

Supporting Children and Youth Affected by Hate

Hate incidents and hate crimes occur when people take actions that are motivated by intense dislike, negative beliefs, or irrational fear based on someone's real or perceived religion, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, political affiliation, and/or age. Hate incidents and hate crimes often rise before and after national elections and in response to global events, including war, conflict, and acts of terrorism. People can directly experience hate incidents or hate crimes, witness them, or be aware of them through the media. Hate incidents and hate crimes can target individuals or groups, including community or religious centers.

Hate incidents involve non-criminal actions motivated by hate.

Hate crimes are criminal acts motivated by hate, like verbal threats of harm, assault, or vandalism.

If Your Family Has Experienced a Hate Crime or Hate Incident

It can be extremely upsetting, potentially adding to any existing distress. You may worry about your safety, as well as your children and your family. If you came from another country to the U.S., you might wonder if it was the right decision. If you have experienced war and conflict and have been forced to flee your country, you may worry that those terrible events will repeat themselves.

After the event, you and your family may also experience things like:

Anger	Helplessness	Fear	Sadness	Frustration	Insecurity
Poor sleep	Headaches	Shame	Worry	Low self-esteem	Uncertainty

As a parent, you may also notice changes in your child's behavior, like:

Young Children

- Clinginess
- Tantrums
- Bed-wetting
- Recreating the event during play

School Age Children

- Worries about safety
- Constantly talking about the event
- Recreating the event during play
- Trouble paying attention

Adolescents

- Moodiness
- Wanting to isolate
- Constantly talking about the event
- Trouble paying attention

Supporting Your Children

Below are some considerations for how you may support your children in recovering from a Hate Crime or Hate Incident.

- ✓ **Support Yourself** - Children look to their parents for safety and security. Make sure you are taking care of yourself so you can be calm and in control in their presence.
- ✓ **Be Present** - Your loving presence matters most. Try to increase the amount of time you spend with your children. This could be doing things together like coloring, singing comforting songs, watching an age-appropriate TV show, or going for a walk.
- ✓ **Be Open** - Be open to their thoughts and feelings, including discussing the incident with age-appropriate language and information.
- ✓ **Share Information** - Share simple facts and information but try to balance it with a sense of safety. For younger children, this may be saying things like, “But mommy was there to help.” For older children, this may be emphasizing how other systems or agencies may have kept your family safe or are working to keep your family safe.
- ✓ **Be Patient** - It may take a while before a child’s sense of safety returns and improvement in thoughts, feelings, and behaviors may be gradual.
- ✓ **Keep to a Routine** - Routines help children feel safe and bring a sense of normalcy. Make sure children get up and go to bed at the same time and have meals at the same time. Keep or establish other routines such as a bedtime book, daily walk, or a weekend event like a special treat, movie, playing with community members, or watching a sporting event.
- ✓ **Model Coping Skills** - Show your children things that help you cope, like deep breathing, listening to music, exercising, and praying. Ask your children what helps them cope. Do your coping skills together as a family.
- ✓ **Limit Media** - Limit media and social media exposure to violence or other distressing content.
- ✓ **Get Help if Needed** - If you find that over time, you and your children are feeling worse, not better, consider extra support. This could be from a counselor, your doctor, a community-based organization, or faith-based leader.