



DIVERSEcity
community resources society

TOGETHER AGAINST HATE

Working together to create more
inclusive communities and
stand up against rising hate

A DIVERSEcity publication • April 2025

WELCOME

A registered charity in BC since 1978, DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society strengthens communities by helping people build the life they want with inclusive programs and services, while working together with community partners to advance change for an equitable and sustainable world.

We recognize that our work takes place on the ancestral, traditional and unceded territories of the SEMYOME (Semiahmoo), q̓ícə́y (Katzie), kʷikʷə́łəm (Kwikwetlem), q̓ʷa:n̓á́n̓ (Kwantlen), q̓iqéyt (Qayqayt), xʷməθkʷə́yəm (Musqueam) and s̓cəwaθən məsteyəxʷ (Tsawwassen) First Nations. The knowledge, traditions and ongoing contributions of these communities are significant in providing context to the work we do, and DIVERSEcity recognizes the importance that reconciliation has in building connected, stronger and healthier communities.

WORKING TOGETHER

As an organization that opened its doors in Surrey, BC, nearly 50 years ago in response to rising racism in the community back then, DIVERSEcity continues to explore new ways to bring people together to diminish the racism that persists — and grows — in our daily lives, public systems and society.

One of our strategic priorities as an organization is to strengthen community connection, especially by creating spaces for dialogue where every voice can be heard. Our 2025 Together Against Hate project, funded by a grant from United Way British Columbia, offered these spaces — both with workshops and a content campaign — for information sharing and advocacy against racism and hate.

In this publication, we have compiled some of the data, insights and workshop takeaways collected to serve as an ongoing community resource, plus five calls to action, for anyone interested in taking a stand against racism and hate. After all, education — both learning and unlearning — continues to be one of the most effective tools for dismantling prejudice and fostering inclusion.

“This work is critical because racialized individuals and newcomers face unique challenges in accessing supportive spaces free from discrimination. Through the Together Against Hate project, we aim to help communities address hate and build resilience, while empowering individuals to cope, heal and support others.”



**LENYA WILKS,
DIRECTOR,
PARTNERSHIPS,
DIVERSECITY**



HATE CAN LOOK LIKE ...

We all have the right to be treated equally, regardless of race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, language, age, abilities or other differences. Yet incidents of hate and racism, both overt and systemic, persist and, in many cases, have risen, particularly during the pandemic. While there has been progress in Canada in diversity and inclusion, hate has deep roots in discrimination, oppression and colonialism, evolving with the politics and unrest of the day.

Hate takes many forms, including:

- Using racial slurs or hate speech
- Sharing stereotypes
- Misinformation
- Online bullying
- Violence
- Refusing service
- Hate incidents and crimes

IT CAN ALSO BE LESS OBVIOUS BUT JUST AS HARMFUL LIKE:

- Not hiring or promoting someone due to culture, immigration status or gender
- Systemic discrimination in public systems such as education and health care
- Over-representation in the criminal justice system

AND IT CAN HAPPEN ANYWHERE ...

Imagine a child nervously walking into school knowing they'll be mocked for how they look or speak. A teenager scrolling through social media only to find hateful comments targeting their identity. An athlete in a locker room silently enduring discriminatory remarks from teammates. An adult sitting through yet another meeting where microaggressions go unchecked. A senior citizen seeking care in a hospital only to be met with prejudice instead of compassion. Families enjoying a sunny day at the park encountering hostility for speaking in their mother tongue. It can happen in a busy city or rural community. In businesses, public transportation and online. Hate has no geographic boundaries and can infiltrate any place or space we enter.

48% Outdoor spaces

39% Social media

32% Indoor spaces

24% At work

Source: Survey by BC's Office of the Human Rights Commissioner



SO, WHAT CAUSES HATE?

Whether it manifests in overt or more subtle ways, there is no single cause. Systemic inequality and oppression in our systems and structures lay the groundwork for hate, reinforcing racist and intolerant behaviours.

Hate can be something we learn from the people around us — in our homes, communities and increasingly online. Children learn about the world around them from their parents and other influential figures in their lives. Their biases are passed along, normalized.

As people grow, they begin searching for who they are and where they belong. In this search for identity, some find themselves in groups or communities shaped by hate speech and a false sense of power or superiority. Once a part of these spaces, hatred for other groups often follows — and in extreme cases, so does radicalization.

There is an estimated 300 active far-right extremist groups in Canada!

