



# HATE CRIMES

**SILENCE IS NOT AN OPTION**

INFORMATION AND RESOURCES FOR  
THOSE WHO WORK WITH YOUTH

Over the past 10 years, hate crimes and bias incidents have [been on the rise](#). Sometimes there is a catalyst for the crimes such as an election or global pandemic, but most often they are happening during a seemingly normal time. Hate crimes are not limited to any one group and they affect the entire community. This resource provides Clubs with practical guidance on how to help victims of hate crimes and bias incidents, how to respond and report, and how to find agencies that help.

Boys & Girls Club professionals are mandated by the organizational constitution to be non-partisan in instruction. When kids and teens are experiencing or participating in speech or acts based on hate or bias, it is not a partisan issue. It is a safety issue. As Club professionals, silence is not an option.

## What are hate crimes?

A hate crime is the victimization of an individual based on that individual's actual or perceived race, religion, national origin, ethnic identification, gender, sexual orientation, or ability status. Hate crimes can occur anywhere: in schools and on campuses, the workplace, public places, or where someone lives. Those who commit these acts come from all backgrounds and represent different age groups. Hate crimes are against the law and may include acts such as:

- Physical assaults, with or without weapons
- Verbal or online harassment
- Vandalism
- Robbery
- Rape or sexual assault
- Attacks on homes or places of worship

## How to Respond

If hate speech is directed at the Club or Club members, respond with your organization's inclusion policies. [BGCA's Black Lives Matter statement](#) and [BGCA's Inclusion statement](#) can help to provide a model for specific sample statements. Your response should point to the mission of your Club. Additionally, your organization should have a plan for where to direct the concern if staff are not able to defuse the situation themselves.

### **When a hate-based crisis occurs, you should:**

- Put safety first
- Ask open-ended questions to find out what happened
- Denounce the act
- Support targeted youth
- Promote healing
- Respond following your organization's policies and procedures for reporting incidents

The steps above are from [Responding to Hate and Bias at School](#), a [Teaching Tolerance](#) publication, a free resource for school administrators, teachers, and counselors

that provides concrete examples of how to respond to hate crimes and bias incidents. It includes information on assessing the climate before an incident occurs, key points when responding to a crisis, and what to do long-term to prevent another crisis.

## Supporting Youth

**Ensure that youth know what to do if they are a witness to or target of a hate crime.**

- Identify trusted adults in their lives for support, such as Club staff, teachers, coaches, and family members. It is important to remember that hate crimes are against the law. Crime victims should never cope with their experiences alone.
- Write down what they remember about the incident
- Contact local law enforcement to file a report. Contacting law enforcement may be triggering for some young people. Be prepared to be a liaison to help the young person feel more comfortable.
- If an incident or its consequences require immediate assistance, call 911.
  - After you make a report to local law enforcement, the Department of Justice also recommends that victims or witnesses of potential hate crimes make a report to the FBI: call 1-800-CALLFBI (225-5324) or [submit a tip online](#) or [call your local FBI field office](#).

**Educate youth about hate crimes and bias as a prevention mechanism.**

- Talk to youth using the [How to Talk to Youth About a Traumatic Election Season Discussion Guide](#) and [Passport to Manhood's Growing Up Black Video-Based Discussion Guide](#).
- Read a round-up of recent [ClubX Blog posts on Racial Trauma, Healing, and Youth Advocacy](#).
- Get lesson plans for teaching social justice and reinforcing social-emotional learning skills on topics such as bias, race and ethnicity, and religion from [Teaching Tolerance](#).
- Start young by finding resources for elementary-age youth on [Edutopia](#).
- Use the [Be A Star Bullying Prevention Program](#) on BGCA.net

For non-emergencies, there are several organizations and hotlines available for hate crime, hate speech, and bias incident reporting and support, including:

- [National Center for Victims of Crime's VictimConnect](#): Live anonymous referrals and support for victims of crime at 855-4-VICTIM (84-2546) or [chat](#).
- [National Coalition of Anti-Violence Projects](#): Direct response to critical incidents of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and HIV-affected community violence. You can report violence by calling 212-714-1141 or [online](#).
- [American Civil Liberties Union](#): The ACLU champions segments of the population who have traditionally been denied their civil rights. If you believe your civil liberties have been violated, contact your [local ACLU affiliate](#).
- [Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network](#): For 24/7 confidential assistance, call 800-656-HOPE (4673) or [chat online](#).
- [National Child Traumatic Stress Network](#): Provides access to services for children and families who experience or witness traumatic events, including bullying, community violence, and mass violence affect children
- Remember that Club professionals are mandated to report any suspected abuse of a minor, including sexual abuse, to state child protective services. Call the Child Safety Helpline for Clubs at 1-866-607-SAFE for assistance.

For more information and resources related to child safety, contact your BGCA Regional Child Safety & Quality Assurance Director or [childsafety@bgca.org](mailto:childsafety@bgca.org)