, its involvement in hate crimes, and the hypocrisy of its pseudo-Christian message.

» Don't allow hate groups to masquerade as white-pride civic groups or "heritage" organizations. In their literature and on their websites, they denigrate certain groups of people, typically people of color and Jews. Seek out comments from local police, state human rights commissions, the Southern Poverty Law Center, or the Anti-Defamation League.

» White supremacist and other extremist groups represent the outer fringes of American society. No meaningful dialogue can occur when it is framed by such extremes. Seek deeper, more thoughtful coverage of issues of race and other -isms.

As a final thought, we ask you to:

Take hate crimes and bias incidents seriously and report on them prominently. Monitor the impact of hate on victims and other members of targeted groups. Become an activist against hate, just as you are against crime. Sponsor a forum or other community journalism event tied to these issues. And don't miss the "good news" as ordinary people discover unique ways to promote tolerance.

You are part of our community, and you must be part of our fight against hate.

5

EDUCATE YOURSELF

An informed campaign improves its effectiveness. Determine if a hate group is involved, and research its symbols and agenda. Understand the difference between a hate crime and a bias incident.

Eruptions of hate generally produce one of two reactions: apathy ("It's just an isolated act by some kooks") or fear ("The world is out of control"). Before reacting, communities need accurate information about those who are spouting hate.

The Southern Poverty Law Center tracks hundreds of active hate groups in the U.S. Some are small — a handful of people — but armed with a computer, email, and a website their reach can be immense, their message capable of entering a child's bedroom.

Through their literature and websites, hate groups spread propaganda that vilifies and demonizes African Americans, Latinos, Muslims, Jews, LGBT people and other groups. Like some of their fellow extremists in militia groups, they also sow fears of losing control of "their country" to a "One World Government" dominated by Jewish bankers, multinational corporations, and the United Nations. More often than not, members of hate groups use other groups as scapegoats for their own personal failures, low self-esteem, anger, or frustration. They frequently use music or other means to recruit and indoctrinate disaffected teens.

Though their views may be couched in code words, members of hate groups typically share these extremist views:

» They want to limit the rights of certain groups they view as inferior.
» They want to divide society along racial, ethnic, or religious lines.

» They demonize the groups they hate with false propaganda and often outlandish conspiracy theories.
» They try to silence any opposition.

Most hate crimes, however, are not committed by members of hate groups; the Southern Poverty Law Center estimates fewer than 5 percent. Many hate crimes are committed by young males acting alone or in small groups, often for thrills. While these perpetrators may act independently, they are sometimes influenced by the dehumanizing rhetoric and propaganda of hate groups.

WHEN HATE COMES TO CHURCH

Dylann Roof was a troubled teenager in South Carolina who was indoctrinated into white supremacist ideology online. The radicalization process began when he searched for information about "black on white crime" after hearing about the case of a black teen, Trayvon Martin, who was killed by a neighborhood watchman in Florida. Roof landed on the web page of the Council of Conservative Citizens, a rabidly racist hate group descended from the old White Citizens Councils formed in the 1950s in the South. There, he found page after page of racist propaganda. Roof later wrote in an online manifesto that he has "never been the same since that day."

As he delved deeper, he was soon immersed in hate materials, writing that he "found out about the Jewish problem" and became "completely racially aware." One of the sites he visited and began posting comments on was Stormfront, a notorious neo-Nazi forum.

On June 17, 2015, Roof walked into the Emanuel A.M.E. Church in downtown Charleston, South Carolina, where a Bible study was under way. The church, known as "Mother Emanuel," is famous for its historic role in the civil rights movement.

After about an hour of listening in the meeting, Roof pulled out a .45-caliber pistol and aimed it at an elderly women. According to witness accounts, he said, "I have to do it. You rape our women and you're taking over our country. And you have to go." Then he began firing methodically, killing nine African Americans, including the church's pastor. He left one woman alive, he said, so she could tell the world what had happened.

Roof was arrested the next day. In January 2017, he was sentenced to death for the murders. He had, by then, become emblematic of a growing phenomenon: the "lone-wolf" terrorist who acts alone after being radicalized by hate propaganda online.

Dylann Roof was indoctrinated into white supremacist ideology online before murdering nine African Americans at a Charleston, South Carolina, church in 2015.

FACEBOOK

WHAT'S A HATE CRIME?

A hate crime must meet two criteria:

» A crime must happen, such as physical assault, intimidation, arson, or vandalism; and

» The crime must be motivated, in whole or in part, by bias.

