



# Empowering Young People in the Aftermath of Hate

A Guide for Educators  
and Families



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# WHAT EDUCATORS AND FAMILY MEMBERS CAN DO



*In the aftermath of violence, terrorism, or other incidents of hate, how can educators, caregivers and family members give children and teenagers the tools they need to understand what has happened and take steps to challenge hate in safe and effective ways?*

Today, local, national or international tragedies happen so frequently that they can feel almost commonplace. When a hate crime, mass shooting, act of terrorism or other terrible and hate-inspired event occurs, one of the first questions many people ask is, what should we tell the children? How can we explain to them what has happened?

Despite our best efforts to protect youth from the details of hate-motivated events, we can never assume that they are unaware of what is happening around them. Through the internet, social media and mobile communication, youth—even very young children—quickly become aware of events of significance in their community and world, and need opportunities to process their feelings and share their fears in sensitive and age-appropriate ways.

Feelings of fear, powerlessness and vulnerability are common experiences all people share whenever acts of hatred, terrorism, or mass shootings occur, and feelings are personally compounded when the perpetrators are targeting a specific group of people to which we may identify. Children and teens are not immune to these feelings, but adults can help by providing information that answers their questions, giving them opportunities to express how they feel, reassuring them that adults in their lives are working to keep them safe, and helping them channel their feelings into positive actions in their own lives and communities.

Before any discussion begins, every effort should be made to create an environment where children will feel comfortable expressing their feelings and views. The strategies and tools in “Creating an Anti-Bias Learning Environment” provide a useful resource. Establishing ground rules for discussion can be a positive way to begin (see page 11). As a family member engaging in these conversations, you will not need formal “ground rules” but it is important to set a tone of safety, respect, listening and confidentiality.



## FAMILY CONVERSATIONS ABOUT HATE INCIDENTS, TERRORISM AND BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

Every child's development follows a varied and unique pace, and the skills needed to dialogue effectively with them evolve as they grow. When incidents of hate, acts of terrorism and acts of bias-motivated violence occur in your community or in the broader society, children and teens necessarily have concerns and fears. Consider the needs, challenges and individual personalities of the young people in your life before deciding how to approach the conversation. And, when beginning the conversations, take a few minutes for your young person to think about some rules that would help them to feel safe, especially when they want to talk about issues that may be scary or unfamiliar to them. As they make suggestions, you may want to write them down. Below are some general guidelines for young people of different ages.

### For Elementary Students

At the elementary level, the primary focus should be on giving children the time and space to express their feelings, which may include confusion, sadness, fear, anger, determination to do something, other emotions or none at all. It is helpful to expand children's feelings' vocabulary so they have access to words that will help them understand and more clearly convey their feelings. Some children easily express themselves verbally whereas others may prefer art, movement or writing as their avenue for expression. Allow time for answering children's basic questions about what happened and identify people who provided help and support during the difficult time. Above everything else, help children to feel safe, reassured and comforted.

#### Discussion Starters:

- *What do you know about what happened?*
- *How do you feel about it?*
- *What questions do you have?*

## For Middle School Students

In the middle school years as students approach adolescence, talking with them in more sophisticated ways about what happened and why—including the root causes of the incident—can be useful. This is also an age when young people are more aware of stereotypes, bias and scapegoating. Therefore, engage them in discussions about how bias and intolerance are often prominent or underlying causes of violent or hateful tragedies. Discuss the ways that some people can revert to stereotyping and scapegoating to understand a perpetrator’s motives in the aftermath of these events, and that these kinds of attitudes are unfair and biased. Give middle school students a chance to express their feelings and to explore ways to turn those feelings into messages of sympathy, hope and action.

### Discussion Starters:

- *What do you know about the incident that happened?*
- *What are your feelings about what you heard?*
- *In what ways do you think bias and intolerance played a role in what happened?*
- *How can we help to prevent ourselves and other people from stereotyping and scapegoating others?*
- *What can we do to help the victims and their families?*

## For High School Students

During the high school years, students are looking for more detailed information about the incident. Tap into their questions and build on them. Providing history, background information and perspective will also be helpful, and you may want to suggest that young people learn more about other issues that have relevance to what happened (e.g., after a mass shooting, they can learn more about gun control and public opinion about it). It’s also an appropriate age for young people to explore what actions can be taken in the face of bias and bigotry, including individual, school/community or societal activism. As with every age, be sure to provide opportunities for young people to understand and express their feelings.

