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# Working with victims of hate

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## Working with victims of hate

“Where we fail to acknowledge the harm caused by discrimination, hate and structural inequalities, we allow hate to grow and the impact on marginalized communities to deepen. Where we fail to protect the safety of marginalized people both online and in real life, especially during times of crisis, we push people out of those spaces and allow hate to flourish in their place. Where we fail to account for basic human needs for belonging and security, and where circumstances such as a pandemic lead to profound isolation, anxiety and fear, human connection and belonging may be found in the shared ideologies of hate rather than in compassion and when we don't hold people to account for the hate and discrimination they have perpetrated, we can never move to the important stages of forgiveness and resolution - either as individuals or as a society.”

from BC's Office of the Human Rights Commissioner (2023). From hate to hope: Report of the inquiry into hate in the COVID-19 pandemic. p.17

### Introduction

It can often feel like our interconnected world has highlighted and worsened the toxicity that has existed in our communities and that the many ways we now possess to connect have become avenues to hurt one another. Although one may focus on the criminal event when exploring hate crimes, it is even more important to focus on the victims and helping them make sense of the crime and how it has impacted their life so they can move forward. In working with victims of hate crimes, this focus on the individual needs, culture and context is essential. Not only is the victim a target of the crime, but the perpetrator is specifically targeting what they see as the victim's identity, community, or other characteristics that the perpetrator sees as unwanted. It is important to remember that this type of victimization is often experienced in the context of a history of marginalization, discrimination, and day-to-day prejudice, thus, the hate crime victimization can be just part of what harms the victim. The message being sent by a hate crime is: You do not belong. You are not welcome.

The personal/professional helping relationship can be even more delicate and important as both you and the victim face the impact of what has happened. There is no one-size-fits-all approach since support workers' personal characteristics can also impact the quality of the relationship, depending upon the victim's experience. If you are part of the group the victim sees as holding prejudicial views, or are perceived to be similar to the perpetrator, it could affect your professional relationship. Your personal biases and prejudices also require honest self-examination as you create genuine connections with victims. This may include frank discussions with your supervisors, mentors, cultural mentors, and the victim. For example, as a person perceived as a white male with a Doctorate living in Canada, my clients will make assumptions about my social class, history of power, privilege, sexuality, religious affiliation, and general life story. Whether these assumptions are accurate or not does not matter—my focus is on helping the client. I will readily acknowledge that I might remind victims of people who traumatized

them or others in their group. Even though I am well-intentioned and trying to help, I have the potential to trigger their trauma response at any point in the relationship. The power imbalance that is part of requesting help may also trigger the victim or result in them not seeking help when needed. This chapter focuses on the issues that support workers need to consider when working with victims of hate and hate crime, including professional issues, the role of the internet, and treatment considerations. It also gives support workers some ideas about how to work with these groups of victims and help them reconnect to their lives.

Similar to the earlier edition of this chapter, hate crimes have been explored here as a whole and not broken down by victim characteristics that might be related to victimization (e.g., race, religion, sexual identity, etc.). There are special issues and elements related to each group, such as historical treatment, that cannot be done justice in this brief introduction. Furthermore, each group is diverse and can be sub-divided by different characteristics or subcultures that may experience different levels of prejudice and hate crime victimization (Cramer et al., 2018; Díaz-Faes & Pereda, 2022). As Funnell (2015; p. 80) stated: “the harms of victimization are physical, psychological and emotional; (sic) they are also social and they impact on each [person] differently.” For example, Orthodox Jews or those dealing with anti-Semitism and transgender individuals from the 2SLGBTQI+ community often face increased targeting and these differences must be understood and respected (Hein & Scharer, 2013; Herek et al., 2009; Hodge & Boddie, 2021). Thus, the information in this chapter needs to be used in conjunction with what victims share about their experiences to guide your work. The victim should guide your efforts.

This chapter takes a trauma-informed approach, recognizing that every individual has a trauma history which needs to be respected and considered in every interaction through a collaborative and transparent support relationship (Hansen et al., 2018; Clinic Community Health Centre, 2013). To provide good service to a victim it is essential to respect their lived experience by hearing and validating their history (Hansen, et al., 2018). This includes validating the impact of how previous generations have been treated (Gutiérrez, 2022; Perry, 2008; Perry & Scrivens, 2019), as well as their personal experiences. The goal of this chapter is to highlight issues that will likely be important in working with any victim who feels that prejudice or bias is part of their victimization. Educating yourself about these general issues is the beginning of providing good care (Hansen, et al., 2018). Support workers are strongly encouraged to pursue their own research and consult with community members (cultural mentors) to better understand issues specifically related to each victim’s needs and trauma history as part of helping them on their healing journey. Regardless of your role, collaboration, empowerment, compassion, and understanding are central to creating a healing interaction.

This chapter first focuses on the definition of hate crimes, to give support workers an idea of the scope of what might happen to victims. The chapter then moves to professional issues one should consider when working with any victim, but especially victims of hate crimes. This highlights general issues that support workers need to understand when dealing with sensitive issues around culture, prejudice, and society. In our current cultural context, one cannot ignore

the role of the internet and social networks as a medium for hate and hate groups as well as supports for perpetrators. Finally, the chapter concludes with a focus on the psychological impact of being a hate crime victim, including suggestions on what support workers might do to help victims.

## Definition of Hate Crime

The following definition of “hate crime”<sup>1</sup> will be used in this chapter:

... a criminal violation motivated by hate, based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation or gender identity or expression, or any other similar factor.

Uniform Crime Reporting Survey manual (2022, 89)<sup>2</sup>

Sometimes when people speak about hate crimes, they think of hate propaganda offences. These offences in the *Criminal Code* are found in sections 318 (advocating or promoting genocide against an identifiable group), subsection 319(1) (inciting hatred against an identifiable group in a public place that is likely to lead to a breach of the peace), subsection 319(2) (wilfully promoting hatred against an identifiable group), and subsection 319(2.1) (wilfully promoting antisemitism by denying, condoning, or downplaying the Holocaust).

Another kind of hate crime is regular crimes such as assault or mischief committed because of hatred of the victim’s perceived race, religion, etc. This kind of hate crime is dealt with in two ways. First, there is the sentencing provision found in subparagraph 718.2 (a)(i) of the *Criminal Code* that provides that a judge must consider at sentencing for any crime “evidence that the offence was motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, or any other similar factor.” Second, there is a specific offence of hate-motivated mischief found in subsections 430 (4.1) and (4.101) of the *Criminal Code* with respect to mischief committed against certain kinds of property, such as property primarily used for religious worship or educational institutions primarily used by an identifiable group.

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<sup>1</sup>The literature also uses the terms “hate-motivated crime” or “bias-motivated crime” and these terms may be more appropriate given they focus on the motivation rather than making assumptions about underlying emotions. I am using the more common term “hate crime” as it may be more familiar to readers.

<sup>2</sup> In Canada, official crime statistics, also known as police-reported crime data, have been systematically collected since 1962 through the UCR Survey. Updates to the survey (now version 2.2) reflect changes in the *Criminal Code*. All police services participate in the survey by submitting data to the Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics (CCJCSS), which is part of Statistics Canada, according to a nationally approved set of common crime categories and definitions.