The list of biases included in state or federal hate crime statutes varies. Most include race, ethnicity, and religion. Some also include sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and/or disability.

As you respond to a hate crime, check specific statutes in your area, then consider working to add missing categories, to protect vulnerable community members.

WHAT'S A BIAS INCIDENT?

A bias incident is conduct, speech, or expression that is motivated by bias or prejudice but doesn't involve a criminal act.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Hate crimes, if charged and prosecuted, will be dealt with in the court system. They typically carry enhanced penalties, such as longer sentences.

Bias incidents occur with no clear path or procedure for recourse.

Both, however, demand unified and unflinching denouncement from individuals, groups, and entire communities.

WHAT'S THE IMPACT?

Hate crimes and bias incidents don't just victimize individuals; they torment communities.

When someone scrawls threatening graffiti targeting Asian Americans, for example, everyone in the community may feel frightened and unsafe, as may members of other ethnic or racial groups.

6

CREATE AN ALTERNATIVE

Do not attend a hate rally. Find another outlet for anger and frustration and for people's desire to do something. Hold a unity rally or parade to draw media attention away from hate.

Hate has a First Amendment right. Courts have routinely upheld the constitutional right of the Ku Klux Klan and other hate groups to hold rallies and say whatever they want. Communities can restrict group movements to avoid conflicts with other citizens, but hate rallies will continue. Your efforts should focus on channeling people away from hate rallies.

DO NOT ATTEND A HATE RALLY

As much as you might like to physically show your opposition to hate, confrontations serve only the perpetrators. They also burden law enforcement with protecting hatemongers from otherwise law-abiding citizens.

If an event featuring a hate group, avowed separatist or extremist is coming to your college campus, hold a unity rally on a different part of campus. Invite campus clubs, sororities, fraternities and athletic organizations to support your efforts.

A WORLD OF IDEAS

Every act of hatred should be met with an act of love and unity.

Many communities facing a hate group rally have held alternative events at the same hour, some distance away, emphasizing strength in community and diversity. They have included forums, parades, and unity

Hundreds of thousands of people attended the Women's March on Washington on Jan. 21, 2017.

fairs featuring speakers, food, music, exhibits, and entertainment. These events give people a safe outlet for the frustration and anger they want to vent. As a woman at a Spokane, Washington, human rights rally put it, "Being passive is something I don't want to do. I need to make some kind of commitment to human rights."

7

PRESSURE LEADERS

Elected officials and other community leaders can be important allies. But some must overcome reluctance — and others, their own biases — before they're able to take a stand.

The fight against hate needs community leaders willing to take an active role. The support of mayors, police chiefs, college presidents, school principals, local clergy, business leaders, and others can help your community address the root causes of hate and help turn bias incidents into experiences from which your community can learn and heal.

When leaders step forward and act swiftly in the wake of a hate incident, victims feel supported, community members feel safe, and space for action and dialogue can grow.

Too often, the fear of negative publicity, a lack of partnerships with affected communities, and a failure to fully understand hate and bias can prevent leaders from stepping up. Their silence creates a vacuum in which rumors spread, victims feel ignored, and perpetrators find tacit acceptance.

STEPS TO TAKE

Here are steps for a healthy community:

» Form relationships with community leaders before a hate incident occurs. If your community group already has a relationship with the mayor, for example, you will be better positioned to ask for a public statement in the event of a hate crime.

» Educate community leaders about the causes and effects of hate.

MARIO TAMA/GETTY IMAGES

Sometimes, well-intentioned leaders don't understand that bias-motivated actions can have far-reaching effects across a community. Educate leaders about the impact of hate and the root causes of intolerance so their response can match the incident.

» Demand a quick, serious police response. The vigorous investigation and prosecution of hate crimes attract media attention to issues of tolerance and encourage the public to stand up against hate.

» Demand a strong public statement by political leaders. When elected officials issue proclamations against hate, it helps promote tolerance and can unify communities. Silence, on the other hand, can be interpreted as the acceptance of hate.

» Encourage leaders to name the problem. Local leaders sometimes try to minimize incidents fueled by hate or bias by not calling them hate crimes. As a result, victims and their communities can feel silenced, and national hate crime statistics become inaccurate.

» Push leaders when they show bias or fail to act. Healing in the wake of a bias crime or incident — and building a more connected community — requires more than official statements. It also takes hard work. Ask your community leaders to walk the talk. Ask for their public support and involvement in rallies, community meetings, and long-term solutions that address the root causes of intolerance.