### Discussion Starters:

- *What are your thoughts about why this happened?*
- *What feelings have come up for you in response to this incident?*
- *What are some things we can do to make a difference in our community, society and world?*

## Some Additional Considerations

Below are some additional recommendations to guide discussions with children and teens:

- **Before talking with children or teens, make sure you feel prepared to discuss the incident and/or topic.** Provide enough time and space for them to share their feelings and ask questions. Although you may personally feel devastated by the event, when talking with young people, strive to remain calm and not overly emotional so they feel comfortable expressing their feelings. Your goal is to reassure them and not communicate fear.
- **Treat all young people’s questions with respect and seriousness.** Rather than ignoring or dismissing a question that makes you feel uncomfortable or anxious, ask yourself why

you feel that way. Children will most likely sense an adult's discomfort, which may increase their feelings of fear and insecurity. It's preferable to tell children that you need to think about their question before answering. If you don't understand a question, clarify what they are asking by repeating it back and inquiring why they are asking. Remember that what a young child may need most is reassurance, closeness and continuity with a familiar routine.

- **Answer questions as clearly and honestly as you can and use simple language in terms they can understand.** Do not give long lectures or speak in platitudes; rather, be matter of fact. When young children ask questions, provide answers in simple terms, rather than assuming they are looking for great detail. If you do not know the answer, say so and make a plan to try to find out. Correct yourself if you give a "wrong" or incomplete answer. Remember, we all make mistakes and children are often a lot more forgiving of them than most adults. Admitting our mistakes teaches children how to do this when necessary.
- **Young people often struggle to understand why these incidents take place and what motivates people who perpetrate these crimes.** These are difficult questions to answer and because the motivation is sometimes unknown or unclear, it is better to say you don't know rather than give a reason that is simplistic or inaccurate. Sometimes intolerance of differences and bias is at the root of the violence. Therefore, it is especially important to be careful when describing the perpetrator because we don't want to respond—out of fear—with our own stereotypes, assumptions and scapegoating. Address any biased comments a child makes and help them understand that words can hurt and in fact, hate-based violence usually doesn't start out physically; it usually starts with words and then escalates.
- **Be alert for signs of distress in children.** These can include withdrawal, lack of interest, acting out, and fear of attending school or other activities. You may become aware of these concerns during the conversation or notice them later at another point when you least expect them.
- **Ask young people what they are hearing from friends, classmates and through social media.** Misinformation, rumors and bias can take place on the playground or on a smartphone. Many young people have access to technology constantly and it is important to gauge what they are hearing about the incident from news sources as well as friends and followers in order to dispel inaccurate, skewed or biased information.
- **It is always very useful to highlight for children the people who helped the victims and their families during these incidents as well as those who supported them afterwards.** Further, think together about something you might want to do to take action. This can take the form of showing you care and building solidarity with the impacted people or community (e.g., sending a card or a donation) or together, get involved in activist activities that address bias and discrimination. Young people need to know that acts of injustice are unacceptable and that they can make a difference in their community and world in creating positive change.



# CREATING AN ANTI-BIAS LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Educational environments that reflect the rich diversity of the community, nation and world assist in opening young people's minds and actively engaging them in their learning. Research has shown that prejudice is countered when educational environments foster critical thinking, empathy development and positive self-esteem in youth.

## Talking with Youth about Diversity and Bias

It is important to think about how you can most effectively raise the complex issues of hate, bias, scapegoating and exclusion with children and teens.

You should keep in mind that conversations about understanding and respect should not be limited to a commemorative event, or other special programs, holidays or activities but instead, should be a part of everyday business in the learning environment. Creating inclusive, respectful learning environments is an ongoing effort, and working for social justice is a life-long endeavor. (See [Dos and Don'ts with Special Diversity Events](#))

To prepare for successfully raising issues of diversity and bias, educators and family members should attempt to make the following practices an integral part of young people's daily practice. When incorporating these practices, educators should also consider the home-school-community connection and involve parents, other family members and other community members in the learning process. Understand that families and others in the community provide the context in which youth are motivated to learn. It is important not to view the school and the home or school and the community as isolated from one another; but rather to examine how they interconnect with each other and with the world.