“Hate is based on perceptions of a stable, negative disposition of persons or groups. We hate persons and groups more because of who they are, than because of what they do. Hate has the goal to eliminate its target... Hate can be reassuring and self-protective, because its message is simple and helps confirming people’s belief in a just world.”  
(Fischer et al., 2018, p. 309)

As a clinician, however, my approach does not come from a legal or policy position; it comes from victims’ definition of the crime. If victims believe hate, bias or prejudice was part of the reason they were victimized, then I work with them using many of the principles and issues raised in this chapter; others’ judgements about the nature of the crime are irrelevant to providing compassionate support. For example, academics argue whether crimes perpetrated against women by men who hold misogynistic ideas might fit the definition of a hate crime (Mason-Bish & Duggan, 2020; McCarthy, 2017); my perspective is that victims decide how to perceive their victimization. One could contend that such validation may be part of them taking their power back, gaining agency as they make sense of what happened to them. Mason-Bish and Duggan (2020) argue that one benefit of defining such gender-based crimes as hate crimes is removing some of the victim blaming that can occur.

Part of developing one’s understanding involves looking at the range of criminal behaviour that might be seen as a hate crime. Several researchers have noted how hate crimes can range in severity from acting out/property destruction to an organized political statement or severe assault or death (Boeckmann & Turpin-Petrosino, 2002; Mason-Bish & Duggan, 2020). Much of the research and writing in this area discuss intimidation, harassment, vandalism (homes/business), vandalism of religious property, personal assaults (physical and sexual) and homicide (Barnes & Ephross, 1994; Cheng, 2004; Garnetts et al., 1990; Jacobs & Potter 1998; McPhail, 2002; Perry, 2008). Perry (2008; p. 110) also highlighted a point made by the American Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist that hate crimes also have an increased risk of triggering further criminal activity as groups engage in retaliation. Support workers are reminded that all crimes involve illegal behaviour. In the case of hate crimes, however, the perpetrator’s motivation is because of bias and prejudice against what they perceive as the victims’ group, seeing that group as outsiders and worthy of attack.

Hate crimes send a message to society in general and the victim’s specific community, with the individual victim as the representative of a homogenous group (Fischer et al., 2018). Although the specific crime may target an individual, often the perpetrator’s goal is to send a message to the victim’s community that they do not belong. Hate crimes require no pre-existing relationship between the victim and perpetrator; people are victimized due to being perceived as part of a despised group (Fischer, et al., 2018). A central element of understanding hate crimes is what Berk, Boyd and Hamner (1992) refer to as the “but for” characteristic of hate crimes: “But for” the biased view of the perpetrator, the crime would not have occurred. The victim is targeted to bring about harm to the group they represent. This interchangeability of a victim as a

representative of the larger group is another marker of a hate crime (Fischer et al., 2018; Jacobs & Potter 1998; McDevitt, Balboni, Garcia & Gu, 2001). Although the perpetrator often wants to “send a message” to the group, sometimes the crime can have a personal element. It is noteworthy that there is research that says that many victims who report hate crimes know their perpetrators, even if only casually (Mason, 2005). Thus, the nature of the crime may be an intermingling of personal animosity and perpetrator prejudice and discrimination, which may influence which individual representative is targeted. Thus, workers should be mindful when gathering information and not assume that the hate crime was a crime perpetrated by a stranger.

## Professional Issues

Before reviewing common clinical issues, one might encounter when working with victims of hate crimes, there are some professional issues I want to highlight. As can be seen in the section above, an empathic victim-centred perspective on hate crimes focuses on the individual experience of the victim as well as their culture’s history. As such, we also need to engage in self-reflection on how victims might perceive us as helpers. This means that our specific characteristics can have an even more heightened impact on victims if we, in any way, resemble the perpetrator of the hate crime. Workers who work as part of a team may want to discuss these issues to decide who might be best able to make a connection with the identified victim.

Another issue that can be important in working with victims of hate crimes is that of consent (Chahal, 2017). In our work with victims of hate crimes, we want to ensure that we are coming from a place of collaboration and empowerment by supporting the victims in their healing journey and decisions about what might happen. This means that support workers should be cautious against imposing their own biases on certain key decisions around reporting the hate crime, dealings with the police and courts, or other more supportive/case management/treatment issues that might arise.

Informed consent is essential as part of the healing journey, especially for those who feel victimized due to their personal or group characteristics. Full and informed consent is achieved through an open and honest discussion of the potential risks and benefits victims are facing in whatever choices they make about what to do about their victimization. Ignoring full and informed consent could serve to enhance victims’ feelings of helplessness in the face of power differences. Many victims of hate crimes are also members of groups that are often not accustomed to having power in our society, so may distrust people in authority, especially as they may have dealt with institutionalized discrimination. This marginalization is why the perpetrator targeted them. Dealing with prejudice and discrimination are issues that many people in these groups face daily and that daily barrage of exclusion has an effect (Gutiérrez, 2022; Helms, Nicolas, & Green, 2010; Perry, 2008). This daily reality will act as a lens that hate crime victims use to understand your work, the criminal justice system, the police, victim services as an agency, and when asking for help.



Finally, this is difficult work. Especially the elements that require you to honestly look at your personal biases and the biases you encountered when growing up. Workers are encouraged to follow the self-care strategies outlined in the original manual, such as assessing your resources, use of supervision, boundary setting, building a balanced life, professional development, and personal therapy. Two related issues that might be important to think about when working with victims of hate crimes are your personal biases and your level of openness and acceptance.

### Personal Biases

We must be very clear and frank on understanding our own personal biases about the victims' culture and their cultural values (Dunbar, 2001). Each of us has a particular cultural experience that needs to be acknowledged and respected, thus, supports should attend to the broader cultural context of the group from which the victim appears to originate, as well as their personal experience. This is central to building trust in the working relationship (Teyber, 2006). Support workers may want to seek consultation with supervisors, co-workers, or persons well acquainted with the victims' culture regarding any biases (Cheng, 2004), recognizing that those with whom we consult can also have biases. Further, support workers need to be cautious that in trying to be fair that they do not treat all clients the same. So-called "culture blindness," that is, not seeing the world as clients see it, and trying to treat everyone the same can cause support workers to be culturally insensitive (Truscott & Crook, 2004).

Furthermore, it is useful to reflect on how systemic racism may affect your day-to-day work without you realizing it because you are part of the system. For example, requiring state-issued identification to receive services could be triggering since those in power may use official means such as identification to deny services or to impose other demands on the person (e.g., referral to social services if identified as having trauma-related symptoms). These concerns may block some victims from accessing help, especially if victims have a trauma history about how they have been treated by those who are supposed to protect them (e. g., police, healthcare, social service).

In my experience, it is when I am most confident that I am not biased that I need to work hardest to identify how I might be misguided, relying on consultation and supervision in conjunction with self-study. Being defensive in the face of questions or being confident in your good intent is different from frank self-examination.<sup>3</sup> This self-examination should also include exploring any prejudicial views you might have been exposed to when growing up or in the general culture. It is noteworthy that some views that might have been acceptable years or decades ago are now considered offensive (Herek, 2015). Even positive biases about a group, called the Model Minority Myth (Yao, 2022), is a part of a prejudicial culture that treats individuals as if they are generic and interchangeable and ignores individual differences. An example of a common myth is

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<sup>3</sup> At the time of publication, the Anti-Defamation League had an [Online Self-Assessment](https://www.adl.org/sites/default/files/personal-self-assessment-of-anti-bias-behavior-online-version_0.pdf) that readers may find helpful. You can also complete an online search using the terms: bias; self-assessment to find other resources that might encourage self-reflection. The written link is: [https://www.adl.org/sites/default/files/personal-self-assessment-of-anti-bias-behavior-online-version\\_0.pdf](https://www.adl.org/sites/default/files/personal-self-assessment-of-anti-bias-behavior-online-version_0.pdf).

that all Asians are hardworking and good students, and Yao (2022) notes examples in the media where Asians were seen as over-represented in Canadian universities, a claim that might incite prejudice and hate. Your approach should fit the experiences and strengths of each client and approach the work with humility. Part of dealing with personal bias is also facing areas of subtle bias.

