



# Youth Hate Crimes and Identity-Based Bullying Prevention Curriculum



**PREVENTING  
YOUTH HATE  
CRIMES &  
BULLYING**  
An OJJDP Initiative

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The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention is a program office within the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the National Institute of Justice; the Office for Victims of Crime; and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking.

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# **Youth Hate Crimes and Identity-Based Bullying Prevention Curriculum**

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# Introduction

## Preventing Youth Hate Crimes and Identity-Based Bullying

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This curriculum is part of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's (OJJDP's) [initiative](#) to prevent youth hate crimes and identity-based bullying. Operating from a youth-based lens that focuses on prevention and early intervention, this multipronged initiative is designed to:

- Increase awareness of youth hate crimes and bias-based bullying.
- Identify best practices and evidence-based strategies to build protective factors in youth, and help youth resist digital hate and disengage from violent extremist hate groups.
- Ensure youth have a voice on the topic of hate crimes and an opportunity for partners to work meaningfully with and for young people.
- Provide tools to grantees, interested communities, and the field at large to change the attitudes and behavior of at-risk youth and young people who commit hate-crime offenses.

### YOUTH HATE CRIMES AND IDENTITY-BASED BULLYING CURRICULUM

As a key component of OJJDP's Preventing Youth Hate Crimes & Identity-Based Bullying initiative, this curriculum was designed to build protective factors in youth, change the attitude and behavior of young people who commit hate crime offenses, and help individuals working with these youth to better understand the potential of advanced communications technologies to break down cultural barriers and address bias. Risk factors are characteristics that elevate the risk for violence, whereas protective factors buffer against the risk factors and may lessen the likelihood of violence victimization or perpetration. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention utilizes a four-level social-ecological model to better understand violence and consider the interplay between individual, relationship, community, and societal factors.

This [multiphase](#) curriculum is intended for youth-serving organizations, schools, and other interested community groups to help raise awareness and prevent youth from engaging in identity-based bullying and hate crimes/hate incidents.

# **THE OJJDP YOUTH HATE CRIMES AND IDENTITY-BASED BULLYING PREVENTION CURRICULUM**

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This curriculum provides an interactive learning process that educates young people about bias, prejudice, and hate and provides them with the information, awareness, skill development, and motivation to be active participants in combating prejudice and hate in their schools and communities, both online and offline. Youth are among the most powerful influences on other young people and on the culture of their schools and communities. When they come face to face with bias, prejudice, and hate, many are highly motivated to take action, but they often need support and opportunities to develop safe and effective skills to respond. The curricular lessons in the guide provide activities and resources useful in developing these skills in youth.

## **THE RATIONALE AND APPROACH OF THE CURRICULUM**

Although we believe there is a sequential process in learning about bias, prejudice, and hate and in developing safe and effective skills to respond, we also recognize the daily pressures facing educators and youth program staff today. For this reason, we have developed these lessons in ways that enable you to pick and choose lessons that meet the needs of the youth in your care. When it is recommended that one lesson be presented as an introduction to another lesson, we clearly state that.

The overall theme of this curriculum is the development of respectful communities, whether they be in the schools, place-based youth-serving organizations, neighborhoods, towns or cities, online communities, and the world in general. In a time when hate crimes are on the rise, hateful rhetoric echoes across social media, school and mass shootings are increasing, and there is untenable divisiveness among people, the daily challenges facing youth can feel daunting. Opportunities for them to discuss their feelings and develop both the skills and motivation to create positive change are too rare.

For this reason, OJJDP has invested resources in developing this curriculum and making it available for middle and high school-age youth. This curriculum can help build protective factors for youth. It begins by asking youth to imagine what a respectful community might look like and ends with actions they can take to mobilize their skills, influence peers, and create positive, sustainable change for good as they work, both individually and collectively, to create more respectful communities where they live and in the world.

## GOALS OF THE CURRICULUM

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Youth will:

- Define, describe, and identify identity-based bullying, hate incidents, hate crimes, and radicalization.
- Examine their own beliefs and attitudes about bias, prejudice, and bias-motivated hate.
- Explore the value of inclusion and diverse perspectives with other youth and those in their communities.
- Increase critical thinking skills in understanding and assessing the role of contributing factors, such as social media and learned prejudice, in perpetuating hate crimes.
- Increase their resiliency and internal protective factors to reject and resist biased attitudes and beliefs in themselves and others.
- Develop safe and effective skills and motivation to take positive action and become allies of those who are targets of bias, bullying, hate, and other forms of oppression.

## THE STRUCTURE OF THE CURRICULUM

This curriculum is composed of the following 10 units:

**Unit 1.** [The Respectful Community, Part 1: Creating a Vision](#) provides today's youth with an opportunity to create a clear vision of what a respectful community would look like and become active participants in creating a respectful community.

**Unit 2.** [Understanding Bias, Prejudice, Bullying, and Hate](#) builds understanding of some working definitions relating to bias, prejudice, bullying, and hate; introduces the concepts of personal and institutional manifestations of prejudice and the differences between them; and presents information about the common behaviors that are typically present when incidents of bullying occur.

**Unit 3.** [Everyday Prejudice and You](#) builds young people's awareness of some of their own unconscious biases and the influence of their thinking and behavior, and increases their understanding of the value of diverse perspectives and the tendency of hate to escalate when no one takes action to intervene.

**Unit 4.** [Conflict and Communication](#) provides opportunities for youth to develop and practice new effective skills in communication and managing conflict, skills that are vital for success in every area where young people's futures may lead them.

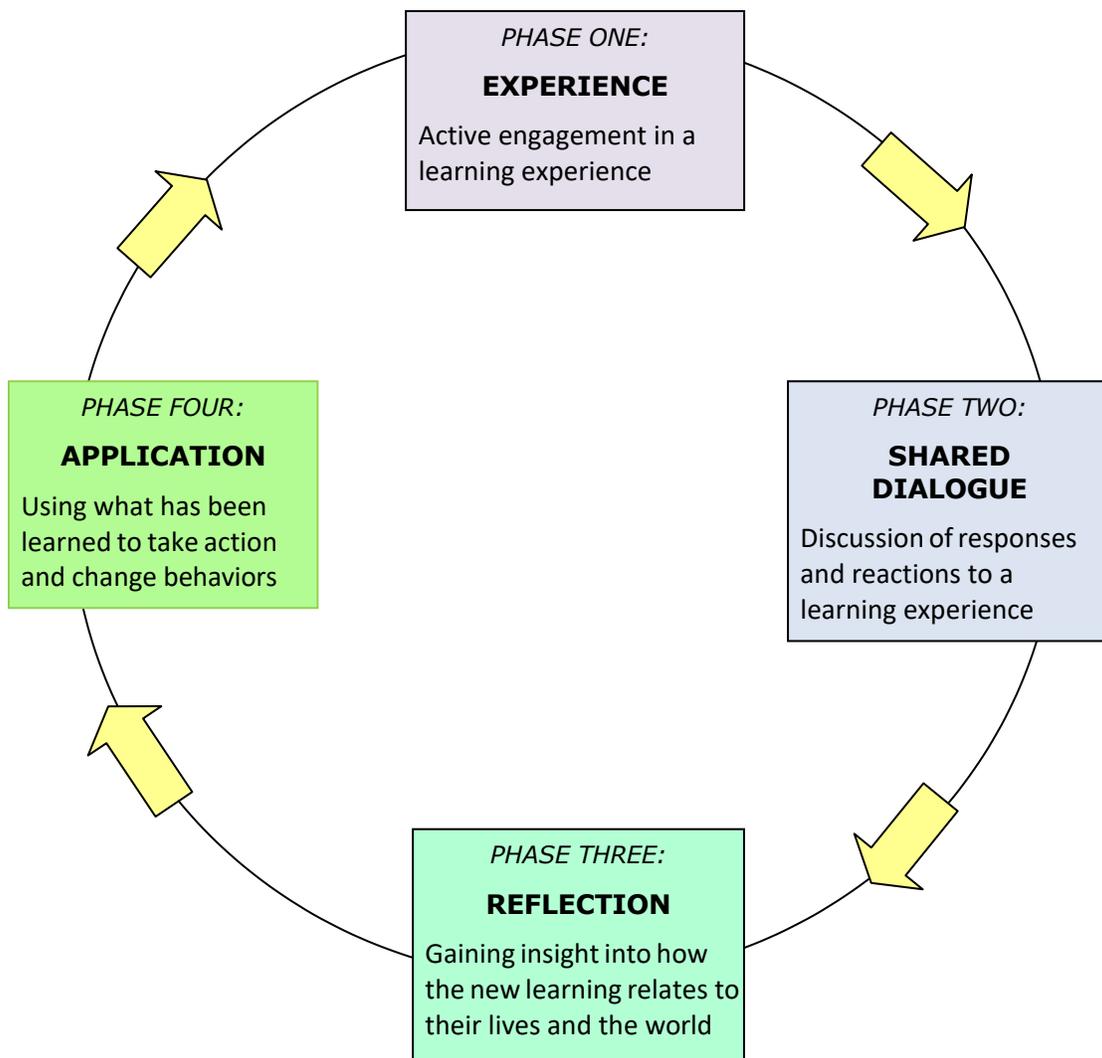
- Unit 5. [Identity and Bullying](#)** increases understanding of the characteristics of bullying and the impact when bullying is motivated by the identity of the person or group being targeted, including race, ethnicity, religion, or other differences. The lessons provide opportunities to better understand the benefits and outcomes of personal choices and opportunities to develop skills as allies to those targeted by bullying.
- Unit 6. [Crime and Punishment](#)** builds understanding of hate crime laws, the basic categories of general crime, the distinction between standard criminal behavior and crimes that are motivated by bias and hate, and some of the criteria used to determine if crimes are motivated by hate.
- Unit 7. [Media Literacy](#)** builds increased awareness of the current climate of misinformation, motivates youth to assess the reliability and trustworthiness of the online and offline media they encounter, and mobilizes their skills to both respond safely and effectively to digital media, but also to use their voices to create media themselves that promote respect and civility.
- Unit 8. [Violent Extremism and Youth](#)** provides a process to identify personal values as tools to counter hate and builds understanding of the kinds of prejudice at the root of violent extremist ideology. The lessons help youth increase their awareness of the ways computer algorithms may lead young people down paths of violent extremism and conspiracy thinking and learn some effective response skills to resist violent extremist ideologies and recruitment efforts.
- Unit 9. [Cyberhate and Counterspeech](#)** addresses the impact of hate speech and behaviors in young people’s own communities and in the broader society, builds their understanding about cyberhate and the ways it manifests, and equips them to respond using strategies to counter online hate while still staying safe.
- Unit 10. [The Respectful Community, Part 2: Creating Change](#)** provides young people with knowledge, skills, and motivation to take actions, both individually and as a group, that contribute to making their communities and their world a civil and respectful place for all.

# THE LEARNING CYCLE

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The foundation of the curriculum is an experiential learning model composed of four sequential and interconnected phases. The initial phase engages youth in an interactive lesson. Following this experience, they share their initial reactions and responses to the lesson activities through a variety of modalities, including writing, reading, and discussion. After sharing initial responses, youth have an opportunity for deeper reflection on the larger implications of the learning and how it relates to the world and to their own beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors.

Reflection often begins in the discussion after a lesson and can be continued through the optional writing activities included at the end of many of the units and in follow-up discussions. Finally, youth have opportunities to plan and practice ways to apply what they have learned to their own lives and communities.



## **SOME HELPFUL GUIDELINES**

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### **RECOMMENDED AGE RANGE FOR PARTICIPATING YOUTH**

This curriculum was designed for middle and high school-age youth. Educators and youth leaders should use their own judgment in adapting language and lesson instructions in response to the needs of their own group.

### **RECOMMENDED GROUP SIZE**

When delivering this curriculum, the optimum size for the group is 20 to 25 youth. This group size maximizes learning as it affords a wide range of opportunities to learn from the perspectives and experiences of others.

It may often be necessary to work with smaller or larger groups, and the lessons should be able to accommodate groups as small as four and as large as the class you are working with. Because much of the learning comes from peer-to-peer interactions and discussions, the lessons will be challenging for large groups of 50 or more without making adaptations that preserve the learning process for everyone.

### **SETTING GROUP AGREEMENTS**

Before every lesson, it is helpful to have youth develop “group agreements.” Many times, when lively classroom discussions are planned, an initial process to establish guidelines in terms of conflict, confidentiality, participation, etc. is helpful. For example, setting a group agreement to silence cell phones during the class can help youth to focus on the topics being discussed.

Although group agreements are most effective when generated by the youth themselves, additional suggestions and guidelines are included in the lesson “Starting With Group Agreements.”

Words are power, and the words we use to describe such guidelines can also serve to foster engagement and interest in what is happening. Often, these guidelines are referred to as “rules”—classroom rules, ground rules for discussion, etc. Instead, referring to these guidelines as group agreements is more accurate because it communicates from the beginning the cooperative nature of the process and the ensuing discussion.

### **ROOM ARRANGEMENT**

Choose a room of adequate size with moveable seating that provides room for youth to move freely about and gather in small groups when necessary. If possible, avoid arranging seating in classroom or auditorium style. Arranging chairs in a circle promotes sharing among group members, rather than addressing comments and responses to the teacher or youth leader at the front of the room. If the room has a chalkboard or whiteboard, use it for brainstorming and writing out *Prep Work* instructions included in the lessons. However, if a chalkboard or whiteboard is unavailable, chart paper is a good alternative; it may be helpful to use chart paper to record content that you want to save for a later lesson, such as group agreements. If you plan to use multiple lessons in this curriculum, it is recommended that you initially begin

with group agreements and save, repost, and revisit them at the beginning of subsequent lessons.

### **A WORD ABOUT “SCRIPTS”**

Throughout this curriculum, you will find sample “scripts” written in italics that include recommended information to share at various points in a lesson. Scripts are provided solely as examples of how you might choose to present a specific component of the lesson. It is our intention that you present this information in your own words; however, if need be, the script can be presented to youth as written.

### **REPRODUCIBLE HANDOUTS AND WORKSHEETS**

The lessons in this curriculum often include informational handouts and worksheets. To assist you in preparing and presenting the lessons, the required materials are included in the body of each lesson. The Materials Needed section of each lesson includes a link to the required handout or worksheet for that lesson, where you can make any copies required for that lesson.

## RESPONDING TO THE NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE TODAY

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This curriculum was developed to give educators and leaders of youth-serving agencies a resource to respond appropriately to the needs of young people as they face the many challenges in the world around them. We believe that we can no longer operate with a “business as usual” approach.

Young people today face serious challenges—concerns over mass shooters and their own safety while at school; the changing environment and how it may impact their lives, both now and in the future; the increasing divisiveness and intolerance of differences among so many; and the growing presence of hate and violent extremism in both their online and offline lives.

Teachers and school counselors play an important role in our children’s lives, and we owe them a debt of gratitude for their guidance and dedication. But today’s classroom curricula stretch teachers to their limits, providing little time, if any, for young people to share their feelings, frustrations, and concerns about these challenges. Young people are experiencing a higher level of stress. Collectively, we need to both see and acknowledge that reality and place a higher value on incorporating programming that enables all young people to share their feelings and concerns and have opportunities to develop useable skills that enable them to take the actions necessary to create sustainable change.

We encourage middle and high schools and all agencies and nonprofits serving young people to consider the ways today’s critical challenges are impacting young people. They need to find ways to provide youth with opportunities to both address the concerns that weigh on their minds and to work with other young people to develop effective skills they can mobilize to create change through their individual efforts and by working together collaboratively.

In the pages that follow, you will find useful information, resources, and interactive lessons to bring these issues to the young people you work with. The curriculum was designed with the acknowledgment that time is rarely available for a sequential presentation of the lessons and, therefore, individual lessons can be pulled out and used independently as needed.

## YOUTH AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM

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*These hate crimes and other bias-related incidents instill fear across entire communities and undermine the principles upon which our democracy stands. All people in this country should be able to live without fear of being attacked or harassed because of where they are from, what they look like, whom they love or how they worship.<sup>1</sup>*

—Attorney General Merrick B. Garland

### WHAT IS VIOLENT EXTREMISM?

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*Violent Extremism* is a concept that describes religious, social, or political belief systems that support or advocate for violence in furtherance of their religious, social, or political goals. Strong religious, social, or political beliefs should never be confused with violent extremism, as these are fundamental American rights, guaranteed by the Constitution. Hate and violent extremist groups are formed around a shared extreme ideology that typically has its root in bias and prejudice against one or more groups based on their race, religion, ethnicity, or other characteristic of identity. Those who hold violent extremist ideologies often seek radical changes in government, religion, or society. There are people and groups whose thinking revolves around violent extremist ideologies and who are convinced that violence is the best strategy to accomplish their goals. Violent extremist ideologies are often identified as motivating factors in hate crimes/incidents, civil unrest, bias-motivated violence, and increasing societal divisiveness.

Many violent extremists are actively working to recruit young people into their ways of thinking. Hate groups, which once operated on the outer fringes of society, now have the ability through social media to spread their ideologies and broaden their impact in far more significant ways.

Youth are susceptible to being led down a path to online content that promotes violent extremist ideas and conspiracy thinking. They can become targets of the recruitment efforts of violent extremist thinking through online content, YouTube videos, social media postings, and free video games. Among the recurring elements of these ideologies is the contention that violent actions are necessary to manifest the goals of violent extremist thinkers.

Young people are seen as easy targets for violent extremist groups, but youth exposed to antihate teaching can negate recruitment efforts. To be successful advocates for deterring violent extremist recruitment efforts against themselves and their peers, they need opportunities to better understand the kinds of prejudice that are at the root of violent extremist ideology; opportunities to develop effective and safe response strategies, including digital and media literacy skills; and the motivation to resist violent extremist ideologies and recruitment efforts when they are encountered.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/attorney-general-garland-issues-statement-2020-fbi-hate-crimes-united-states-statistics>

## WHERE YOUTH ENCOUNTER VIOLENT EXTREMIST IDEOLOGIES

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It is distressing to realize that, because young people spend so much of their time online, most of them are likely to encounter hate speech and experience casual exposure to hate and violent extremist ideology far more frequently than we imagine. By clicking on posts in their social media feeds, playing online computer games, doing online searches in response to curiosity about a topic or for a homework assignment, they can unintentionally encounter vile, hate-filled words and images. Many young people now believe this kind of occurrence is “just the way things are,” but normalization of hate has concerning implications. It is a strong indication that young people need new information, skills, and strategies, not just to reject this kind of thinking, but to be active participants in rooting it out of the communities in which they live.

The culture of online information today is one that includes *misinformation*, where incorrect information is provided without the intention of causing harm; *disinformation*, where incorrect information is provided and the person providing it knows it is false and has intent to cause harm, and *malinformation*, where a person posts information or photos that are true but were intended to be personal and private. The intent here is to cause significant harm, embarrassment, and damage to a person.

Many young people, in their daily online activities, lack the skills to examine and evaluate the reliability of the information they receive. This is especially important when youth are exposed to online hate and radical violent extremist ideology. Admittedly, there are some youth whose life experiences make them more vulnerable to recruitment, but all young people need digital and media literacy skills to help them distinguish reliable information from that which cannot be trusted.

### Radicalization and How Some Youth Become Radicalized

**Radicalization** is any process that leads a person to hold violent extremist views. This can result from both in-person or online activities, such as reading online violent extremist content, viewing YouTube videos, being exposed to violent extremist propaganda, and encountering peers or online social acquaintances who promote violent extremist views.

### Common Recruitment Strategies by Violent Extremist Groups

Some of the specific strategies used to interest and engage youth are:

- Video games that youth can play online for free, unaware the game is sponsored or created by a violent extremist group. As youth progress in the levels of the game, they encounter increasing ideologies of hate. Hate groups also have a presence on mainstream video games, such as Roblox and Minecraft, where they use hate speech and, at times, begin grooming youth to become radicalized. Most of these games include interactive chat features where youth playing the game can encounter a message from a “friendly” proponent of violent extremist ideology.
- Social media where violent extremists post short propaganda clips with links young people can click on for more information.

- Memes that are widely posted and use images to incorporate hate symbols and visual representations of hate toward specific groups.
- Content “rabbit holes” where automatic recommendations based on a chance or even unintentional visit to a site promoting hate suggest similar videos to watch, books to purchase, or articles to read, opening pathways to radicalization.
- Peers who have encountered and become interested in hate and violent extremist content and subsequently share it with friends.
- Direct contact with people endeavoring to recruit young people through in-person contact, including at rallies and through propaganda materials that include stickers, leaflets, and pamphlets.

## WHY YOUTH ARE VULNERABLE TO RADICALIZATION

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Adolescence is a time of great developmental changes. The changes they experience in their cognitive and emotional lives can often lag behind the changes in their physical bodies as they begin to grow and mature. Because the cognitive function of their brains is not fully developed, they cannot effectively manage stress and assess danger. As youth reach middle school years, they begin to explore and focus on their own identity. They often want more than anything to fit in with their peers, while at the same time they are grappling with who they are as individuals. They need a sense of belonging. This is an immutable feature of adolescence, and social media feeds the insecurity of both boys and girls with unattainable ideals. Youth with strong bonds to family, school, and community are more likely to be motivated to engage in healthy behaviors and follow the guidelines set by those they have bonded with.

For adolescents, middle and high school are a time of increasing responsibilities and increasing freedom. The adults in their lives may have the expectation that teens can make more of their own decisions now—decisions about time, friendships, and school responsibilities. In total, it is both an exciting and a disconcerting time of immense growth.

Amid all the conflicting feelings of adolescence, teens often have a feeling of being invincible, and that feeling can make them susceptible to engaging in risky behaviors. It would be misleading to state that the vulnerabilities all adolescents experience during these years leave them open to radicalization by violent extremists. However, some of the qualities common to young people are the factors that motivate violent extremists to reach out to them, such as their desire for a sense of belonging; tendency to engage in risky behaviors; unformed sense of personal identity; and emotions that may include feelings of insecurity, loneliness, questioning of authority, and desire for acceptance and respect. What this means is that young people in their adolescent years are more likely than adults to be targets of violent extremist content and ideology.

## WARNING SIGNS

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There are warning signs that educators, school counselors, youth program staff, and other involved adults need to pay attention to that indicate a young person is beginning to be radicalized.

The warning signs fall into two categories: (1) changes in a young person’s personality and (2) the young person starts sharing ideas that align with violent extremist thinking.

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➔ **Red Flags: Personality Changes**

- Choosing to isolate themselves
- Being secretive about views
- Increasing expressions of anger or disrespect
- Attraction to conspiracy theories
- Rejecting authority

➔ **Red Flags: Sharing Violent Extremist Ideology**

- Expressing a belief in the need for violence to further ideas
  - Expressing hateful views toward other groups
  - Blaming other groups for societal problems (immigrants, African Americans, Jewish Americans, etc.)
  - Interest in attaining/learning to use weapons
  - Sharing violent extremist views and ideologies with others
- 

## WHAT SCHOOLS AND YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS CAN DO

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### PRIORITIZE EDUCATION



THAT EQUIPS YOUTH TO COUNTER BIAS, BULLYING, CYBERHATE, AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM.

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One of the more effective strategies a school or youth service organization can do is to prioritize the delivery of educational content such as the lessons included in this curriculum. There is no denying that the presentation of one or two lessons will be beneficial and will certainly have an impact, but the development of bias, bullying, and hate-motivated attitudes, behaviors, and actions does not happen in isolation. Interrupting the development of this kind of thinking is most effective when young people have an opportunity to experience the sequential process outlined in this curriculum. As stated earlier, we acknowledge that the current requirements of the educational community as well as the unique developmental characteristics of youth make this nearly impossible, and yet, youth clearly need educational content to equip them to address and counter the hate and violent extremist thinking they experience so often online.

### REACH OUT



TO ENGAGE STUDENTS WHO SEEM ALONE.

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Reach out to youth who report feeling or appear to be isolated and excluded. Realize that these students may be more vulnerable than others and take steps to help them feel included and connected to the community or the school.

### MAKE RESPECT AND INCLUSION



A PART OF THE CLIMATE OF YOUR SCHOOL OR ORGANIZATION.

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Take steps to institutionalize a climate of respect and inclusion. This can be as simple as communicating its value in your classroom/program, group agreements youth make, and discussions during out-of-class or program activities. Share the value of communicating respect and inclusion from leadership and institutionalize it in things like school or organization vision statements, mottos, and activities.

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**BE ON THE LOOKOUT**

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**FOR RED FLAGS.**

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Be on the lookout for youth who are exhibiting warning signs of violent extremist radicalization. Reach out to them. Engage them in discussion to assess their thinking. If needed, confer with school or agency leadership and the youth's adult family members to devise strategies to remediate what is happening.

## FACILITATION SKILLS

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The following section highlights key points to keep in mind as the facilitator for this curriculum and to promote strategies for success. In this role, you will be working with a group of youth around issues of prejudice, discrimination, and hate. Your role is to create a respectful environment where young people can learn, explore, experiment, and grow, and where they can discover the knowledge, skills, and resources they already have. The program content encourages them to learn more and to explore their own potential. Change is far more likely to be sustained when learning is self-motivated, and this environment and process create a space where positive change can flourish.

The *OJJDP Youth Hate Crimes and Identity-Based Bullying Prevention Curriculum* is designed to build young people's empathy for others who are targets of prejudice and hate, increase their acceptance of differences, and promote respectful speech and behavior. Your willingness to share, when appropriate, aspects of your own identity with respect to gender, race, culture, age, social class, ethnicity, religion, etc., and your own experiences with bias are invaluable teaching tools.

### Promote a Nonthreatening Learning Environment

To facilitate learning, youth benefit from feeling free to explore and share their attitudes and feelings. Be open, genuine, supportive, and nonjudgmental in your interactions with them. Use humor at appropriate times. Make sure they understand, and avoid using jargon or other language that youth may not be familiar with. Ensure that mutual expectations, guidelines, and group agreements are discussed, understood, and agreed upon. Use these guidelines to build trust with the group and to establish and maintain a safe learning environment.

### Establish and Make Use of Group Agreements

It is important that youth understand what is expected of them and what they can expect of you. The establishment of initial group agreements that are developed collaboratively and agreed upon through consensus is the framework for creating and maintaining a respectful learning environment. While the group is working together to establish group agreements, write the agreements on a sheet of chart paper. If you are planning to present additional lessons from this curriculum, start the lesson by repeating the group agreements and ensuring the group still feels that they are effective.

### Provide Clear Instructions

Always confirm that participants understand the directions and know what to do for the lesson they are participating in. Take a moment before beginning the lesson to make sure there are no questions. Write small group instructions or discussion questions on the board as references while participants work together.

### Model the Process

*Modeling* refers to the process whereby the facilitator demonstrates part of a lesson for which they have just given instructions. It provides an opportunity for you to both share relevant

information and provide suggestions about the way young people might respond. For example, if a lesson requires going around the room to obtain a response from each person, you can model this by demonstrating the approximate length of the response (from one word to a lengthier story), examples of the kinds of information that people might share, and a demonstration of the process the lesson requires.

Although it is important for young people to feel free to share whatever responses they are comfortable sharing, they often take their cues from what adults have modeled at the beginning of the process. For example, if you are leading a closing activity in the final minutes of class and your response is 3 minutes long, you can assume youth will also provide more detailed responses. If you give a short response of only a few words, however, they are likely to do the same.