### 1. **Self-Exploration**

Examine personal cultural biases and assumptions. Explore personal perceptions and understanding of situations by developing an awareness of personal cultural "filters."

### 2. **Comprehensive Integration**

Integrate culturally diverse information/perspectives into all aspects of teaching. Consider moving beyond the constraints of a cultural history month by incorporating multiple perspectives into all aspects of the curriculum.

### 3. **Time and Maturation**

Allow time for a process to develop. Introduce less complex topics at first, and create time to establish trust. Begin discussions by developing ground rules that allow for honest discussion within a respectful context. Recognize that the long history of mistrust between people in different groups will influence classroom discussions.

#### **4. Accepting Environment**

Establish an environment that allows for mistakes. Since most people have been unconsciously acculturated into prejudicial and stereotypical thinking, individuals may not be aware that certain attitudes are hurtful to others. Acknowledge that intolerant thinking will surface from time to time in others and ourselves. You should model non-defensive responses when told that something you said or did was offensive to someone. Assume good will and make that assumption a common practice in the classroom.

#### **5. Intervention**

Be prepared to respond to purposely-directed acts of bias. Youth will carefully observe how you intervene when someone is the target of discriminatory or hate-based behavior. Silence in the face of injustice conveys the impression that prejudicial behavior is condoned or not worthy of attention. Make it clear to young people that name-calling will not be allowed in the classroom. Appropriate and timely intervention is critical in establishing a safe learning environment where all young people can succeed.

#### **6. Life-long Learning**

Keep abreast of current anti-bias education issues and discuss them with youth. Clip articles from newspapers and magazines and post them in the classroom. You should let young people know that you consider yourself a learner, and that you see yourself as part of the learning process.

#### **7. Discovery Learning**

Avoid "preaching" to students about how they should behave. Research indicates that exhortation is the least effective methodology for changing prejudiced attitudes; in fact, it often produces a result opposite from the desired effect. Provide opportunities for young people to resolve conflicts, solve problems, work in diverse teams and think critically about information.

#### **8. Life Experiences**

Provide opportunities for students to share life experiences; choose literature that will help students develop empathy. Make the learning environment a place where young peoples' experiences are not marginalized, trivialized or invalidated. Prejudice and discrimination have a unique impact on each individual. Youth and their families develop a variety of coping strategies based upon the type and frequency of discrimination they have experienced. It is never fruitful to engage in a debate over who has suffered the most. Oppression is harmful to all people in all of its forms.

#### **9. Resources Review**

Review materials so that classroom displays and bulletin boards are inclusive of all people. Insure that supplemental books and videos do not reinforce existing societal stereotypes. When such examples in textbooks are observed, point them out to students and encourage students to think about them critically and to challenge them.

#### **10. Examine the Classroom Environment**

What is present and absent in the classroom provides youth with important information about who and what is important. Every effort should be made to create a setting that is rich in possibilities for exploring cultural diversity. Such an environment assists young people in developing their ideas about themselves and others, creates the conditions under which youth initiate conversations about differences and provides educators and family members with a setting for introducing activities about diversity. It also fosters young people's positive self-concept and attitudes.

## Classroom Resources

To assist in engaging in conversations with young people about tragic events, classroom activities are included below followed by a section on online resources for both educators and families at the end of this guide.

# GROUND RULES FOR DISCUSSION

Lesson for Upper Elementary, Middle and High School Students

## Purpose:

Prior to engaging in a discussion about the ideas and feelings of young people about a recent incident of violence or hate, it is helpful to create ground rules that promote a safe and supportive atmosphere where youth feel comfortable and where they perceive that their ideas and feelings are accepted and valued.