10 REASONS HATE HAPPENS

1. Lack of education or exposure
2. Misinformation
3. Mental health issues
4. Searching for belonging & identity
5. Feelings of superiority or power
6. Systemic racism
7. Anger over injustice
8. Isolation & fear
9. Cultural or family influences
10. Social or political ideologies

HATE CRIME VS. HATE INCIDENT

When we experience or witness hate or racism, we may feel uncertain about what to do and the steps to take. We may even wonder, “Is what I just experienced a crime?”

Hate crimes are criminal acts, like assault or property damage, motivated by hate toward a specific group, whether based on race, religion, gender identity or other factors.

Hate incidents — such as sharing discriminatory material, using racist slurs, insulting someone based on their nationality or making offensive jokes — don’t meet the criminal threshold under the Canadian Criminal Code, but they still cause lasting harm.

STATS & FACTS

HATE IS ON THE RISE

During the pandemic, hate crimes notably increased and, five years later, they continue to be on the rise.

Police-reported hate crimes in Canada from 2022–2023 rose

32%



Total police-reported hate crimes in BC from 2019–2023 more than doubled



Hate crimes targeting the South Asian population from 2019–2022

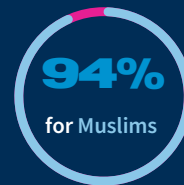
INCREASED BY
143%



The number of hate crimes connected to sexual orientation in BC increased:



Hate crimes in Canada from 2022–2023 targeting certain communities rose by:



The Black population faced the greatest percentage of police-reported hate crimes in 2023 motivated by race making up:

37%

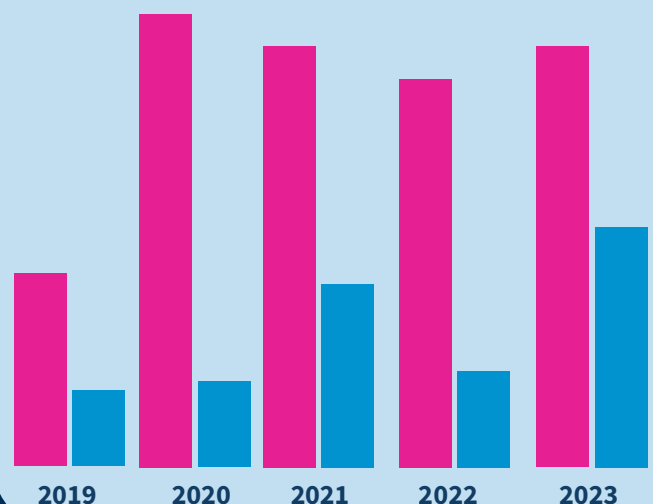
194% ↑

Increase in number of victims of violent hate crimes motivated by race from 2015–2021

Police-reported hate crimes based on race, ethnicity or religion in BC have risen:

■ Race & ethnicity

■ Religion



WHAT CAN WE DO?

Hate is not new. It is as old as humankind and has lingered and evolved, building deep, structural roots that weave into our systems, thoughts and even language. Education and understanding are our most powerful defenses against hate. By learning from one another and seeking out diverse perspectives, we can begin to dismantle the structural roots of hate and replace them with empathy and connection.

IF WE WANT TO CHOOSE HARMONY OVER HATE, IT'S UP TO ALL OF US TO:

- Listen and learn from each other
- Share safe spaces to inspire dialogue and build connections
- Support others who are different than us
- Use inclusive language and understand it's always changing
- Challenge our own bias with courage and humility
- Be an ally to those who are marginalized or face hatred
- Stand up and speak out — together against hate.

NEED HELP?

If you've experienced hate or racism, support is available. Contact the United Way British Columbia's helpline online at racistincidenthelpline.ca or call 1-833-457-5463.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

From January to March 2025, DIVERSEcity held several workshops culminating in a community forum the day after the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. At the centre of each event was an opportunity for dialogue in a safe space — a rare and much-needed opportunity to ask ourselves: “What happens when we open our hearts to new perspectives?”

ISLAMOPHOBIA WORKSHOP

This workshop facilitated by Foundation for a Path Forward brought together Muslims and non-Muslims in a powerful exchange that challenged fear and fostered allyship. A Christian participant shared how learning about the commonalities between faiths helped them push back against misinformation in their own community. This is the impact of dialogue — when we understand each other, we stand stronger together.



“The program was very good. Everyone received very good information and knowledge. If anything happens to anyone in the community, we have learned lots of information on combatting it. Thank you to the team and DIVERSEcity.”