### **Share Personal Stories**

Stories are powerful tools to reinforce learning and translate abstract concepts into real-life experience. Your own stories and anecdotes about personal experiences with bias incidents—whether as someone who was targeted, instigated an incident, or acted as an ally—and how you responded or otherwise dealt with the situation are particularly useful in promoting learning. Equally relevant are stories about others who have struggled against prejudice, and such stories can be drawn from history, literature, and current events.

### **Facilitate Discussion and Reflection**

Small and large group discussions are central to the *OJJDP Youth Hate Crimes and Identity-Based Bullying Prevention Curriculum* process. Pay special attention to ensure everyone has an opportunity to actively participate. Some people are more outgoing and talkative than others, but the opportunity for pair-sharing discussions should encourage even those who are less talkative to fully participate. Use alternative strategies, such as allowing a few minutes for individual reflection, to enable quieter people the opportunity to formulate their thoughts and experiences about a specific topic. Each person has a unique personality and style of learning, and it should not automatically be assumed that less vocal youth are not engaged and learning.

### **Take Time to Summarize**

Periodically review what has been previously discussed and learned. If appropriate, allow time at the end or beginning of a lesson to summarize what has been covered so far. There are several ways to accomplish this, including making a few comments at the end of the discussion or inviting youth to share what they learned. Because discussion is a large part of the learning process, do not be surprised if people are uninterested in additional discussion at the end of a class. Feel free to use alternative techniques, such as a “one word” closing activity or simple drawing exercise to provide space for people to make relevant connections between the lesson content and their own lives.

### **Meet the Challenges**

Because of the many variables that can arise, including interpersonal dynamics, the flow of discussion, and external events, the lesson instructions will not always go the way you expect

them to or the way they are written in this curriculum. This reality is both the reward and challenge of working with experiential content. Educators and youth leaders need to be able to think on their feet and be responsive to what is happening during the class.

### **Challenge: Too little time**

You may find that, although you are running out of time to complete a specific lesson, youth seem particularly engaged in a discussion. Consider checking in to determine if they are willing to move on, would like a few additional minutes to continue discussing the topic, or have some other suggestion on how to resolve the problem (such as a willingness to complete the lesson on the following day). If this happens, make sure that not too much time passes before the lesson is completed and people feel some sense of closure.

### **Challenge: Too little energy**

When people's energy levels seem low, use a quick energizer or allow for a short break. (See the *Icebreakers and Closings* section in the appendix for a few quick icebreakers.)

### **Challenge: Too little discussion**

When discussion seems to get stalled, try to determine the cause:

- Do people understand what you are asking?
- Do people understand the relevance of the discussion to their own situations?
- Has the topic been exhausted?
- Is the topic too threatening or emotional?
- Is there an environmental issue, such as the room temperature being too warm or cold or the presence of other distractions?

To choose the best strategy to address this challenge, you will have to decide why discussion is “stuck.” Openly acknowledge that discussion seems to be stalled and ask people to comment on why they think this is the case.

### **Challenge: Feeling you need to provide answers to people's questions or problems**

Each person needs to individually find their own answers through listening to others and sharing their own experiences. This does not mean that you should refrain from providing your opinions or advice when asked, but the group needs to find their own solutions and decisions to build self-motivation to foster change.

### **Teach the Feedback Process**

Sharing one's personal feelings and perceptions is a key part of the learning process. When someone says or does something, feedback from another person can be either reinforcing or discouraging. Your role is to teach the feedback process and its benefit to them. When giving feedback, people tend to naturally gravitate toward criticism—what is problematic, what might have produced better results, what could have been done differently. Even when people attempt to provide positive feedback, it is often framed as a precursor to criticism; for example, “It's clear you were acting with good intentions when you did that, but it just wasn't a very smart thing to say.” When an expression of positive feedback (“you had good intentions”) ends

with a critical statement (“that wasn’t a smart thing to say”), what the person tends to hear and what stays with them is the criticism, “you are not smart.” Not only is this impression not helpful, but it also destroys the person’s sense of empowerment to create change. It is important to note that in almost every case, the person giving the feedback is trying to be helpful and not destructive. The key approach is to acknowledge what is positive in a detailed and genuine way. Following that, you can offer constructive suggestions for other possible ways to respond.

Because of the importance of the feedback process, facilitators need to be familiar with, teach, and model this process. Unit 9 includes a brief lesson about *The Feedback Process*, which introduces the process, but it will require continual reinforcement to ensure that feedback is given and received in supportive ways.

### Learning Through Feedback: Some Guidelines

- When participants are asked to give self-feedback, instruct them to begin with positive comments—what they did well and what worked. Remind them that positive comments should not be introductory phrases for negative self-feedback.
- Instruct people to focus their feedback on behaviors and not people.
- Request that people listen to feedback being given by others and hold off on immediately trying to defend their actions or words.
- Ask people to take time to evaluate the feedback that has been provided, but to remember that they have the freedom to accept or reject what has been said.

There may occasionally be conflict or disagreements during discussion, and these dynamics can make it difficult for anyone to hear and learn from feedback. In these cases, it is more important to respond to the conflict than to ask people to “hear” constructive feedback.

### Respond to Resistance

Participating in experiential lessons can sometimes be demanding, especially when the content touches upon people’s personal attitudes, beliefs, past choices, and their consequences.

Although the curriculum uses a variety of strategies—discussion, individual reflection, worksheets, etc.—not all of the strategies and not all of the activities will work all of the time. You will occasionally experience resistance (behaviors that are intentionally disruptive) from a youth and need to know how to effectively respond.

Resistance can take many different forms. A youth who is uncomfortable or insecure may repeatedly try to change the subject of discussion or may engage in a variety of other disruptive behaviors, such as asking irrelevant questions or making continual jokes about discussion topics. A young person can occasionally try to undermine your credibility by making comments like, “You have no idea what it’s like. You live in your nice house in the suburbs.” or “It’s been years since you were young.” Similarly, a youth may try to undermine the lesson itself: “Not more discussion! Why can’t we just do something else?” Resistance can also take the form of avoidance of learning, where a typical discussion response begins, “Yes, but ...”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> This specific form of resistance is addressed in the “Yes, But ...” lesson in *Unit 4: Conflict and Communication*.

Remember that these topics have the potential to be threatening and uncomfortable for some people. Resistance is a defense mechanism people use to protect themselves. The following strategies will help you to avoid resistance and respond to it when it emerges:

- Be aware of people during the class and observe any sensitive emotions that are triggered by a specific activity, topic, or part in a role-play.
- Make sure that people know they are not under any pressure to say or reveal anything about themselves that makes them feel uncomfortable.
- Allow enough time for debriefing and discussion so people feel that their participation is valued and their opinions are heard.

### Some Additional Guidelines

- Use words, expressions, and language that are in common usage. When in doubt, check for understanding and define any words that might be unfamiliar.
- When you ask a question, expect and allow for thinking time. Invite people to offer their opinions. If they have no immediate response, allow 10 seconds or longer for thinking time before posing an additional question.
- Practice neutrality. By avoiding responses that judge some comments as “excellent” and others as “incorrect,” you will foster an environment where young people feel they can be open and honest.
- Create opportunities for youth to connect global aspects of prejudice and intolerance to their personal experiences so they see the relevance of learning to their own lives. Spend time at the end of each activity talking about what they learned and how it relates to their own life, their community, and society in general. The opportunity to reflect on experiences enables youth to gain the knowledge and skills needed to motivate positive change in themselves and their communities.
- Encourage youth to think at deeper levels about the issues. Use the recommended discussion questions provided with each lesson as a guide, but pay close attention to the flow and direction of the discussion. When someone shares an honest response, don’t immediately move on. Ask the person a follow-up question that encourages them to go deeper, such as, “*Can you describe the way you were feeling when that happened?*”

### The Discussion/Reflection Process

Recommended discussion questions are provided with each lesson; however, the following is a general outline to structure the discussion and reflection processes:

- What happened during the lesson and what feelings came up for them?
- What did they learn about the issues addressed in the lesson?
- What did they learn about themselves?
- How they can apply what was learned to their own lives, their choices, and their decisions?

## WORKING TOGETHER TO CREATE CHANGE

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It is our hope that these materials and resources will be useful in your work with youth. OJJDP is your partner in this process, and we value any feedback you can offer about your use of these materials or other resources you feel would be helpful. If you have any questions about the implementation of this curriculum, please feel free to contact us at <https://ojjdp.ojp.gov/askojjdp>.

# Unit 1.

## The Respectful Community, Part 1: *Creating a Vision*

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All people want to live in communities where respect is the norm and where communication, interactions, relationships, and transactions are characterized by thoughtfulness and consideration. But respect doesn't happen organically; it requires the shared efforts of all community members. Both in-person and online communities are sometimes marred by rudeness, hostility, antagonism, and even hatred.

Recognizing our shared desire to live in communities of respect, the lessons in this unit provide today's youth with opportunities to create a clear vision of what a respectful community would look like. This vision is a necessary precursor to motivate active engagement in efforts to break through the divisiveness that so often prevents true progress and civility. There is no arguing that the challenges young people face today can feel daunting, but change is possible, and change can begin through creating a vision of what can be and through education that exposes challenges on the road ahead and equips youth to make wise choices.

### IN THIS UNIT:

- *Starting With Group Agreements* creates agreed-upon guidelines for group discussions.
- *What Does Respect Look Like?* provides an opportunity to share first thoughts about what respect is and how it manifests.
- *The Road to Respect* imagines what a community of respect would look like and the obstacles that stand in the way of its growth and development.
- *Small Changes Make Great Gains* underscores that the small changes a single person makes can become significant contributions to reaching individual and collaborative goals.

## **LESSON: STARTING WITH GROUP AGREEMENTS**

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### **PURPOSE:**

Group discussions are most successful when participating youth have initial opportunities to work together to establish consensus on the norms, expectations, and behaviors that will guide their time together. Setting group agreements is important for creating a safe environment that is conducive to learning and productive discussion. This process allows the group to work together immediately and increases their engagement in the work that follows.

### **MATERIALS NEEDED:**

Chart paper or whiteboard and markers, or chalkboard and chalk, masking tape (optional)

### **TIME REQUIRED:**

10–15 minutes

### **INSTRUCTIONS:**

- Explain that it will be helpful if the group works together to establish some agreements that will be useful in creating a positive and considerate environment and providing a respectful framework for managing their discussions together.
- Invite the group to volunteer ideas for agreements they believe will promote a respectful environment. Write down their ideas on chart paper, a whiteboard, or the chalkboard.
- Continue this process for no more than 5–10 minutes, generating a short list of group agreements. Confirm that no one has any additional ideas they want included, and if not, ask for consensus from the group to abide by the group agreements they have developed.
- Post the group agreements in a place that is visible to all. Refer to them whenever it seems appropriate and encourage group members to do so as well.
- Save this list and use it when the group is engaging in discussions, especially during challenging or sensitive topics. If the list was created on whiteboard or chalkboard and the group agreements will be needed at another time, take a photo of the list and recreate it later when needed.

## A NOTE TO FACILITATORS

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As youth suggest their ideas for group agreements, you may occasionally wonder about the usefulness or appropriateness of a specific suggestion. If that happens, ask the person to elaborate on why it seems like an important group agreement. If they make a good case for its inclusion, add it to the list.

### SOME ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

The following suggestions are helpful inclusions to a group's agreements, and you can feel free to add one or more yourself if the group has no further agreements to add. When you do this, be sure to explain why you think it is important.

- Be present.
- Speak from your own experience instead of someone else's ("I feel," "I've experienced," rather than "one time, a friend of mine...").
- If you disagree with something that is said, ask questions about the idea rather than engaging in a personal attack.
- Be respectful.
- Maintain confidentiality—what is said in this room stays in this room.<sup>3</sup>
- Do not interrupt each other.
- Make this a judgment-free zone.

### OTHER HELPFUL STRATEGIES

**Beginning the process.** If people have difficulty coming up with ideas, or if they don't suggest a group agreement you feel is important to the discussion, ask questions to prompt them to consider the topic. If this is unsuccessful, you can add an agreement yourself. Consider including one about how group participation will be managed. Will there be open discussion, or should people raise their hands? Whatever method is agreed upon, ensure that quieter members of the group also feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and experiences.

**Model the group agreements yourself.** In your own behavior and interactions, model respect, listen actively, and express ideas and thoughts by using "I" statements whenever possible.

**How to address violations.** If a particular agreement is being broken repeatedly, it is important to raise the issue with the group, ask them to examine why they are not adhering to an agreement they established, and its importance in creating a respectful community.

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<sup>3</sup> However, it is important to inform participants if the facilitator is a mandated reporter. Mandated reporters have a legal responsibility to report any incidents of child abuse or neglect, and this includes information provided by youth about events that happened in the past. The list of mandated reporters may vary by state but generally include teachers, school officials, counselors, social workers, doctors, nurses, and police officers.

## **LESSON: WHAT DOES RESPECT LOOK LIKE?**

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### **PURPOSE:**

Most people are aware of the existence of hostility and a lack of respect in their daily lives in both their online and in-person communities. They know what disrespect looks and feels like, but to create a community where respect is the norm, they need a clear understanding of what respect means to them and how it might look in practice. In this lesson, youth will brainstorm what disrespectful conduct looks like to them and, conversely, what respectful behavior looks like.

### **MATERIALS NEEDED:**

[\*What Does Respect Look Like?\*](#) handout, scissors, paper clips or rubber bands, masking tape (optional)

### **TIME REQUIRED:**

15–20 minutes

### **PREP WORK:**

Make a copy of the discussion prompts—one copy for every four people in the group plus one extra copy. Prior to conducting this lesson, write the following statements on a sheet of paper, allowing an inch to separate each statement. Cut each sheet of paper into four strips, with one statement on each strip. Fasten the statements from each copy together (you can use a paper clip, rubber band, or other means), so that each small group of four will receive a pile of four different statements.

Discussion prompts:

- Some things that happen when people are acting in disrespectful ways to others.
- Some things I see when someone is showing respect to someone else.
- When I am online and see someone being hateful and disrespectful, this is how I feel ...
- If I want to live in a more respectful environment, some actions I can take are ...

### **INSTRUCTIONS:**

- Introduce the lesson by sharing, in your own words, the lesson’s purpose.
- Divide the large group into small groups of four people. If there is an unequal number of people, make one smaller group.
- Provide one pile of statements to each small group and ask them to divide the strips among the group members.
- Instruct groups to have each person take a turn reading their statement aloud, followed by 2 minutes where all members of the small group respond to that statement. Continue

this process until all of the small group members have read their statements and their group has had time to respond. Allow about 10 minutes for this process.

- Reconvene the large group and ask a member from each small group to share their group's responses to the prompt, *If I want to live in a more respectful environment, some actions I can take are ...*
- Lead a discussion, using the questions below as a guide.

### **CONTINUING THE DISCUSSION:**

- What common themes, if any, came up when your group shared things that happen when people act in disrespectful ways?
- How do you think those kinds of behaviors affect others who witness them?
- Do you think a culture of disrespect is contagious? Why or why not?
- What impact do you think respectful attitudes and behaviors have on others?
- Do you think a culture of respect is contagious? Why or why not?
- What can one person do to increase respect in their community?

## WHAT DOES RESPECT LOOK LIKE?

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Some things that happen when people are acting in disrespectful ways to others.



Some things I see when someone is showing respect to someone else.



When I am online and see someone being hateful and disrespectful, this is how I feel ...



If I want to live in a more respectful environment, some actions I can take are ...



## LESSON: THE ROAD TO RESPECT

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### PURPOSE:

Although it is troubling to live in a community where disrespect and hostility are commonplace, change is unlikely to happen without a clear vision of what needs to change. What would a community look like where rudeness, name-calling, bullying, and even hatred were eliminated, replaced by a shared respect in people's thinking, attitudes, words, and behaviors? It might seem like an impractical goal to set, but history shows that great change can occur when people start making small changes. In this lesson, youth will create their roadmap from the community of hate to the community of respect to visualize that change is possible.

### MATERIALS NEEDED:

Chart paper and markers, masking tape

### TIME REQUIRED:

30 minutes

### PREP WORK:

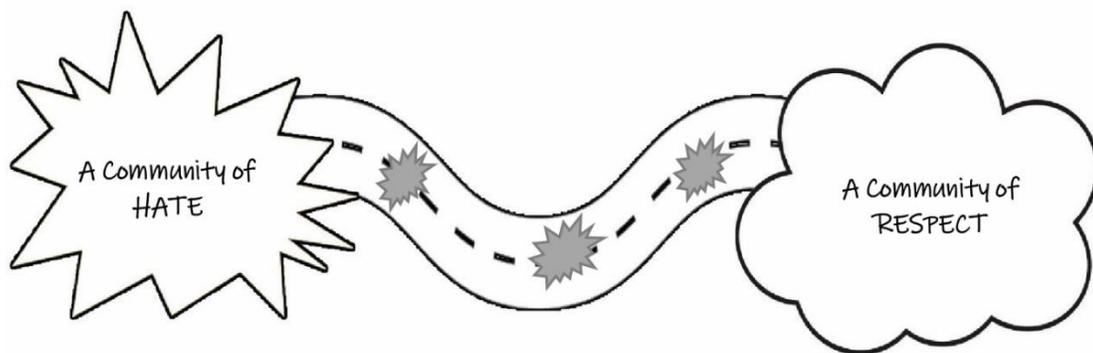
Prior to conducting this lesson, make a copy of the image below on a sheet of chart paper. If chart paper is not available, draw the image on a whiteboard or chalkboard.

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**NOTE:** Please see Part 2 of this lesson in Unit 10. If you are planning to also do Part 2, it will be helpful to record people's ideas on chart paper and retain them for the later lesson. Alternatively, if created on a whiteboard or the chalkboard, take a photo with a smartphone to revisit in Part 2 what people created in this first part.

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### IMAGE:



### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Begin this lesson by asking youth to think about their own community (school, online community, geographic community, etc.). Explain that it is likely that it includes both acts of respect and acts of disrespect. Ask them to imagine what that community would look

like if there was *only* disrespect and hate, where no one was treated with respect and only rudeness, hostility, antagonism, and even hatred existed between people.

- Ask the group:
  - *What would a community like that look like?*
  - *If you lived there, what would it feel like?*
  - *What kinds of things would you see and hear?*

As the group volunteers their ideas in response to these questions, write them down inside and around the part of the image titled *A Community of Hate*.

- Now ask the group to imagine they lived in a community where there was *only* respect, where people always treated one another and themselves with respect, where all the negative and hateful attitudes and behaviors that made up the Community of Hate did not exist. Now ask the group:
  - *What would a community like that look like?*
  - *If you lived in a community like that, what would it feel like?*
  - *What kinds of things would you see and hear?*

As the group volunteers their ideas in response to these questions, write them down inside and around the part of the image titled *A Community of Respect*.

- Instruct the group to look at what they have listed for the two communities and ask which community they would rather live in and why.
- Now ask the group to imagine they are living in a community like the Community of Hate, and they no longer want to live there. Ask:
  - *What would you need to do if you wanted to leave behind attitudes and behaviors that were part of the Community of Hate and start moving toward the Community of Respect?*
  - *What are the obstacles on that road that might keep a community from moving from a place of hate to a community of respect? What things might be standing in the way?*
- Ask for volunteers to suggest some of the possible obstacles that might deter a community from moving toward *respect*. Write their ideas for potential obstacles on and around the road that connects the two communities.

### **CONTINUING THE DISCUSSION:**

- Although there are no real communities where only hate and intolerance exist, what are some steps people could take to avoid or remove one or more of the obstacles that prevent their community from being a place of respect?
- Does change require the actions of a group or can only one person make a difference?
- What can one person do to move forward toward respect?

## **LESSON: SMALL CHANGES MAKE GREAT GAINS**

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### **PURPOSE:**

The challenge of creating change in a community can feel daunting. Although it is true that the collective action of a group can result in significant change, it cannot be denied that the consistent actions of one person, however small, can also make an important difference. This is a light, fun lesson that reinforces the idea that change almost always happens incrementally through the actions of individuals.

### **MATERIALS NEEDED:**

None

### **TIME REQUIRED:**

10 minutes

### **INSTRUCTIONS:**

- Ask group members to find a partner and stand facing each other.
- Ask the pairs to use their observation skills to try to remember as much as possible about their partner's appearance. Take just 30 seconds for this process.
- Now ask pair members to turn their backs to one another and to make one or more small changes to their appearance. Allow another 15–20 seconds for this process.
- Instruct pair members to turn back and face one another again and take turns spotting the change(s) their partner has made. After 1–2 minutes, ask people to return to their seats.

### **CONTINUING THE DISCUSSION:**

- What were some of the skills that helped you to observe the small changes?
- If we repeated this lesson again many times, what would be the result on your appearance?
- How does this lesson connect to how changes happen?

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### **CLOSING REMARKS:**

Share the following, in your own words:

*When we want change to happen, small changes can be both easy to accomplish and easy to overlook, but by adding one small change on top of another, the resulting change is no longer small. It has become significant. It's good to remember that true change happens in steps. It's powerful when we work together, but the small steps we each make as individuals are also significant in leading to lasting change.*

## Unit 1

### THE RESPECTFUL COMMUNITY, PART 1: CREATING A VISION

#### UNIT 1 SUMMARY AND ASSESSMENT

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In this unit, youth initially worked together to create group agreements that would guide their discussions on these topics. They reflected on what *respect* means for them personally and imagined together what their community might look like if respect characterized the interactions between people and organizations. Sometimes youth feel like change will never happen, or if it could, it would require monumental efforts. In this unit, they have learned about the power of making small changes consistently over time and how doing so can result in significant positive change.

A key factor in preventing a community from being a place of respect is the presence of biased thinking and behaviors. In an environment where bias is accepted, it becomes normalized and if unchecked, tends to escalate to more serious manifestations of prejudice and hate. The units that follow will build understanding of the roots of bias, prejudice, and hate; the different ways they manifest; and the skills youth need to act with empathy as allies to others.

If you have used all or most of the lessons in this unit with the youth in your care, you may want to assess their learning and readiness to move on to *Unit 2: Understanding Bias, Bullying, and Hate*. The following questions can guide a final discussion to provide a summary, closure, and assessment of the group's progress:

- *What stands out for you in the lessons we did in this unit?*
- *One thing you did was to create a vision for what a respectful community would look like. What are your thoughts on taking action to make this vision a reality?*
- *We talked about some obstacles that might be faced if we wanted to create change. What are your thoughts about what causes the obstacles in your own community?*
- *What resources would help you to create change?*

# Unit 2.

## Understanding Bias, Prejudice, Bullying, and Hate

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An initial step in understanding bias, prejudice, bullying, and hate is to develop a common understanding of some of the basic terms and concepts that are a regular part of discussions on these topics.

The lessons in this unit build understanding of some working definitions relating to bias, prejudice, bullying, and hate. The concepts of personal and institutional manifestations of prejudice and the differences between them are also introduced.

Youth will also learn about the common behaviors that are typically present when incidents of bullying occur. The tendency to attach labels, such as *bully*, to behaviors a person has done in the past or present is unhelpful in accomplishing an overall goal of changing biased attitudes and behaviors. Labels that attach an identity to a person rather than calling out the behavior as unacceptable often have lasting negative consequences for the person being labeled. For this reason, descriptions of the dynamics of bullying and other bias-motivated incidents are described in this curriculum as behaviors and not roles people take.

The lessons in this unit are designed to help young people develop foundational knowledge by first exploring definitions that are both clear and understandable, followed by opportunities to link some of the terms and concepts to concrete experiences in their own lives.

### IN THIS UNIT:

- *The Art of Listening* strengthens listening skills, which are critical in effective communication; includes the handout *The Different Ways We Listen*.
- *A Living Lexicon* introduces some terms and concepts to build understanding.
- *Behaviors Not Labels* addresses the practice of describing people involved in incidents of bullying, bias, and hate by their behaviors and not by assigning them a role; includes the handout *Common Behaviors in Bullying, Bias, and Hate-Motivated Incidents*.
- *The Culture of Inequality* clarifies the difference between the ways prejudice and discrimination manifest in personal and institutional ways; includes the handout *Forms of Prejudice: Definitions and Examples*.
- *Writing: Past Moments* explores feelings when people are involved in incidents of bias and bullying and how they responded.

## LESSON: THE ART OF LISTENING

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### PURPOSE:

In learning about prejudice and bias, two important elements that assist people are gaining new knowledge and building awareness of what motivates thoughts and behaviors. This introductory lesson focuses on listening, an important communication skill in this process, that also helps to build trust among group members.

### MATERIALS NEEDED:

[\*The Different Ways We Listen\*](#) handout, one copy for each person

### TIME REQUIRED:

15 minutes

### PREP WORK:

Make copies of the handout *The Different Ways We Listen*, one for each person. Write the following prompts on chart paper, the chalkboard, or a whiteboard:

- Share something that you feel is a personal strength and how it helps you in your life.
- Share something in your life that is difficult and often comes up for you.
- Share a goal or dream you have for the future.

### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Provide a copy of the handout *The Different Ways We Listen* to each person. Briefly review with the group the different ways people listen. Begin by reading the first paragraph, then continue either reading aloud, introducing this information in your own words, or have youth take turns reading. TIP: Having youth read is a great way to keep them engaged.
- Call attention to the three prompts (written during Prep Work). Ask people to find a partner and take 1–2 minutes each to share responses to the prompts with their partner. Explain that they should both respond to each prompt before moving on to the next. Referring to the handout, tell people that this exercise will give them a chance to practice the fourth way of listening shown on the handout—being present and really hearing what the other person is saying. Begin pairs-sharing and allow 10 minutes for discussions.
- Reconvene the group and lead a brief discussion to process the experience.

## **CONTINUING THE DISCUSSION:**

- When you were the listener, what was it like when you concentrated on being present and really listening to what your partner was saying?
- When it was your turn to speak, what were your reactions to feeling like you were really being heard?
- How did this process influence the sense of trust between you and your partner?

## THE DIFFERENT WAYS WE LISTEN

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Whenever two or more people are talking together, listening skills are being used, but is all listening the same?

These are some of the different ways people listen:

- **“My Mind Is Elsewhere” Listening:** You are in a conversation but have other things on your mind. Instead of listening, you allow these concerns and random thoughts to prevent you from hearing whatever the other person is saying.
- **“Jumping the Track” Listening:** You hear what the other person is saying, or at least a fragment of it, and it immediately reminds you of something or someone in your own life. When you respond, you start talking about that experience without regard to what the speaker had been saying.
- **“What I Think About It” Listening:** You want to hear what the person is saying, but your mind immediately becomes occupied with your own response, what you want to say, and what you think. Instead of really listening to what the speaker is saying, your mind is occupied with what you will say as soon as there is a pause in the conversation.
- **“I Am Present, and I Hear” Listening:** This is active listening. Your full attention is on listening to what the other person is saying, both in their words and the feelings that seem to underlie those words. When you are fully present and hearing what the other person is saying, your responses are quite different from other kinds of listening, allowing you to ask a relevant question or provide a moment of quiet rather than immediately jumping in.

## LESSON: A LIVING LEXICON

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### PURPOSE:

Young people benefit from an opportunity to examine the meanings of some basic terms and concepts related to bias, bullying, and hate so they have a shared understanding of their meanings and the ways they manifest in their lives and in the broader society. This lesson provides youth an opportunity to develop their vocabulary in this area to facilitate effective communication on these topics.