## Materials Needed:

Board/Smart board or chart paper, markers, paper, pens or pencils

## Time:

20–30 minutes

## Directions:

1. Begin by asking young people to imagine they are playing a game of basketball. Ask them what the game would be like if none of the players bothered to follow the rules. Then ask what it might be like to play the game without any rules.
2. Explain that the topic(s) you will be discussing can be difficult at times because it can evoke many emotions for people. In order to have an honest and meaningful conversation, it will be helpful to think about how to communicate with one another during this discussion.
3. Divide participants into small groups, provide paper to each group and ask groups to choose one member to serve as a recorder of their discussion. Instruct groups to come to consensus on two or three ground rules that they feel would be important when having a discussion. Ask them to write down the proposed ground rules and to discuss all the reasons why they believe this is an important ground rule.
4. Have each small group select one of their proposed ground rules and create a short skit (1–2 minutes) that shows the importance of the ground rule by doing one of the following:
  - Illustrate what could happen without it, or
  - Demonstrate an effective discussion that happens because the rule was followed.
5. Reconvene the whole group and have each small group share their ground rules and perform their skit. As groups share their ground rules, create a composite list on chart paper or the board/smart board.
6. If the following points are not mentioned, stress the importance of respecting one another's opinions, being open to new ideas, having empathy, listening actively and maintaining confidentiality.

# BALANCING THE GOOD AND THE BAD

## Lesson for Upper Elementary Students

### Purpose:

To give children an opportunity to investigate some of the bad and hateful things that happen in society as well as good or helpful things that people do to fight hate.

### Materials Needed:

8½" x 11" construction paper (two colors), markers, tape

### Time:

20–30 minutes

### Directions:

1. Prior to this activity, using two different colors of construction paper, cut in half equal numbers of each color so that half of the students will have a half-sheet of one color (color A) and the other half will have the other color (color B).
2. Introduce the activity by sharing with the class that sometimes bad and hateful things happen in the world that can sometimes hurt people. Explain that we are going to think about some of those things, but we will also think about some of the good and helpful things people do to fight hate.
3. Distribute the construction paper half sheets. Explain that each student with color A should work independently to list some of the bad things that have happened in the world that they have either heard or know about. Explain that the each student with color B will work independently to list some of the specific things people do that help people and communities when bad or hateful things happen. Provide five minutes for students to create their lists.
4. After students have completed their lists, provide another five minutes for students to pair up (a color A and a color B) and share their lists. Provide each pair with tape to fasten the two pieces of paper together, and invite them to post their papers around the room.
5. Lead a brief whole group discussion, using the questions below.
  - a. What were some of your feelings as you created your list?
  - b. How did your feelings change when you joined with a partner to share the different lists of the hurtful things and the helpful things?
  - c. What ideas do you have for responding to bad or hateful incidents in our school or community?

# THE TROUBLE WITH STEREOTYPES

## Lesson for Upper Elementary Students

### Purpose:

To provide an opportunity for students to examine how people develop stereotypes and to consider how stereotypes can lead to prejudice and other hate behaviors.

### Materials Needed:

Board/Smart board or chart paper, markers, paper, pens or pencils

### Time:

20–30 minutes

### Directions:

1. Provide students with a sheet of blank paper and tell them that you will be reading aloud a series of words. Instruct them to write each word on their paper, followed by the first word that comes to mind when they think of a person in that role. Encourage students to just write down the first response that comes to them without editing their initial thoughts.
2. Read the following words aloud, one at a time, allowing enough time after reading each word for students to write down their “first thoughts” about a person in that role.
  - athlete
  - teacher
  - doctor
  - immigrant
  - grandparent
  - police officer
  - teenager
  - scientist
  - cheerleader
  - dancer

After completing this step, ask students to turn their papers face down on their desks until later in the activity.

3. Divide students into small groups of 3–4 people per group and provide a sheet of blank paper to each group. Select two words from the above list and assign one to half the groups and the other to the remaining groups. Ask groups to spend the next five minutes creating a list of as many characteristics as possible that relate to a person in that role.
4. Reconvene the group and ask groups, one at a time, to share their list. As they do, make two lists on the board/smart board or on chart paper, one for each assigned role that includes all of the characteristics they identified.
5. Lead a brief discussion regarding these lists by asking the following questions:
  - Are these lists accurate? In what ways might they be inaccurate?
  - Do you believe that the characteristics you included on your list are true for all people who are [assigned role]?
  - Which things on your list could be considered assumptions (i.e., things that you believe to be true without having any proof)?
6. Provide the following definition of **stereotype**:

A **stereotype** is an oversimplified generalization about a person or group of people without regard for individual differences. Even when a stereotype about a group is based on a seemingly positive characteristic, it can have a negative impact when people assume that it is true for all members of the group.