### Openness and Acceptance

In working with victims of hate and hate crimes, support workers need to assess their comfort with victims, their lived experience, and potential biases about their culture. Dunbar (2001) points out that you should assess your own skills and knowledge in working with a member of the group in question. Are there differences between your worldview and that of your clients? How might these differences affect your work? Are there other issues that might interfere with the work you do together? Teyber (2006) points out that many of those from marginalized groups will often not expect to be heard or understood because of their experiences of prejudice, discrimination, and systemic racism. Workers can build trust and a good working relationship by acknowledging this challenge.

As Hansen et al. (2018) advise, we need to provide an environment that is reflective of:

- cultural safety—examining your views to create a safe space;
- cultural humility—self-reflection and co-learning with a goal to increase client and community participation in care; and
- narrative humility—listening closely to a victim’s stories to examine your role in those stories. How do you identify with the various people? What are your expectations? What responsibilities do you feel?

These issues are important because many victims of hate crimes will be watchful of any potential bias on the part of those helping them. Of note, we can often show subtle cultural bias in seemingly innocent ways that may cause problems in the professional relationship (Truscott & Crook, 2004). For example, office decorations, reading material, and personal items may be welcoming to some but distancing to others. Although this is not to advocate creating a sterile support environment, it is helpful to be aware of the messages we send victims when they come seeking help.

## Common Issues

### Culture

Culture refers to a set of shared meanings that form a structure for social relationships (Truscott & Crook, 2004). Any group targeted in hate crimes can be seen from a cultural perspective as being different from the dominant culture or as having different norms from the dominant culture. Support workers, however, must not make the same mistake as the hate crime perpetrators: each victim is an individual and we should not view them simply as a member of

the group. Support workers need to be aware of cultural norms, but also keep in mind that this person has a unique perspective that must be the focus (Truscott & Crook, 2004).

For the purposes of this chapter, we will be taking an expansive definition of culture that includes many elements of identity. When I reference the **dominant culture** or the **dominant group**, these terms represent those in the general culture. This would be roughly defined in Canada as the white (Northern European), middle-class, heterosexual, and able-bodied group. However, it is important to note that the values and specific make-up of a dominant culture will vary in various parts of the country. Dominance does not mean the most numerous but those who have more power (social/economic/political) and define what is “normal.”

### Prejudice in Society

All crimes occur within a social context. There are social, economic, family and personal pressures on both the victim and perpetrator, and many argue that hate crimes need to also be understood within the context of living in a prejudicial society (Garnetts et al., 1990; Goodley & Runswick, 2011; Gutiérrez, 2022; Herek et al., 1997; Perry, 2002; Perry, 2008; Willis, 2004). In fact, some have shown how coping with oppression and discrimination can lead to similar mental health symptoms as dealing with hate crime victimization (Bandermann & Szymanski, 2014; Szymanski & Balsam, 2011). In other words, those who are treated as “different” or “not belonging,” whether that treatment is criminal or not, often need to mobilize psychological resources to cope. Within our society, what is seen as “normal” is set by the dominant culture—there are those seen as acceptable and those that are seen as “different.” Often those seen as different can be the target of prejudice and, potentially, hate-motivated crimes by perpetrators who want to send a message that “those people” are not welcome.

Beyond the context of crime, support workers can recognize that this in-group/out-group dynamic may cause a great deal of distress to the victim and their family (Ardley, 2005; Bryant-Davis & Ocampo, 2005; Dunbar, 2001; Glaser, Dixit, & Green, 2002; Helms et al., 2010). Furthermore, those who are part of the out-group may also experience other stressful issues, such as poverty, that will affect their victimization experience (Dale et al., 2016), even if it does not seem to be directly related to the crime. Coping with prejudice, poverty, and marginalization **may** be part of their everyday experience and this will likely become part of any work (Gutiérrez, 2022; Teyber, 2006).

This chapter will not be discussing perpetrator motivations in detail; however, it is appropriate to draw attention to prejudice in this section. In discussing prejudice in policing, Senator Murray Sinclair highlighted system issues: “Systemic racism is when the system itself is based upon and founded upon racist beliefs and philosophies and thinking and has put in place policies and practices that literally force even the non-racists to act in a racist way. So it is what you would call systematic racism.” (Bien, 2020). This is a critical issue which may explain why many people who commit hate crimes are not typically extremists or members of hate groups (Chakraborti, 2015). Prejudicial views and racism are baked into multiple layers of Canadian society, not just policing, and hate crime victims are often the recipient of that exclusion. Thus, it may be seen as

acceptable to intimidate or harass certain groups in the workplace, at school or in the community. Such harassment may be at the hands of peers or persons in authority (Dupper, Forrest-Bank, & Lowry-Carusillo, 2015) and reflect an acceptance of prejudicial views as normal and potentially grounded in historical and more violent prejudicial acts (King, Messner, & Bailer, 2009; Perry, & Scrivens, 2019). For examples of marginalized groups, one need only look at the policies of the residential school/Indian hospital system (Drees, 2010) in Canada, and later government apology (Harris, 2017), or the historical mistreatment of the 2SLGBTQI+ community in the federal civil service. Thus, hate crimes can be viewed in the context of a prejudicial society. For evidence, we can look at the increase in Islamophobia and hate crimes against people who looked Middle Eastern after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre on September 11, 2001 (Gerstenfeld, 2002) or the rise in hate crime and discrimination directed at Asians during the COVID-19 pandemic (Huang & Tsai, 2022; Huynh, Raval & Freeman, 2022; Inman et al., 2021; Kim & Tummala-Narra, 2022; Lee & Waters, 2021; Oh, Zhou & Banawa, 2022; Sims et al., 2022; Wang & Santos, 2022; Wong-Padoongpatt, Barrita & King, 2022). This harmful behaviour obviously reflects the perpetrator's personal views, but also of views that might be promoted online or in the media. It is to this concept of community prejudice that we now turn.

### The Internet and Hate

The internet and social media have been used to make positive connections and social linkages, including online support groups, fundraising, and discussion forums on prosocial interests. Littman (2015) reflects on how media advances like the printing press and cheap paper, radio, television, and now the internet have had benefits but also came with a cost. People can easily find a community and make healthy links to others in ways that might have been onerous or impossible prior to the internet because of physical isolation or resources. This is also true for those wishing to spread hate. In a survey of six countries, Reichelmann et al. (2021) found that most people in their sample of those between 18 and 25 years old accidentally found hateful messages when online, with 72.7% to 94.8% indicating they did not seek out hateful messages. Hateful messages included use of stereotypes, group blame for personal or social problems, promoting discrimination, promoting hatred, and promoting violence (Reichelmann et al., 2021).

Rohlfing (2015) points out that hate groups have always existed and are not simply the result of online access. The challenge pre-internet was finding like-minded people. She indicated that such groups might use pamphlets, small meetings, music, and other materials distributed by hand or information shared by word-of-mouth, highlighting the effort needed. The internet offers a much less expensive and wider reach than these old-style methods of gathering like-minded people. It is also useful for support workers to keep in mind the point that many hate crimes are committed by people who are not members of organized groups but, rather, people who may hold prejudicial ideas (Chakraborti, 2015). For the victim, however, hate on the internet and hate expressed during the crime are part of the same message that they are the problem.