### MATERIALS NEEDED:

Paper, scissors, glue or tape

### TIME REQUIRED:

30 minutes

### PREP WORK:

Prior to this lesson, create a set of cards using the [Living Lexicon: Cards](#) template. Create enough copies so that each person has one card—either a card that lists a word or concept or a card that includes only a definition. If the group number is uneven, the facilitator should participate, taking one of the cards that lists the name of a word or concept.

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**NOTE:** There are nine terms and definitions on the template. Make sure you provide enough matching cards and definitions so that everyone has either a word card or a matching definition.

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### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Begin this lesson by explaining that they are going to learn the meanings of some basic concepts and terms that relate to bias, prejudice, and hate. Explain that developing a working lexicon of the terms and concepts that will be part of their discussions helps to promote clear communication and understanding.
- Explain the following, in your own words:

*For this lesson, you will be receiving a small card. Half the cards have a word or concept printed on the front. The other half of the cards have a definition for a word or concept. When we begin, circulate around the room, and locate the definition or word that matches your card. Some of the words are closely related, so if you think you have found your match, show me so I can confirm your match is correct. Once your match is confirmed, sit down with your partner and come up with an example(s) from the present day or history that demonstrates your word.*

- Begin the process and allow about 15 minutes for people to locate their matches. As people find and confirm their match, invite them to be seated and brainstorm on an example(s) of their word or concept.
  - When everyone has found their match and identified an example of their word, reconvene the group. Have each pair read their word, its definition, and the example(s) of their word.
- 

### **CLOSING REMARKS:**

Many times, people have their own understandings of words. For example, is the word bias always a negative? Is it just a word to describe a more subtle form of prejudice? As we explore some of these issues, it will be helpful if we all have a common understanding of these words and begin to understand that the different ways prejudice manifests, such as racism, sexism, and bias based on disability, do not just happen when one person treats another person on that basis.

## LIVING LEXICON: CARDS

**DIRECTIONS:** Using the template on the next two pages, create a set of cards with enough copies so that each person has one card—either a card that lists a word/concept (left column) or a card that includes only a definition (right column). If the group number is uneven, the facilitator should participate, taking one of the cards that lists the name of a word or concept.

|                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <p><b>PREJUDICE</b></p>               | <p>Making a decision or assumption about a person or group of people without enough knowledge, often based on stereotypes.</p>   |
| <p><b>BIAS</b></p>                    | <p>An inclination or preference either for or against an individual or a group that interferes with impartial judgement.</p>   |
| <p><b>IDENTITY-BASED BULLYING</b></p> | <p>Any behavior that targets a person intentionally and repeatedly based on an aspect of who they are or are perceived to be, for the purpose of humiliating, demeaning, ridiculing, or hurting them.</p>  |
| <p><b>BIAS-MOTIVATED INCIDENT</b></p> | <p>Nonviolent conduct, including words, slurs, or actions, directed at a person, residence, house of worship, or business because the target is or is perceived to be a member of a specific race, religion, ethnicity, national origin, disability, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, or other characteristic of their identity.</p> |

|                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <b>HATE CRIME</b>                   | A violent act or threat of violence against property, a person, or a group where the offender is motivated, either in whole or in part, by the target's actual or perceived race, religion, ethnicity, national origin, disability, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, or another characteristic. |
| <b>PROPAGANDA</b>                   | Information, ideas, opinions, or images, often only giving one part of an argument, that are broadcast, published, or in some other way disseminated, with the intention of influencing people's thinking and opinions.   |
| <b>COUNTERSPEECH</b>                | The process of exposing hate speech for its dishonest, false, and hurtful content; setting the record straight; and promoting respect.  |
| <b>ONLINE BULLYING<br/>AND HATE</b> | Any use of electronic communications technology that attacks people based on their actual or perceived race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or another characteristic.   |

## LESSON: BEHAVIORS NOT LABELS

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### PURPOSE:

The language of bullying is everywhere, from video news clips to movies, from websites and books to classroom curriculums. Bullying is clearly a serious concern for schools, youth groups, and communities, but how we talk about it can have unintended consequences.

Too often, those who are involved in bullying incidents, either directly or indirectly, experience the common use of labeling when describing the issue. *Bully, victim, target,* and *confronter* are all common terms used to describe what are often referred to as the “roles” people take when bullying occurs. But using roles that attach a label to a person, as if the incident is now part of who they are, is both unfair and unhelpful. This lesson promotes the idea of naming the behaviors different people choose when an incident of bullying occurs, rather than assigning them a role. A person who engages in bullying behavior today may just as easily choose ally behavior the next day. Likewise, a person who is targeted today can engage in bullying behavior at another time.

### MATERIALS NEEDED:

[Common Behaviors in Bullying, Bias, and Hate-Motivated Incidents and Crimes](#) handout, one copy for each person

### TIME REQUIRED:

20 minutes

### PREP WORK:

Prior to this lesson, make copies of the handout *Common Behaviors in Bullying, Bias, and Hate-Motivated Incidents and Crimes*, one copy for each person.

### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Begin by introducing this lesson in your own words, by sharing the concept of describing incidents of bullying, bias, and hate using the behaviors people choose during a specific incident rather than assigning labels to people based on these behaviors.
- Share with the group, in your own words:

*It can be easy to fall back into the ways we have always described something. Change often takes time. One of the ways to change a pattern is to reflect on the impact and consequences of how something is being described. With regard to the dynamics of bullying incidents, negative labels can sometimes stay with people for a very long time and can influence the ways they see themselves and how others see them. Let's take a few minutes to imagine together what the long-lasting negative consequences might be of being labeled a "bully" quite early in your life.*

- Provide the following brief story before beginning:

### **STORY: THE IMPACT OF BEING LABELED**

*Imagine a boy named Nick. Nick is an only child whose father has recently died. He and his mom have had to move into his grandparents' house, and Nick has started attending a new school. It is a difficult time for Nick, multiplied by the reality that the boys in his new school aren't friendly and continually try to exclude him from activities and groups. Now, without knowing more of the details, suppose an incident happens where Nick loses his temper and acts out, physically pushing another boy into a locker. The boys immediately call Nick a bully and report him to the school administration, who accepts their report and mandates that Nick serve several days in detention. Two weeks after starting his new school, Nick finds himself ostracized for being a "bully."*

- Explain the following: Let's assume that this label stuck with Nick for a very long time. Remember, this was a very difficult time for Nick before that happened. Imagine how that label impacted his experience at school and in later life. We are going to create a "group story" about the negative, long-lasting impact of this label on Nick. I will start with a simple sentence, and then we'll go around the room and, one by one, each of you can add one sentence that builds on the one before. When we get to the end and everyone has added a sentence, the last person will say, "The End."
- Before beginning, tell the group that this can often be a fun lesson where people are motivated to say silly things, but in this instance, there is a goal to better understand the ways language and labeling negatively impact people. Ask people to think about what they will add, making sure it is a meaningful sentence that aligns with that goal.
- Begin the group story by saying, "Once upon a time, there was a boy named Nick who was labeled a bully." Go around the group and have each person contribute one sentence to the story. If the group is large, you can go around once; if the group is small, you can go around twice.
- At the conclusion, provide a few moments to process the lesson. The questions below are provided to guide the discussion.

### **CONTINUING THE DISCUSSION:**

- Have you ever been labeled? How did it make you feel? Did it matter if the label was seen as a positive label or a negative one?
- Have you ever been assigned a label that you felt didn't fit who you were?
- When you encounter someone else using terms that label other people, how do you think you will react?

## COMMON BEHAVIORS IN BULLYING, BIAS, AND HATE-MOTIVATED INCIDENTS AND CRIMES

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### **INSTIGATING/BULLYING:**

Intentionally saying or doing something hateful, malicious, or threatening to another person or group or their property.

### **COLLABORATING:**

Speaking out or taking actions that are helpful or supportive to someone engaging in bullying, bias, or hate-motivated behaviors.

### **BYSTANDING:**

Witnessing an incident of bullying, bias, or hate, but not saying or doing anything to respond.

### **CONFRONTING:**

Intervening when an incident of bullying, bias, or hate takes place. When deemed safe, confronting can be done by other people or the person(s) being targeted.

### **BEING AN ALLY:**

Speaking out on behalf of someone else or taking actions that are helpful and supportive of someone else.

### **BEING TARGETED:**

Having harm, abuse, or mistreatment directed at you.

### **BEING VICTIMIZED:**

Being the target of a bias- or hate-motivated crime.

## LESSON: THE CULTURE OF INEQUALITY

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### PURPOSE:

This lesson focuses on learning how prejudice can manifest in both personal and institutional ways. Working together, youth identify examples of both personal manifestations of an assigned form of prejudice as well as how it manifests in institutional ways.

### MATERIALS NEEDED:

[\*Forms of Prejudice: Definitions and Examples\*](#) handout, one copy for each person; blank paper and pens or pencils

### TIME REQUIRED:

20–30 minutes

### PREP WORK:

Write out the following definitions on the chalkboard, chart paper, or whiteboard. Make copies of the handout *Forms of Prejudice: Definitions and Examples*, one copy for each person.

*Personal prejudice* is prejudicial treatment by one person or a group against another person based on that person's membership in a specific group, such as race, religion, or ethnicity. Personal prejudice typically manifests in slurs, name-calling, etc.

*Institutional prejudice* is prejudice or discrimination that is deeply rooted in the practices, policies, and procedures of large institutions or organizations. Examples include unequal pay structures or different hiring practices and unequal opportunities or services offered for different groups.

### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Begin by sharing the following, in your own words:

*Although people widely understand that things like name-calling, slurs, stereotypical thinking, and demeaning humor are clear examples of prejudice when directed at a person or a group because of their race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, etc., prejudice can also manifest in what we call institutional ways.*

- Refer to the definitions of *personal prejudice* and *institutional prejudice* created prior to beginning the lesson. Read them aloud to the group or ask one of the participants to read them. Explain that the behaviors you just described (in step 1) are all examples of personal forms of prejudice, that is, actions a person does based on their bias against a group, but there are other forms of prejudice that also happen in what we call institutional ways. To demonstrate these two ways that bias and hate can manifest, provide the following example about prejudice against people because of their ethnicity or nation of origin:

An example of *personal prejudice*: A recent immigrant from Pakistan, who was a teacher in his country, responds to a help wanted sign at a local business and two employees standing outside yell, “Go back to where you came from and stop taking all our jobs.”

An example of an *institutional prejudice* against this same person is when he has difficulty finding housing for his family because three of the apartments he goes to look at won’t take his application because they insist on “English only” in their building.

- Divide the large group into five small groups. Provide a copy of the handout *Forms of Prejudice: Definitions and Examples* to each person, along with a few sheets of paper and some pens or pencils for each small group. Clarify that the handout does not include all of the ways prejudice manifests itself against different groups; it only includes five categories or forms of prejudice for the purposes of their discussion.
- Assign a different form of prejudice (racism, classism, etc.) to each group, and ask them to identify an example of personal prejudice and of institutional prejudice relating to that specific form of prejudice. Allow 10–15 minutes for this process. During the small group discussion, circulate around the room to provide guidance or suggestions when needed.
- Reconvene the group and have one person from each small group report, sharing first their specific form of prejudice followed by their examples.

### **CONTINUING THE DISCUSSION:**

- Our society is often described as being a system of liberty and justice for all. Do you agree? Why or why not?
- What do you think might be at the root of the inequality we experience, both in personal and institutional manifestations of bias and hate?
- How does an understanding of the different ways that prejudice and discrimination manifest benefit individuals and society in general?
- In what ways would the impact be different between personal manifestations of prejudice and those that are institutional in nature?
- How does this understanding relate to your own life?

## FACILITATOR RESOURCE:

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### PERSONAL AND INSTITUTIONAL EXAMPLES OF PREJUDICE

In this lesson, youth may have difficulty identifying institutional examples of their assigned forms of prejudice. If this is the case, you may provide an example from the list below.

#### Racism

*Personal Manifestation:* Two teenage friends of different races shop in a retail clothing store for new jeans. The shop clerk follows the black friend around the store the entire time she is shopping, but never offers her assistance. Another example would be a group of middle school students, while on recess, saying to three new Hispanic students "Go back to your country, you don't belong here."

*Institutional Manifestation:* National crime statistics indicate that law enforcement stop and arrest Black people at a higher rate than whites for the same suspected crime.

#### Classism

*Personal Manifestation:* A group of girls mock another girl about her clothes, saying they must have been purchased at a garage sale.

*Institutional Manifestation:* Classes to ensure students get the best scores on SAT exams are only affordable for families with higher incomes.

#### Ableism

*Personal Manifestation:* A boy with special needs is called a "retard" by other students.

*Institutional Manifestation:* In the supermarket, the most popular brands of groceries are located on the upper shelves, making it difficult for a person in a wheelchair to reach them.

#### Sexism

*Personal Manifestation:* As girls walk down the hall, boys rate them on their appearance from 1 to 10.

*Institutional Manifestation:* At work, women earn almost 30% less than men who work in the same job position.

#### Religious Bigotry

*Personal Manifestation:* When observing fast days during Ramadan, two Muslim girls are required to spend their lunch hour in the cafeteria where other students throw food at them.

*Institutional Manifestation:* A class trip is scheduled for a day when Jewish students cannot attend because of observance of Yom Kippur.

## FORMS OF PREJUDICE: DEFINITIONS AND EXAMPLES

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**PERSONAL PREJUDICE** is prejudicial treatment by one person or a group against another person based on that person's membership in a specific group, such as race, religion, or ethnicity. Personal prejudice typically manifests in slurs, name-calling, etc.

**An example of personal prejudice:** A Mexican American man responds to a help wanted sign at a local business and two employees standing outside yell, "Go back to where you came from and stop taking all our jobs."

**INSTITUTIONAL PREJUDICE** is prejudice or discrimination that is deeply rooted in the practices, policies, or procedures of large institutions or organizations, such as lack of fairness in pay structure, hiring practices, opportunities, and services offered.

**An example of institutional prejudice:** A recent immigrant has difficulty finding housing for his family because three of the apartments advertised won't take his application because they insist on "English only" in their buildings.

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|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Racism:</b>            | Prejudice or discrimination against a person or group on the basis of skin color or other physical characteristics, including the belief that race is the determining factor in shaping human traits and capacities, and that racial differences are responsible for the inherent superiority of one race over others.   |
| <b>Classism:</b>          | Prejudice or discrimination against an individual or a group because of their social or economic status (how much money their families have or do not have, where they live, the kind of clothes they wear, etc.).   |
| <b>Ableism:</b>           | Prejudice or discrimination against people who have disabilities, including physical, intellectual, or psychiatric disabilities.   |
| <b>Sexism:</b>            | Prejudice or discrimination against an individual or a group based on the idea that one sex or gender is better than the others.   |
| <b>Religious Bigotry:</b> | Prejudice or discrimination against people based on their religious beliefs or practices. <i>Antisemitism</i> is a form of religious prejudice that includes negative ideas and stereotypes about people who are Jewish based on their religious beliefs and practices. <i>Islamophobia</i> is a form of religious prejudice that includes negative ideas and stereotypes about people who identify as Muslim and practice and/or adhere to the beliefs associated with the religion of Islam. |

## WRITING: PAST MOMENTS

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### INSTRUCTIONS:

**Introduce the assignment:** Bias and hate can take many forms, from stereotyping to name-calling to violent threats. Every day, each of us witnesses situations where assumptions and judgments are made about other people based on qualities of their personal identity, such as race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, social class, and more. It is likely that some people make these kinds of assumptions about you without really knowing who you are or what you are like.

**Assignment:** Think about some of the personal experiences you have had in your life relating to bullying, bias, or prejudice. Write a few sentences or a paragraph in response to one of the following:

- A time when you were the target of the behavior
- A time when you were a bystander of the behavior
- A time when you engaged in bias or bullying behavior against someone else

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**NOTE:** If youth have a difficult time coming up with an example, prompt them to think of an example or scenario they have seen on TV, in a movie, or on social media that would apply.

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### FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSION:

Provide an opportunity for people to discuss their writing by leading a group discussion. The questions below are provided as a guide.

- What was it like to remember the specifics of different incidents? Was it easier to respond to being in one role than others? Why do you think this is the case?
- What role did you choose, and what do you remember about your feelings when you were in that situation?
- If you didn't choose the role of someone being targeted, how do you think the person in your example may have felt? Do you think they felt supported or alone?
- What did you do in the situation you described? Were you happy with your response or do you wish you were better prepared?

## Unit 2

### UNDERSTANDING BIAS, PREJUDICE, BULLYING, AND HATE

#### UNIT 2 SUMMARY AND ASSESSMENT

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This unit builds understanding of bias, prejudice, bullying, and hate, beginning with the development of a working vocabulary of the common concepts associated with bias and prejudice, along with opportunities to link these concepts to participants' real-life experiences. They have learned about the long-lasting impact of labeling people involved in bias incidents and crimes, and the reason why labeling behaviors results in better outcomes for all. They have been introduced to the idea that bias and prejudice manifest in both personal and institutional ways and have explored through writing lessons ways to help them build empathy for others.

If you have used all or most of the lessons in this unit with the youth in your care, you may want to assess their learning and readiness to move on to *Unit 3: Everyday Prejudice and You*. In this unit, their learning thus far will enable them to personally connect the concepts of the common language they have developed to their own lives and experiences.

The following questions can guide a final discussion to provide a summary, closure, and assessment of the group's progress:

- *What is something that stands out for you in the lessons we did in this unit?*
- *We looked at both the personal and institutional ways that bias and prejudice happen. What surprised you about this? What other thoughts do you have?*
- *Do you agree that all people are created equal? Does that value match what happens in society?*
- *What questions do you still have?*

# Unit 3.

## Everyday Prejudice and You

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Intolerance and biased attitudes are often viewed as though they happen somewhere else to someone else. All people have developed some biased attitudes from a variety of places—the adults in their lives, movies and television, print media, advertising, books and magazines, and websites and social media. This unit builds awareness of this reality, beginning by linking terms and concepts relating to prejudice with their own real-life experiences. Through this unit, youth participants will have the opportunity to learn about and imagine different ways in which people can feel excluded and can exclude others. They will increase their understanding of the diverse perspectives that exist in every situation and will engage in a dialogue on several topics to further explore the dynamics between people who have diverse points of view.

The lessons are designed to build awareness of some of their own biases and to motivate them to act as allies to those who are targeted by bias and hate. To do so, they need to be able to personally connect these concepts to their own experiences and develop a solid understanding of the ways bias and hate can manifest, their tendency to quickly escalate if no one intervenes, and their own feelings when they have been personally involved.

### IN THIS UNIT:

- *Left Out* encourages reflection on the feelings associated with prejudice and the experience of feeling different from others.
- *Exploring Different Perspectives* increases understanding of the different perspectives that exist in every situation, and how these perspectives can influence attitudes and behavior.
- *The Impact of Bias and Hate* examines how biased attitudes impact people's behaviors.
- *The Ladder of Hate* demonstrates the tendency of hate to escalate when no one intervenes.
- *Writing: Climbing Down From the Ladder* asks youth to develop a brief story that demonstrates the escalation of hate and what actions could produce a better outcome.

## **LESSON: LEFT OUT**

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### **PURPOSE:**

The development of empathy is strengthened through opportunities to reflect on the feelings associated with being targeted by bias and prejudice. In this lesson, youth look back on times they personally felt different from others and identify some of the feelings that motivate their own biases.

### **MATERIALS NEEDED:**

Chart paper or whiteboard and markers, or chalkboard and chalk

### **TIME REQUIRED:**

15 minutes

### **INSTRUCTIONS:**

- Ask youth to take a minute or two to think back on a time when they felt different from everyone else; for example, their first day in a new school or a time when they were the only person of their gender or race in a group.
- Confirm that everyone has thought of a situation. Ask them to think of one word that describes how they felt in that situation.
- Go around the room and have each person say their word aloud. Lead a brief discussion to process this experience.

### **CONTINUING THE DISCUSSION:**

- How would you describe the kinds of words you all used to describe how you felt? Were they positive or negative words?
- There have been times when other people have joined a class or another group where everyone knows everyone else. Do you think they may have been feeling like they were different from others in the group? What words would you use to describe how they might have felt?
- What does it mean to “walk in the shoes of another”?

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### **CLOSING REMARKS:**

Share that, even though everyone has had these kinds of feelings at one time or another, it's easy to forget how these experiences made us feel. However, if we remember our own feelings in similar situations, it can help us to be more sensitive to the feelings of others and to imagine what it's like to “walk in their shoes.”

## LESSON: EXPLORING DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

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### PURPOSE:

In today's culture, which is increasingly characterized by divisiveness, young people benefit from recognizing that many points of view exist on any given topic and there is value in hearing and understanding the perspectives of others rather than immediately rejecting them as wrong. In this lesson, youth will practice listening skills to understand and appreciate different perspectives.

### MATERIALS NEEDED:

[\*Opinion Signs\*](#) or four pieces of paper, markers, tape

### TIME REQUIRED:

20–30 minutes

### PREP WORK:

Make one copy of the *Opinion Signs*. Alternatively, you can write the following words with marker, with one opinion word(s) in the center of each page: STRONGLY AGREE, AGREE, DISAGREE, STRONGLY DISAGREE. Tape the papers on the walls around the room, with one in each corner.

### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Introduce this lesson, in your own words:

*Sometimes we imagine that most people feel the same way as we do about many things. It's easy for us to imagine that our opinions on things are right and that people who feel differently are either in the wrong or are misinformed. There is a wide range of opinions about nearly everything. It's helpful if we understand this reality and are open to others' opinions, especially if they differ from our own.*

- Share the following process with the group:
  - You are going to read 10 statements, one at a time.
  - After each statement, people should decide their opinion about the statement and move to the corner with the sign that best expresses their view.
  - If someone has no opinion on a particular statement, they can move to the center of the room for their response.
  - Instruct youth to engage in this lesson silently, without discussion, but to observe how they agree with some people on some topics but not on others, and how they are sometimes in the majority, sometimes alone, and sometimes part of a small group.

- Ask people to stand. Begin reading the *Different Perspectives Statements* at the end of this lesson, one at a time, allowing time after each statement for people to move to the corner of the room that best expresses their opinion.
- After all statements have been read, ask people to be seated and invite them to share their thoughts about the process. The questions below are provided as a guide.

### **CONTINUING THE DISCUSSION:**

- Were some of the questions more difficult to respond to than others? Why do you think this was the case?
- If you were alone in your opinion, or part of a very small group, how did you feel?
- Did you ever choose your opinion based on how others were responding? In what ways were you influenced by how others chose to respond?
- Do you think the results would be the same if people responded with their eyes closed or who could otherwise not see how others were responding? Why or why not?
- What are some ways people typically respond to others when their opinions are different? What are some results of this way of responding?
- What did this lesson teach you about being open to diverse perspectives on a topic?

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### **DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES STATEMENTS:**

- My school administration does all that it can to inspire people to respect one another and be open and honest in their communication with others.
- All students are treated equally in my school, are given the same attention, and receive the same discipline for the same behaviors.
- I am comfortable when people around me speak languages I don't understand.
- I spend too much time on my phone.
- Everyone should have the right of free speech—even organized hate groups.
- Social media connects me to my friends, but I often feel overwhelmed by the drama.
- I have experienced online name-calling, bullying, or harassment.
- I have unfollowed or unfriended someone because of their bullying behavior.
- I worry about becoming a victim of a mass shooting.
- My experiences online have sometimes negatively affected my daily life.

**STRONGLY  
AGREE**

**AGREE**

**DISAGREE**

**STRONGLY  
DISAGREE**

## **LESSON: THE IMPACT OF BIAS AND HATE**

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### **PURPOSE:**

Bias and prejudice toward others are perceived as something that is a problem somewhere else. When these behaviors happen, people often explain them away as anomalies or blame them on someone or something else. This lesson takes a brief look at the ways people often act when they are holding biased attitudes for a person or group based on some element of their identity. This lesson is an introduction to the concept of the tendency of hate behaviors to escalate (see lesson that follows, “The Ladder of Hate”).

### **MATERIALS NEEDED:**

Chart paper or whiteboard and markers, or chalkboard and chalk

### **TIME REQUIRED:**

20 minutes

### **PREP WORK:**

Write the following definition on chart paper, the whiteboard, or the chalkboard:

**Bias** is prejudice or discrimination against a person or a group based on negative stereotypes about the group or assumptions about their beliefs and practices formed with limited or nonexistent knowledge.

### **INSTRUCTIONS:**

- Explain that there are many groups that are often targets of prejudice and hate. Provide some examples (immigrants, African Americans, people experiencing homelessness, members of the LGBTQ+ community, religious groups such as Muslims and Jews).
- Brainstorm with the group some of the reasons why people form negative feelings about those they see as being different from themselves. Write the heading “Attitudes” on the top of a sheet of chart paper, the whiteboard, or the chalkboard, and list people’s responses below the heading.
- Referring to the list, suggest that they have just brainstormed the reasons for what is sometimes referred to as bias or prejudice. Review the definition, prepared before this lesson, with the group.
- Now ask the group to identify the ways a person who holds biased views about a specific group might behave. Write a second heading beside the first list called “Behaviors.” As people suggest responses, list them below this second heading.
- Lead a brief discussion to help process this lesson. The questions below are provided as a guide.

## CONTINUING THE DISCUSSION:

- Looking at these lists, do you think that some of the behaviors might be more harmful or damaging than others on the list? Which ones?
- In what ways might some actions be more harmful?
- Which would you identify as the most harmful? What makes it the most harmful?
- Do you see any progression in these attitudes and behaviors from least harmful to most harmful? What is your thinking on this?
- How does a person move from a level of behavior that seems less harmful to one that is very harmful?

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## CLOSING REMARKS:

At the end of the discussion, share the following, in your own words:

*While it's important to recognize that bias-motivated behavior tends to escalate if nothing happens to stop its progression, you can see how easy it is to categorize actions into those we feel are less harmful and others that seem most harmful. We do need to be cautious, however, when we assume that one action of hate is less harmful or serious than another. While we can agree that a behavior like name-calling is less harmful than bias-motivated violence, we need to remember that for people who are repeatedly targeted by bullying and other bias-motivated behaviors that may seem less harmful, those being targeted can feel that these behaviors are very serious and harmful and they can experience long-lasting negative consequences because of them, including anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts.*

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**NOTE:** Young people who develop this understanding of the tendency of hate to escalate if no one acts need opportunities to develop skills to effectively act—skills that include the ability to assess the safety of a situation before responding. In *Unit 9: Cyberhate and Counterspeech*, a lesson “Understanding Cyberhate” includes content and a worksheet on assessing the safety of a situation before responding.

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## LESSON: THE LADDER OF HATE

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### PURPOSE:

This lesson builds understanding about how bias and hate-motivated behaviors can escalate from attitudes to violence. Using the image of a ladder, youth will explore (1) how hate can escalate when no one takes action to stop it and (2) the impact of this escalation for the individuals and community.

### MATERIALS NEEDED:

[The Ladder of Hate](#) worksheet and [The Escalation of Hate](#) story, one copy of each for each person; pens or pencils

### TIME REQUIRED:

30 minutes

### PREP WORK:

Prior to this lesson, make copies of the worksheet and story handouts listed above, one copy of each for each person.

### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Begin by distributing a copy of the worksheet *The Ladder of Hate* to each person. Explain that *The Ladder of Hate* is a way to visually represent how hate can quickly escalate when no one takes action to stop it. Referring to the handout, explain the following, in your own words:

*The flat ground at the bottom of the ladder represents an environment of complete respect where there is an absence of bias, prejudice, and hate. When a person engages in subtle acts of bias, it represents stepping onto the first rung of the ladder, where they are slightly removed from respectful behavior. The left column next to the first rung explains some of the acts of bias that occur at this level. If the person engages in more concerning behaviors, such as using demeaning slurs, name-calling, taunting, or bullying others, they have taken another step up the ladder. If the person's hate behaviors continue to grow more serious, they have chosen to climb further up the ladder. When nothing happens to stop the hateful behavior, it can be an easy step up to the next level.*

- Review the rungs of the ladder and the behaviors and actions associated with each level (examples are listed on the left of each ladder rung).
- Distribute a copy of *The Escalation of Hate* story to each person. Before reading the story aloud, share the following, in your own words:

*Everyone has learned prejudices from other people or from books, movies, and television. I am going to read a short story that demonstrates how easy it is for hate to escalate. This story is fictional; the main characters could be part of any ethnicity, race, or other*

*identity group. Just because the young men in the story acted in biased or violent ways, it does not mean that everyone in their group would act that way.*

*Likewise, the actions of one storeowner and his wife do not mean that all people would react in the same way as the storeowner in the story does. All groups and all people have biases.*

*When they act on those biases, hate can quickly escalate.*

- Read the story at the end of this lesson. Afterward, suggest that *The Ladder of Hate* could be used to demonstrate how hate escalates. Ask people to take the next 5–10 minutes to use *The Ladder of Hate* worksheet to identify the specific acts of bias and hate that happened in the story and on which rung of the ladder they would be located. Have them write their examples in the column to the right of the ladder.
- Reconvene the group and remind people that although the behaviors on the bottom rung of the ladder are described as “subtle,” it doesn’t mean they are insignificant. Explain that when people are targeted by *subtle acts of bias* day after day, they can feel alone, isolated, and miserable.
- Lead a group discussion, using some of the questions below.

### **CONTINUING THE DISCUSSION:**

- Why do you think people tell ethnic jokes or use insulting names about other people or groups?
- Where do people learn these kinds of attitudes and behaviors?
- Why do you think the initial behaviors in the story escalated into violence?
- Even if the initial behaviors seemed somewhat harmless, do you think the storeowners would have felt they were harmless if they knew about them? How do you think they would have felt?
- At what rung of the ladder are people engaging in criminal behavior?
- In the story, what are some possible ways a person could have intervened to change the outcome?

## ***STORY: THE ESCALATION OF HATE***

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In a crowded neighborhood of a large city, a Muslim couple who immigrated from Egypt invested their retirement savings in the purchase of a vacant building. Recognizing that people who lived in the area had to travel a long distance to the nearest store, the couple opened a small grocery store. They expected to be welcomed into the community; however, because the couple lived some distance away in the suburbs, some people began to resent that they were profiting from the business but were not reinvesting the money back into the community.

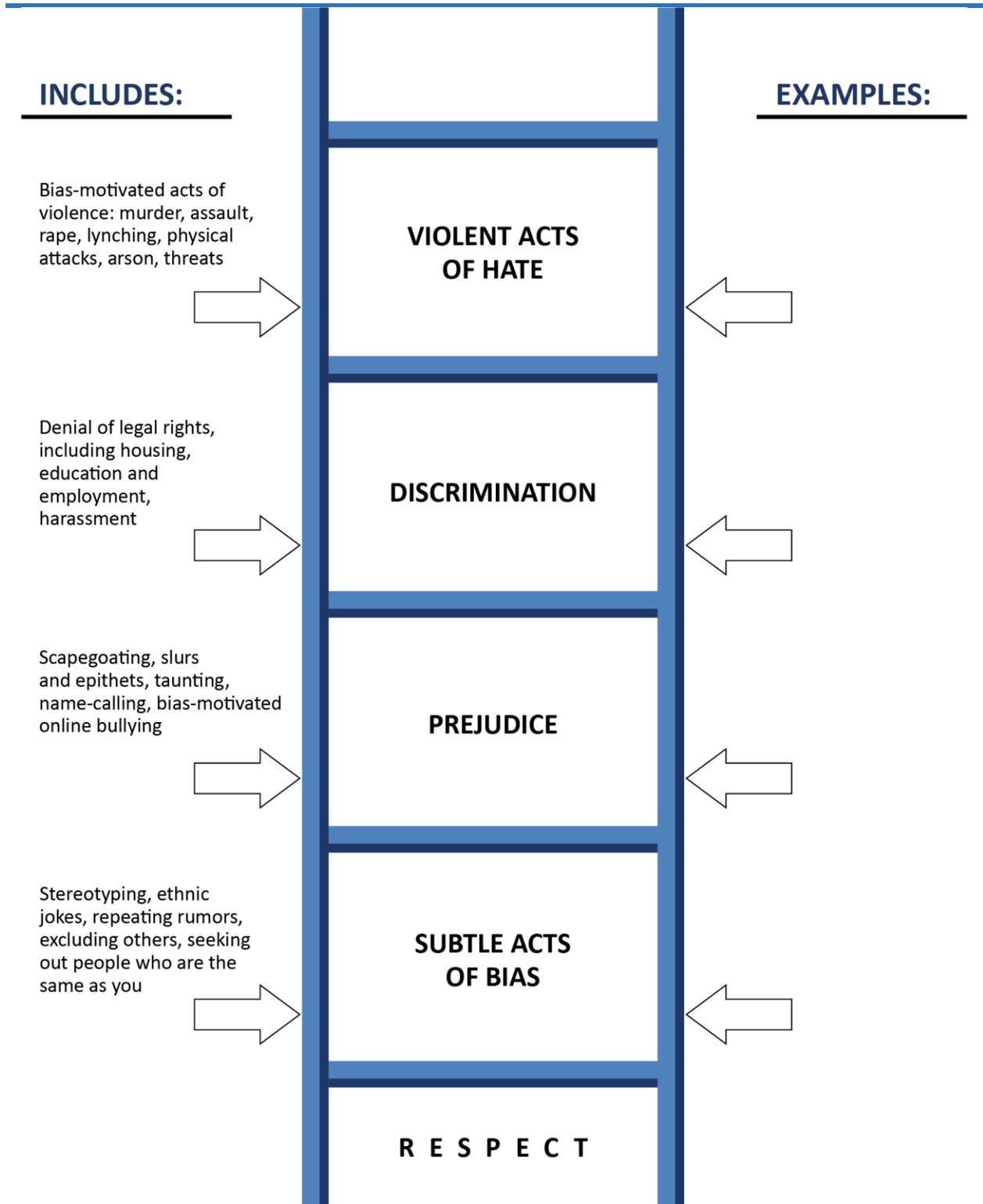
People thought that the store's prices were higher than other small grocers in the city, and they began to discuss among themselves how unreasonable the prices were. This became a frequent topic of discussion whenever people gathered. Although the storeowners didn't realize it, they had become the brunt of insensitive ethnic jokes and slurs during these conversations, and over time, these disapproving attitudes increased.

One Tuesday morning, the storeowner came in to find that the refrigeration unit had failed over the long holiday weekend. The milk and many of the other products were spoiled. Shortly after he discovered this, two young men from the neighborhood came into the store to buy milk.

When they found out the store had none, they became angry and called the storeowner insulting names and said that his store was "the worst." Fearing for his safety, the storeowner demanded the men leave the store or he would call the police.

Over the next two weeks, the storeowner began to find handwritten notes in the store's mailbox that included hateful slurs and threats. He began to feel afraid and decided to purchase a handgun, which he stored underneath the counter. One night a few weeks later, when he was emptying the trash in the dumpster behind the store, three young men approached him. Two of the men grabbed him by the arms and the other man pulled out a knife and held it against the storeowner's neck. "We don't want your kind around here," he threatened. Then he started laughing and pushed the man to the ground. Although the storeowner wasn't seriously injured, he was traumatized by the incident.

# THE LADDER OF HATE



## **WRITING: CLIMBING DOWN FROM THE LADDER**

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### **INSTRUCTIONS:**

Ask youth to create a brief fictional story that demonstrates the escalation of hate, including the actions and consequences for the person engaging in the behavior, the person who was targeted, and the wider community.

Following the story, have them write some possible suggestions for ways that, at each point where the story escalates, (1) the person engaging in the hate behavior could choose to step down from the ladder and (2) strategies someone else could use to intervene in that moment.

### **FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSION:**

To strengthen people's understanding of the escalation of hate, begin by asking for one or two volunteers to share their stories. Then use some or all of the questions below to continue the discussion:

- What did you notice in the volunteers' stories about the way hate escalated?
- What were some of the strategies you identified to intervene at various rungs of the ladder? What about the lowest rung?
- Is it always safe to intervene? How would you assess the safety of doing so?
- If you witnessed another person acting on their biases to target someone, at what rung of the ladder would it be easiest for you to persuade them to climb down?
- If a person found themselves engaging in bias and hate-motivated behaviors, what skills might motivate them to reconsider and climb back down the ladder?
- If a person's biased behavior continued to escalate, resulting in them climbing higher on the ladder, would your strategies change? If so, in what ways?
- If you decided to enlist the assistance of someone else, who would you ask?

## Unit 3

### EVERYDAY PREJUDICE AND YOU

#### UNIT 3 SUMMARY AND ASSESSMENT

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In this unit, youth considered the roots of biased thinking, identifying the common sources that have been a part of every person's life. They began to understand that for some people, biased attitudes can translate into biased behaviors. They have learned about the tendency of hate behavior to escalate unless someone takes action to intervene, and they have had opportunities to increase their empathy in several ways, including connecting to what it feels like to be left out by being the only one in a situation. For most youth, when they come face-to-face with injustice, they are highly motivated to act. In the units that follow, they will have opportunities to build on their foundation of understanding by developing new and effective skills in communication and managing conflict.

If you have used all or most of the lessons in this unit with the youth in your care, you may want to assess their learning and readiness to move on to *Unit 4: Conflict and Communication*. The following questions can guide a final discussion to provide a summary, closure, and assessment of the group's progress:

- *What stands out for you in the lessons we did in this unit?*
- *We learned about the tendency of hate to escalate if no one steps in to intervene. If you wanted to intervene in this process, what would be the best place in the process to intervene? Why do you feel that way?*
- *What skills are necessary to effectively intervene?*
- *How can you either develop or strengthen those skills in yourself? What resources would you need?*

# Unit 4.

## Conflict and Communication

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Young people today are growing up in a culture where people who disagree often see those who feel differently from them as wrong and somehow their enemy or adversary. It is not unusual to see people on the highway reacting with anger and road rage at the slightest provocation, or to see people lashing out online in vehement hate toward those who have different opinions from theirs. These are only a few examples of the world in which we all live and where young people are growing up. It should be no surprise that when growing up in a world where divisiveness is the norm, today's youth would greatly benefit from opportunities to develop new and more effective skills in communication and managing conflict. Such skills are vital for success in every area where young people's futures may lead them. Right now, these skills can help stop the development of attitudes and behaviors motivated by bias, prejudice, and hate.

### IN THIS UNIT:

- *Yes, But ...* builds an important skill that promotes positive communication and effective collaboration with others.
- *The Face of Anger* begins the process of learning how to defuse angry feelings before they escalate into violent actions.
- *Fact or Opinion?* increases skills in communicating around difficult issues without becoming angry or violent and increases empathy and acceptance for the experiences of others.
- *The Raised Fist* provides a hands-on experience of the different choices people make when involved in an incident of violence, and an opportunity to develop alternative responses people can take to defuse anger and reject violence.
- *Writing: What I Saw, I Learned* enables people to reflect on the messages they learned about conflict and how they may have incorporated the positive and overcome the negative messages.

## LESSON: “YES, BUT ...”

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### PURPOSE:

This brief lesson brings to light some of the personal internal resistance people have when faced with new ideas. It provides a practical experience of the impact of this resistance and builds a necessary skill for effective collaboration and openness to different perspectives.

### MATERIALS NEEDED:

None

### TIME REQUIRED:

15 minutes

### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Begin by asking people how they would define the word *resistance*. After a few volunteers offer their ideas, clarify that resistance can be both *external*, as when someone uses physical means like pushing or hitting to stop something from happening, but can also be *internal*, as when someone engages in a behavior like ignoring or excluding someone to stop something from happening.
- Confirm that youth understand the concept of internal resistance. Explain that this lesson will enable them to experience the impact of internal resistance on their ability to communicate and collaborate with others and to be open to different perspectives.
- Share the following introduction to this lesson, in your own words:

*Imagine you have been asked to plan an important event with another person—for example, it could be a surprise party for a good friend. When you are asked to do this, you do a lot of thinking and have some clear ideas you believe would be perfect. Take a few minutes to come up with some ideas you would want to suggest for a surprise party. In a few minutes, you will be meeting with another person, and you will be able to share your ideas, one at a time. Your partner will help in the planning by offering a response to each of your suggestions, but each time you offer a suggestion, your partner must begin their response with the phrase, “Yes, **but ...**”*

- Ask people to find a partner and begin this process, deciding first who will be the one sharing ideas and who will be the one who offers “Yes, but ...” responses, and then plan the party together. If needed, an example is provided below. Continue this pair-share process for 1–2 minutes.

*Example:*

Person 1: “I could hire a caterer to prepare all of the refreshments.”

Person 2: “*Yes, but* that could be really expensive, and you can’t depend on the quality of the food.”

- Without engaging in further discussion at this point, ask people to now switch roles and imagine that they oversee planning a second event – it could be a special anniversary party for someone in their family or a trip somewhere. Repeat the process above, but this time, person 1 will respond with sentences that begin with “*Yes, and ...*” Continue this discussion for 1–2 minutes. If needed, an example is provided below.

*Example:*

Person 2: “Maybe we could hire a caterer to prepare all of the refreshments.”

Person 1: “*Yes, and* I know a good caterer you can call. He is an amazing chef.”

- Reconvene the group and process the experience. The questions below are provided as a guide.

### **CONTINUING THE DISCUSSION:**

- What did you notice about this process?
- How did you feel when your ideas received a “*Yes, but ...*” response? How did it affect your ability and motivation to work together to plan the party?
- How did you feel when your ideas received a “*Yes, and ...*” response? How did it affect your ability to work together to plan the event?
- Why do you think we sometimes resist other people’s ideas? What do you think is the effect of doing so?
- Does inner resistance affect our willingness to hear and consider different ideas? How?
- What can a person do to increase their willingness and ability to really listen, hear, and be open to what other people are saying?

## LESSON: THE FACE OF ANGER

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### PURPOSE:

This lesson provides an opportunity for young people to begin to better understand how to defuse angry feelings before they escalate into violent actions.

### MATERIALS NEEDED:

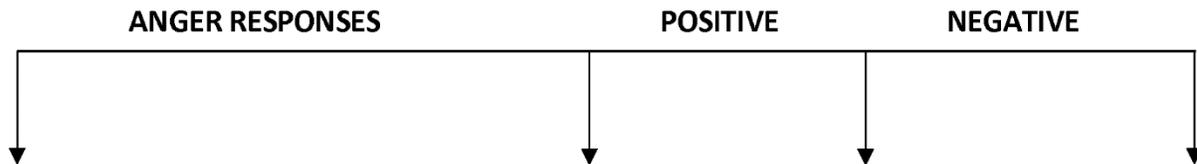
None

### TIME REQUIRED:

15–20 minutes

### PREP WORK:

Prior to this lesson, create the following chart on chart paper, a whiteboard, or chalkboard:



### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Begin this lesson by providing the following information, in your own words:  
*We all have a wide range of emotions we experience every day. Occasional feelings of anger are part of being human. Something can happen or someone can do something that sets off the powerful energy that can accompany feelings of anger, and we sometimes find ourselves tempted to do or say things without thinking about the consequences. Angry feelings that erupt into hateful speech or threats are taken very seriously by society and can result in loss of employment, loss of college admissions and scholarships, loss of friends and social groups, and even criminal penalties. Once something is said, it cannot be unsaid, and though apologies are important, the effect of hateful words of anger can be long-lasting. It can be challenging to pause for a few moments before acting, but if we do, we may be able to identify feelings of disappointment, sadness, frustration, or jealousy underlying our angry feelings. If this is the case, we can deal with the actual issue.*
- As a large group, have people brainstorm some of the different ways people respond when they are angry. Make a list under **Anger Responses** on the chart created prior to this lesson. As each suggestion is made, ask if they think the response is positive (likely to defuse anger) or negative (likely to escalate the situation). Add this positive/negative

assessment of the impact of the response by adding a ✓ next to it on the appropriate column on the chart.

- Once a good number of responses have been offered, ensure that both positive and negative responses are provided. If not, ask the group for additional responses in the column that lacks responses.
- Begin choosing responses from both columns, one at a time, and ask the group (for each response) some possible times when the action might be useful and appropriate.
- Process this experience by leading a group discussion. The questions below are provided as a guide.

### **CONTINUING THE DISCUSSION:**

- Which of the actions you have suggested is likely to make the situation worse?
- Which actions might calm people down and improve the situation?
- What would help you to choose a response that might defuse the anger in the situation?
- If you are witnessing someone about to act on their anger, what could you do? Are there some responses you could use to defuse the situation?
- If something or someone has made you angry, how would you decide, in the heat of the moment, what response was the best choice?
- If you acted in anger in response to a situation, and regretted something you said or did, what steps might help?

## LESSON: FACT OR OPINION?

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### PURPOSE:

Different perspectives and points of view exist in almost every situation. Information, experiences, and sometimes personal biases shape the development of one's point of view, and that point of view influences both attitudes and behaviors. In this lesson, youth are provided with two statements that take opposite views on the same subject. Their task is to develop and present the strongest case for their assigned perspective, whether they agree with it or not.

This process builds their skills in expressing themselves around difficult issues without losing control or becoming angry or violent. The experience of developing arguments for both sides of the same issue also increase empathy and acceptance for the different perspectives of others.

### MATERIALS NEEDED:

None

### TIME REQUIRED:

45 minutes

### PREP WORK:

Write the following group agreements for this lesson on the whiteboard or chalkboard:

- **Develop an argument.** Your team should develop an argument in support of your assigned position and plan a 2–3-minute presentation that includes at least two or three arguments in favor of your group's position.
- **Use respectful language** in your presentation.
- **One voice at a time.** Allow each person time to share their thoughts.
- **Choose a reporter,** one group member to present your position to the whole group.
- **Wait your turn.** Don't interrupt when someone else is presenting their perspective.

### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Explain that this lesson is going to provide an opportunity to develop an argument in favor of and against a specific topic, and the topic they will be using is the policy on school detention.
- Write the following statements on chart paper, the whiteboard, or the chalkboard:
  - A. When someone violates the school rules or values, detention is the most effective disciplinary tool.
  - B. As a school disciplinary tool, detention is very ineffective and should be eliminated.
- Refer to the group agreements created in the Prep Work section, review them with the group, and ask for consensus to adhere to the group agreements during the lesson.
- Divide participants into two groups, naming one Group A and the other Group B. Refer to the statements you have written out and assign Group A the task of developing their best

argument “for” the issue (i.e., detention is very effective) and Group B their best argument “against” the issue (i.e., detention is very ineffective). Direct groups to different parts of the room and allow about 10 minutes for them to develop their arguments.

- Reconvene the whole group and ask Group A to present their argument that *detention is effective*. Following Group A’s presentation, have Group B provide their argument that *detention is ineffective*. Provide each group an additional minute to rebut the other group’s argument, if they want to do so.
- After both groups have presented their arguments and optional rebuttals, lead a brief discussion:
  - What was it like developing an argument for a position you might not agree with?
  - What sources did you use to develop your arguments?
  - What feelings or thoughts came up for you when you heard the opposing argument?
  - What ways did this debate change your thinking about the issue of detention?
- Now write these second statements on chart paper or the board:
  - A. Bullying hurts everyone in the school.
  - B. Bullying only hurts those who are targeted.
- Repeat the process above, assigning Group B to develop an argument “for” the issue (*bullying hurts everyone*) and Group A “against” the issue (*bullying only hurts those targeted*). Allow an additional 10 minutes for this process and optional rebuttals.
- Reconvene the group and lead a brief discussion, using the questions below as a guide.

### **CONTINUING THE DISCUSSION:**

- In what ways did this process change your thinking about the issue of bullying?
- In your group’s presentations on both detention and bullying, did you rely on known facts, opinion, or something else?
- Is it easy to distinguish fact from opinion? How can you do so?
- Seeing as people’s opinions are often formed through the filter of personal biases, how can you weigh new information to ensure your own opinions are not being shaped by the biases of others?
- How does this relate to the ways people often access information online? How can you determine whether a piece of new information is fact or opinion?
- What is the benefit of engaging in a process like this?

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**NOTE:** See *Unit 7: Media Literacy* for lessons to build the skills of youth in assessing online content.

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## **LESSON: THE RAISED FIST**

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### **PURPOSE:**

This lesson provides an opportunity for youth to explore the dynamics of acts of bias and hate and begin to develop skills and strategies to choose different behaviors, both when they are instigating an incident and when they are witnessing an incident.

### **MATERIALS NEEDED:**

Paper and pens or pencils

### **TIME REQUIRED:**

60–75 minutes or two class periods

### **PREP WORK:**

Prior to conducting this lesson, write the following on the whiteboard or chalkboard; chart paper can also be used.

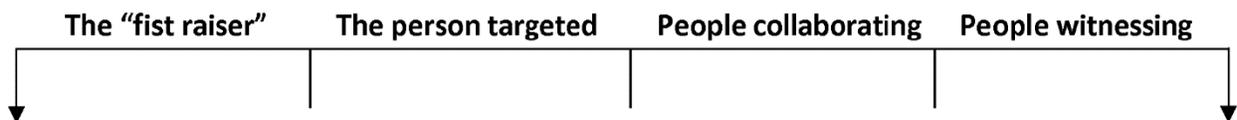
- What circumstances led to this person reaching a point where they were raising their fist to throw a punch?
- Who else is present besides the person raising their fist and the person being targeted?
- If other people are present, what are they doing? What ways, if any, are they involved?
- What was the “final straw” that resulted in the person about to commit a violent act? If so, what happened? Where did it take place? Who else was involved?

### **INSTRUCTIONS:**

- Divide people into small groups of six to eight. Explain that groups will be creating and acting out a story that ends with a freeze frame of a person raising a fist to throw a punch.
- Explain that all group members should have an active role in the presentation of their story. To help the youth develop their skit, point them to the questions prepared prior to this lesson on the whiteboard or chart paper, and instruct groups to consider these questions as they create their skit. Allow about 15 minutes for groups to complete this task.
- As groups work, circulate around the room to help people stay on task and accurately follow directions. Clarify that no actual physical contact should occur among group members as they act out their skits. Check in with groups a few minutes early to determine if they need additional time.
- Reconvene the group and have groups present their skits. At the conclusion of each, ask the large group about what they believe was going on in the scene:
  - *What immediate issue caused the person to raise their fist to throw a punch?*
  - *What underlying issue may have been at the root of this situation?*

Allow about 5 minutes after each presentation for this discussion.

- Explain that they are now going to look deeper at the choices of the different people in their skits and develop some alternative ways to address the immediate and underlying issues. Have people remain in their same groups and choose one person who will take notes on their group's discussion to share later in the lesson. Provide each group with some blank paper and a pen or pencil.
- Write the following characters on the whiteboard or chalkboard:
  - The person who was raising their fist about to strike.
  - The person being targeted for the punch.
  - The people collaborating, if any, with the person raising their fist.
  - The bystanders who were present.
- Referring to this list of characters, instruct groups to discuss the roles of these people in their skit, why they were present, what they did in the skit, and what alternative strategies they might have used to defuse what was happening. Allow 10–15 minutes for the process.
- As groups work, create a simple chart, as demonstrated below, on the whiteboard or the chalkboard.



- Reconvene the group and have a person from each small group to share their group's ideas. As they do, list their suggestions for alternative strategies under the appropriate person on the chart.
- After all small groups have shared their ideas, lead a whole-group discussion. The questions below are provided as guidelines.

### CONTINUING THE DISCUSSION:

- In your small group, what kinds of feelings did you have for the person who was raising their fist? Did you feel empathy? Understanding? Anger? Fear or anxiety?
- What actions would you recommend if you were a bystander, and you knew the person raising their fist was being motivated by bias or hate?
- What is your thinking about the best actions to take if you were someone who felt justifiably angry about something and were tempted to raise your fist? In what ways might this action hurt you as much as the person you are targeting? What could you do to move to a more positive solution?
- If someone is threatening violence and you want to respond, what safety concerns need to be considered before acting?

- Which role(s) in your skit would benefit from the ally actions of others? What actions might you take?
- What new skills do you need to defuse situations like this more effectively?

## A NOTE TO FACILITATORS

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For youth to gain the greatest benefit from this lesson, it is helpful to ensure adequate time is allotted for planning and practicing skits, presentations, and discussions. If time is limited, this lesson can be divided into two sessions or class periods. The first part could include instructions up to step 4, the presentation of small group skits and brief discussions after each one.

The second part could begin with step 5, the beginning of small group discussions. Begin by asking people to return to their same small groups and having someone from each group provide a 1-minute summary of their skit. Then continue the discussion part of the lesson, starting at step 5 through the end of the lesson.

For additional content and lessons on considering the safety of response strategies and building skills to be an ally to others, see Unit 9: *Cyberhate and Counterspeech*, “Understanding Cyberhate” lesson.

## **WRITING: WHAT I SAW, I LEARNED**

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### **INSTRUCTIONS:**

Ask youth to consider two adults who have had a major influence on their life. What did these adults teach them about conflict? How did they navigate the conflicts they faced in their lives? What did they do when they were faced with a conflict? What memories do they have about things they said about conflict?

From the point of view of one of these adults, instruct the youth to write a paragraph or two about how that person manages conflict in their life. They should consider things like: What do they think about conflict? What kinds of things do they think and say about conflict? How do they act when they are in a conflict?

Then, have them write another paragraph using the same process and applying it to themselves.

### **FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSION:**

- What messages did you receive from others about conflict?
- What do you value about what others taught you in regard to managing conflict?
- What did you learn about your own attitudes and behaviors about conflict through this exercise?
- In what ways has your earlier learning about conflict enabled you to incorporate positive aspects and overcome unhelpful ones in your own approach to conflict?

## Unit 4

### CONFLICT AND COMMUNICATION

#### UNIT 4 SUMMARY AND ASSESSMENT

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In this unit, youth have had opportunities to develop new and effective skills in communication and managing conflict. They have begun to build communication skills helpful for collaborating with others, reflected on the wide variety of responses people can have when faced with anger, and engaged in a lively debate to help them build skills to communicate around difficult issues. In one lesson, they engaged in an interactive simulation where they created and acted out an original story that encouraged them to assess a bias-motivated incident and strategize the impact and results of different responses. Finally, they reflected on some of their own attitudes and behaviors about conflict, including ways they could incorporate positive aspects and overcome unhelpful ones from their earlier learning.