7. Based on this definition, ask students whether the characteristics they listed could cause people to develop stereotypes about people who were part of these groups. Have them turn over their papers and repeat this process for their “initial thoughts” about the groups that were read aloud in step #2.
8. Lead a brief discussion, using some or all of the following questions:
  - a. In what ways has what we’ve learned about stereotypes caused you to reconsider some of your initial thoughts?
  - b. Seeing as you all responded to the same words, do you think that many of your “initial thoughts” would be similar? Why or why not?
  - c. How do people learn stereotypes?
  - d. What are some examples of stereotypes that you have heard recently because of [a current event in the news]?
  - e. What are some ways you could respond to these stereotypes?

# REMEMBERING THOSE HURT BY HATE

## Lesson for Middle and High School Students

### Purpose:

To provide an opportunity for students to remember people who have been hurt by hate and to create a unique way to express their hopes that such events will not happen again.

### Materials Needed:

Assorted art supplies; blank paper

### Time:

1–2 class periods

### Directions:

1. Have students recount some events that have happened that were motivated by hate (e.g., the shootings in Orlando, the school shootings in Sandy Hook, the Boston Marathon attack, the Holocaust, the 9/11 terrorist attacks, etc.).
2. Lead a brief discussion, using the following questions:
  - a. When acts of hate occur, what are some of the broader impacts on community members?
  - b. What are some of the positive community responses that spontaneously happen?
  - c. What are some collective responses community members organize to counter the hate?
3. Tell students that they are going to have an opportunity to respond to a recent incident of hatred by designing a memorial to those who were hurt by hate. Explain that their memorial can be in any form: a poem, a poster, a meme, a collage, a song, an essay, etc. The memorial should be a personal expression of remembering the people who were hurt by hate. Allow in- and out-of-class time for projects to be completed.
4. Once completed, provide time for students to share their memorials with the rest of the class. When possible, display projects in the school or community venue, such as a public library.

# THE ESCALATION OF HATE

## Lesson for Middle and High School Students

### Purpose:

To provide an opportunity for students to examine the escalating nature of hate and to consider the difficulty of stopping the progression once it begins.

### Materials Needed:

*Terms and Definitions*, *The Reality Behind the Words Worksheet* and *The Pyramid of Hate* (one of each for each student); board/smart board or chart paper and markers

### Time:

20–30 minutes

### Directions:

1. Distribute the *Terms and Definitions* handout to each student. Ask them to read the definitions, consider the meaning of each, and think about how they differ from one another.
2. Distribute *The Reality Behind the Words Worksheet* to each student and ask them to find a partner.
3. Working in pairs, have students take 5–10 minutes to:
  - a. Match the examples on the right to the corresponding term on the left side.
  - b. Identify if more than one term can be applied to any of the examples and be prepared to explain their responses.
4. Reconvene the group and have students discuss the answers to the worksheet, clarifying any definitions as needed.

(ANSWER KEY: 1. Stereotype; 2. Bias-motivated violence; 3. Genocide; 4. Discrimination; 5. Prejudice; 6. Hate crime; 7. Scapegoating).
5. On the board/smart board, draw a large triangle and draw four horizontal lines so that the triangle is divided into five sections. Starting at the top, label the sections as follows: Genocide; Acts of Bias-Motivated Violence; Acts of Discrimination; Acts of Prejudice; Acts of Bias.
6. Distribute the *Pyramid of Hate* handout to each student. Explain that the *Pyramid of Hate* is a good way to understand how prejudice and hate can escalate when no one speaks up or takes action.
7. Briefly review each level of the pyramid starting with the bottom level entitled Acts of Bias. (See “Presenting the Pyramid of Hate” at the end of the activity).
8. For each level of the pyramid, ask students to provide one or two additional examples from their own experiences, situations they have heard or read about or in history that also exemplify the level.
9. Lead a brief whole group discussion, using some or all of the questions that follow.
  - a. What are some of the factors that make it more likely that hate will escalate? (e.g., hate behaviors are tolerated; the media reinforces stereotypes; friends or family members may communicate agreement with one another’s prejudices)