MICHAEL APPLETON/MAYORAL PHOTOGRAPHY OFFICE

8

STAY ENGAGED

Promote acceptance and address bias before another hate crime can occur. Expand your comfort zone by reaching out to people outside your own groups.

Hate usually doesn't strike communities from some distant place. It often begins at home, brewing silently under the surface. It can grow out of divided communities — communities where residents feel powerless or voiceless, communities where differences cause fear instead of celebration.

The best cure for hate is a united community. As Chris Boucher of Yukon, Pennsylvania, put it after residents there opposed a local meeting of the Ku Klux Klan, "A united coalition is like Teflon. Hate can't stick there."

On the other hand, the seeds of hate take root and thrive in communities that are receptive to it.

Experts say the first step in changing hearts is to change behavior. Personal changes are important — the positive statements you make about others, challenging assumptions about people who are different — but community-wide changes are crucial for lasting change.

Often, either after a bias incident or as a tool for preventing one, communities want to sponsor multicultural food festivals and other events to celebrate differences. These are important steps in helping community members feel acknowledged and appreciated. We encourage you to sponsor these events — and we encourage you to go deeper.

STEPS TO TAKE

Not sure where to start? Consider the following:

» Hold candlelight vigils, interfaith services, and other activities to bring together people of different races, religions, and ethnic groups. In Boise, Idaho, for example, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday has become an 11-day human rights celebration.

» Honor history and mark anniversaries. In Selma, Alabama, a multicultural fair is held on the anniversary of Bloody Sunday, when voting rights activists attempted to cross a bridge in their march to Montgomery and were beaten back by police.

» Break bread together. Some communities have dinner clubs that bring together people of different ethnicities and income levels for a meal. These groups typically have no agenda, no speakers, and only one rule at their dinners: Sit next to someone you don't know.

» Move from prayer to action. In California's San Fernando Valley, an interfaith council formed "home dialogues" with people from different faiths and cultures meeting together in their homes. In Covington, Kentucky, churchwomen conducted a letter-writing campaign to support hate crime legislation; they later promoted teacher training in race relations.

» Begin a community conversation on race. Discussion groups, book clubs, chat rooms, and library gatherings can bring people together. Effective community conversations allow individuals to tell their stories, their immigration history, their daily encounters with discrimination, their fear about revealing sexual orientation, and so on.

FRANCES ROBERTS/ALAMY

» Consider building something the community needs, and use it as an organizing tool — from a senior center to a new playground. Make sure residents from different backgrounds are included in the process.
» Create a Facebook page or an online community discussion board celebrating diversity and inclusion.

NETWORKS

From regional "human rights coalitions" to local "peace and justice" groups, member organizations can connect like-minded people around issues of tolerance and social justice. These networks make a powerful force for responding to bias incidents and lobbying for change. The Many and One Coalition, for example, formed after a white supremacist group held a rally in Lewistown, Maine, in 2003.

The Many and One Coalition evolved into a large-scale diversity organization, educating and organizing residents, businesses, and community-based organizations to address personal and systemic oppression like racism, sexism, and homophobia.

The coalition sponsored an annual statewide event, called 10 Days of Community, Diversity, and Justice, to celebrate differences with activities like a multicultural food fair. But it also helped residents go further, providing a safe space in which participants could talk about sensitive issues like religion, sexual orientation, and race.

EXPANDING COMFORT ZONES

A Connecticut-based group, Everyday Democracy, helps communities look long-range by creating dialogue groups in which residents discuss issues of inclusion before tensions can boil over into bias incidents and hate crimes.

The idea is simple: Bring together people from different backgrounds and belief systems, and provide them with a safe space to share thoughts and get to know each other.

It's a formula that can be replicated anywhere.

9

TEACH ACCEPTANCE

Bias is learned early, often at home. Schools can offer lessons of tolerance and acceptance. Host a diversity and inclusion day on campus. Reach out to young people who may be susceptible to hate group propaganda and prejudice.

Bias is learned in childhood. By age 3, children can be aware of racial differences and may have the perception that "white" is desirable. By age 12, they can hold stereotypes about ethnic, racial, and religious groups, or LGBT people. Because stereotypes underlie hate, and because almost half of all hate crimes are committed by young men under 20, tolerance education is critical.

Schools are an ideal environment to counter bias, because they mix children of different backgrounds, place them on equal footing, and allow one-on-one interaction. Children also are naturally curious about people who are different.