If you have used all or most of the lessons in this unit with the youth in your care, you may want to assess their learning and readiness to move on to *Unit 5: Identity and Bullying*. The following questions can guide a final discussion to provide a summary, closure, and assessment of the group's progress:

- *We have been looking at conflict and communication. What connections do you see between these two things?*
- *What have you learned about conflict that was new or that surprised you?*
- *What skills have you developed that you feel equipped to use? What, if anything, would help you feel more equipped to respond?*
- *How can you either develop or strengthen those skills in yourself? What resources would you need?*

# Unit 5.

## Identity and Bullying

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Bullying consists of repetitive behaviors that are designed to hurt—physically, socially, or emotionally—the person being targeted, and where there is an actual or perceived power differential between the person bullying and the person being targeted. More than a third of all bullying can be categorized as identity-based bullying, meaning the person engaging in the behavior is being motivated by a bias against a person or group based on some aspect of their identity, such as their race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or disability.

Some young people have ingenious ways of masking their bullying behaviors, often waiting to act until no one is around or providing convincing explanations if caught, such as “we were only kidding around.” Educators and other adult leaders are sometimes unaware of how widespread or serious the problem can be.

Youth themselves are among the most effective tools available to interrupt bullying and bias-motivated behaviors, but they need both skills and motivation to do so. Justin W. Patchin,<sup>4</sup> an expert in the field of bullying, says that it is one thing to imagine courageous actions in the face of a bullying incident, but quite another thing to do the courageous acts in that moment. To do so, youth need opportunities to better understand the benefits and outcomes of their choices and opportunities to develop and practice new skills.

### IN THIS UNIT:

- *The Identity Tree* introduces the many dimensions that make up people’s personal and cultural identities and enable youth to define and better understand the elements of their own identity.
- *Origins* connects the varied elements of the extended members of their own families’ current and historical identities, with ways that identity has been a target of prejudice.
- *The Inside-Outs of Identity-Based Bullying* enables youth to discuss their feelings and experiences about bullying and its link to identity.
- *What Is an Ally?* revisits definitions of bullying, identity, and identity-based bullying and the behaviors common in bullying incidents and begins to explore what it means to be an ally to others.
- *In the Moment* provides youth with practical opportunities to apply their learning as they strategize effective ways to respond to incidents of identity-based bullying.
- *Writing: From Bias to Hate* is a writing exercise that explores the reasons why identity-based bullying can escalate into bias incidents and crimes of hate.

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<sup>4</sup> For additional information and resources from Justin W. Patchin, Ph.D., see his website, [www.cyberbullying.org](http://www.cyberbullying.org).

## LESSON: THE IDENTITY TREE

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### PURPOSE:

All people have unique personal and cultural identities, although we rarely take the time to reflect on the complexity of our own identities and the various elements that comprise who we are. An awareness of one's identity and the ways that identity serves as a lens through which we see others and form assumptions about them is foundational knowledge in understanding the dynamics and motivations of bullying, bias, and hate.

### MATERIALS NEEDED:

[The Identity Tree](#) handout, one copy for each person; pens or pencils

### TIME REQUIRED:

30–40 minutes

### PREP WORK:

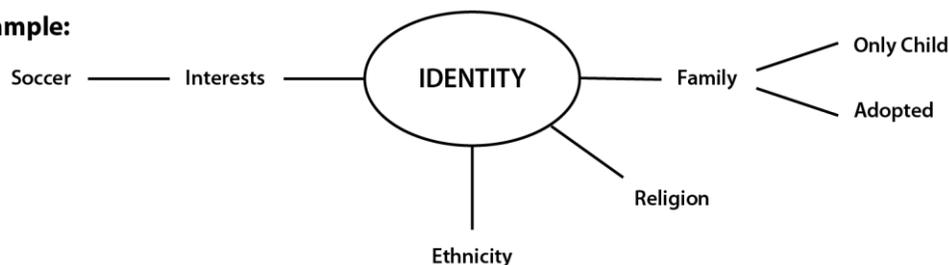
Prior to this lesson, make copies of the handout *The Identity Tree*, one for each person. Write the following definition of “identity” on the whiteboard, chalkboard, or sheet of chart paper:

**Identity** is composed of the characteristics that make you different from everyone else. It can include things like your race, religion, ethnicity, gender, ability, family makeup, interests, appearance, and more.

### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Introduce this lesson, in your own words, using the information above. Begin by explaining that everyone has a unique combination of qualities, skills, and characteristics that define who they are.
- Draw a circle on the whiteboard, chalkboard, or a sheet of chart paper, and write the word Identity in the center of the circle. Call attention to the definition of identity prepared during Prep Work. Read the definition aloud to the group or have a group member read it.
- Ask the group to brainstorm ideas for some of the specific things that might be included in a person's identity. As they call out ideas, write them around the Identity circle, drawing lines that extend from the circle outward, as shown below. Continue adding the group's suggestions until ideas are exhausted.

#### Example:



- Suggest to the group that not all aspects of identity are visible, such as family relationships or disabilities, even though they are an important part of a person’s identity. Ensure that some of these “invisible” identity categories are included in the diagram.

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**NOTE:** It will be helpful in building understanding of the concept of identity if you initially add the following broad categories—race, religion, ethnicity, gender, family, ability, interests—extending out from the center circle (see example above). As people suggest their ideas, write them by the appropriate category. When something is suggested that doesn’t fit these categories, feel free to add another category.

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- Distribute a copy of the handout *The Identity Tree* to each person. Ask people to take the next few minutes to identify five or six elements of their own identity that they feel are central to who they are. Ask them to write those elements of identity on the “branches” that extend out from the tree, adding more branches as needed. Explain that visible categories can be listed on the upper tree and invisible categories by the roots. Before beginning, model your own identity tree response. Provide about 5 minutes for youth to create their identity trees.
- Divide the large group into small groups of four or five people. Instruct people to first share their identity trees with one another and then discuss the following as a small group:
  - A time when you were the target of bias or bullying because of an aspect of your identity.
  - A time when an aspect of your identity motivated you to be an ally to someone else.

Reconvene the group and continue the discussion, using the questions below as a guide.

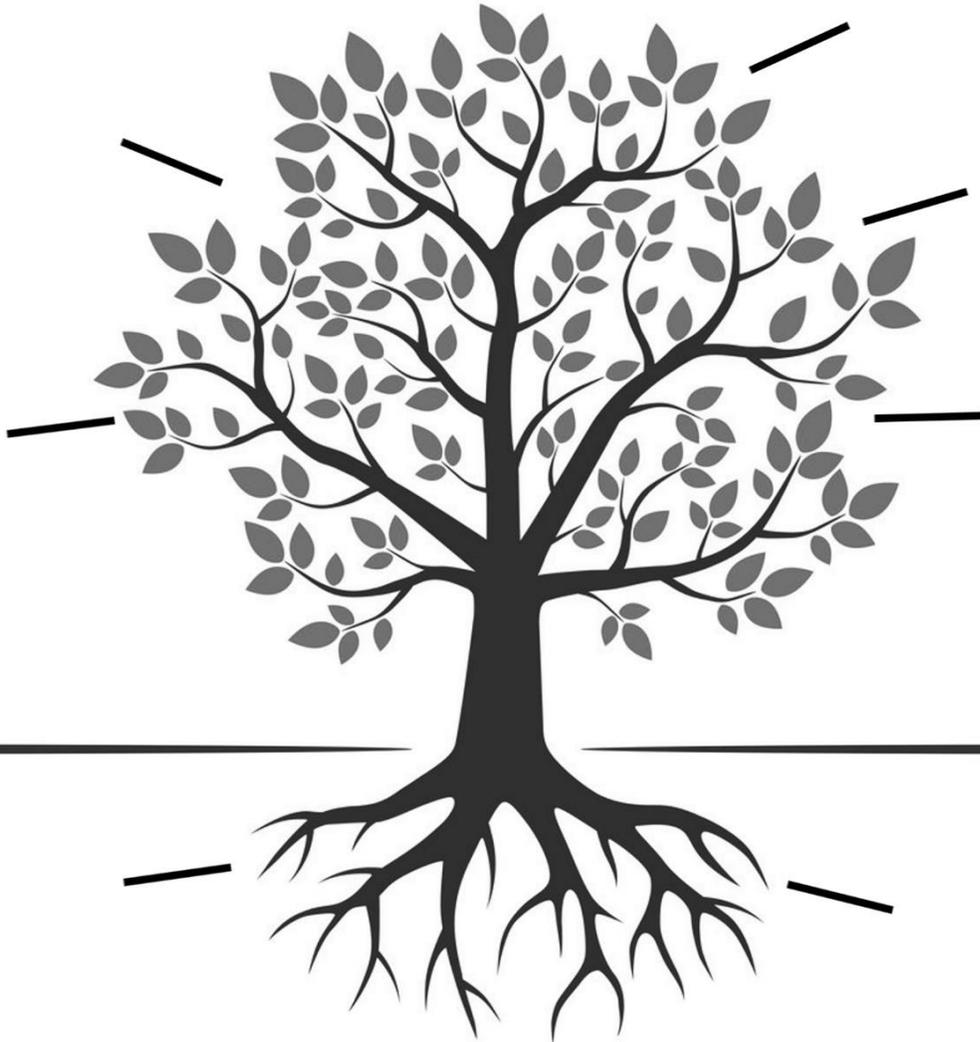
### **CONTINUING THE DISCUSSION:**

- What did you learn about yourself and your identity through this process?
- What aspects of your identity seem more important to you than others? Why?
- In what ways do you think a person’s identity affects how they judge others?
- What is the role of identity in incidents of bias or bullying?

## THE IDENTITY TREE

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Visible Aspects of my Identity



Invisible Aspects of my Identity

Image: clipground.com

## LESSON: ORIGINS

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### PURPOSE:

Our own personal and cultural identity is the lens through which we view others and the world around us. This lesson encourages youth to connect aspects of their own identity to those of their immediate or extended family members, and to identify ways their family's identity groups may have been targets of bias and hate, both in the present and the past.

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**NOTE:** It is possible that one or more people in the group will not have knowledge of their extended family members. If this is the case, instruct them to use their own identity and membership in the selected identity categories.

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### MATERIALS NEEDED:

Chart paper and an assortment of markers, pens, or pencils

### TIME REQUIRED:

30 minutes

### PREP WORK:

Prepare six sheets of chart paper. Write a title in marker at the top of each sheet, using the following titles, one on each sheet: Ethnicity, Race, Religion, LGBTQ+, Disabilities, Gender. Tape the sheets up on the walls around the room.

### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Introduce this lesson and ask youth to think about their own background and, if they know it, the background of some of their extended family members, including cousins, grandparents, aunts, and uncles. Ask them to consider the identities of these family members and what identity groups they belonged to.
- Ask people to circulate around the room and write on each sheet of paper the groups that are represented by themselves and their extended family members. Allow about 10 minutes for people to complete this process. For clarity, provide the following example:

*Example:* If you had family members who were both Italian and French Canadian, you should write both ethnicities on the Ethnicity sheet.

- Once people have finished, invite them to take a few minutes to circulate around the room and take note of the many identity groups represented.
- Ask people to be seated. Going from one Identity category to the next, ask people to think of ways the groups listed may have been targets of bias and prejudice, either today or in the past. You can provide the following example to clarify.

*Example:* Suppose you identify your ethnicity as Irish. An example of how the Irish people are targets of prejudice today is when people tell jokes that characterize Irish

people as being alcoholics. A historical example was in the early 1900s when many Irish people immigrated to the United States and faced harsh employment discrimination. It was common for signs of “Irish not welcome” and “Irish need not apply” to be seen in shop windows during that time.

- Lead a brief discussion, using the questions below as a guide.

### **CONTINUING THE DISCUSSION:**

- What did you learn about identity and bias through this process?
- Do you think that the bullying that happens in your school or community is connected to identity? In what ways?
- How would you define empathy?
- What connections can you make between empathy and what you learned in this lesson?

*Empathy* is the ability to identify with or understand another's situation or feelings.

## LESSON: THE INSIDE-OUTS OF IDENTITY-BASED BULLYING

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### PURPOSE:

The purpose of this lesson is to provide an opportunity for people to discuss their thoughts and feelings about experiences with bias, bullying, and hate in their school or community. Using a concentric circles format, people make personal connections and share their thinking on these topics with several other people.

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**NOTE:** This lesson requires a large open space where people can form a large circle.

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### MATERIALS NEEDED:

List of [Inside-Out Questions](#), clock or watch with a second hand

### TIME REQUIRED:

30 minutes

### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Begin by explaining that the group is going to participate in a lesson where they will have opportunities to talk one-on-one with a few other people in the room.
2. Have people count off by twos. Ask those who are counted as #1 to form a circle in the center of the room and face outward. Then ask those who are counted as #2 to form a second circle around the outside of the first circle and face a partner from the inside circle.
3. Explain that you will be reading some questions or statements, after which they will have 1 minute to share their response with another person. Each pair will have a total of 2 minutes to respond, 1 minute for each member of the pair.
4. Tell the group that you will signal when 1 minute is up by calling out “*change speakers.*” At the end of each question, after both members of the pair have responded, you will instruct the *outside* circle to move one space to their left where they will have a new partner for the next question. Let them know that you will indicate this by calling out “*move left.*” Verify that the instruction to “*move left*” only applies to the outside circle, and that the inside circle will not move during the lesson. Confirm that the group understands this process.

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**NOTE:** If the group is an uneven number, have an adult (facilitator or another person) participate.

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Read the questions or statements from the list of *Inside-Out Questions* that follow, one at a time, calling out “*change speakers*” after 1 minute, and “*move left*” at the end of 2 minutes for each statement, creating new pairs for each new question.

- After all questions have been answered, ask people to return to their seats. Lead a group discussion using some or all of the questions below.

### CONTINUING THE DISCUSSION:

- What was it like to share some of your thoughts and feelings with your different partners?
- What do you think would happen if no one ever intervened when identity-based bullying occurred?
- What are some practical actions one person can take to confront or challenge bias and bullying?
- What does it mean to be an ally? What kinds of actions do allies typically take?

**An Ally:** speaks out on behalf of someone else or takes actions that are helpful and supportive of someone else.

### INSIDE-OUT QUESTIONS:

- What is your favorite holiday? What happens in your home to observe the day(s)?
- What do you think is meant by the term *identity-based bullying*?
- Is all bullying identity-based? Why or why not?
- Do you agree that “bullying is no big deal” and just a normal part of school life? Why or why not?
- Share a time when you witnessed an incident of identity-based bullying, and what you did.
- When name-calling and bullying occur, why do you think people often choose to be passive bystanders?
- If you could change one thing about society, what would it be?

### A NOTE TO FACILITATORS

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Additional lessons in this curriculum provide content and resources on developing skills as an ally. See the next lessons in this unit, “What Is an Ally?” and “In the Moment,” and an additional lesson in Unit 10, “Ally Actions.”

## LESSON: WHAT IS AN ALLY?

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### PURPOSE:

To develop effective and safe responses to different incidents of bullying, bias, and hate, youth benefit from understanding the various ways identity-based bullying happens and the behaviors people choose when they are involved in these incidents. In this lesson, youth will practice identifying kinds of bullying and the different behaviors of those involved in the incidents.

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**NOTE:** This is an introductory lesson to “In the Moment,” which follows.

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### MATERIALS NEEDED:

[Kinds of Bullying](#) handout and [Useful Terms: Bullying and Bias Incidents](#) handout, one copy of each for each person

### TIME REQUIRED:

20 minutes

### PREP WORK:

Prepare copies of the selected handouts, one copy of each for each person.

### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Introduce this lesson by handing out a copy of the handout *Kinds of Bullying*.
- Briefly review the kinds of bullying using the handout or by sharing in some other way the different ways bullying happens.
- Distribute a copy of the handout *Useful Terms: Bias and Bullying Incidents*. Call attention to the terms bullying and identity-based bullying. Ask:
  - What are some differences between *bullying* and *identity-based bullying*?
  - Do you think their impact is any different? In what ways?
  - Identity-based bullying is known to have the potential to lead to a hate crime. Why do you think this is so?

Review the second part of the *Useful Terms: Bias and Bullying Incidents* handout, “Common Behaviors in Bullying,” by asking different volunteers to read the different behaviors.

Call attention to the behavior listed on this handout that is referred to as *confronting*.  
Ask:

- What is the difference between *confronting* and *being an ally*? Do allies ever confront those who are engaged in bullying others? If so, what considerations would be important to keep in mind?
- What circumstances would cause an ally to choose a behavior other than confronting? What are the potential concerns?
- What are some other ways to be an ally to someone who is being targeted by bullying?
- If possible, follow this lesson with “In the Moment,” the lesson on the following pages that provides practical opportunities to apply the learning in this introductory lesson. If you are not doing this subsequent lesson currently, lead a group discussion using the following questions as a guide.

### **CONTINUING THE DISCUSSION:**

- What is the difference between labeling someone a “bully” and describing the person as engaging in bullying behavior?
- Looking at the common behaviors of bias, bullying, and hate, if you were being targeted by someone else’s bullying and others were present, which behavior would be most helpful?
- If you wanted to be an ally to someone being targeted, what considerations would be important before you act?
- What are some of the helpful ways people could be allies?

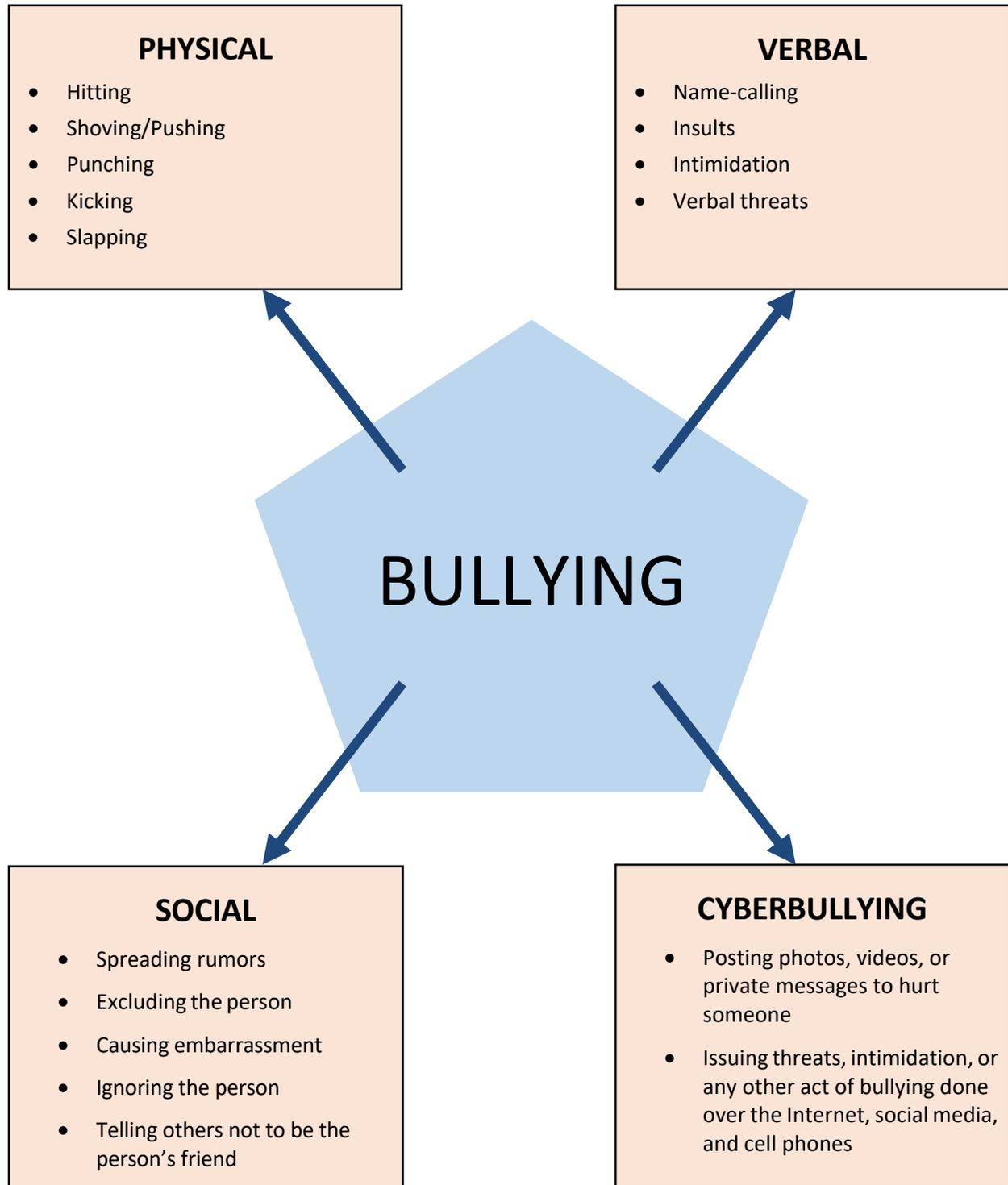
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**NOTE:** Additional lessons in this curriculum provide content and resources on developing skills as an ally. See the next lesson in this unit, “In the Moment,” and an additional lesson in Unit 10, “Ally Actions.”

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## KINDS OF BULLYING

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## USEFUL TERMS: BULLYING AND BIAS INCIDENTS

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### USEFUL TERMS:

- Identity:** The characteristics that make a person different from all others. The elements of identity can include race, religion, ethnicity, gender, ability, family constellation, interests, appearance, and more.
- Bullying:** Any aggressive or hostile behavior that intentionally and repeatedly targets another person for the purpose of humiliating, demeaning, ridiculing, or hurting them.
- Examples:* (1) A group of girls intentionally spreads false rumors about another girl they dislike. (2) A group of boys repeatedly torments a smaller boy in their physical education class.
- Identity-Based Bullying:** A form of bullying where a person acts on their own biases against a person or group based on their identity, such as their race, religion, sexual orientation, or physical appearance.
- Examples:* (1) A classmate repeatedly intimidates a student of Mexican ethnicity. (2) A group of girls harasses a classmate who recently came out, calling her homophobic slurs.

### COMMON BEHAVIORS IN BULLYING:

- Being Targeted:** Having harm, abuse, or mistreatment directed toward you.
- Bystanding:** Witnessing a bullying or bias incident, but not saying or doing anything.
- Bullying:** Engaging in any aggressive or hostile behavior that intentionally and repeatedly targets another person for the purpose of humiliating, demeaning, ridiculing, or hurting them.
- Being an Ally:** Speaking out on behalf of someone else or taking actions that are helpful and supportive of someone else.
- Collaborating:** Speaking out or taking actions that are helpful and supportive to someone engaging in bullying.
- Confronting:** Directly intervening when an incident of bullying or bias takes place. When appropriate, confronting can be done by other people or by individuals being targeted.

## LESSON: IN THE MOMENT

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### PURPOSE:

Because hate has the tendency to escalate if no one responds, youth need both the skills and motivation to respond effectively and to deescalate situations when necessary. To take safe and appropriate action when faced with incidents motivated by bias and hate, they need opportunities to develop and practice skills to respond, effectively moving from bystanding or collaborating to becoming allies. Additionally, youth who may find themselves on the verge of instigating an incident of bullying, bias, or hate need to learn how to pause, check their behavior, and choose a strategy that can produce a better outcome for themselves and for those being targeted.

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**NOTE:** This lesson has two options. **Option 1** invites people to create their own scenarios based on the real issues they are facing in their lives. **Option 2** uses selected scenarios from the list provided at the end of the lesson.

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### MATERIALS NEEDED:

[\*An Ally Is Me and You\*](#) handout, one copy for each person; chart paper, tape, five or six different color markers, paper, pens, or pencils; index cards (needed for Option 1 only)

### TIME REQUIRED:

45–60 minutes

### PREP WORK:

Write five or six scenarios, either those developed by youth (Option 1) or those provided at the end of this lesson (Option 2), on sheets of chart paper with one scenario on each sheet of paper. Write the scenario at the top of the page, allowing space below for people to write their ideas for recommended strategies. Post them on the walls around the room. Next to each sheet, add an extra blank sheet of chart paper so people have adequate room to post their suggestions.

Write the following **small-group questions** on chart paper, the whiteboard, or the chalkboard:

- What biases might be motivating the person engaging in this incident?
- What safety issues or unexpected consequences might need to be considered before choosing how to respond?
- Who else, if anyone, needs to know about what happened?

## INSTRUCTIONS, OPTION 1:

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**NOTE:** This option requires a brief time set aside a day or two in advance of the lesson for people to develop and write out scenarios about actual issues they are facing in their schools or communities.

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### DAY 1 (OPTION 1):

- Write the following guidelines on the whiteboard, chalkboard, or a sheet of chart paper:
  - A. **DON'T include any identifying information** in your scenario—no real names or other details that make any people identifiable.
  - B. **DO include enough details** to set the scene—when and where the scenario is happening, who else is present, what may have happened beforehand to provoke the incident.
  - C. **DON'T resolve the issue** – leave out what bystanders or allies did or didn't do. Imagine your scenario just happened or is just about to happen.
- Introduce the lesson, in your own words, and explain that they are each going to create a brief scenario that describes an incident like the ones they might face in their own lives. Review the guidelines prepared in step 1. Give an index card and a pen or pencil to each person. Allow 5–10 minutes for people to write their scenarios. When they are done, collect the cards.

### DAY 2 (OPTION 1):

- Prior to beginning this lesson, review the cards and select four to six of the best that seem representative of the experiences of participating youth, and that provide enough detail to motivate the development of response strategies.
- Prepare the scenarios according to Prep Work above. Continue the lesson beginning with step 6 below.

## INSTRUCTIONS, OPTION 2:

This option uses selected scenarios from the [In the Moment: Identity-Based Bullying Scenarios](#) template included at the end of this lesson. Select four to six scenarios, depending on the group size, that address the current issues being faced by the youth. Prepare scenarios according to Prep Work above and continue the lesson beginning with step 5 below.

### OPTIONS 1 AND 2:

- Distribute the handout [An Ally Is Me and You](#). Briefly review the common behaviors in bullying (see [Useful Terms: Bias and Bullying Incidents](#) handout in previous lesson). Clarify the differences between confronting behaviors and being an ally. Then review the handout *An Ally Is Me and You*, which provides useful ally behaviors. You may want to ask different people to read aloud the points on the handout.

- Divide the group into small groups equaling the number of scenarios you selected. There should be the same number of groups as scenarios. Explain that they will be working on best response strategies for a few different scenarios. Encourage them to use the guidelines in the *An Ally Is Me and You* handout.

Ask each small group to stand at one of the sheets of chart paper, and have groups select one person to be their recorder. Provide a marker to the recorders, with a different color for each small group.

Instruct the groups to read their scenario and, together, brainstorm their recommendations for responding to the scenario. Allow about 3 minutes for groups to brainstorm responses to their scenarios.

At the end of 3 minutes, instruct all small groups to move right to the next scenario sheet. Allow an additional 3 minutes for groups to brainstorm best responses to that scenario, listing their ideas below those of the first group. Continue this process of brainstorming for 3 minutes and moving to the next scenario to their right until groups have written on all sheets and returned to the scenario where they began.

Provide paper and a pen or pencil to each small group and instruct them to read through all of the suggestions listed under their scenario and prepare a summary of the ideas. Refer to the questions prepared during Prep Work, instructing groups to discuss them, and be prepared to share their thoughts later with the whole group in the lesson. Allow 10 minutes for this process.

Reconvene the entire group and have each small group present their summary and their thoughts on the small-group questions.

At the conclusion, lead a discussion to process the experience.

### **CONTINUING THE DISCUSSION:**

- In what ways did you see biases or assumptions influencing what happened?
- What are some of the important things you learned through this process?
- How might this process help you when you are faced with incidents of bullying in your school or community?