- b. Once the actions of a person involved in a bias incident began to escalate, do you think it's difficult to stop? Why or why not?
- c. What are some things that might stop the escalation of hate? (e.g., education; new laws; enforcement of existing school policies and laws)
- d. At what level of the pyramid do you think it would be easiest for someone to intervene? What are the possible consequences of waiting until behaviors escalate to take action?
- e. What are some actions people can take to interrupt the escalation of hate? What can communities do?
- f. In what ways does this understanding of the tendency of hate to escalate relate to [the current incident being discussed]?

# TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

## **Bias**

An inclination or preference either for or against an individual or group that interferes with impartial judgment.

## **Discrimination**

Unfair treatment of one person or a group of people because of their identity (e.g., race, religion, gender ability, culture, etc.). Discrimination is an action that can come from prejudice.

## **Genocide**

The act of or intent to deliberately and systematically annihilate an entire religious, racial, national or cultural group.

## **Hate Crime**

A criminal act against property, a person or group where the victim is intentionally targeted because of their actual or perceived race, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, gender/gender identity or ethnicity.

## **Prejudice**

Judging or forming an idea about someone or a group of people before you actually know them. Prejudice is often directed toward people in a certain identity group (e.g., race, religion, gender, etc.)

## **Scapegoating**

Blaming a person or group for something, when the fault actually lies elsewhere. Scapegoating includes hostile words or actions that can lead to verbal or physical violence; a person or group is blamed for something because of some aspect of their identity, but they usually lack the power or opportunity to fight back.

## **Stereotype**

The false idea that all members of a group are the same and think and behave in the same way.

## **Bias-motivated Violence**

An action that emotionally or physically harms a person or group and that is motivated by the identity of the person or group (e.g., race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ability, etc.).

# THE REALITY BEHIND THE WORDS WORKSHEET

**Directions:** Match the example on the right with the correct term on the left by either drawing a line from the term to the matching example or writing the number of the example in the space provide for the correct term.

## Terms

## Examples

\_\_\_\_\_ **Discrimination**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Genocide**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Hate Crime**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Prejudice**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Scapegoating**

