NEWS IN REVIEW

EXPOSING HATE: Are Hate Crimes on the Rise in Canada?

Hosted by MICHAEL SERAPIO

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EXPOSING HATE: Are Hate Crimes on the Rise in Canada?

Video duration – 12:33

A CBC News investigation discovered that there were nearly 1,800 hate crimes reported to Canadian police last year. But that number likely doesn’t tell the whole story. Inaccurate reporting and different classifications make a true calculation nearly impossible. Nonetheless, hate seems to be growing across this country. But no place more so than Hamilton, Ontario, which has the infamous title of being the hate crime capital of Canada. Has that city become a cautionary tale for the rest of Canada? And then there’s the internet. How is hate speech being fought online?

Related Content on curio.ca
• News in Review, October 2018 – Safeguarding Social Media: Facebook’s Challenge
• News in Review, February 1991 – Canada’s Anti-Hate Law: The Keegstra Case
• Can online hate be controlled? (The National)
• Documenting Hate (The Passionate Eye)
• Fighting hate with friendship: The unlikely bond of a Sikh man and a former white supremacist (The National)
• Free Speech Under Attack (The National)
• Under attack: The Quebec Mosque Shooting (The Fifth Estate)
VIDEO REVIEW
In a group of three or four, discuss your responses to the following questions:

1. What is your definition of a hate crime?
2. Discuss any recent examples of hate crimes that you know of.
3. Many countries have specific laws against hate speech. Do you think laws like this are important? Why or why not?
WHILE VIEWING

1. How many hate crimes occurred in Canada last year?
   a. ☐ Nearly 1800
   b. ☐ 180
   c. ☐ 1000

2. There is one common, universally agreed upon definition of hate crime in Canada.
   ☐ TRUE or ☐ FALSE

3. Which one of the following categories is not specified in some provincial definitions of hate crimes.
   a. ☐ Religion      b. ☐ Gender identity    c. ☐ Disabilities

4. Hate crime definitions are used for sentencing purposes, they are not part of the Criminal Code. ☐ TRUE or ☐ FALSE
5. Why did the Hamilton police chief apologize?
   a. ☐ He didn’t protect the people at a protest.
   b. ☐ He didn’t want to charge anyone with hate speech.
   c. ☐ He made comments that included stereotypes of the LGBTQ+ community.

6. What does the company Hatebase do?
   a. ☐ It creates code to identify hate speech online.
   b. ☐ It monitors social media accounts.
   c. ☐ It analyzes hate crime databases worldwide.

7. One of the major challenges in identifying hate speech online is that the people using hate speech change the language they are using. ☑ TRUE or ☐ FALSE
TALK PROMPTS
TALK PROMPT #1

Consider pausing the video and giving students the opportunity to talk to an elbow partner for a few minutes or use these questions as part of a class discussion.

Pause the video after Kiel Hughes says, “Literally every time I'm down here I'm always looking over my shoulder.” – @ 00:00 to 02:46

- Kiel Hughes is uneasy about walking in his own community. What changes do you think are needed to beliefs, laws, law enforcement and community action to ensure that black, gay men like Kiel feel safe in their community?
Pause the video for discussion after the segment featuring Hamilton Mayor Fred Eisenberger and McMaster University professor Tina Fetner.” – @ 03:06 to 08:54

1. Eisenberger and Fetner disagree on what constitutes free speech and how to treat groups who use the free speech argument to protect their right to articulate hate speech. Do you think any group has the right to articulate and promote its beliefs even if that includes hatred of another group? Why or why not?
1. How have hateful acts and words impacted your life? How have hateful acts and words impacted your school community?

2. What viable steps do you think could be taken to lessen hatred in your school community and to promote a safe and inclusive school environment?
I can't just let them [anti-immigration protesters] go unopposed. And ignoring them made it worse. More of them showed up. You can see they're coming from other cities. They're importing hate.