Within the context of hate crimes, online networks have allowed people to anonymously connect and share prejudicial attitudes offensive to wider society. In a study on cyberbullying and cyber

hate, Wachs et al. (2019) highlight factors that contribute to toxicity (termed ‘toxic online disinhibition’), including how being uninhibited because of being anonymous, and physically distant from victims, reduced empathy because of non-contact with victim and lack of appropriate social cues online. People who were previously isolated can now find a community where their views are validated and potentially enhanced by people who hold similar values or provide social support to hateful messages. One could look at this as a radicalization of prejudicial beliefs that may stay within the virtual world or extend to activities in the real world (Awan & Zempi, 2015; Corb, 2015b). Hate-oriented websites can have diverse goals but often focus on linking people with similar views, ‘educating’ the curious, and recruiting new members (Corb, 2015b; Rohlfing, 2015).

The internet also provides a new virtual environment for hate crimes (Rohlfing, 2015), such as criminal harassment targeting a person because of their personal characteristics. Social media can also serve to vicariously traumatize other members of the group who might see videos or encounter print descriptions of hate crimes (Pickles, 2021), extending the victim group. Furthermore, perpetrators can pretend they are from the victim’s group in order to get personal information to use to commit an offence (Alhaboby, al-Khateeb, Barnes, & Short, 2016). Such virtual criminal activity can be quite damaging as it visits the victim in the relative safety of their home and might occur at any point they respond to email or engage online. Alhaboby et al. (2016) note how cyber harassment may affect the victim directly, but also the victim’s family and other supports. Victims themselves note the possibility of online threats or hate crimes moving into the real world (Awan & Zempi, 2015) which can intensify feelings of fear, mental health symptoms, and overall distress. Awan and Zempi (2016) argue that the boundary between the online world and the real world is blurred and the impacts of hate crimes on the victims’ sense of safety and belonging to greater society represent a continuum of attack, wherein victims feel at risk and unwelcome in both the online and real world. Furthermore, the psychological effects of hate crimes may be the same, regardless of whether the crime was online or in the real world (Zempi, 2017).

Creating an internet safe from online hate and hate crime may be as challenging as creating a crime-free society. Littman (2015) notes how people might protect themselves by blocking others, but this generally only occurs after the hate has been perpetrated. Furthermore, this also means the perpetrators may go on to victimize more people. Blaya (2019) reviewed initiatives focused on teaching victims how to assertively confront online attacks, report perpetrators, and training in appropriate reactions. They noted how such initiatives had not undergone rigorous evaluation but focused on victim empowerment. These challenges highlight the importance of guidelines, rules, regulations and monitoring that might be needed to maintain a safe internet (Chetty & Alathur, 2018; Littman, 2015; Rauf, 2021).<sup>4</sup> Given that the internet knows no

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<sup>4</sup> On February 26, 2024, the Minister of Justice introduced in the House of Commons Bill C-63 to enact the *Online Harms Act*, which would make social media platforms responsible for addressing harmful content and for protecting children. See [Backgrounder – Government of Canada introduces legislation to combat harmful content online, including the sexual exploitation of children. - Canada.ca](#) and

international boundaries, this may prove challenging (Chetty & Alathur, 2018). Support workers aiding victims would be well-served to help them learn how to assess and defend against hate when venturing into the online world through the use of resources (e.g., guides, websites) focused on defending against online bullying.

### Reporting the Crime

There is much written about how many victims of hate crimes do not report the crime to authorities (Boeckmann & Turpin-Petrosino, 2002; Corb, 2015a; Díaz-Faes & Pereda, 2022; Garnetts et al., 1990; Herek et al, 1999; Herek et al., 2002; Janoff, 2005; Kaysen et al., 2005; Kuehnle & Sullivan, 2003; Kutateladze, 2022). Díaz-Faes & Pereda (2022) completed a review of the literature and highlighted how the psychological effects of hate crimes work to suppress reporting. They noted that issues of differing legal definitions, perceptions of police legitimacy, police attitudes, political climate, the victim's experience of discrimination, and offender characteristics affect reporting decisions (Díaz-Faes & Pereda, 2022). These issues highlight some of the cultural and systemic discrimination issues outlined above that have a daily impact on the victim.

With reference to the Canadian context,<sup>5</sup> Corb (2015a) also noted that hate crimes are underreported, pointing to reasons such as fear of repercussions, fear of exclusion from the general community, stigmatization, fear of the police or law enforcement, and so forth. The finding that victims underreport crime is supported by more recent research estimating that only 29% of hate crimes are reported to police (Research and Statistics Division, Department of Justice Canada, 2023). Thus, support workers may want to identify how to help victims in a way that does not leave them feeling controlled. The goal is to empower people to make an informed decision that promotes healing, which can differ among people. Although police in Canada accept third-party reporting, support workers should discuss with victims how to best approach authorities, including the decision to report or not report. Victims may need informational support or assistance in looking at the costs and benefits of reporting to clarify any misconceptions about the Canadian system based on their experiences and perceptions of the justice system. At the core of these discussions is enhancing victims' sense of control over their lives. Corb (2015a) noted that the multicultural and immigrant nature of Canada means that victims may have diverse experiences with the police or authorities either here or, for immigrants, in their birth country. Depending upon the person's individual experiences with law enforcement and government, such open discussions can be essential. This is why support workers must always validate a victim's choice in whether to report and how to approach the situation in general.

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[Government Bill \(House of Commons\) C-63 \(44-1\) - First Reading - Online Harms Act - Parliament of Canada](#)

<sup>5</sup> See infographic for a 2021 summary of Canadian information regarding hate crimes: <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/jr/vhci-dvch/index.html>

Several researchers have noted that victims may be reluctant to report hate crimes because of fear of secondary victimization and/or concerns about police bias (Atak, 2020; Herek et al., 2002; Peel, 1999). Furthermore, victims may not perceive the attack as a hate crime, even in the face of evidence, because they have become accustomed to prejudice in society, highlighting the need to sometimes explore this perception directly by asking: “Do you think you were victimized due to prejudice?” (Cuevas et al., 2021). In other words, people can become so desensitized to dealing with daily prejudice that they may not consider the possibility they were targeted due to that same prejudice.

Researchers have also identified several other reasons people give for not reporting hate crimes (Chahal, 2017; Herek et al., 2002; Peel, 1999), including that:

- they felt the crime was not important, or it was unlikely police would catch the perpetrator(s);
- the person saw it as a personal matter. This might include harassment from family, co-workers, classmates, etc.;
- the person felt they were to blame or were embarrassed about being victimized;
- the person did not believe it was a crime; and
- the person fixed, or tried to fix, the problem themselves and did not think they needed to contact the police.

A victim’s previous experiences can also affect whether they will report the crime. Stermac and Sheridan (1993) point out that victims who belong to more than one marginalized group are at higher risk of being a victim of hate crime, but also are at increased risk of facing discrimination in society. This feeling of not being accepted because of multiple labels may also decrease the chances they will report the crime (Dunbar, 2006). Thus, an Indigenous lesbian might be less likely to report a hate crime than a white lesbian. Dunbar (2006) also indicates that for victims of anti-2SLGBTQI+ violence, the more violent the attack, the **less** likely it is to be reported; yet others have found that more severe hate crimes are **more** likely to be reported (Lantz, Wenger, & Malcom, 2022). These mixed results may involve differences in victim groups, but also changes in society over the intervening years of the research. Feddes and Jonas (2020) found that those who had previous experience with being a hate crime victim were also less likely to report and reported less trust in the police. Support workers may need to help victims look at their personal costs and benefits of reporting the crime to authorities as part of an ongoing informed consent process (Garnetts, Herek, & Levy, 1990).