The Southern Poverty Law Center offers free resources to K-12 classroom teachers across the country. Teachers can download lesson plans to address a range of biases and order free, award-winning documentary films on themes promoting civil and human rights. Its Teaching Tolerance program also sponsors a unique program to help students move out of their comfort zone and cross social boundaries in their schools. During the annual Mix It Up at Lunch Day, students eat lunch while sitting next to someone they don't know. Prompts from teachers or other students help guide the conversation. Mix It Up has helped millions of students across the country examine their own biases and

overcome their fears of differences. Go to tolerance.org to find these free resources and more.

BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Tolerance can be taught outside the classroom as well. Consider this case in Arizona: Amid increasingly virulent anti-immigrant sentiment, the Coalicion de Derechos Humanos (Human Rights Coalition) began holding weekly public vigils in Tucson to remember those who lost their lives trying to cross the border from Mexico into the United States.

The group, which works to document human rights abuses along the border, also keeps a list of border deaths, including age and cause of death: *age 26, dehydration; age 18, hit by a car; age 43, gunshot wound; age 25, drowned; age 19, heat stroke.*

"It hits home, with the specific information," said Kat Rodriguez of the Coalicion de Derechos Humanos. "It shows the cost of the failed and flawed border policies of the United States, the human cost."

FIVE STEPS FOR PARENTS

1. Examine your children's textbooks and the curricula at their schools to determine whether they are equitable and multicultural.

2. Expose your child to multicultural experiences by intentionally expanding your circle of friends and experiences.

3. Encourage your children to become activists. They can form harmony clubs, build multicultural peace gardens, sponsor "walk in my shoes" activities, and create ways to interact with children of other cultures.

4. Examine the media your children consume, from internet sites to the commercials during their favorite TV shows. Stereotypes and examples of intolerance are bound to be present. Discuss these issues openly, as you would the dangers of cigarette smoking.

5. Model inclusive language and behavior. Children learn from the language you use and the attitudes you model. If you demonstrate a deep respect for other cultures, races, and walks of life, they most likely will, too.

10
DIG DEEPER

Look inside yourself for biases and stereotypes. Commit to disrupting hate and intolerance at home, at school, in the workplace, and in faith communities.

Acceptance, fundamentally, is a personal decision. It comes from an attitude that is learnable and embraceable: a belief that every voice matters, that all people are valuable, that no one is "less than."

We all grow up with prejudices. Acknowledging them — and working through them — can be a scary and difficult process. It's also one of the most important steps toward breaking down the walls of silence that allow intolerance to grow. Luckily, we all possess the power to overcome our ignorance and fear, and to influence our children, peers, and communities.

IT BEGINS WITH ME

Human rights experts recommend starting with the language we use and the assumptions we make about others. Am I quick to label people as "rednecks" or "illegals"? Do I look with disdain at families on welfare, or do I try to understand the socioeconomic forces that prevent many families from climbing out of poverty?

Here are other questions you might ask yourself:

» How wide is my circle of friends? How diverse are the people who visit my home?

» How integrated is my neighborhood? My child's school? My workplace?

» Do I take economic segregation and environmental racism for granted?

» Do I have the courage to ask a friend not to tell a sexist or racist or homophobic joke in my presence?

» Do I receive information about other cultures from members of those cultures, or from potentially biased, third-party sources?

» Do I take the time to listen and learn from other people's experiences — especially people with whom I might initially disagree?

WIN MCNAMEE/GETTY IMAGES

Congregants at the Metropolitan AME Church in Washington, D.C., hold hands during a June 19, 2015, prayer vigil for the nine people killed at a South Carolina church by a white supremacist .

» How often am I in the minority?

Many good books, films, and workshops can help guide you in self-examination. Reading the histories of other cultures and of different social justice movements — the civil rights movement, the Chicano movement, the fight for LGBT rights, for example — is a good start.

FIGHTING FOR SYSTEMIC CHANGE

Sooner or later, your personal exploration will bump up against issues that take more than one person to solve. Deep racial disparities and systemic discrimination continue to plague our country.

These issues cry out for answers and people to take them on.

In any city and state there are dozens of problems to address: hunger, affordable housing, domestic violence, school dropout rates, police brutality — the list goes on. A caring group of people, having coalesced to deal with hate, could remain together to tackle any number of societal problems.

Luckily, many towns and cities have neighborhood or citywide organizations that bring together people of different backgrounds to work for change. If yours does not, there are plenty of resources available to help you start one.

Why not start today?

“TRUTH AND LOVE AND KINDNESS AND CARING WON OUT OVER HATE. IT RESTORED MY FAITH IN HUMANITY.”

— former Palatine, Illinois, Mayor Rita Mullins, after teenagers within the community rose up against the Ku Klux Klan

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