- Hamilton resident participating in anti-hate protest
THE STORY

Minds on

Consider the most current Statistics Canada data on police reported hate based crimes and incidents in different jurisdictions in Canada. Use this link to see the data:
www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3510019101

1. What conclusions can you draw from this data?
2. What questions remain?

What are hate crimes?

Hate crimes are acts of violence or hostility directed at people because of who they are or who someone thinks they are. In Canada, we like to believe that we are a peaceful society that accepts differences. However, hate incidents and hate crimes occur sporadically across the country, forcing us to question this belief and face an uncomfortable reality: maybe we aren’t as peaceful as we think.

Sean Dowling brought his young children to a June 2019 rally in Hamilton, Ont., to “stand up against hatred, bigotry and xenophobia.”
(photo: Laura Howells/CBC)
Hate incidents can take many forms including: verbal abuse, harassment, bullying or intimidation, spitting, threats of violence, physical attacks, abusive text messages or other online abuse on social media, circulating discriminatory literature or posters and graffiti. Although advocating genocide and public incitement of hatred are Criminal Code offences, a “hate crime” in Canada is not a specific offence. However, agreement over hateful motivation as an aggravating factor as it relates to sentencing was ratified in the Criminal Code in 1996, enshrining in law the precedent that hate motivation makes a crime more serious.

Hate crimes in Canada
Here are some examples of hate crimes that have occurred in Canada:
- Barbara Kentner, a 34 year old Anishinaabe of the Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation (Thunder Bay), was walking along the road with her sister when she was struck by a trailer hitch thrown from a passing car. “I got one!” a voice from the car shouted. This is
what Barbara Kentner’s sister remembers hearing. Kentner died from her injuries five months later. Eighteen-year old Brayden Bushby was charged with second-degree murder in 2017 after Indigenous leaders lobbied police for months to upgrade the original charge of aggravated assault. Having bottles, eggs, garbage and even feces thrown at them from moving vehicles is a common occurrence for Indigenous people walking along the streets of Thunder Bay according to APTN and other news outlets.

- In 2010, an interracial couple near Windsor, Nova Scotia, woke up to find a cross burning outside their home. Justin Chad Rehberg, 20, was charged with inciting hatred. This was a precedent-setting case for Canada. The judge convicted him, saying the burning of a cross is closely associated with the anti-Black, racist organization known as the Ku Klux Klan.
- A spike in anti-Semitism occurred in 2018. Here are a few of the incidents:
  - a group of teens shot lit fireworks at Hasidic Jews in Boisbriand, Quebec;
  - a group of Orthodox Jewish students in Toronto were harassed and beaten close to their school;
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- A 13-year-old Toronto student was harassed by a peer who threatened to “shoot up a Jewish school” and told her to “go back into the ovens.”

- In 2017, the deadliest mass shooting in Canadian history took place at the Islamic Cultural Centre of Quebec City. The gunman pleaded guilty to six counts of first-degree murder and six counts of attempted murder. It was described as an act of terrorism by both Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Quebec Premier Philippe Couillard. The event prompted widespread debate around Islamophobia in Canada.

Who are the victims of hate crimes?
The Canadian Race Relations Foundations 2018 report “Hate Crime in Canada” details trends in hate crimes against specific groups. The Jewish community is most frequently targeted when the motivation is hatred based on religion. The black community is most frequently targeted when the motivation is hatred based on race or ethnicity. While all communities experience violent attacks at times, those experienced by the LGBTQ+ community tend to be the

most violent and hate-filled. Other communities, such as Muslims and Indigenous Canadians are also impacted by hate crimes.

**Who are the perpetrators?**
The perpetrators of hate crimes tend to be young and male. The median age of those accused of hate crimes is 25 but the age of perpetrators depends on the crime. The median age of those accused of hate crimes targeting sexual orientation is 23, while the average age of those accused of targeting the Muslim community is 42.

**What can be done?**
If there is encouraging news to be found, it is that there are people across Canada who fight hate and promote inclusion and acceptance. When hate crimes occur, concerned citizens rise up against it, often in greater numbers and with stronger voices, acting as a kind of counter-attack of community spirit.