Given the above, some researchers have looked at those who did report hate crimes. McDevitt et al. (2001) noted that hate crime victims were more likely to talk to other people before reporting the crime. This may relate to all crime victims’ need to decide whether what happened was a crime or to seek other types of support. Kutateladze (2022) also found that the biggest predictor of reporting was encouragement and support from friends. Peel (1999) indicated that those who report hate crimes are more likely to view the police as effective and reported that they did not want the perpetrator to “win.” However, those who reported also felt more fear about reporting

the crime (Peel, 1999). The severity of the hate crime increased the likelihood of reporting for some victims (Lantz, Wenger, & Malcom, 2022), possibly indicating that the severity of the crime may overcome some of the limiting factors outlined above.

### Waves of Victims

Although the criminal act harms the primary victim, there are also many secondary victims (Ardley, 2005; Ashraf & Nassar, 2018; Jacobs & Potter 1998; Perry & Alvi, 2012; Pickles, 2021; McDonald & Hogue, 2007; Stults, Kupprat, Krause, Kapadia, & Halkitis, 2017). Iganski (2001) described “**waves of harm**” which move out from the initial victim to the group/neighbourhood, other targeted communities, social norms, and values. Hate crimes send a clear message to the initial victim’s community that they are not welcomed or accepted in society (Jacobs & Potter 1998) regardless of whether they live in the immediate area (Blee, 2005). Furthermore, there is evidence that people have a stronger reaction when the crime victim is from a group with which one identifies (Paterson et al. 2019a; Walters et al., 2020) and are more likely to see it as a hate crime (Lee et al., 2007). Empathy for the victim who is like oneself may be the explanation (Paterson et al., 2019a; Paterson et al., 2018), although also being a victim may reduce this pattern and result in victim-blaming (Paterson et al., 2019b).

The issue of vicarious traumatization has been highlighted when people see the victimization of someone like themselves (Ashraf & Nassar, 2018; Perry & Alvi, 2012). For example, if a religious site (e.g., synagogue, church, mosque) in Montreal is vandalized, this can affect the feelings of safety and security of a similar people in Vancouver. Similarly, if a rainbow crosswalk is vandalized, media reports can affect 2SLGBTQI+ people in other communities. Any cultural symbol, religious or otherwise, can be a target of hate to traumatize the target group (e.g., burning or removal of totem poles or crosses). This can result in increased feelings of fear, lack of safety and vulnerability in all members of the targeted community (Boeckmann & Turpin-Petrosino, 2002; Jacobs & Potter 1998; Herek et al., 2002; Huang & Tsai, 2022; Jenness & Broad, 1997). This in turn can lead to even greater feelings of being marginalized.

### Psychological Impact

Many writers in the area agree that hate crimes have an impact on the victim above and beyond that of simply the criminal act (Ardley, 2005; Boeckmann & Turpin-Petrosino, 2002; Iganski, 2001). Although many of the reactions listed in this section are reactions that any crime victim might have, researchers studying victims of hate crime have identified these reactions as being particularly important. These reactions may simply be a reasonable reaction to the extraordinary stress of being targeted by the perpetrator and harmed because of characteristics beyond the victim’s control (Bryant-Davis & Ocampo, 2005; Craig-Henderson & Sloan, 2003). There is evidence that victims of multiple hate crime events show more severe mental health symptoms than victims of a single incident (Mitchell et al., 2020), and this extends to those who have experienced multiple traumas throughout their life. Of note, support workers may also want to be aware that there can be gender differences in response to hate crimes or prejudice (Abu-Ras



& Suarez, 2009), highlighting the need to focus on the victim's report rather than general research findings.

Similar to research on all victims of crime, research specifically on victims of hate crimes or those who face repeated prejudice indicate that they often:

- Feel less secure (Abu-Ras & Suarez 2009; Ashraf & Nassar, 2018; Awan, & Zempi, 2015; Boeckmann & Turpin-Petrosino, 2002; Garnetts et al., 1990; Huang & Tsai, 2022; Huynh et al., 2022; Janoff, 2005; Mason-Bish & Duggan, 2020; Staub, 1996)
- See the world as less orderly and meaningful (Garnetts et al., 1990)
- Have lower self-worth (Dunbar, 2006; Garnetts et al., 1990; Janoff, 2005)
- Feel less effective (Staub, 1996)
- Engage in avoidance and isolation (Cramer et al., 2018; Funnell, 2015; Samari, Alcalá, H& Sharif, 2018)
- Have problems in personal relationships (Janoff, 2005; Staub, 1996)
- Feel guilty and blame themselves (Dunbar, 2006; Wertheimer, 1990)
- Are less empathic towards other hate crime victims or engage in victim-blaming (Paterson et al., 2019b)
- Question their ability to protect themselves (Staub, 1996)
- Feel they can not meet goals in life (Staub, 1996)
- Feel anger toward the larger community or sub-community (Herek et al., 1997; Janoff, 2005; Staub, 1996)
- Feel excluded from the greater society, affecting their identity (Ashraf & Nassar, 2018)
- Experience depression (Awan, & Zempi, 2015; Burton et al., 2013; Feddes & Jonas (2020; Herek et al., 1997; Huynh, Raval & Freeman, 2022; Inman et al., 2021; Janoff, 2005; Lee & Waters, 2021)
- Experience anxiety or Post Traumatic Stress (Alhaboby, et al., 2016; Cramer et al., 2018; Garnetts et al., 1990; Herek et al., 1997; Huynh et al., 2022; Inman et al., 2021; Janoff, 2005; Lee & Waters, 2021; Sims et al., 2022)
- May experience increased thoughts of suicide (Burton et al., 2013; Cramer et al., 2018; Duncan & Hatzenbuehler, 2014)
- Experience sleep problems (Lee & Waters, 2021)
- Experience headaches, nightmares, crying, agitation, restlessness, and weight loss (Garnetts et al., 1990; Janoff, 2005)
- Have increased use of drugs and/or alcohol (Janoff, 2005)
- May engage in social action and advocacy (Sheehan et al., 2021)

### Differences from Other Victims

There are some differences between hate crime victims and victims of non-hate crimes. The following results are from research that directly compared victims of hate crime to similar (i.e., same culture) victims of non-hate crimes to note differences in reaction. Note that in most cases

the response is like what is seen in any victim of crime, but the negative impact seems to be greater in those who have experienced hate crime.