## IN THE MOMENT: IDENTITY-BASED BULLYING SCENARIOS

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Jackie, a girl in your class, is always being taunted and ridiculed about her weight. This morning, when you get a bathroom pass to leave your class, you come upon two boys talking to her at the end of the hall. One boy is calling her hurtful names, saying she is a “fat pig” and ugly and disgusting, because they think she’s overweight. Jackie is backed up against the lockers and has tears in her eyes, and the other boy is laughing.



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Last month, Evan tried out for the lead in the school play, competing against Joel, another boy who ultimately did not get the part when Evan was selected. Since then, several people have mentioned to Evan that Joel was spreading nasty rumors about him online. Evan was angry but decided he would just ignore it. Last night, Evan was looking at TikTok and saw that Joel had posted a picture of him with a bow drawn on his head and the caption, “*Stay away from this guy, girls. He is a flaming homo!*” Evan didn’t want to ignore this anymore, but he wasn’t sure what to do. This morning, you are standing outside school with a couple of friends talking to Evan when Joel walks by. He starts calling Evan homophobic slurs and tries to push him down.



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Scott hangs around with three other boys who always seem to be getting into trouble. His locker is near yours at school, and you recently noticed that he has several swastika images inside his locker door. Since then, you’ve tried to stay clear of him and his friends. Today, you are walking down the hall with your friend Rebecca, who is Jewish, when you pass Scott and his friends standing by the lockers. Scott calls out an antisemitic slur to Rebecca and makes a cruel joke about the Holocaust. Rebecca has tears in her eyes when she whispers, “It’s not the first time he’s done this. Let’s just walk faster and get away from him.”



## IN THE MOMENT: IDENTITY-BASED BULLYING SCENARIOS (CONTINUED)

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Eliza moved here from Mexico a month ago when her father accepted a job at the local university. She is very unhappy about having to leave her friends and school behind. She is also struggling with her English and hasn't really settled in or made any friends yet. A few girls notice that Eliza is often alone and start joking that she must be an "illegal" who jumped over the border fence. They make fun of her accent, and a few days later, they start sharing their private gossiping with other teens. The story begins to spread as if it is true. Soon, the girls start posting photos on Instagram of Eliza at the center of a "Wanted Dead or Alive" poster and suggest that someone should call the police to round up her family and send them back to Mexico.



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A few weeks ago, a Muslim family moved into your block. The family has three daughters, including one your age named Amina. Since then, there has been a sharp increase in anti-Muslim talk among the neighborhood boys. Walking home from school one day, you see Amina a half block ahead and start walking faster to catch up. You've heard some boys calling anti-Muslim slurs across the street in Amina's direction before today. When you almost catch up to her, you see two of the boys cross the street toward Amina and stand and block her path. They are calling her anti-Muslim names, and one of them yanks the hijab (head scarf) off her head and throws it down in the dirt. The other boy laughs and tries to push Amina down.



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As a Black teen, Xander knows about the kinds of racist slurs and name-calling that are sometimes directed at Black people. But recently, these kinds of behaviors have been directed at him personally online, on his phone, and on social media. He has received several texts with disturbing photos of lynchings and has a good idea who might be doing this but has no real proof. One afternoon, when a few of his friends are at his house playing video games, Xander looks out the window and sees two teens from the neighborhood running away from his house. When he opens the front door to look out, he finds a miniature noose hanging on the front doorknob.

## AN ALLY IS ME AND YOU

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If you find yourself in the middle of an incident of bullying, what are your choices? Here are some guidelines.



Photo Credit: iStock

- **Think before acting.** Assess safety concerns before deciding how to respond. Decide if it is best to respond in the moment or later.
- **Choose a response that doesn't put you in danger.** Never choose an action that might endanger your own safety or the safety of someone else.
- **Assess what is needed.** Don't assume you know what the person being targeted needs in the moment or later. Find time to talk with them to ask how you can best be helpful.
- **Confront when appropriate.** If the person engaged in bullying another person is a good friend of yours, you may feel comfortable directly intervening and telling the person you are not okay with what they are doing.
- **Talk later with the person engaging in the bullying.** Once the heat of the moment has passed, you may want to approach the person who was engaging in the bullying and tell them how the incident made you feel.
- **Seek assistance.** If you are unsure how to respond but fear someone is going to get hurt, immediately find an adult that you trust will take appropriate action.

For additional resources, visit [www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov).

## **WRITING: FROM BIAS TO HATE**

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### **INSTRUCTIONS:**

**NOTE:** This exercise is optional and requires that youth have participated beforehand in Unit 2 (Understanding Bias, Bullying, and Hate) and Unit 3 (Everyday Prejudice and Youth). We all have biases. Everyone has been exposed to biased attitudes in television shows, the news media, movies, books, video games, and advertising, to name a few. Identity-based bullying—where a person acts on their bias to target an individual or a group based on their race, ethnicity, religion, gender, disability, or sexual orientation—has been recognized as a behavior that has the potential to escalate into a hate incident or hate crime.

Ask youth to write a paragraph or two in response, using the following questions to guide their writing:

- Why do you think that bullying based on a person’s biases could lead to a hate crime?
- What factors might lead to the escalation from biased attitudes to hate incidents?
- How do hate crimes against individuals affect entire communities?
- What is something you could do within your own community to address this concern?

### **FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSION:**

Lead a group discussion to allow people to share their thoughts and ideas. The questions below are provided as a guide.

- What did you learn about the ways biased attitudes can escalate into hate behaviors?
- If no one steps in, would all incidents of identity-based bullying escalate to a hate crime?
- What can help people become more aware of their own biases? What would help them change their thinking?
- What skills would help a person who is engaging in bullying step back and choose a different strategy?
- How and in what ways could a person develop those skills?
- How will this process help you in being an ally when bias and bullying incidents occur?

## Unit 5

### IDENTITY AND BULLYING

#### UNIT 5 SUMMARY AND ASSESSMENT

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In this unit, youth have had an opportunity to better understand identity, the components that comprise identity, and the components that are unique to them personally. They have discussed together their perceptions and perspectives on bullying that is based on a person's identity. They have begun to explore what it means to be an ally and some of the behaviors characteristic of allies, and they have applied this knowledge to develop ways they could respond to different incidents of identity-based bullying.

If you have used all or most of the lessons in this unit with the youth in your care, you may want to assess their learning and readiness to move on to *Unit 6: Crime and Punishment*. The following questions can guide a final discussion to provide a summary, closure, and assessment of the group's progress:

- *We have been looking at identity in general and applying it to identify the dimensions of your own identity. Why do you think an understanding of your own identity is important in addressing identity-based bullying?*
- *What are your thoughts about the difference between bullying and identity-based bullying? What differences, if any, do you see?*
- *What does it mean to be an ally?*
- *What information or skills might help you when you are faced with incidents of bullying in your school or community?*

# Unit 6.

## Crime and Punishment

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This unit builds understanding of hate crime laws, including the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009 (The Shepard-Byrd Act). Youth will learn about the basic categories of crime (felonies and misdemeanors) as well as some of the criteria used to determine if a crime was motivated by hate. They will also learn how to distinguish a bias incident from a hate crime.

### IN THIS UNIT:

- *Understanding the Law* provides a basic understanding of the legal and law enforcement structure underlying hate crimes prosecutions. It includes the handouts *Classifying Crime* and *The Shepard-Byrd Act*.
- *What Makes a Crime a Hate Crime?* builds understanding of the differences between criminal behavior and crimes motivated by bias against a person from a legally protected group. It includes the handout *Some Considerations in Identifying if a Crime Is Bias-Related*.
- *Bias Incident or Hate Crime?* enables youth to think in-depth using a case study about a specific fictional act of hate and determine how people should respond.

## LESSON: UNDERSTANDING THE LAW

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### PURPOSE:

The purpose of this lesson is to provide an understanding of the categories of crimes, as well as the reasons why some crimes carry more serious punishments than others. The lesson also introduces the landmark federal hate crime law, The Shepard-Byrd Act.

### MATERIALS NEEDED:

[Classifying Crime](#) handout and [The Shepard-Byrd Act](#) handout, one of each for each person; chart paper and markers or chalkboard and chalk

### TIME REQUIRED:

45–60 minutes

### PREP WORK:

Prepare copies of two handouts, *Classifying Crime* and *The Shepard-Byrd Act*, one copy for each person.

Write the following discussion question on the chalkboard or chart paper:

- Can the Shepard-Byrd Act be used to prosecute offenders in these situations?
  - The police catch a group of people spray painting Nazi swastikas on a synagogue wall at midnight.
  - Police arrest a group of protestors who carry homophobic signs that disrupt a Gay Pride parade.
  - A Caucasian woman who is recovering from cancer and wearing a headscarf is violently attacked by a person known to have a long history of anti-Muslim online activity.

### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Begin by asking youth to brainstorm some acts that are punishable by law (i.e., crimes) in the United States. As youth call out various offenses, write them on the whiteboard, chalkboard, or a sheet of chart paper. Write them down as they are called out. Don't make any effort at this point to classify them. Youth might describe an act, and the act can be written down as the name of a crime. Some of the crimes likely to be mentioned include assault, assault with a deadly weapon, sexual assault, theft/larceny, vandalism/destruction of property, burglary, robbery, kidnapping, homicide, forgery, receiving stolen property, conspiracy, unauthorized use of a motor vehicle, cybercrime, treason, and many others.
- Explain that crimes are either felonies or misdemeanors. Write these terms on the board. A **felony** is a more serious crime, and it is punishable by imprisonment for more than 1



- Distribute *The Shepard-Byrd Act* handout. Provide time for the youth to read the information. Check for understanding. Consider having the youth reread the text before engaging in the following activity.
- Divide the group into pairs and ask them to consider the three scenarios listed on the chalkboard or chart paper. Allow time for discussion. Reconvene the group and ask for volunteers to share their thoughts on each scenario. Lead the discussion using the information below as a guide.
  - The first example involves destruction of property, so the Shepard-Byrd Act does not apply because the law requires willfully causing bodily injury against persons in a protected group. However, another federal hate crime law, 18 U.S.C. § 247, may apply. (damage to religious property).
  - The second example involves freedom of speech. Even though the speech has hateful content, the Shepard-Byrd Act cannot be used to prosecute. Speech is typically protected by the First Amendment.
  - In the third example, while the victim is a Caucasian woman, wearing of a headscarf means that it's possible that she could have been or perceived to be in a protected religious group. Also, authorities had information about the assailant's past anti-Muslim online rantings. Therefore, it might be possible to use the Shepard-Byrd Act to prosecute the offender for committing a hate crime.

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**NOTE:** Youth might be interested in knowing that there are other federal hate crime laws. Some require reporting of hate crime incidents, and others provide incentive grants to state and local authorities that support law enforcement and prosecutor training to strengthen hate crime laws.

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### **CONTINUING THE DISCUSSION:**

- U.S. Sentencing Guidelines provide for enhanced penalties for crimes that are committed based on bias against the victim's identity or perceived identity in one of the groups protected under the law. Why do you think the penalties are more severe than if the same crime was committed without that bias?
- Why do you think the writers of the law also added the description "or perceived identity" when referring to the victim?
- Criminal laws are primarily passed at the state level, enforced by state and local law enforcement, and prosecuted in state (as opposed to federal) court. Almost all states have their own hate crime laws. All state hate crime laws protect race, religion, and national origin. However, some do not protect sexual orientation, gender identity or disability. The Shepard-Byrd Act serves as an important backstop when a hate crime occurs in a state without an applicable hate crime law or where state or local authorities do not prosecute the case. While there is variation from state to state in terms of what groups are protected, in general, state hate crime laws require proof of the commission of a crime and that the victim was selected because of their membership in a protected group.

- Go to the Bureau of Justice Statistics website (<https://bjs.ojp.gov/>) and search for State-by-State Hate Crime Laws to learn if your state has a hate crime law. If your state has a hate crime law, what groups are protected? Are there other groups that should be protected? If your state does not have a hate crime law, should your state legislators pass such a law? Be sure to give your reasons.

# CLASSIFYING CRIME

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**FELONIES**  
(more serious crimes)

**MISDEMEANORS**  
(less serious crimes)

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## THE SHEPARD-BYRD ACT

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The Shepard-Byrd Act is named after Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Matthew Shepard was a gay college student who was beaten to death in Wyoming in 1998. James Byrd Jr. was an African American man who was murdered by white supremacists in Texas in 1998.

### SOME HISTORY:

The Civil Rights Act of 1968 included the first two federal hate crime laws. The first law permitted federal prosecution of anyone who willingly uses force or the threat of force and injures, intimidates, or interferes with another person, or attempts to do so, because of the other person's race, color, religion, or national origin and because the victim was engaging in a federally protected activity such as attending school, using a public facility, applying for a job, acting as a juror, or traveling in interstate commerce. As a hate crime law, it was quite narrow.

Another law, the Fair Housing Act, was enacted on the same day. This law protected against discrimination in housing. The Fair Housing Act also provided criminal penalties. The law, which has been amended over the years, continues to provide penalties for anyone who uses force or threat of force to injure, intimidate, or interfere with someone because of their race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin and because they are exercising or enjoying a housing right (such as the right to occupy a dwelling free from discrimination).

In 1994, Congress enacted 18 U.S.C. § 247, sometimes called the Church Arson Prevention Act. This statute protects all houses of worship (not just churches) and prohibits all manner of defacing, damaging, or destroying religious real property (not just arson). This statute also prohibits using force or threat of force to obstruct someone's free exercise of religious beliefs (regardless of whether they are in a house of worship).

In 2009, Congress passed the landmark Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr., Hate Crimes Prevention Act. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, the Shepard-Byrd Act created a new federal criminal law that "criminalizes willfully causing bodily injury (or attempting to do so with a dangerous weapon)" when the victim is selected because of their actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability.

The law applies when a defendant intentionally causes bodily injury. It also applies to certain *attempts* to cause bodily injury, namely those attempts involving a dangerous weapon. It does not apply to property crimes or threats such as verbal threats. An amendment enacted in 2022 provides for penalties for conspiracies to cause bodily injury when that conspiracy results in serious harm to the victim (such as when it causes death). A conspiracy is an agreement between two or more people to commit an act that violates the criminal law. The law does not impinge on freedom of speech. Remember that in some instances other federal laws, including other federal hate crime laws, as well as state laws could possibly be used to punish behavior that is beyond the scope of the Shepard-Byrd Act.

Conviction under a hate crime law may result in an enhanced (greater) punishment. In fact, in addition to the federal hate crime laws listed above, the United States Sentencing Guidelines

provide a three-level enhancement for almost any federal offense if a jury (or judge in the case of a plea) determines beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant targeted the victim or property “because of the actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, disability, or sexual orientation of any person.”

The reason for this is that hate crimes harm not only the victim but the members of the group that the victim belongs to.

## LESSON: WHAT MAKES A CRIME A HATE CRIME?

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### PURPOSE:

This lesson reinforces understanding of the elements of a hate crime and continues the exploration of why such crimes may carry enhanced penalties (punishment).

### MATERIALS NEEDED:

[\*Some Considerations in Identifying if a Crime Is Bias-Related\*](#) handout

### TIME REQUIRED:

30–40 minutes

### PREP WORK:

Prior to this lesson, make copies of the handout *Some Considerations in Identifying if a Crime Is Bias-Related*, one copy per person.

### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Remind youth that a hate crime requires more than the commission of a crime and the fact that a victim is a member—or perceived to be a member—of a protected group. To prove a hate crime the government must show that (a) the offender committed a criminal act and (b) the offender intentionally chose the crime victim because of their bias against the victim’s actual or perceived membership in a group protected by law.
- Brainstorm with youth about this question: How might the government (the prosecution) show that the offender chose the victim because of actual or perceived membership in a group protected by law?

Write the youth’s ideas on the board or chart paper. Then distribute the handout *Some Considerations in Identifying if a Crime Is Bias-Related* and give youth the opportunity to read it. Which factors described in the handout had the students thought of? Did the youth come up with any factors not in the handout?

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**NOTE:** Some of the factors appear to relate to the offender’s speech/expression. The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that there is a meaningful difference between punishing the content of speech (which would violate the First Amendment) and using speech as evidence of motive to prove a hate crime. *Wisconsin v. Mitchell*, 1993.

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- Brainstorm with youth about this question: Who is harmed by hate crime and how are they harmed?

Guide the discussion to ensure youth understand that a hate crime is a personal crime. The reason this is personal is that the victim was targeted precisely because of their membership or perceived membership in a protected group. The victim of a hate crime suffers not only physical injury but might also suffer emotional and psychological injury.

Beyond the harm to the individual, a hate crime can make members of the victim's community feel terrorized and vulnerable.

## SOME CONSIDERATIONS IN IDENTIFYING IF A CRIME IS BIAS-RELATED

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Although **no one factor is conclusive**, the following criteria, applied singly or in combination, can assist in determining if a crime was motivated entirely or in part because of bias against or hatred of the person's or group's race, ethnicity/national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or disability:

- Offensive words, symbols, or actions were used by the person or evidence is present that is associated with the person against an identifiable group.

*Examples:* There is a burning cross, a painted swastika, or derogatory words, slurs, or graffiti directed at a particular racial, religious, ethnic, or other group.

- The victim is the only member of the targeted group (or one of just a few people) in the neighborhood or community.
- The victim or the victim's group has been subjected to past incidents of a similar nature.
- The victim recently moved to the area, and there has been evidence of hostility toward the victim from neighbors.
- The victim and the suspected person committing the offense are members of different social identity-based groups, such as racial or religious groups.
- There has been recent tension or hostility toward the victim's group by another group.
- Multiple incidents occurred at the same time, and all victims are of the same race, religion, ethnicity, or other social identity group.
- A meaningful portion of the community perceives and responds to the crime as a bias-related incident.
- The crime appears to be timed to coincide with a specific holiday or date of significance.

*Examples:* Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Rosh Hashanah, Lunar New Year, LGBT Pride Month

- The victim has been involved in public events or activities relating to race, ethnicity, religion, or sexual orientation, which may have made them a target.

*Examples:* Black Lives Matter, gay rights rally, demonstrations by or against a hate group

- There has been prior or recent news coverage of events of a similar nature.
- The manner and means of attack support the conclusion that the crime was bias-motivated.

*Examples:* Color of graffiti paint, symbols or signs used, unusual spelling of words

- There is an ongoing neighborhood problem that may have initiated the crime.

*Example:* The alleged crime could be retribution for some conflict between neighborhoods or youth who live in the area.

- The person committing the offense has a true understanding of the impact of the crime on the victim or other group members.
- The crime indicates possible involvement by an organized hate group.

*Examples:* Printed or handwritten literature that contains an identifiable hate group symbol or insignia or hate group address, or the presence of a documented or suspected organized hate group in the area.

## LESSON: BIAS INCIDENT OR HATE CRIME?

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### PURPOSE:

This lesson reinforces understanding of the elements of a hate crime and continues the exploration of why such crimes may carry enhanced penalties (punishment).

### MATERIALS NEEDED:

[Case Study](#) handout

### TIME REQUIRED:

30 minutes or less

### PREP WORK:

Make copies of the *Case Study* handout.

Write the following questions on the chalkboard or chart paper:

- Is this a bias-motivated incident or a hate crime? Explain your reasoning.
- What, if anything, should be done in response to what happened?
- What are your thoughts about the impact of what happened? Who is impacted by what happened?
- What would be a good resolution to this situation?

### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Distribute a copy of the *Case Study* handout to each youth. Ask them to take a few moments to read through the case study.
2. Use one of the following options to explore whether this scenario is a bias incident or hate crime.

**Group Discussion:** Divide the group into pairs or small groups. Provide 10–15 minutes for them to discuss the questions on the chalkboard or chart paper.

**Writing Exercise:** Ask youth to take about 10 minutes to respond in writing to the scenario, using the questions on the chalkboard or white paper.

3. Reconvene the group and lead a brief large-group discussion.

### CONTINUING THE DISCUSSION:

A crime has not been committed in the short case study. This is an example of a bias-related incident. Just because it is not a hate crime does not mean that it should be ignored. Support services should be provided to victims of the incident, who might include other members of the same community. For this case study the school should also take proactive steps to avoid repetition of this incident. What steps could a school take?

Ask youth if they have witnessed a bias incident in their school or community. If so, what steps were taken—or should be taken—to support those harmed and to avoid repeat incidents?

## CASE STUDY

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Over the weekend, there were news stories throughout the day about a deadly hate crime in another part of the state where Jewish people were the targets. When Lauren, a Jewish teen, comes into her high school on Monday morning, three girls walk by her in the hall and yell, “ Go home and don’t come back ... Jews are not welcome here.”

After school, Lauren’s mother could see that Lauren was visibly upset. When Lauren finally told her mother what had happened, she was very troubled and insisted they go together to speak to the principal of Lauren’s school.

## Unit 6

### CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

#### UNIT 6 SUMMARY AND ASSESSMENT

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One element in understanding bias and hate-motivated incidents is to learn about the distinctions between a hate incident and a hate crime. In this unit, youth learned about the different categories of criminal offenses and how the legal system determines punishment based on harm caused. They learned about what factors are considered in whether an offender selected a victim based on bias against a protected group. Youth also became acquainted with the newest federal hate crime law, the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr., Hate Crimes Prevention Act, and might have had an opportunity to explore their state's hate crime law.

If you have used all or most of the lessons in this unit with the youth in your care, you may want to assess their learning and readiness to move on to *Unit 7: Media Literacy*. The following questions can guide a final discussion to provide a summary, closure, and assessment of the group's progress:

- *How would you describe the difference between a hate incident and a hate crime?*
- *Why do you think there are more severe penalties for a crime if it is motivated by hate for a person or group based on some element of their identity?*
- *Should there be consequences for those who commit bias- or hate-motivated incidents that are not considered crimes? Why or why not?*
- *Are there steps that should be taken in your school or community to prevent bias incidents or hate crimes? What are some of these steps?*

# Unit 7.

## Media Literacy

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Young people encounter a barrage of messages and information daily from a variety of sources: **online**, through their social media feeds, websites, blogs, podcasts, and online interactions with others; **print**, through books, magazines, newspapers, and advertisements; **video**, through movies, television, streaming programs and series, and commercials; and **in person**, through conversations with family members, social acquaintances, religious and political leaders, and close friends.

Increasingly, some of the media content youth are encountering is not based on verifiable facts, nor is it often subjected to criteria that require multiple sources to confirm reliability. Instead, media content is often based on the creator's personal opinions and at times, their biases.

Much content is based on faulty or false information that is sometimes shared unknowingly and at, other times, with the intent to mislead or influence others.

Young people today require both increased awareness of the current climate of misinformation and opportunities to develop skills in digital/media literacy. They require strong critical thinking skills they can use to assess online and offline media for reliability and trustworthiness, and they need opportunities to practice these skills that can enable them to continually assess and respond, safely and effectively, to the media they encounter.

### IN THIS UNIT:

- *Sources of Information* builds understanding of what is included in the term *media* and the various forms of media youth regularly access for new information.
- *Algorithms: Mapping the Path Without Permission* builds awareness of computer algorithms and how they function in one's online experience. Includes the worksheet *Everything Happens So Much*.
- *Misinformation, Disinformation, and Malinformation (MDM): Can You Tell the Difference?* builds understanding of some of the categories of untruths youth may encounter online and the intent behind common manifestations of online misinformation. It includes the worksheet *MDM Scenarios* and the handouts *Not All Misinformation Is the Same* and *Disinformation Starts With You*.

## IN THIS UNIT (CONTINUED):

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- *Evaluating Media: Six Basic Questions* provides a simple process youth can use to assess the reliability of the media content they encounter using a few basic questions. It includes the handout *Assessing Media: Six Basic Questions* and the worksheet *Applying the Questions*.
- *Youth as Media Creators* increases the awareness of young people's ability to use media to communicate positive messages that promote a respectful community, both online and offline.

## LESSON: SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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### PURPOSE:

A working knowledge of media literacy provides youth with a helpful framework for assessing the reliability of content they may be encountering through the media they access daily. An initial step in this process is to understand what is included in the term *media* and the various forms of media youth regularly access for new information. The lesson asks them to conduct a brief search on an assigned topic identified to fuel discussion about the strategies they are now using, if any, to assess the reliability of their sources.

### MATERIALS NEEDED:

Internet access; if unavailable, the search can be done as an homework assignment

### TIME REQUIRED:

30 minutes

### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Begin this lesson by leading a whole group discussion/brainstorm. Ask, *If you were looking for an answer to a question or wanted to learn something more about a topic, how would you go about it?* Have the group volunteer answers and list them on the board or chart paper.
- Then ask the group, *How do you typically find out about current news? What sources do you access to learn about news?* If additional sources of information are named, add them to the list. If people mention cable or streaming services, ask them to name them specifically, e.g., CNN, Fox News, as well as any social media platforms they suggest, such as YouTube or TikTok.

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**NOTE:** The list should include popular search engines, local cable or streaming services, social media platforms, print media, other people, etc.

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- Next, ask the group, *When you find new information through one of these sources, do you usually assume it's credible—that is, based on verifiable facts and not on opinion? If not, how do you assess whether it is credible?*
- Explain that the group is going to do a brief Internet search on a topic identified as one that is a serious concern for young people: climate change. Rather than searching for the term alone, ask people to frame their search as a question that will engender different points of view: *"Should elected officials pass laws to address climate change?"*

- Instruct the group to select one of the media sources from the list they developed, and search for the topic using the assigned question. People should attempt to find two different points of view on the topic in their search and to determine the credibility of both postings. If there is the capability for youth to do their searches in class, allow about 10–15 minutes for this process. Alternatively, ask people to conduct their searches as a homework assignment.
- Reconvene the group and lead a discussion, using the questions below as a guide.

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**NOTE:** The discussion is not for the purpose of debating the various points of view people come up with; rather, it is to identify the processes they are currently using to assess the credibility of content they access online. If anyone reports they were not able to find different points of view in their searches, simply ask them to consider how they determined the credibility of the posting they chose.

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### **CONTINUING THE DISCUSSION:**

- What was the process like doing the search on this topic in your selected media?
- With the media you selected, what information did the search results provide? Did it feel adequate in helping you decide whether you should click through?
- When you selected an item with a viewpoint on the topic, how did you find yourself responding? Were you neutral about what was being said, or did you find yourself agreeing, feeling skeptical, or disagreeing?
- What process did you use to form your response?
- Did the article or video seem to be based more on opinion or on verifiable fact?
- Do you think content creators ever include what appears to be fact, but may be more expressions of opinion? How can you tell the difference?

### **A NOTE TO FACILITATORS**

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In closing, confirm with the group that being able to determine if the different perspectives about any topic they view online can be trusted and are based on fact and not opinion or intentional disinformation is a process they can learn. A simple series of questions can be used to assess who wrote the content, who they were trying to reach, and what their overall goals were in doing so. Explain that they will have opportunities to learn that process in a subsequent class. (See the lesson “Evaluating Media: Six Basic Questions” later in this unit).