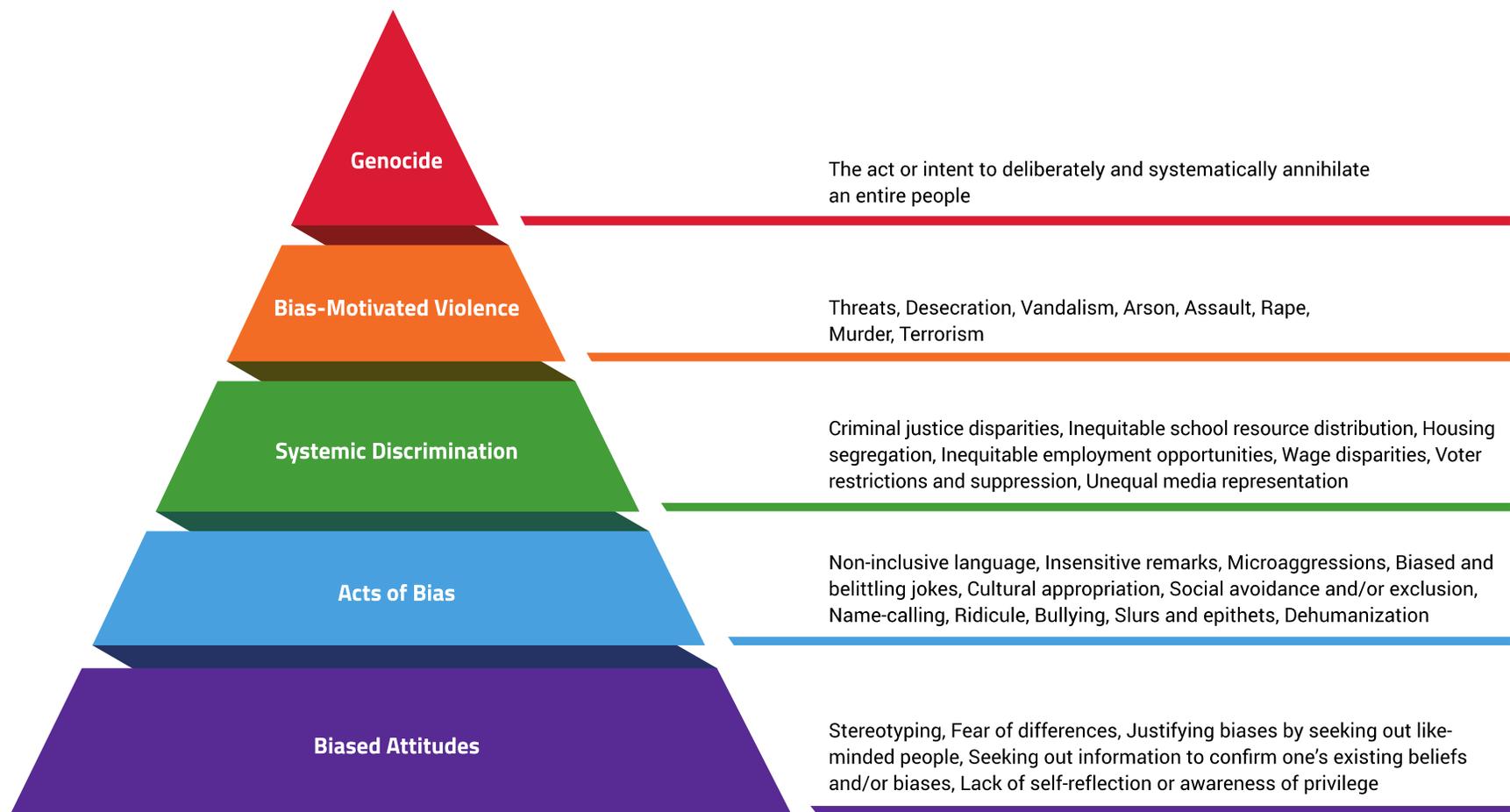
\_\_\_\_\_ **Stereotyping**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Bias-motivated Violence**

1. Fashion magazines rarely include photographs of plus-size models in a positive way.
2. A group of LGBTQ teens who attend a peaceful rally in support of same sex marriage are taunted and violently attacked by a group of teens.
3. In Rwanda in the 1990s, the ruling majority Hutus engaged in efforts to systematically destroy their nation's Tutsi population, brutally killing 800,000 Tutsi through violent executions, murders with clubs and machetes and massacres in churches and hospitals.
4. An employer does not hire a male candidate who is otherwise qualified because the candidate is wearing a turban as part of his religious tradition.
5. A teacher doesn't recommend one of her top students for a leadership program in Washington DC because she believes the family couldn't afford the required expenses.
6. A synagogue in a Midwest city is spray-painted with swastikas and hateful graffiti about Jews.
7. A school installs a metal detector by the front entrance of the school because of a perceived increase in students' carrying weapons to school. Many of the students are upset with the new procedures this creates and blame Muslim students at the school because of people's concerns about terrorism.

# PYRAMID OF HATE

The **Pyramid of Hate** illustrates the prevalence of bias, hate and oppression in our society. It is organized in escalating levels of attitudes and behavior that grow in complexity from bottom to top. Like a pyramid, the upper levels are supported by the lower levels. Bias at each level negatively impacts individuals, institutions and society and it becomes increasingly difficult to challenge and dismantle as behaviors escalate. When bias goes unchecked, it becomes “normalized” and contributes to a pattern of accepting discrimination, hate and injustice in society. While every biased attitude or act does not lead to genocide, each genocide has been built on the acceptance of attitudes and actions described at the lower levels of the pyramid. When we challenge those biased attitudes and behaviors in ourselves, others and institutions, we can interrupt the escalation of bias and make it more difficult for discrimination and hate to flourish.