In comparison to non-hate crime victims, hate crime victims are more likely to:

- Suffer more brutal attacks (Janoff, 2005; Willis, 2004), possibly due to hate crimes often being perpetrated by more than one perpetrator (Lantz & Kim, 2019) and are almost three times more likely to experience severe injury (Messner, McHugh & Felson, 2004)<sup>6</sup>
- Report more distress (Herek et al., 1997; Herek et al., 1999; McDevitt et al., 2001; Mjoseth, 1998)
- Report higher levels of fear (Craig-Henderson & Sloan, 2003; Herek et al., 2002; McDevitt et al., 2001)
- Report higher levels of depression, anxiety, anger, and PTSD symptoms (Alhaboby, et al., 2016; Herek et al., 1997; McDevitt et al., 2001). However, other researchers found that there were no differences between the two groups with respect to depression (Rose & Mechanic, 2002)
- See others as dangerous (Herek et al., 1997; Herek et al., 1999)
- See the world as unsafe (Herek et al., 1999; McDevitt et al., 2001)
- Rate their risk of future victimization as higher (Herek et al., 1997)
- Show a relatively low sense of personal mastery (Herek et al., 1999)
- See personal setbacks as related to prejudice (Herek et al., 1999)
- Report overcoming the incident as “very difficult” (McDevitt et al., 2001)
- Report the incident as having a big impact on their life (Craig-Henderson & Sloan, 2003)
- Report more intrusive thoughts of the incident and feeling like they do not want to live any longer (McDevitt et al., 2001)
- Report losing their job (McDevitt et al., 2001)
- Report significant health problems (McDevitt et al., 2001).
- Report more intrusive thoughts of the incident and feeling like they do not want to live any longer (McDevitt et al., 2001)

Support workers will want to pay close attention to these and other issues that they are accustomed to seeing in any crime victim. One explanation for the more severe reaction in hate crime victims is that the perpetrator targeted the victim because of their hatred toward how the victim appeared to them (Blake, 2001; Craig-Henderson & Sloan, 2003; McDevitt et al., 2001). The reaction is related to the victims’ feelings of marginalization. Thus, it makes it more difficult for victims to (re)build a feeling of a safe world. Furthermore, after the hate crime, victims are still likely to encounter other bias and prejudice that will re-emphasize that some in society do not accept them (Ardley, 2005; Chahal, 2017; Garnetts et al., 1990; Herek et al., 1997; Willis, 2004).

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<sup>6</sup> Partially related to increased physical damage, Sivarajasingam et al. (2017) identified hate crime victims in the emergency room and suggested that emergency room statistics better track severe hate crime levels in society than traditional research methods.

## Identity Issues

Support workers will note that many clients who are victim of hate crimes will have issues involving how they see themselves, others, and their relationships. Identity includes: a) feelings of belonging to the group, b) group-specific behaviours and practices, and c) exploration of and commitment to the group (Dubow, Pargament, Boxer & Tarakeshwar, 2000). Several authors indicate that those victims who have a strong cultural identity and define themselves by that identity can be at greater risk for developing mental health symptoms after being a victim of a hate crime (Dubow et al., 2000; Janoff, 2005) or any prejudicial acts (Gutiérrez, 2022; Moradi & Risco, 2006). This may be because the victim has experienced an attack on both themselves **and** how they see themselves (Blake, 2001; Kaysen et al., 2005; Staub, 1996). Others point out, however, that those who do not have strong bonds to the identity characteristics targeted in the crime may be more likely to blame themselves, feel they are worthless, and not report the crime (Boeckmann & Liew, 2002). Support workers need to assess how important group identity issues are to the victim. By knowing whether a victim highly identifies with their group, support workers might better predict the types of problems the victim might face and be able to refer them to appropriate supports.

On the other hand, researchers also note that those who have a strong cultural identity can also look to teachings and people from their group for ways to cope (Adams et al., 2006; Dubow et al., 2000). They are also more likely to have social support within the community which can help them make sense of what has happened (Blee, 2005; Jackson, 2017; Janoff, 2005; Miville et al., 2005). Furthermore, they may be more likely to report the crime, seek help and strengthen their cultural identity (Boeckmann & Liew, 2002). In fact, research on diverse ethnic and cultural groups indicates that many people use group status and identity as a way of understanding themselves and their world (Alvarez et al., 2006; Chen et al., 2006; Miville et al., 2005; Wester et al., 2006). This understanding can have a major impact on how the person makes meaning about their victimization. Support workers should encourage those victims that have a strong sense of cultural identity to access supports within their community, as well as other supports. This will also help them make meaning that fits both their relationship to their culture and the dominant society (Craig-Henderson & Sloan, 2003; Dunbar, 2001).

The main goal in working with crime victims is helping them move on from the crisis of the criminal victimization and rebuild their life. If needed, this process includes helping them gain new understanding about how they now fit into their cultural group as well as to the dominant culture (Dunbar, 2001). With multi-racial victims or victims from different identity groups (e.g., black, Catholic, gay), healing may also include helping them access strengths and identity from several different cultures (Miville et al., 2005). Rosenwasser (2000) describes a group process called cooperative inquiry wherein people work together to develop their identity in the face of challenges. The process includes elements that help members build a healthy cultural identity with respect to their group and society in general. It appears this embracing of one's cultural identity and setting boundaries around dealing with the dominant culture helps people move forward in a healthy manner.

Although this chapter has not generally focused on one group, there is an issue specific to 2SLGBTQI+ clients that is worthy of note. Several researchers have reported that 2SLGBTQI+ clients may react to being attacked by questioning their decision to be “out” (Cheng, 2004; Garnetts et al., 1990; Janoff, 2005; Stermac & Sheridan, 1993). Thus, support workers may find that victims may want to again hide their sexuality and may be confronted with issues similar to those they had faced when they came out (Janoff, 2005). Several other authors also discuss internalized homophobia, wherein the person adopts the negative view of the greater society on homosexuality (Herek et al., 2009; Kaysen et al., 2005). Although this is a specific issue raised around sexual orientation and gender identity, it is easy to see that any hate crime victim may have a similar response of trying to minimize any apparent differences they have, to better “fit” into general society (e.g., choice of dress, wearing identifying religious symbols). Victims and others from the group may also choose to highlight apparent differences in a show of defiance against hate crime perpetrators and self-advocacy.

### Issues Involving Support Networks

As noted above, hate crimes involve waves of victims and affect all community members. We need to work with victims to help identify key people in their support networks that can help them make meaning of the crime. This is especially true if you as the support worker are not from the same identity group as the victims. Further, support workers may also need to partner with those in the victims’ support networks who may need to come to terms with their reactions to hate crime, possibly dealing with their own victimization history and reactions (Garnetts et al., 1990; Hansen et al., 2018; Clinic Community Health Centre, 2013). Victims must strike a balance that allows them to access support, but not overwhelm their network. Of note, survivor guilt often occurs in victims’ support networks or in others from the same group (Bryant-Davis & Ocampo, 2005). Thus, support workers need to educate victims about possible reactions of their network and help them succeed in reconnecting.

I wanted to end this section before we move on to treatment issues by pulling together what the above research means for victims who are seeking services. Perry (2008) highlighted this point around Indigenous victims of hate crime by noting the history of colonization, continued limitation of rights, the day-to-day dealing with prejudice, and the psychological impact of victimization when one sees the system is part of the problem. These points are very salient with Indigenous victims of hate crimes, but they are also salient to any victim of a hate crime who faces marginalization as part of their victimization or in their daily life. I would like to invite support workers to re-examine the potential psychological impacts of hate crime victimization and consider how you might feel dealing with these issues within a context of marginalization and prejudice. Now imagine dealing with the buildup of repeated instances of prejudice and marginalization that trigger and re-trigger earlier victimization; possibly contributing to concerns about future victimization. Within mental health, we acknowledge the cumulative nature of traumatic events as we diagnose and treat Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. What struck me about Dr. Perry’s point is that much of the literature is focused on hate crimes that are **single**

**events**, possibly due to the criminal justice system focus on the definition. From a support perspective, we would serve our clients much better by realizing that hate crime victims who are willing to ask for help in the context of continued rejection and marginalization are showing courage, hope and a desire to take charge of their life. This also speaks to why many hate crime victims might seek out support in organizations not focused on criminal victimization, but in organizations that work with their group. This speaks to the importance of partnerships between victim services and various cultural entities to ensure a greater understanding of both the cultural issues and victim issues.