## LESSON: ALGORITHMS: MAPPING THE PATH WITHOUT PERMISSION

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### PURPOSE:

Search engines and social media platforms employ computer algorithms, complex programs designed to learn from a person's online behavior and personalize their web experience. Given the vast amounts of information available on the web, one can see the sensibility of this process. But algorithms have their downsides as well, limiting what youth view, influencing their choices, and making decisions for them without their permission. Algorithms are the reason why viewing videos about kittens results in more opportunities to view kitten videos, but they are also the reason why viewing content about a conspiracy can present more content in support of that conspiracy. Because algorithms function invisibly, young people can benefit by being aware of them and how they function in their online experience. This lesson enables youth to examine the role algorithms play in dictating what information a person encounters online.

### MATERIALS NEEDED:

Blank paper; pens or pencils; [Everything Happens So Much](#) worksheet, one copy for each person; Internet access (alternatively, lesson components that require Internet access may be assigned as homework)

Ingredients to make a tuna sandwich: small bowl, can of tuna, spoon, mayonnaise, sliced bread (optional)

### TIME REQUIRED:

30–45 minutes

### PREP WORK:

Select one of the articles listed in step 7 below. Either make copies of the article, one copy for each person, or if Internet access is available, ensure the selected article can be accessed through the link (may require a fee).

Make copies of the worksheet, *Everything Happens So Much*, one copy for each person.

If doing the optional part of the tuna sandwich portion of this activity, assemble the necessary ingredients for the demonstration.

### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Introduce this purpose of the lesson, in your own words, using the *Purpose* section above.
- Ask the group if they know what an *algorithm* is. Write their ideas on the board and use them to create a definition. Share with them that in general terms, an *algorithm* can be

described as a set of steps required to solve a problem, explaining that a recipe is a kind of algorithm.

(Steps 3–5 are *optional*) Provide each person with a piece of blank paper and a pen or pencil and ask them to write the “algorithm” for making a tuna sandwich. Allow about 5 minutes for them to do so. Ask for a volunteer to read their tuna sandwich algorithm. If you have gathered materials to demonstrate their algorithms, follow their steps exactly (i.e., if instructions say, “put tuna in the bowl” but do not mention opening the can, place the unopened can in the bowl. You will only need to follow people’s directions with one or two volunteers to demonstrate how each step in an algorithm result in the intended results.

- Ask: What did this exercise teach you about algorithms? Explain the following, in your own words:

*We just looked at the way an algorithm, consisting of step-by-step instructions, is necessary to produce the desired result, in this case a tuna sandwich. The term algorithm is also used to describe how you see and view content online. Algorithms are invisible computer codes that online search engines and social media platforms use with the goal of personalizing your online experience. Although you may not always be aware of it, whenever you are online, algorithms are constantly at work watching your online behavior—the sites you visit, the things you consider buying, the postings you click on, like, or share. Algorithms function by processing this information and giving you content related to your browsing history. Step by step, based on the history of your online activity, algorithms produce the desired result of giving you more content related to what you are doing online.*

- Ask the group:
  - Do you think online algorithms are a good thing? In what way?
  - Are there ways that algorithms can lead you astray or limit what you see online?
- Distribute a copy of one of the following articles, and allow about 10 minutes for people to read the article silently:
  - “What If You Could Subscribe to Somebody Else’s Facebook Feed?”
  - “I Made the World’s Blindest Facebook Profile, Just to See What Happens”

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**NOTE:** Alternatively, you can assign this reading beforehand as homework.

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- After people have completed the reading, lead a brief discussion, using the questions below as a guide.
  - What, if anything, surprised you about what you read?
  - In what ways did the article broaden your understanding of how algorithms work?

- Explain the following, in your own words:

*The reading you just did was referring to the algorithms used by Facebook. Even if you never use Facebook, the social media platforms you do use regularly are also using their own algorithms to shape what comes up in your feed. Now that you are more familiar with the presence of algorithms, why social media providers and platforms use them, and how they work, it will be helpful to look at your own social media feed and try to discern how the platform's algorithm may be directing and limiting your content without you knowing it.*

- Distribute to each person a copy of the worksheet *Everything Happens So Much*. Ask people to take about 15 minutes to explore the possible impact of algorithms on their activity on the social media platform they use most often. If Internet access is not available, assign this as homework.
- After people have completed an assessment of their own social media feeds, lead a discussion. The questions below are provided as a guide.

### **CONTINUING THE DISCUSSION:**

- What did you learn by assessing your own social media feed for the influence of algorithms?
- What patterns, if any, did you notice that indicated an interest you expressed through your online activity?
- If you couldn't discern any patterns, what did that tell you about how algorithms work?
- Although you can always search for content that is not being suggested on your feed, could the process result in "not knowing what you don't know?" In other words, by limiting your feed's suggestions to what you have expressed interest in, are your opportunities to experience diverse points of view being limited? Explain your thinking.
- Algorithms are here to stay, but what can you do to ensure you have access to different points of view? Why is this important?

## EVERYTHING HAPPENS SO MUCH

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“Everything Happens So Much” was a Twitter post that first appeared more than a decade ago, gaining wide popularity and resulting in thousands of Twitter retweets over the years.

Interestingly, the Twitter handle used a mix of words to evade spam-tracking techniques, which allowed the handle to affect the content that appeared on each user’s timeline. Whatever you see, click on, like, and spend time on begins to happen more and more on your social media feed.

Look at your own social media feed. Use the social media platform you spend most of your online time on. What can you tell about how the algorithm is navigating your online experience, often without your knowledge or permission?

Use these questions to help you in this process and make notes here for a group discussion later.

- What patterns do you notice in the content the platform suggests to you?
- What content do you notice is coming up that relates to something you have expressed an interest in before, such as posting a comment or “liking” a post?
- Based on what you are seeing on your feed, what qualities do you think the algorithm is assuming about who you are, your age, where you live, your interests, and other aspects of who you are?
- What do you notice about the video clips that are coming up? Are they related to something you have watched in the past? Have you ever paused on a video with content you didn’t like and then found that more videos with similar content were being suggested?
- What else did you notice?

## **LESSON: MISINFORMATION, DISINFORMATION, AND MALINFORMATION (MDM): CAN YOU TELL THE DIFFERENCE?**

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### **PURPOSE:**

There is so much information available to young people today, content sometimes at odds with other content. Claims of “fake news” are waged against any opposing viewpoint, as if a different opinion is automatically wrong and deceitful. Some suggest that relative truth doesn’t exist; only the “truth” a person attributes to their own perspective. Sorting all of this out at a time when young people are learning and developing their own cognitive abilities to think critically is a significant challenge. In addition, the sources available to them are often rife with bias and untruths, with misinformation, and with content developed purposely to mislead or harm. For this reason, the development of digital/media literacy skills is critical to young people. Understanding the categories of untruths they may encounter online, as well as the intent behind common manifestations of online misinformation, will help them to successfully navigate the murky waters of information. In this lesson, youth will practice examining scenarios to determine the reliability of the information and the category of MDM that may be present.

### **MATERIALS NEEDED:**

[MDM Scenarios](#) worksheet, one copy for every two people; and the [Not All Misinformation Is the Same](#) worksheet and [Disinformation Stops With You](#)<sup>5</sup> handout, one copy of each for each person

### **TIME REQUIRED:**

30–40 minutes

### **PREP WORK:**

Make copies of the required worksheets and handout, as noted above. Write the following definitions on the board or on chart paper:

**MISINFORMATION** is inaccurate and false information that is created or shared without the intention to cause harm.

**DISINFORMATION** is inaccurate and false information that is deliberately created or shared with the intention to mislead, deceive, or cause harm.

**MALINFORMATION** is information that is based on fact that was intended to be private, but is shared publicly with the intention to mislead, deceive, or cause harm.

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<sup>5</sup> The information in this lesson and in the handout and worksheets included are excerpted from materials on MDM created by the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency. For additional content and information on the five tips outlined, see [https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/disinformation\\_stops\\_with\\_you\\_infographic\\_set\\_508.pdf](https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/disinformation_stops_with_you_infographic_set_508.pdf).

## INSTRUCTIONS:

- Introduce the lesson using the information provided in the *Purpose* section above.
- Ask the group:
  - How do you usually get information on current news?
  - Have you heard the term “fake news”? What do you think is meant by that term?
  - Do you think most news reporting today should be categorized as “fake news”? Why or why not?
  - What characterizes media that is classified as “fake news”?
- Distribute a copy of the handout *Not All Misinformation Is the Same* to each person. Provide 5 minutes for people to read the handout.
- Refer to the definitions created in the Prep Work section. Ask:
  - The handout refers to the different ways of sharing false information as MDM. Which form(s) do you think is most common in the media today?
  - When a person or group creates and shares media content, what role does their intention play?
  - What are some of the effects of the increase of disinformation in media sources like news reports, political reporting, social media posts, website content, etc.?
  - Have you ever shared anything online that ended up being untrue? Which form of MDM would that fall under?

- Share the following, in your own words:

*A national survey was done about this topic<sup>6</sup> a few years ago and they found that almost one in three people said they had shared a made-up news story online. About half of the people sharing it did not know it was false, which would be an example of misinformation, and the other half knew it was false when they shared it (disinformation). Almost everyone (95%) believed the increase of MDM was causing widespread confusion about what could be trusted as basic facts. But the other interesting finding was how many people (about half) feel that it's someone else's responsibility to weed out false information—social media platforms, the government, and politicians. Do you agree?*

- Distribute a copy of the handout *Disinformation Stops With You*. Explain that because they are the ones accessing media content and deciding how to respond to it, whether to “like,” “share,” or ignore it, they will benefit from building their skills in effectively recognizing if the content includes MDM.
- Briefly review the content on this handout, focusing especially on the tips outlined.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.pewresearch.org/journalism/2016/12/15/many-americans-believe-fake-news-is-sowing-confusion/>.

- Explain that they are going to take a few minutes to apply these guidelines to several scenarios to determine what form of MDM the scenario is describing, and what steps they could take to assess the reliability of the content.
- Ask people to find a partner, preferably someone they have not worked with before. Give each pair a copy of the *MDM Scenarios* at the end of this lesson, some paper, and a pen or pencil. Ask them to use the information on the handout to decide if they think the scenario is an example of misinformation, disinformation, or malinformation, and then to consider what steps they might take to determine reliability. Allow about 10 minutes for pairs to complete this task.
- Reconvene the group and review each scenario, having people share their thoughts on each.
- Lead a discussion with the whole group, using the questions below as a guide.

### **CONTINUING THE DISCUSSION:**

- How easy was it to decide whether a scenario was an example of misinformation, disinformation, or malinformation? Why do you think this is the case?
- Upon encountering new information, can a person easily discern if the information is false or misleading? Why or why not?
- If you encounter information that seems in opposition to how you feel about a topic, what is your typical response?
- What role do personal biases play in the formation of people's opinions?
- What steps seemed most helpful in assessing whether something in media is based on verifiable facts or someone's opinion?
- What else do you need to help you develop media literacy?

## MDM SCENARIOS

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- Critics of a candidate for Congress post negative ads on Facebook calling the candidate an evil socialist, posting a photo of his image superimposed next to some Nazis.
  - Does this seem like an example of:  
Misinformation \_\_\_\_\_, Disinformation \_\_\_\_\_, or Malinformation \_\_\_ ?
  - How might you determine its reliability? \_\_\_\_\_

---
- A photo is posted online showing the garbage-strewn grounds following a speech by an important environmental activist, which is later found to have been taken at a different event three years earlier.
  - Does this seem like an example of:  
Misinformation \_\_\_\_\_, Disinformation \_\_\_\_\_, or Malinformation \_\_\_ ?
  - How might you determine its reliability? \_\_\_\_\_

---
- An avid hunter shares a posting on Twitter that discourages voting in his state because of a little-known law that links voting in the state to losing hunting licenses in neighboring states.
  - Does this seem like an example of:  
Misinformation \_\_\_\_\_, Disinformation \_\_\_\_\_, or Malinformation \_\_\_ ?
  - How might you determine its reliability? \_\_\_\_\_

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- Distraught about the rising cost of gas, a teen sees on social media that gas prices are much higher in other countries, including neighboring Canada, where gas costs twice as much as in the U.S. This makes her feel better so she shares it on her Instagram account.
  - Does this seem like an example of:  
Misinformation \_\_\_\_\_, Disinformation \_\_\_\_\_, or Malinformation \_\_\_ ?
  - How might you determine its reliability? \_\_\_\_\_

## MDM SCENARIOS (INSTRUCTOR COPY)

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- Critics of a candidate for Congress post negative ads on Facebook calling the candidate an evil socialist, posting a photo of his image superimposed next to some Nazis.
  - Does this seem like an example of:  
Misinformation \_\_\_\_\_, Disinformation , or Malinformation  ?
  - How might you determine its reliability? **Search reputable news sources.**

---
- A photo is posted online showing the garbage-strewn grounds following a speech by an important environmental activist, which is later found to have been taken at a different event three years earlier.
  - Does this seem like an example of:  
Misinformation , Disinformation \_\_\_\_\_, or Malinformation  ?
  - How might you determine its reliability? **Search for news stories covering the event directly on a news site.**

---
- An avid hunter shares a posting on Twitter that discourages voting in his state because of a little-known law that links voting in the state to losing hunting licenses in neighboring states.
  - Does this seem like an example of:  
Misinformation \_\_\_\_\_, Disinformation , or Malinformation  ?
  - How might you determine its reliability? **Confirm this information with the office that issues hunting licenses.**

---
- Distraught about the rising cost of gas, a teen sees on social media that gas prices are much higher in other countries, including neighboring Canada, where gas costs twice as much as in the U.S. This makes her feel better so she shares it on her Instagram account.
  - Does this seem like an example of:  
Misinformation , Disinformation \_\_\_\_\_, or Malinformation  ?
  - How might you determine its reliability? **Check government websites that might provide this statistical data.**

## NOT ALL MISINFORMATION IS THE SAME<sup>7</sup>

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### WHAT IS (AND WHAT ISN'T) "FAKE NEWS"?

The label "fake news" seems to be everywhere today, often attached to stories in broadcast, print, and online media by those whose perspectives run counter to the reporting in the piece. Not all reporting can correctly be categorized as fake news, but enough misinformation exists to make it difficult to weed out what is based on verifiable facts and what is misinformation.

The ability to determine the trustworthiness of the content you see, hear, and read begins by understanding that not all misinformation is the same. Important differences exist in the intent of the person creating the media content.

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### THREE TYPES OF ERRONEOUS INFORMATION

There are three important distinctions – **Misinformation**, **Disinformation**, and **Malinformation**, collectively referred to as MDM:

- **MISINFORMATION** is inaccurate and false information that is created or shared without the intent to cause harm.
  - **DISINFORMATION** is inaccurate and false information that is deliberately created or shared with the intent to mislead, deceive, or cause harm.
  - **MALINFORMATION** is information that is based on fact, but is shared with the intent to mislead, deceive, or cause harm.
- 

### THE DANGERS OF DISINFORMATION

The increasing abundance of disinformation in media today is not a minor occurrence that has little impact on people's everyday lives. Malicious influencers, including foreign states and violent extremist groups, are using disinformation to undermine democracy, shape the national conversation, cause divisions and distrust, and manipulate behavior. The goals of these bad actors are to divide people, build a following, and amplify their message and move it into mainstream thinking and behavior. These strategies have dangerous, real-world effects, including damaging trust in the nation's electoral process.

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<sup>7</sup> Much of the information in this lesson is adapted from the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency's *Disinformation Stops With You Infographic*. For additional content and resources, see [https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/disinformation\\_stops\\_with\\_you\\_infographic\\_set\\_508.pdf](https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/disinformation_stops_with_you_infographic_set_508.pdf).

# Disinformation Stops With You



Bad actors spread disinformation to undermine democratic institutions and the power of facts. False or misleading information can evoke a strong emotional reaction that leads people to share it without first looking into the facts for themselves, polluting healthy conversations about the issues and increasing societal divisions.

**Do your part to stop the spread of disinformation by practicing and sharing these tips.**

Share

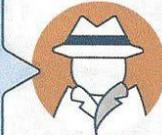


## Recognize the Risk

Understand how bad actors use disinformation to shape the conversation and manipulate behavior.

## Question the Source

Check who is really behind the information and think about what they gain by making people believe it.

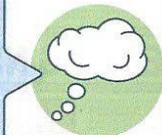


## Investigate the Issue

Search reliable sources to see what they are saying about the issue.

## Think Before You Link

Take a moment to let your emotions cool and ask yourself whether your feelings about the content are based on fact.



## Talk With Your Circle

Talk with your social circle about the risks of disinformation and how to respond when you see it.

## Who to follow



### Trusted Sources

Follow

Rely on official websites and verified social media for authoritative information.

## Types of false info

### Misinformation

is false, but not created or shared with the intention of causing harm.

### Disinformation

is deliberately created to mislead, harm, or manipulate a person, social group, organization, or country.

### Malinformation

is based on fact, but used out of context to mislead, harm, or manipulate.

## Who spreads disinfo?



Foreign States



Scammers



Extremist Groups

Learn more at [www.cisa.gov/mdm-resource-library](http://www.cisa.gov/mdm-resource-library)



The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) produced this graphic to highlight tactics used by disinformation campaigns that seek to disrupt critical infrastructure in the United States. CISA's publication of information materials about this issue are intended for public awareness, and are not intended to restrict, diminish, or demean any person's right to hold, express, or publish any opinion or belief, including opinions or beliefs that align with those of a foreign government, are expressed by a foreign government-backed campaign, or dissent from the majority.

## LESSON: EVALUATING MEDIA: SIX BASIC QUESTIONS

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### PURPOSE:

Young people encounter media throughout the course of the day, and it can be easy to simply accept the messaging, information, and opinions from those sources that youth personally trust or those espousing viewpoints they are already in agreement with. Given the concerning increase of false information created to mislead and influence young people, however, one of the most important skills they can learn is a process to assess the media content they encounter. This lesson provides a simple process using a few basic questions that youth can use to assess the reliability of a media source.

### MATERIALS NEEDED:

[Assessing Media: Six Basic Questions](#) handout and [Applying the Questions](#) worksheet, one copy for each person; pens or pencils; Internet access

### TIME REQUIRED:

30–45 minutes

### PREP WORK:

Make copies of the handout and worksheet above, one copy for each person. Locate an example of a current website that is all or partly based on the creator’s opinions. Depending on the piece selected, either write it on the board or provide a copy to participants.

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**NOTE:** Possible websites for young people to assess through this process can be found at [Misinformation Directory](#).

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### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Explain the rationale for this lesson, sharing that they are going to be learning and practicing a process to assess the media they encounter daily to ensure their sources of information are trustworthy and reliable.
- Distribute the handout *Assessing Media: Six Basic Questions*, one copy to each person. Briefly review the six questions by having a different person read each one aloud. Ask the group:
  - In what ways would using these questions help you to assess if a source of information could be trusted?
  - Do you think the questions would need to be addressed in a particular order? Are all the questions necessary? Why or why not?

- Provide the media piece/website you have selected to the group. Distribute a copy of the *Applying the Questions* worksheet to each person.
- Provide about 15 minutes for youth to work individually on this task. Alternatively, you can assign this as a homework assignment.
- Reconvene the group and lead a discussion using the questions below as a guide.

### **CONTINUING THE DISCUSSION:**

- How did you find this process? Were there any questions where the answers were difficult to find?
- If you were able, what conclusions did you draw about whether you could trust the content?
- If the content conflicted with your own opinion on the topic, did that play a role in your conclusions?
- If you felt you could not conclude whether the source was reliable, what could you do? (Example: See if you can find other sources that align with the facts presented.)

### **A NOTE TO FACILITATORS**

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Although having young people work independently on this process enables them to engage with the questions in assessing the selected piece, you can also choose to do this as a pairs share, which also requires both pair members to be actively involved. You may also assign people to select one or two postings on their social media feeds and use the process to assess the reliability of the content. The more practice people have, the more comfortable they will feel in using the process independently.

## ASSESSING MEDIA: SIX BASIC QUESTIONS

| THE CONCEPTS       | THE SIX STEPS   | QUESTIONS TO ASK   |
|--------------------|---|--|
| <b>AUTHORSHIP</b>  | 1. Determine who created this content.                          | Who created this message? What are the author's credentials?   |
| <b>TECHNIQUES</b>  | 2. Identify techniques being used.                              | What techniques is the author using to attract my attention and communicate their message (e.g., camera angle, lighting, music, movement, etc.)? |
| <b>AUDIENCE</b>    | 3. Identify the target audiences.                               | Who seems to be the intended audience?   |
| <b>PERSPECTIVE</b> | 4. Discover underlying values and perspectives being presented. | Why was this message created? What values and perspectives are being presented, and what others are being omitted?                               |
| <b>PURPOSE</b>     | 5. Assess the purpose of the media.                             | Is the message trying to get me to think or act in a certain way? Is the underlying goal of the message to generate money?                       |
| <b>ACCURACY</b>    | 6. Determine accuracy and reliability.                          | Based on my assessment, how do I know that the message is accurate?  |

## APPLYING THE QUESTIONS

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Use the *Assessing Media: Six Basic Questions* handout to explore whether a source of information can be trusted, whether it is based primarily on opinion or verifiable facts, and whether it contains false or misleading information.

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### THE MEDIA BEING ASSESSED:

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**AUTHORS:** *What do I know about the author of this piece? (Note: There may be multiple authors, an organization, or anonymous).*

**TECHNIQUES:** *What techniques is the author using to attract my interest and engage me?*

**AUDIENCE:** *Who is the most likely intended audience for this media? How do I know?*

**PERSPECTIVE:** *Why was this message created? What values and perspectives are being presented, and what others are being omitted?*

**PURPOSE:** *Is the message trying to get me to think or act in a certain way? Is there any motivation through the message designed to generate money?*

**ACCURACY:** *Based on this assessment, do I think the content of this message is accurate?*

## LESSON: YOUTH AS MEDIA CREATORS

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### PURPOSE:

Rather than being passive consumers of media, youth are already acting as media creators through the social media posts they compose and the smartphone videos they record and share. In an online world full of rumors, bullying, objectification, and intolerance, this lesson builds awareness in young people of their own power to communicate positive media messages that promote a respectful community, both online and offline.

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**NOTE:** It is recommended that facilitators take a few minutes to review each person's media creation before sharing it with the whole group.

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### MATERIALS NEEDED:

Ability for youth to access the media they select to create their own content, such as Internet and smartphone access; art supplies, paper, pens, pencils, and markers; [Assessing Media: Six Basic Questions](#) handout (optional)

### TIME REQUIRED:

45 minutes

### PREP WORK:

Create a chart on the board or on chart paper as indicated in step 2 below.

Copy the following media creation guidelines on the board or a sheet of chart paper:

- Use the *Six Basic Questions* handout as a guide in creating your media.
- Videos can be no more than 30 seconds long.
- Other media presentations (dance, music, drama) should be brief and to the point: about 1–2 minutes total.
- If your media includes art (a poster, flyer, social media post, etc.), include a plan as to how you might share it with others.
- Accompanying music is fine if it doesn't include anything offensive.

## INSTRUCTIONS:

- Introduce this lesson by sharing the following, in your own words:

*Every day, you are continually receiving messages and information through a wide variety of media, both in person and when you are online. Many times, you act as a passive consumer of media messages, but there are also ways that you are a creator of media content. Let's look at the ways you encounter media daily, and which of them affords you the opportunity to be a media creator.*

- Create a chart on the board:



- Ask the group to volunteer some of the different ways they regularly experience media. As they call out their ideas, list them on the chart and ask them to identify whether the media currently provides them an opportunity to be primarily a consumer, creator, or both. Continue this process until you have a substantial list of both offline and online ways they experience media.
- Tell the group that in this lesson, they are going to focus on the ways they can use their own voice and personal values to be creators of media that counter the commonplace negativity and destructiveness with media that promote respect and civility.

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**NOTE:** If youth have not participated in the previous lesson, *Evaluating Media, Six Basic Questions*, share this handout and information with them. This previous lesson includes a process that will be useful to them, and the questions are relevant as they create their own media.

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- Call the group's attention to the chart and the forms of media where they currently have opportunities to create media content. Examples can include a brief video they create and post on a social media platform, a public service announcement for a local TV station, a poster or flyer they create that could be posted in their school or community, media for a group project, or a campaign they organize to promote social responsibility.
- Before beginning, share the guidelines for their media creation, prepared during Prep Work. Provide about 15–20 minutes for people to create their media. While they work, circulate around the room to check in, provide guidance, and address any concerns.

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**NOTE:** It is possible that youth will need more time for this process. If so, you could delay presentations of their media creations until the following day.

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- Reconvene the group and have people share their media creations. Remember to build in time for you as facilitator to review their creations to address any sensitive or inappropriate issues or content. At the conclusion, lead a discussion with the group. The questions below are provided as a guide.

### **CONTINUING THE DISCUSSION:**

- What was it like to intentionally create content that connects to your personal values?
- Has anyone had an experience like this before, where they intentionally created media content to share with others? What was the result?
- In addition to the media you chose for your creation, what other types of media are you interested in using to share your voice?
- What are your thoughts about focusing more of your time on creating positive messaging that counters some of the negative things you experience online?
- What else do you need? What questions do you still have?

### **A NOTE TO FACILITATORS**

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Although youth may choose a variety of media to create content, the opportunity to create brief videos that both align with their values and enable them to use the power of their own voices to promote the kind of respectful community they want is both relevant and attuned to the way they receive information. Youth are likely to create this kind of content on their smartphones; therefore, successful completion of this lesson requires that arrangements be made for showing any videos they create to the whole group. A word of caution: Make it clear to the group that any accompanying music should not include content that might be offensive, and that video clips should be limited to about a minute. If possible, preview any video content beforehand to ensure it aligns with the goals of the lesson.

## Unit 7

### MEDIA LITERACY

#### UNIT 7 SUMMARY AND ASSESSMENT

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In this unit, youth have begun to develop a working knowledge of media literacy that includes a helpful framework for assessing the reliability of the content they are encountering through the various media they access daily. They have had opportunities to determine if different perspectives about a topic are based on fact and not opinion or intentional disinformation.

Using a simple set of questions, they have been introduced to a process to assess content for authorship, intended audience, and strategies employed to engage readers/users. They have also increased their knowledge of the presence of algorithms and the ways they shape their online experience.

The unit introduced this knowledge and provided opportunities for youth to develop new skills that are important to their development and learning. They will need further opportunities to strengthen these skills and to consistently assess the content they are encountering to determine if it is trustworthy and reliable. This is especially relevant considering the concerning increases in misinformation in media and will help them to successfully navigate the murky waters of information.

If you have used all or most of the lessons in this unit with the youth in your care, you may want to assess their learning and readiness to move on to *Unit 8: Violent Extremism and Youth*. The following questions can guide a final discussion to provide a summary, closure, and assessment of the group's progress:

- *What, if anything, surprised you about what you learned about misinformation?*
- *Were you already aware of algorithms? What are your thoughts about dealing with this reality in your online experience?*
- *Did you find the process to assess information helpful? Are you planning to use it in the future?*
- *What are some of the effects of the increase of disinformation in media today?*

# Unit 8.

## Violent Extremism and Youth

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The underlying ideologies of hate are everywhere today, and various hate groups are actively working to recruit young people into their ways of thinking. Hate groups, which once operated on the outer fringes of society, now can spread their ideologies and broaden their recruitment in far more significant ways. An Internet search can unintentionally lead down an algorithmic path to content in support of violent extremist ideas and conspiracy thinking. Because young people spend so much of their time online, they can become targets of the recruitment efforts of violent extremist thinking through content, people, and groups seeking to expand the reach of their radical and violent extremist ideologies. Among the concerning elements of these ideologies is the contention that violent actions are necessary to manifest their goals.