— Senior participant

PATHWAYS TO KINSHIP WORKSHOP

In an intimate day-long gathering led by Indigenous facilitators Kim Haxton and Elfred Matining, this workshop fostered meaningful dialogue between Indigenous and settler communities. Participants explored Indigenous histories, land stewardship and their own responsibilities as settlers and immigrants. One participant connected Indigenous teachings with their own cultural traditions. These moments remind us that reconciliation starts with listening, learning and taking action in our own lives.

SUPPORTING VICTIMS OF HATE WORKSHOP

For many seniors, navigating hate and discrimination can be isolating — but access to knowledge changes everything. In a session delivered in Punjabi and facilitated by Landon Turlock and Sunpreet Singh Johal, participants learned how to recognize, report and respond to hate crimes while feeling heard and supported. When people feel seen and strengthened, they can step forward with confidence, knowing they are never alone in this fight.



TOGETHER AGAINST HATE COMMUNITY FORUM: ELIMINATING RACISM FOR A BETTER FUTURE

The Together Against Hate Community Forum marked the culmination of the project, held in recognition of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. We began with a grounding welcome from Elder Kevin Kelly and Rose Filardeau of Kwantlen First Nation, who reminded us of the importance of the connections we share across cultures, communities and generations.

An enlightening panel discussion featuring Zara Chaudhry of the Inclusion Project, Mahado Hassan of Solid State, Dacious Richardson from Surrey Schools and moderator and social impact leader Daljit Gill-Badesha sparked deep reflection and constructive dialogue. Their insights challenged us to think critically about how we can best serve marginalized communities, amplify voices and build more inclusive systems.

This conversation was complemented by interactive sessions with Ingrid Broussillon and Marialejandra Reyes, each of whom guided participants through activities that not only shed light on incidents of hate, but also provided tangible pathways to action — strengthening us all to bring these lessons back to our schools, workplaces and communities. The day ended with clear calls to action, reminding us that our collective work to end hate is ongoing, and each of us plays a vital role in this movement.

5 CALLS TO ACTION

1. Shift away from the illusion of inclusion

It's time to shift away from the "illusion of inclusion" to a practice that enables stronger relationships, understanding of intersectionality as well as accountability. Let's be open to unlearning, relearning, while listening and elevating diverse people's voices.

Zara Chaudhry noted that a lot of engagement with BIPOC individuals has traditionally been "very transactional, focused on deliverables," but true inclusion needs to focus on relationship building and investing back in communities.

2. Acknowledge where the power lies

It's important to recognize "who is at the table" when decisions are made, but we need to expand that outlook to recognize "who is designing the table." Most systems and institutions were not designed with people of colour in mind, leading to poorer outcomes in areas such as health, education and employment. Mahado Hassan said, "Often times, BIPOC individuals are engaged with as part of a checklist in the process." Instead, let's look at engagement as a process to build things together, so everyone can prosper.



**SCAN THE QR CODE FOR
VIDEO CLIPS, STATISTICS
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5 CALLS TO ACTION CONTINUED

3. Work together at the speed of trust

Take the time to develop trust among people and communities, getting to know each other before we make an ask.

Zara Chaudhry said, “Trust is almost like a garden and you do have to cultivate it and it takes time. Gardens need time, effort and communities to plant the seeds and nurture the soil.” Further, when you harvest those seeds, make sure you replant them and invest in communities.

4. Create more spaces and capacity

Safe and inclusive spaces to advance dialogue can be rare, especially for youth and parents. We need to create more spaces, events and platforms to bring diverse voices to share and connect.

Institutions like schools need to better support those in leadership positions with the anti-racism training they would need to guide or be an ally in such discussions.

At the same time, let’s focus more on capacity building and mentorship for BIPOC individuals, who may hold a wealth of knowledge or expertise, but may not have the resources or platforms to easily demonstrate this.

5. Advance change, together

When we open our hearts to new perspectives and choose dialogue over silence, we challenge fear, build bridges and strengthen our communities. When we understand each other, we stand stronger together. So, we encourage you to be part of the conversation. Be part of the change. Join us — because real change starts with one courageous conversation at a time.



“Let the conversations we had be a call to action — for all of us to invest in relationships, amplify underrepresented voices and build networks of support that leave no one behind.”

*— Sumaiyyah Adam,
Manager, Together Against
Hate Project, DIVERSEcity*



Panelists (from left) Zara Chaudhry of the Inclusion Project, Dacious Richardson from Surrey Schools and Mahado Hassan of Solid State at the Together Against Hate Community Forum.



Participants at the Together
Against Hate Community Forum
in Surrey, BC, March 22, 2025.



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