A CBC Opinion column**, written by Sanaa Ali-Mohammed and Shazlin Rahman, asks all Canadians to consider that “our response to tragic events like the mosque attack in Quebec City cannot be limited to words and one-time measures.” They acknowledge that “it is crucial to mark the date and honour the lives lost” when it comes to hate crimes, but they also stress that our communities must address the root causes of hate. Pointing to the
arguments made by historian and racism expert Ibram X Kendi in his book How to Be an Antiracist, they emphasize that “it is our institutions that are responsible for creating and reinforcing biases and assumptions held by individual members of society about racialized groups.”

The two writers go on to say that “If Canadians are truly committed to recognizing and addressing Islamophobia, we will need to do the difficult work of examining and challenging deeply held and often subconscious biases in our society against Muslims.”

Their advice offers a way forward for Canadians who want to work against racism and hate that targets any group in our society.

**Source:** [www.cbc.ca/news/opinion/opinion-islamophobia-canada-1.5445229](http://www.cbc.ca/news/opinion/opinion-islamophobia-canada-1.5445229)

TO CONSIDER

1. What information about hate crimes in Canada surprised you? Why?

2. What do you think are some of the underlying reasons people commit hate crimes?

3. A central issue relating to hate crimes is underreporting. Why do you think that people are not willing to report hate crimes and incidents? What could be done to encourage reporting?

4. What can be done to prevent hate crimes?
ACTIVITY: Exploring Theories of Hate

Why might we hate certain people or groups? The reasons are complex. Psychologists have linked hate to fear, especially fear of people that are different from us.

One theory — called the “in-group and out-group theory” — posits that, when we feel threatened by perceived outsiders, we instinctively turn toward our “in-group” — those with whom we identify. According to behavioral researcher Patrick Wanis, “Hatred is driven by the two key emotions of love and aggression” Love goes toward the in-group or the group that is favoured. Aggression goes toward the out-group or the group that has been deemed different, dangerous and/or a threat to the in-group.

Other hate theories suggest:

- Our family upbringing, culture and societal beliefs impacted our tendency to hate. In this case, people are taught to hate certain individuals or groups.
- The media, social media and our chosen groups of friends can lock us into silos of those with whom we agree, where it is easy to hate, demonize and oversimplify those who are different from us.
- Our cultural and political history points to violence and competition as a way of life. We are taught to hate the enemy.
- Hatred of individuals or groups acts as a way of distracting oneself from the more challenging task of creating one’s own identity.

So what can we do about hatred in our lives? The antidote to hate is compassion, understanding and empathy for others and for ourselves. In an all too often divisive and hostile world, each one of us can commit to re-orienting our world to unity and peace.

**Activity**

Research one of the topics listed below and on the following page. Prepare a brief presentation to share with your class. Your research should include written sources and at least one interview with a person that you feel has shown expertise in the area being discussed. You can refer to an interview from an online source or you can conduct your own interview with someone you know personally.

**Focus of your presentation:**

a. How to be a more empathetic person.

b. How to challenge and overcome your own personal biases and prejudices.
c. How to encourage dialogue between different types/groups of people.

d. How to stand up for groups that are victimized by hate.

e. How to recognize online hate and how to intervene by answering back to it.
SOURCES


VIDEO REVIEW – WHILE VIEWING (ANSWER KEY)

1. How many hate crimes occurred in Canada last year?
   a. Nearly 1800

2. False. There is no common, universally agreed upon definition of hate crime in Canada.

3. Which one of the following categories is not specified in some provincial definitions of hate crimes.
   b. Gender identity

4. True. Hate crime definitions are used for sentencing purposes, they are not part of the Criminal Code.

5. Why did the Hamilton police chief apologize?
   c. He made comments that included stereotypes of the LGBTQ+ community.

6. What does the company Hatebase do?
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7. True. One of the major challenges in identifying hate speech online is that the people using hate speech change the language they are using.