## Treatment Issues

A major goal of treatment is to help the victim make sense of the crime and start the healing process (Cheng, 2004; Craig-Henderson & Sloan, 2003). There are many issues that are important to all victims of crime that support workers should also assess in victims of hate crimes. These include history of previous victimizations/revictimizations, history of trauma, issues around mental health, normal coping mechanisms, healthy behaviours, issues around the current victimization, access to support networks, and so forth. As noted above, it is important to take a trauma-informed approach that acknowledges that victims may have multiple trauma experiences and, if we are not careful, we can trigger and retraumatize them, and this includes looking at how our systems might cause trauma (Hansen et al., 2018).

The following issues are those that may arise when working with victims from marginalized identity groups or victims of hate crimes.

## Questions/Issues to Raise

- 1) Assess whether the person has a strong bond to the identity targeted by the crime (Dunbar, 2001). Also be aware of the dangers of internalized prejudice the victim may experience (Gutiérrez, 2022; Herek et al., 2009; Perry, 2008).

As noted above, this connection to a broader community can offer resiliency (Adams, et al., 2006; Díaz-Faes & Pereda, 2022; Dubow et al., 2000; Sheehan, Maduro, & Derlega, 2021) or it can potentially result in more challenges (Blake, 2001; Díaz-Faes & Pereda, 2022; Dubow et al., 2000; Janoff, 2005; Kaysen et al., 2005; Moradi & Risco, 2006; Staub, 1996). It is essential to not impose your personal view of what your client should do. Allow your client to lead you in how much, or how little, they want to use their culture to shape their identity.

- 2) With respect to building resiliency, evidence shows that depending on a supportive family, peer group, or community members can also help victims recover (Bartoş & Langdridge, 2019; Jackson, 2017; Lee & Waters, 2021; Singh & McKleroy, 2011). Support workers can help victims reach out to natural supports and not let symptoms cause clients to isolate themselves. This also extends to understanding that support workers can also aid supporters, focusing on the victims' natural supports as part of assisting the victim.

- 3) Support workers may need to directly address their ability to work with the victim (Dunbar, 2001; Teyber, 2006). The victim has been through a difficult situation (or situations) and will need to feel comfortable with you and feel you are skilled not only in your work but also knowledgeable about their issues and the issues of others in their culture. Support workers can connect with key people in the victims' community to help educate themselves on important issues to the group. Support workers might also seek consultation from others more familiar with the issues, transfer the victim to those workers from the victims' group, or discuss their concerns with their supervisors.
- 4) Support workers may want to keep in mind the issue of systemic racism and recognize that some victims may need to test the relationship. Meeting victims where they are may extend to partnering with other organizations to provide a support that is not based in dominant North American culture but more within healing modalities common in the victim's culture. This may also include education of others and advocacy (Hansen et al., 2018; Hodge, & Boddie, 2021).
- 5) Watch for, and highlight, any displays of resilience or strength. This is especially true of resilience around the strengths of their identity group and spirituality (Adams, et al., 2006; Dubow et al., 2000; Dunbar, 2001; Peel et al., 2023; Singh & McKleroy, 2011). This helps the victim see how they are part of a meaningful network, helps them access models similar to themselves on how to cope with the distress, and helps them focus on change and adapting to relating to problems with the dominant group. This must be balanced with developing an understanding of the dominant group to ensure that the victim does not succumb to unresolved anger at society at large that results in them feeling powerless to make positive changes in their life and in society (Dunbar, 2001; Janoff, 2005).
- 6) Get a history of victims' experiences in dealing with prejudice, discrimination, and marginalization (Boeckmann & Liew, 2002; Dunbar, 2001) and a trauma history (Mitchell et al., 2020). Was this their first experience with prejudice? Do they have positive experiences as well? This history also allows support workers to explore what the victims' relationships have been with different groups or with the group the support worker represents. Of note, support workers may find that victims of hate crimes will be even more curious about the support workers' identity and beliefs around these issues (Dunbar, 2001; Teyber, 2006). Support workers are encouraged to talk to colleagues and supervisors about their comfort and boundaries to ensure they can answer such questions in a way that is both helpful and respectful. If it is in the victim's best interest, this may also be an opportunity to refer the victim to other supports better able to "meet the victim" where they are.

### Continuum of Services

As noted above, hate crimes affect all of society and the impact goes far beyond the direct victim (Barnes & Ephross, 1994; Iganski, 2001; McDevitt, et al., 2001). Thus, services need to include normal crisis intervention, as well as short-term, long-term, group, and individual supports (Dunbar, 2001; Wertheimer, 1990), and go beyond to community interventions and education.

Support workers might want to look for public legal education information (PLEI), anti-violence campaigns, and trainings on dealing with prejudice and violence (Jeness & Broad, 1997; Lieberman et al., 2001). Advocacy can also be an important role in addressing the needs of all victims of hate crimes (B. C. Human Rights Coalition 2003; Blee, 2005; McMahon, West, Lewis, Armstrong & Conway, 2004). In essence, support workers can help the direct victim but also support efforts to reduce the trauma in the overall community (Espiritu, 2004).

Although the focus of this chapter is on working with individual crime victims, many have argued that since the main target of hate crimes is the community targeted, then interventions should also target the community (Blee, 2005; Espiritu, 2004). This community-based work might focus on the marginalized group or on broader society. Efforts might include promoting changes to laws, educating the public, encouraging community development, and so forth (B.C. Human Rights Coalition 2003; McDonald & Hogue, 2007). The key to these community education interventions is to increase understanding in all community members in less prejudicial beliefs in hopes of affecting their behaviour (Gerstenfeld, 2002). Support workers interested in community-based efforts might want to complete an online search using the term “hate crime” or “bias crime” with the word “support” or “resources” or “program.”<sup>7</sup>

### The Basics

- A hate crime is: “...a criminal violation motivated by hate, based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation or gender identity or expression or any other similar factor.” (Uniform Crime Reporting Survey 2.2 Definition).
- Support workers helping victims should focus on how the victim defines the crime, not just on legal definitions.
- Trauma-informed care is an empowering approach that recognizes and respects the victim’s history of trauma and works to avoid further traumatization.
- Full and informed consent is part of providing ethical care that helps the victim direct their own healing journey.
- Support workers should seek out learning, consultation, and supervision to address blind spots and personal biases. Online self-assessment tools may be helpful.
- Hate crimes create “waves of victims,” harming the victim, their family, their identity group, and society at large.
- Support workers should be aware of the importance of how the victim views their culture, and personal and cultural identities and how they have faced and coped with prejudice in society.

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<sup>7</sup> The previous version of this chapter had recommended resources, but such lists often become “stale” quickly and do not include new resources. Interested workers can perform their own search while being aware that personal blogs or websites are likely not as well-researched as information from government or healthcare.

- Support workers should reflect on the systemic nature of prejudice. How might prejudice, systemic discrimination, and hate crime victimization impact how the victim approaches the support worker and the professional relationship?
- It would be helpful if support workers could assess what supports the victim has in the community and whether they have good coping models.
- Many victims of hate crimes do not report the crime to authorities. Support workers may face this reluctance to report in working with hate crime victims.
- Workers are encouraged to access the internet to find resources specific to their client's identity group and issues.

