



# TEN WAYS TO FIGHT HATE

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Southern Poverty Action

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NEVER FORGET  
WHO YOU ARE AND  
WHAT YOU REPRESENT!  
#I DONT HATE



# 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,



## 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**

## 6 CHALLENGE HATE RALLIES

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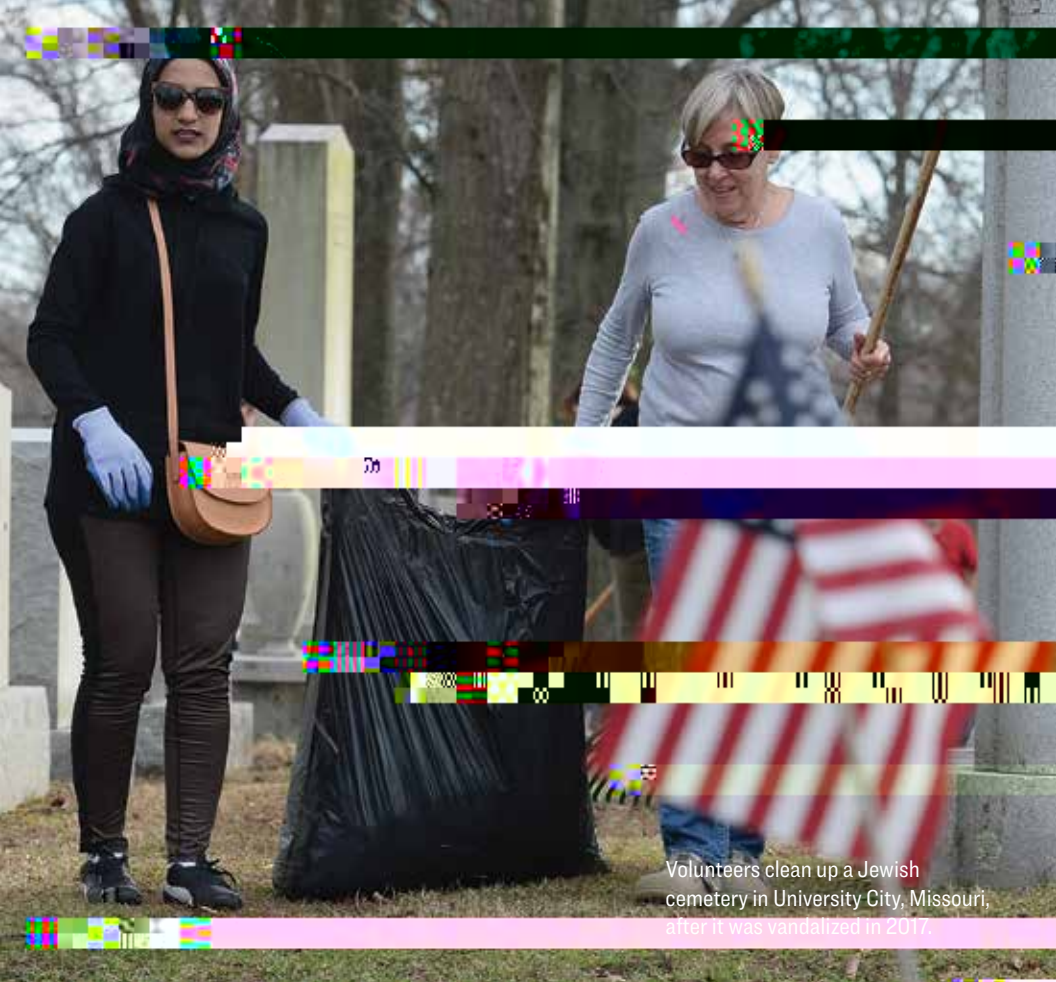
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Do something. In the face of hatred, apathy will be interpreted as acceptance by the perpetrators, the public and — worse — the victims. Community members must take action; if we don't, hate persists.

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



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

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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# 4

## EAK

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 united community is the best defense against hate.

You can spread tolerance through social media and websites, church bulletins, door-to-door rangers, 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.

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.

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

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.



# 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 con-

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 percent. Many hate crimes are committed by young males acting alone or in small





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.

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

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 denunciation from individuals, groups, and entire communities.

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

## DO NOT ATTEND A HATE RALLY

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.

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.

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

# 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



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

# 8

## 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 Te on. 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.

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.

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.

From regional human rights coalitions, to local peace and justice groups, member organizations can connect like-minded people around

# 9

## EACH ACCEP/A CE

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





# 10

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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



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.





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

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The Southern Poverty Law Center, based in Alabama with offices in Florida, Georgia, Louisiana and Mississippi, is a nonprofit civil rights organization dedicated to fighting hate and bigotry, and to seeking justice for the most vulnerable members of society. For more information, see [www.splcenter.org](http://www.splcenter.org).

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Hate Crimes  
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