# PRESENTING THE PYRAMID OF HATE

The *Pyramid of Hate* presents a visual image to demonstrate how the seeds of hate, once planted, can quickly grow from biased ideas to hate violence. The following is provided to assist in presenting the concept of the tendency of hate to escalate when unchecked.

## Level One: Biased Attitudes

The base of the pyramid describes biased attitudes we see and hear every day in schools, workplaces, communities and even at the dinner table. These include things like non-inclusive language, stereotypes, microaggressions or insensitive remarks. One might regard these attitudes as “not a big deal” or they don’t necessarily hurt anyone. But biased attitudes that begin with a simple stereotype about a group, if left unchallenged, can easily grow into sustained feelings about that group. These attitudes serve as the foundation of the pyramid, supporting more extreme levels of hate.

## Level Two: Acts of Bias

Based on biased attitudes, we then form prejudicial FEELINGS about a group which can lead to actions like bullying, scapegoating, biased jokes, ridicule, and name-calling. ACTS of bias move the biased ATTITUDE that “All those people are lazy and stupid” to ACTS that perpetuate that “I don’t like or trust those people.”

## Level Three: Systemic Discrimination

Once biased ATTITUDES and ACTS of bias have taken hold, DISCRIMINATION can follow. Discrimination moves the biased ATTITUDE “I don’t like or trust those people” to DISCRIMINATION, “I won’t hire those people to work in my store” or “I won’t let those people live in my neighborhood.” Once hate has progressed up the bottom three levels of the pyramid, it is not a far step to move from ACTIONS to Acts of Violence....

## Level Four: Bias-Motivated Violence

When discrimination is unchecked, acts of bias-motivated VIOLENCE can occur in schools and communities, including desecration of property, threats and assaults, but also arson, terrorism, vandalism, assault and murder.

## Level Five: Genocide

The top level of the pyramid is Genocide, the act of or intent to deliberately and systematically annihilate an entire people. During the Holocaust the Nazi’s committed genocide against the Jewish people, Gays, people with disabilities, Roma and Jehovah’s Witnesses.

The *Pyramid of Hate* demonstrates how ideas, feelings/attitudes and actions can form a basis for the denial of justice. Although not every act of bias will lead to genocide, it is important to realize that every historical instance of genocide began with the acts of bias described on the lowest level. The most effective opportunity to take action is when we witness behaviors that fall within the lowest level of the pyramid. We can safeguard our schools and communities by modeling respect, promoting respectful behavior in others and engaging in efforts to stamp out hate.

# ADL RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS AND FAMILIES

## **Books Matter: The Best Kid Lit on Bias, Diversity and Social Justice**

[www.adl.org/books-matter](http://www.adl.org/books-matter)

ADL's online bibliography of children's and young adult literature on bias, diversity and social justice. Reading and discussing children's and young adult literature is an excellent way to promote empathy, learn about the cultures and experiences of different people, dispel stereotypes, understand bias and stand up to hate and injustice.

## **Helping Students Make Sense of News Stories about Bias and Injustice**

[www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/helping-students-make-sense-of-news-stories-about-bias-and](http://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/helping-students-make-sense-of-news-stories-about-bias-and)

Strategies and resources for talking with students about important stories in the news.

## **Dos and Don'ts with Special Diversity Events**

[www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/dos-and-donts-with-special-diversity-events](http://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/dos-and-donts-with-special-diversity-events)

List of recommended "dos and don'ts" to help create meaningful diversity events in the school and community that are thoughtful and inclusive.

## **Table Talk: Family Conversations about Current Events**

[www.adl.org/table-talk](http://www.adl.org/table-talk)

Tools to engage in conversations about important news stories and societal and world events.

## **Early Childhood FAQs**

[www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/question-corner](http://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/question-corner)

Frequently asked questions and answers about bias for early childhood professionals and parents/family members.

## **Guidelines for Achieving Bias-Free Communication**

[www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/guidelines-for-achieving-bias-free-communication](http://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/guidelines-for-achieving-bias-free-communication)

Tips for reviewing your language for bias and stereotypes.

## **10 Ways Youth Can Engage in Activism**

[www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/10-ways-youth-can-engage-in-activism](http://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/10-ways-youth-can-engage-in-activism)

Strategies and ideas for youth activism.



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