Compared to before their victimization, victims of hate crimes often:

- Feel less secure (Abu-Ras & Suarez 2009; Ashraf & Nassar, 2018; Awan, & Zempi, 2015; Boeckmann & Turpin-Petrosino, 2002; Garnetts et al., 1990; Huang & Tsai, 2022; Huynh et al., 2022; Janoff, 2005; Mason-Bish & Duggan, 2020; Staub, 1996)
- See the world as less orderly and meaningful (Garnetts et al., 1990)
- Have lower self-worth (Dunbar, 2006; Garnetts et al., 1990; Janoff, 2005)
- Feel less effective (Staub, 1996)
- Engage in avoidance and isolation (Cramer et al., 2018; Funnell, 2015; Samari, Alcalá, H& Sharif, 2018)
- Have problems in personal relationships (Janoff, 2005; Staub, 1996)
- Feel guilty and blame themselves (Dunbar, 2006; Wertheimer, 1990);
- Are less empathic towards other hate crime victims or engage in victim-blaming (Paterson et al., 2019b)
- Question their ability to protect themselves (Staub, 1996);
- Feel they can not meet goals in life (Staub, 1996)
- Feel anger toward the larger community or sub-community (Herek et al., 1997; Janoff, 2005; Staub, 1996)
- Feel excluded from the greater society, affecting their identity (Ashraf & Nassar, 2018)
- Experience depression (Awan, & Zempi, 2015; Burton et al., 2013; Feddes & Jonas (2020; Herek et al., 1997; Huynh, Raval & Freeman, 2022; Inman et al., 2021; Janoff, 2005; Lee & Waters, 2021)
- Experience anxiety or Post Traumatic Stress (Alhaboby, et al., 2016; Cramer et al., 2018; Garnetts et al., 1990; Herek et al., 1997; Huynh et al., 2022; Inman et al., 2021; Janoff, 2005; Lee & Waters, 2021; Sims et al., 2022)
- May experience increased thoughts of suicide (Burton et al., 2013; Cramer et al., 2018; Duncan & Hatzenbuehler, 2014)
- Experience sleep problems (Lee & Waters, 2021)
- Experience headaches, nightmares, crying, agitation, restlessness, and weight loss (Garnetts et al., 1990; Janoff, 2005)
- Have increased use of drugs and/or alcohol (Janoff, 2005)



- May engage in social action and advocacy (Sheehan et al., 2021)

In comparison to non-hate crime victims, hate crime victims are more likely to:

- Suffer more brutal attacks (Janoff, 2005; Willis, 2004) and are almost three times more likely to experience severe injury (Messner et al., 2004)
- Report more distress (Herek et al., 1997; Herek et al., 1999; McDevitt et al., 2001; Mjoseh, 1998)
- Report higher levels of fear (Craig-Henderson & Sloan, 2003; Herek et al., 2002; McDevitt et al., 2001)
- Report higher levels of depression, anxiety, anger, and PTSD symptoms (Alhaboby, et al., 2016; Herek et al., 1997; McDevitt et al., 2001). However, other researchers found that there were no differences between the two groups with respect to depression (Rose & Mechanic, 2002)
- See others as dangerous (Herek et al., 1997; Herek et al., 1999)
- See the world as unsafe (Herek et al., 1999; McDevitt et al., 2001)
- Rate their risk of future victimization as higher (Herek et al., 1997)
- Show a relatively low sense of personal mastery (Herek et al., 1999)
- See personal setbacks as related to prejudice (Herek et al., 1999)
- Report overcoming the incident as “very difficult” (McDevitt et al., 2001)
- Report the incident as having a big impact on their life (Craig-Henderson & Sloan, 2003)
- Report more intrusive thoughts of the incident and feeling like they do not want to live any longer (McDevitt et al., 2001)
- Report losing their job (McDevitt et al., 2001)
- Report significant health problems (McDevitt et al., 2001)
- Report more intrusive thoughts of the incident and feeling like they do not want to live any longer (McDevitt et al., 2001)
- Report losing their job (McDevitt et al., 2001)
- Report significant health problems (McDevitt et al., 2001)

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## Author Note

As I started working on the revision of this chapter, I reflected upon the changes that have happened in trauma therapy and clinical work with victims of crime in the past 15 years. Recent Canadian research indicates that there was a 158% increase in violent hate crimes reported to the police between 2015 and 2021 (Research and Statistics Division, Department of Justice Canada, 2023). This statistic may be surprising to those working with victims of hate crimes, as we often focus on the victim in front of us rather than group-based research, but it is likely to affect our work. In collaborative treatment and support of victims, this past decade and a half has seen the rise of trauma-informed care. Trauma-informed care emphasizes that we should consider the person's history of victimization, even if the person themselves has managed the negative events well and invites us as providers to reflect on our own history, so it was reviewed in this revision but also informs the overall victim-focused approach. I would contend that most support workers were always doing trauma-informed care, even if unconsciously. Therefore, this chapter reflects not only the recent research in working with victims of hate crimes, but also how those hate crimes might impact us as providers (vicarious traumatization, our views on systemic discrimination, and our personal attitudes and prejudices).

I want to note that I took a broad perspective to update the research literature. The database search was relatively wide by looking for research since the year 2000 that included either the term "hate crime" or "bias crime" as I did not want to miss relevant research by having too many search terms or exclusions. I then reviewed the list to identify research that was the most relevant to psychological changes or clinical issues. Much of the literature I encountered involved definitional or legislative changes, as well as general comparisons of frequencies or reports, rather than the psychological impact of hate crimes on victims. When I discovered articles that were more clinically relevant, I also completed searches on those specific authors to see if they had other research publications that I might have missed. As always, I then took a deeper dive into the reference lists of the various clinically oriented articles to identify other research articles that had not been captured in the database search. The databases I focused on were identified as those that might be more likely to contain clinical intervention research: PsychInfo, PsychArticles, and Medline. I also searched Google Scholar to expand this more clinical research database to ensure I had not missed other social science research that might be relevant. Once I noted that I was encountering the same articles despite the discovery method (database, author search, reference list review), I reduced my use of databases. My goal was to gather as much recent research as possible, but I acknowledge that published research (either on databases or other internet sites, such as an author's coverage of a topic for a non-academic audience) can miss community-based accounts.

Readers will also note that the section on comparisons between victims of general crime and hate crimes has few updated references. It was interesting to discover that every article I encountered that reviewed these differences refer to at least one of the same articles that I used in the original chapter. Although there may be new research that directly compared hate crime

victims and general victims of crime, I did not encounter it. What seemed to be more of a theme in the literature is focusing on how people are supporting one another and the overall impact of hate crimes on general society, as well as the targeted community. This is especially true in examining how social media and the internet have affected hate crime. There appears to be a growing understanding that hate crimes affect all of us, regardless of whether we are a member of the targeted group. The other issue that one may notice in looking at research over the past 20 or 30 years is that language also changes; thus, terms such as 'gay bashing' become 'anti-gay violence.' Such language changes are often reflections of changes in society and how researchers communicate their findings. Some readers may also note that I have maintained older references even though I could not find more recent research that had similar findings. I did this because I did not want important issues to be missed simply because there was not recent research; it is possible the issue is still experienced by victims but no longer an area of study for researchers.

My hope is that you found the information in this updated chapter helpful as well as the recommendations to reflect on your own experiences in dealing with bias and hate within our culture. Of note, it is my view that we each represent a particular perspective on "our culture:" my cultural understanding is mediated by my personal experience so will have some common elements with your views but may differ on other aspects. Our clients benefit when we reflect on our personal experiences and biases that can affect even the smallest decisions. This includes reflecting on how our personal characteristics might impact or even trigger the victims of hate crime that we seek to help, whether we are from the same general cultural background or not.