Young people have an important role in countering efforts to recruit them into acceptance of violent extremist beliefs. To do so, they need opportunities to better understand the kinds of prejudice at the root of violent extremist ideology; opportunities to develop effective response skills, including digital and media literacy skills; and the motivation to resist violent extremist ideologies and recruitment efforts when they are encountered. Remember that protective factors help young people follow standards of behavior established by schools with strong bonds and clear guidance, which motivate youth to engage in healthy behaviors. As civil rights' leader Ida B. Wells once said, "The people must know before they can act."

### IN THIS UNIT:

- *The Values We Live By* provides an opportunity for youth to better understand what values are and the difference between cultural and personal values. By identifying some of the values that have been guiding forces in their own lives, they will consider how these values can be important considerations when deciding how to best respond to hate. It includes the handout *Some Cultural Values in the United States*.
- *In the News* provides a basic understanding of the term violent *extremism* and builds understanding of this concept through media coverage of a few events from the recent past that have been associated with violent extremist ideologies. It includes the worksheet *Hate Incidents Associated With Violent Extremist Ideologies*.

## IN THIS UNIT (CONTINUED):

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- *Violent Extremist Ideology Today* is a lesson that includes a background reading describing some of the common forms of intolerance that underlie the violent extremist ideologies that may be used to interest or recruit youth into this way of thinking and acting. It includes the worksheet *Understanding Violent Extremism Pursuit* and the handouts *The Roots of Violent Extremist Ideologies* and *What Is Radicalism and How Do People Become Radicalized?*
- *Purposeful Chaos* makes use of a free online game, *Harmony Square*,<sup>8</sup> that provides an opportunity to experience some of the tactics and manipulation techniques used to mislead people. Using the example of election misinformation, young people learn about the techniques violent extremists often use to try to recruit them into violent extremist thinking and behavior.
- *Constructing Counternarratives* provides youth with an opportunity to (1) experience how the ways people choose to respond to information can determine the ways they feel, think, and act in response and (2) develop strategies to choose counternarratives that align with their own values.

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<sup>8</sup> *Harmony Square* was produced with and based on the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency.

## LESSON: THE VALUES WE LIVE BY

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### PURPOSE:

References to values appear with regularity in our lives—national values, cultural values, family values, personal values—but surprisingly, most people would have difficulty coming up with more than one or two personal values that they believe are at play in their own lives. Although values largely operate on the unconscious level, they can be powerful forces that shape thinking and behavior. By identifying and naming the values that are guiding their own lives, youth can consciously mobilize their values as key factors in their responses and decisions when faced with hate, both when they encounter external sources interested in swaying them to their points of view and when they encounter troubling violent extremist behavior in others.

### MATERIALS NEEDED:

[Some Cultural Values in the United States](#) handout, one copy for each person; index cards and pens or pencils

### TIME REQUIRED:

30 minutes

### PREP WORK:

Prepare copies of the handout *Some Cultural Values in the United States*, one copy for each person.

### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Introduce this lesson by sharing the following, in your own words:

*The culture of a society is shaped by the cultural values of that society. Although it can be easy to spot the values in operation in societies that are different from the one we live in, when it comes to the values of our own society, it becomes far more difficult. Because cultural values are powerful forces that shape our collective ways of thinking and being, they can be largely invisible.*

- Begin by asking the group what is meant by the term *values*. After a few people volunteer their ideas, write the following working definition on the whiteboard or chalkboard:  
**Values** are those internalized and culturally approved ideas that motivate beliefs, behaviors, and actions. Rather than being actual realities of life, they are the things that people aspire toward that influence their speech, thinking, interactions, choices, and actions, and often shape their personal assessment of their life chances.
- Ask the group what shared values they think are common in the culture of the United States. Have them call out their ideas, if any, and list them on the whiteboard or chalkboard.

- Distribute a copy of the handout *Some Cultural Values in the United States* and take a few minutes to briefly review it. Clarify that this is only a partial list of the common values of people in the United States. Ask:
  - *Did any of these shared cultural values surprise you?*
  - *Is it possible for any of these values to conflict with another value?*
  - *Why do you think U.S. cultural values largely operate on an unconscious level?*
  - *Is there a difference between these shared cultural values and your own personal values?*
- Ask people to call out some personal values that are often deeply held and that can also shape a person’s thinking and behavior. List them on the board. For example, the list might include the following: honesty, loyalty, authenticity, courage, faith, integrity, etc. Continue generating this list until all ideas are exhausted.
- Distribute an index card and a pen or pencil to each person. Ask them to take a few minutes to identify two or more personal values that they believe are central to the way they live their life. Explain that they can use the list they just generated or can add a different value that they hold deeply.
- Reconvene the group. Go around the room and ask each person to share aloud one of the values they have listed on their index card.
- Ask the group to imagine they are now faced with the following scenario:  
 You are standing in the hallway with a group of your friends and one person makes a derogatory remark about Jewish people. The friend says that they read online that “Jews run Hollywood and the financial market and are trying to control the world.”  
 In response to this scenario, lead a discussion with the whole group, using the questions below as a guide.

### **CONTINUING THE DISCUSSION:**

- If you witnessed a classmate saying these things, what would you do?
- If you wanted to respond, what values could you call upon when deciding how to respond?
- You’ve just identified some of your own deeply held values. Would your own personal values impact how you choose to respond? In what way?
- If you disregarded your own values, how might your response be different?
- Whenever you are faced with behavior that seems to be motivated by bias or hate, are there times when your response might cause you to become targeted?
- If this comment was made by someone you didn’t know well, what safety concerns need to be considered before you respond? Why is this important?
- If your own safety is a concern, what other actions could you take that would not risk your own safety?

## A NOTE TO FACILITATORS

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Young people who are motivated to act can sometimes disregard the potential safety concerns of their responses. See the Unit 9, “Understanding Cyberhate” lesson, which assists young people in developing skills to assess personal safety as they consider how to respond to situations of bias and hate.

## SOME CULTURAL VALUES IN THE UNITED STATES<sup>9</sup>

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### **WE ARE THE ONES WHO CONTROL OUR OWN ENVIRONMENT.**

Rather than believing in fate, people in the United States believe personal initiative and responsibility hold the power to control life and nature and produce any desired outcome.

### **CHANGE AND MOBILITY ARE NECESSARY AND GOOD.**

While many other cultures see change as a disruptive force that should be avoided at all costs, in the United States change is seen as a natural feature of life and a necessary element in progress, growth, and improvement.

### **EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS GO HAND IN HAND.**

Perhaps our most easily recognized value is articulated from the voices of young children who protest any lack of fairness to the national documents that frame American society and establish the value of equality. This value is somewhat unique to culture in the United States and in practice has almost always included caveats about who is more equal than others.

### **THE CONTROL AND BEST USE OF TIME IS CRITICALLY IMPORTANT.**

Plans, time schedules, and deadlines are often a first step in any endeavor and an important measure by which success is evaluated. Deviation from an expected deadline is seen as an annoyance and a shortcoming.

### **SELF-HELP IS THE SOURCE OF ACHIEVEMENT.**

People are recognized and given credit for those things they accomplish by themselves, through their own efforts, rather than through any benefits accrued by family membership or inheritance.

### **INDIVIDUALISM, INDEPENDENCE, AND PRIVACY ARE OUR BIRTHRIGHTS.**

People are seen as individuals rather than members of a group. They highly value their independence and the ability to be themselves and take steps to ensure their own privacy.

### **HIGH PRIORITY IS PLACED ON OBTAINING AND PROTECTING MATERIAL POSSESSIONS.**

The acquisition of material objects is seen as a source of status and a natural benefit of hard work and accomplishment.

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<sup>9</sup> Excerpted and adapted from L. Robert Kohls, 1984, "The Values Americans Live By."

### **PEOPLE ARE ORIENTED TOWARD ACTION AND WORK.**

Action is always preferable to inaction. Leisure time is limited as it is seen, in excess, as “wasting one’s time.” Instead, it is viewed as a brief respite that should be followed by a time of working harder and more productively once the period of recreation is over.

### **THE FUTURE IS THE FOCUS.**

By valuing the future and what will be accomplished there, past achievements and knowledge are largely devalued and there is a general lack of awareness about the present.

## LESSON: IN THE NEWS

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### PURPOSE:

Over the past few years, high-profile hate incidents have occurred that have captured the attention of the nation. In many of these cases, a lone, heavily armed gunman selected a target based on hatred and intolerance for a specific group. Afterward, law enforcement typically discovered evidence in the perpetrators' social media feeds that indicated an alignment with violent extremist groups and ideologies. Youth clearly hear about these events but may have limited understanding of the tenets of these ideologies. This lesson is a precursor to the lessons that follow, which explore some of the recruitment strategies these groups use to involve young people in their causes. This lesson is designed for youth to practice examining events with a critical lens focused on violent extremism and hate.

### MATERIALS NEEDED:

[Hate Crimes Associated With Violent Extremist Ideology](#) handout, one copy for each person, and multiple copies of each news piece listed on the handout

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**NOTE:** It is recommended that the handout above be distributed as a paper copy; however, electronically it will include links to the news articles that provide youth with opportunities to click through and gain additional information, including content on specific hate groups. It is up to the judgment of facilitators whether they would prefer to limit additional information on these groups, but distribution of paper copies makes this less likely.

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### TIME REQUIRED:

30 minutes

### PREP WORK:

Prior to this lesson, write the following questions on the whiteboard, chalkboard, or chart paper:

- What feelings or issues came up for you when you read this article?
- What did the article tell you about the alleged perpetrator?
- What details indicated alignment with a violent extremist ideology?
- If you could tell, what motivated the perpetrator to choose to target this group?

### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Introduce this activity in your own words:

*Over the past few years, we have seen increasing numbers of violent incidents where the alleged perpetrator reported a connection to violent extremist ideology as a motivation for their crimes. Although you may have heard about some of these incidents online or in the news media, we are*

*going to look at a few events that have happened in recent years and explore together what we know about what happened.*

- Begin by asking the group, what is *violent extremism*? Elicit ideas from the group and combine their thinking to develop a working definition. Add to the ideas of the group by providing the following definition.

**Violent Extremism** is a concept that describes religious, social, or political belief systems that support or advocate for violence in furtherance of their religious, social, or political goals. Strong religious, social, or political beliefs should never be confused with violent extremism, as these are fundamental American rights, guaranteed by the Constitution.

Ask the group to talk about how violent extremism is different from strong religious, social, or political beliefs that are not violent.

- Share that they are going to revisit some of these events through news reports released shortly after the events happened. Call attention to the questions prepared in the *Prep Work* section above. Instruct youth that they are going to read an article about one of these events and should consider their thoughts and feelings about it in response to the questions.
- Distribute a copy of the handout *Hate Incidents Associated With Violent Extremist Ideology*. Instruct people to choose one of the events and come up and select the news article about it. Let them know that they can use the questions on the handout to take notes as they read. Provide them with about 10 minutes to independently read through the article and make any notes.

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**NOTE:** The handout includes news articles released shortly after the events happened. They are hyperlinked so facilitators can print them out for this lesson. Feel free to replace these articles or add other recent or local incidents associated with violent extremism ideologies.

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- Reconvene the group and lead a discussion with the whole group, using the questions on the handout to process this activity. Additional questions (below) are provided as guides.

### **CONTINUING THE DISCUSSION:**

- What feelings or issues came up for you when you read the article you selected?
- Is there anything we can do as a group to create a safer space to discuss these issues?
- What did the article tell you about the alleged perpetrator?
- What details indicated alignment with a violent extremist ideology or group?
- If you could tell, what motivated the perpetrator to choose to target this group?
- Why do you think the alleged perpetrators chose violent means to try to accomplish their goals?
- What would you do if you heard a peer sharing violent extremist ideas?
- What actions could a community take to deter violent extremist-motivated thinking and violence?

## HATE CRIMES ASSOCIATED WITH VIOLENT EXTREMIST IDEOLOGY

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Choose one of the recent events below and read the news story included in the hyperlink. As you read, consider the questions below, which will be discussed at the end of the lesson.

- [Tree of Life Synagogue Mass Shooting](#)
  - [Buffalo Tops Supermarket Mass Shooting](#)
  - [Violent Extremism in Social Media](#)
  - [El Paso Walmart Mass Shooting](#)
- 

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

- What feelings or issues came up for you when you read this article?
- What did the article tell you about the alleged perpetrator?
- What information, if any, seemed to be missing from the report?
- What questions did you have?
- What details indicated alignment with a violent extremist ideology?
- What actions could have happened in the weeks or months before the incident that might have changed the outcome?

## LESSON: VIOLENT EXTREMIST IDEOLOGY TODAY

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### PURPOSE:

Young people have an important role in countering the spread of racialization and violent extremism, but they need opportunities to develop effective skills and motivation to resist these efforts when they are encountered. This lesson is designed to provide youth with general knowledge about the common tenets that underlie violent extremist ideology and some of the recruitment strategies used to target youth, which is information necessary to motivate youth to act.

### MATERIALS NEEDED:

[Understanding Violent Extremism Pursuit](#) worksheet, [The Roots of Violent Extremist Ideologies](#) handout, and [What Is Radicalization?](#) handout, one copy of each for each person; pens or pencils

### TIME REQUIRED:

45 minutes

### PREP WORK:

Prior to this lesson, make copies of the worksheet and handouts listed above. Alternatively, provide online access to the two handouts. Youth will still need a paper copy of the worksheet.

### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Introduce this activity in your own words, using the information in the *Purpose* section above.
- Distribute a copy of the two assigned readings to each person. Inform the group that once they have completed the assigned readings, they will use that information to play *Understanding Violent Extremism Pursuit*. Provide 10–15 minutes for people to read through the handouts.
- Reconvene the group and explain that they are going to play a short game together to strengthen their understanding of the readings. Divide the large group into small groups of five or six people per group and distribute a copy of the *Understanding Violent Extremism Pursuit* worksheet to each person. Instruct groups to select one person to be their group's recorder, and then work together to complete the questions on the worksheet. Explain that they should locate the answer to each question in the reading, share the answer to the question, and have their recorder place a check (✓) in the box on

their worksheet. The first group to find all of the answers to the questions correctly will be declared the winners.

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**NOTE:** Consider awarding the winning group a simple prize. The goal of this exercise is to strengthen people’s comprehension of what they have read. Also, if the group is small, you can play the game with the whole group.

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- Reconvene the group, and briefly review the answers to the questions. Then lead a discussion with the whole group, using the questions below as a guide.

### **CONTINUING THE DISCUSSION:**

- In these handouts, you read that encountering violent extremist ideology, either offline or online, does not mean a person will automatically become radicalized. What factors do you think would prevent a person from becoming radicalized?
- What factors might contribute to a person becoming radicalized?
- What are some concerning signs you might observe that a peer is becoming radicalized? If you noticed these kinds of signs, what could you do?
- How can you assess if content you are encountering is based on violent extremist or hate ideology?
- If you personally encountered violent extremist ideology, what steps would you take?
- Why should we care about content designed to recruit and/or radicalize youth?

### **A NOTE TO FACILITATORS**

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This unit suggests that young people have an important role in countering the spread of violent extremist ideology, but to do so, they require relevant information, opportunities to develop useful skills, and motivation to respond. This lesson has provided them with information about violent extremist ideology, what prejudices are at its root, where they may encounter violent extremist ideology, and the process of radicalization. To add the necessary skill building, it is recommended that youth have opportunities to actively engage in one or both lessons that follow, which are designed to give them the skills and motivation to respond effectively and safely.

#### **Additional resource for facilitators:**

“Building Resilience & Confronting Risk: A Parents & Caregivers Guide to Online Radicalization,” Southern Poverty Law Center, [https://www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/splc\\_peril\\_parents\\_and\\_caregivers\\_guide\\_june\\_2021\\_final.pdf](https://www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/splc_peril_parents_and_caregivers_guide_june_2021_final.pdf).

## UNDERSTANDING VIOLENT EXTREMISM PURSUIT

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Working together, find the answers to these questions from the assigned readings. When your group locates the answer, place a check in the box. The group that finds all the answers and can provide responses to the answers the quickest will be the winner.

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | What action often goes hand-in-hand with prejudice?                                   |
|  | What is the definition of <i>violent extremism</i> ?                                  |
|  | What is an example of a hate incident that was inspired by violent extremism?         |
|  | What is <i>xenophobia</i> ?   |
|  | What form of prejudice motivated the crime at the Tree of Life Synagogue?             |
|  | What does violent extremist ideology believe is necessary to achieve its goals?       |
|  | What are two different ways a person can become radicalized?                          |
|  | What common belief is the basis of most conspiracy thinking?                          |
|  | What is meant by a “rabbit hole”?   |
|  | What is one reason why social media platforms use algorithms?                         |
|  | What are two of the places where a person might encounter violent extremist ideology? |
|  | What is the definition of <i>radicalization</i> ?                                     |
|  | Does exposure to violent extremist ideology always result in radicalization?          |
|  | What is meant by the term “mainstream beliefs”?                                       |
|  | What would help to equip a person when they encounter violent extremist ideology?     |

# UNDERSTANDING VIOLENT EXTREMISM PURSUIT (INSTRUCTOR COPY)

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## UNIT 8: VIOLENT EXTREMIST IDEOLOGY TODAY

Working together, find the answers to these questions from the assigned readings. When your group locates the answer, place a check in the box. The group that finds all of the answers and can provide responses to the answers the quickest will be the winner.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| What action often goes hand-in-hand with prejudice?                             | Discrimination   |
| What is the definition of <i>violent extremism</i> ?                            | It is a concept that describes religious, social, or political belief systems that support or advocate for violence in furtherance of religious, social, or political goals. Strong religious, social, or political beliefs should never be confused with violent extremism, as these are fundamental American rights, guaranteed by the Constitution. |
| What is an example of a hate crime that was inspired by violent extremism?      | One of these:<br>Tree of Life Synagogue<br>Tops grocery store shooting   |
| What is <i>xenophobia</i> ?   | Prejudice and discrimination against anyone who is perceived to be outside a person's own group  |
| What form of prejudice motivated the crime at the Tree of Life Synagogue?       | Antisemitism   |
| What does violent extremist ideology believe is necessary to achieve its goals? | Violence   |
| What are two different ways a person can become radicalized?                    | Direct or indirect contact with someone who has been radicalized<br>AND self-radicalization  |
| What common belief is the basis of most conspiracy thinking?                    | Prejudice  |
| What is meant by a "rabbit hole"?   | Internet algorithms that feed users content on the same topic  |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| What is one reason why social media platforms use algorithms?                     | To keep a user interested and engaged and hold their attention   |
| What are two places where a person might encounter violent extremist ideology?    | Any two: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online social media posts or videos expressing extremist views</li> <li>• Conversations with peers who share violent extremist views</li> <li>• Podcasts, websites, and streaming content that promote violent extremist ideology</li> <li>• Speakers at extremist rallies you attend</li> <li>• Computer algorithms that provide you with content relating to violent extremism</li> <li>• Online video games that slowly introduce ideas of intolerance toward others</li> </ul> |
| What is the definition of <i>radicalization</i> ?                                 | Any process that leads a person to hold violent extremist views  |
| Does exposure to violent extremist ideology always result in radicalization?      | No   |
| What is meant by the term “mainstream beliefs”?                                   | Belief systems more broadly accepted in society  |
| What would help to equip a person when they encounter violent extremist ideology? | Awareness of the predatory efforts to recruit young people so they can be aware of and watch out for these efforts   |

# THE ROOTS OF VIOLENT EXTREMIST IDEOLOGIES

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## WHAT IS VIOLENT EXTREMIST IDEOLOGY?

**Violent extremism is a concept** that describes religious, social, or political belief systems that support or advocate for violence in furtherance of religious, social, or political goals. Strong religious, social, or political beliefs should never be confused with violent extremism, as these are fundamental American rights, guaranteed by the Constitution.

## VIOLENT EXTREMIST IDEOLOGIES ARE OFTEN ROOTED IN PREJUDICE AND DISCRIMINATION.

**Prejudice is an attitude**, an assumption, feeling, or opinion about a person or group based on their race, ethnicity, religion, or other difference, that is formed without any actual knowledge of the person or group. Prejudice causes people to assume everyone in a specific identity group is the same.

**Discrimination is an action** where people act on their prejudicial attitudes to deny rights, opportunities, and privileges to people and groups based on characteristics such as race, gender, age, or sexual orientation. Discrimination often follows prejudicial thinking.

## VIOLENT EXTREMIST IDEOLOGIES HAVE BEEN LINKED TO BOTH HATE CRIMES AND HATE INCIDENTS.

The ideologies of hate and violent extremism have been linked to violent hate crimes and incidents, including:

- *The mass shooting at the Tree of Life Synagogue* in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 2018, where a gunman shot and killed 11 people who were attending the service and wounded 6 others.
- *The Tops Grocery Store shooting* in Buffalo, New York, in 2022, where a heavily armed gunman, radicalized online, murdered 10 people and injured 4 others.

## WHERE VIOLENT EXTREMIST IDEOLOGY MIGHT BE ENCOUNTERED:

- Online posts or videos on social media that contain violent extremist content.
- Conversations with peers who share violent extremist views.
- Podcasts, websites, and streaming content that promote violent extremist ideology.
- Speakers at rallies you attend.
- Computer algorithms that provide you with content relating to violent extremism.
- Online video games that slowly introduce ideas of intolerance toward others.

## THE ROOTS OF VIOLENT EXTREMIST IDEOLOGIES (CONTINUED)

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### WHAT THINKING MOTIVATES VIOLENT EXTREMISM?

Violent extremist ideologies are often motivated by prejudice toward different identity groups. Following are some forms of prejudice that are often at the root of much violent extremist ideology:

***RACISM: Violent extremist ideology is often rooted in racism.***

**Racism** is prejudice and discrimination against people based on their race. Differences in physical characteristics, such as skin color, eye shape, or hair texture, are used to justify unequal and unjust treatment of people of different races. A violent extremist ideology rooted in racism includes the belief that skin color confers superiority on the white race over other races and cultures.

***ANTISEMITISM: Violent extremist ideology is often rooted in antisemitism.***

**Antisemitism** can be defined as prejudice and discrimination against Jewish people as individuals and as a group based on stereotypes and myths that target Jews as a people, their religious beliefs and practices, and the Jewish State of Israel. Violent extremist ideology rooted in antisemitism is based on a belief in those stereotypes and myths as being true.

***XENOPHOBIA: Violent extremist ideology is often rooted in xenophobia.***

**Xenophobia** can be defined as prejudice and discrimination against anyone who is perceived to be outside a person's own group. Xenophobia is commonly used to describe negative attitudes and treatment against people who are immigrants, migrants, and those seeking asylum based on humanitarian needs. Violent extremist ideology that is rooted in xenophobia sees these groups as foreigners whose presence threatens what they see as their dominance and superiority.

***ANTI-LGBTQ+ BIGOTRY: Violent extremist ideology is often rooted in anti-LGBTQ+ bigotry.***

**Anti-LGBTQ+ bigotry** includes prejudice and discrimination against people who define as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ+). This ideology opposes the rights of these groups, and often frames their opposition by describing people who identify as LGBTQ+ as threats to children and society in general.

### WHY YOU SHOULD REJECT THESE IDEOLOGIES

The United States is a land composed of a diverse group of people, created on the concept of freedom and equality and the belief that all humans have the rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The contributions of the many diverse peoples who are part of the national fabric have been responsible for the outstanding progress and innovations that have emerged over the decades since the nation's early beginnings. The United States has consistently aspired toward the shared values of respect, cooperation, and individual dignity.

Violent extremist ideology, rooted in bigotry and intolerance, runs counter to shared national values and instead creates divisiveness, conflict, and violence.

## WHAT IS RADICALIZATION?

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**Radicalization** is any process that leads a person to hold violent extremist views. This can result from both in-person or online activities, such as reading online violent extremist content, viewing videos, being exposed to violent extremist propaganda, and meeting peers or online social acquaintances who promote violent extremist views.

### RADICALIZATION: THE PROCESS

Although the process of radicalization is complex, in general there are two broad ways that young people can become radicalized:

- **Direct or indirect contact with someone who has been radicalized by violent extremist ideology** that is designed to build interest and recruit young people. Examples include in-person recruitment, exposure to propaganda promoting violent extreme views, engaging in video games designed to promote hate and violent extremist ideology, and visiting websites and reading online content associated with the ideology of a violent extremist or hate group.
- **Self-radicalization** happens when a person encounters and increasingly seeks out online content promoting violent extremist ideology and begins to accept and adopt violent extremist views. Examples include viewing web content about conspiracy theories, reading online manifestos from radicalized youth, and watching videos promoting violent extremism and hate.

### THE “RABBIT HOLE” OF INTERNET ALGORITHMS

Most social media platforms use computer algorithms to provide users with more of the content they are spending time viewing. Algorithms are designed to keep a person engaged by providing content to spark their interest and hold their attention. The overall goal is to generate income, and the algorithms are designed to further that goal.

Although algorithms are helpful when searching for online content about a specific topic, they can also be problematic, leading people down what has been described as a “rabbit hole,” where viewing content with violent extremist/hate views leads to more content relating to violent extremist thinking, conspiracy theories, and propaganda.

### DOES EXPOSURE TO VIOLENT EXTREMIST IDEOLOGY RESULT IN RADICALIZATION?

Encountering violent extremist or hate ideology will not always lead to radicalization, but everyone should be aware and concerned about the predatory efforts of these groups to interest, engage, and recruit children and young people to their causes. If this does happen, the results can include estrangement from family relationships and other helpful means of support, committing hate-motivated crimes, staging violent demonstrations and insurrections, making threats of civil war, and more. Violent extremist radicalization is a clear and present danger and a threat to civil society and the democratic way of life.

## LESSON: PURPOSEFUL CHAOS

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### PURPOSE:

Those holding violent extremist views today are motivated to broaden their reach, expand their influence, and recruit additional people to join in their efforts to create change through violent chaos. The Internet has opened powerful avenues for them to spread their views, and because young people spend so much of their time online, they can become targets of those who espouse violent extremism as a strategy and a belief system. Increased understanding of violent extremist ideology is an important step, but that new knowledge needs to be linked to skill development. This lesson uses a free, interactive online game called *Harmony Square*. The focus of the game is to provide experiential knowledge of the most common techniques used to influence and manipulate people's thinking about an issue: misinformation and elections.

Playing the game allows young people to gain personal experience in using five powerful strategies to influence thinking. At a time when election security has been called into question, the topic is relevant and current, but these same strategies are regularly used by extremists to recruit young people to their views. As youth experience playing *Harmony Square* and, likewise, as the result of violent extremist thinking, these strategies create chaos and divisiveness.

Violent extremist ideologies take root in disinformation, and *Harmony Square* provides young people with opportunities to experience how these strategies work and what they result in.

### MATERIALS NEEDED:

Internet access; link to *Harmony Square* game, available at <https://harmonysquare.game/en>

### TIME REQUIRED:

45 minutes

### PREP WORK:

Prior to presenting this lesson, take time to play through the *Harmony Square* game yourself.

### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Share the following with the group, in your own words:

*A goal of violent extremism is to promote radical change through chaos and violence. Those who hold violent extremist views today are motivated to broaden their reach, expand their influence, and recruit other people to join their efforts. They use specific strategies to interest and engage others online, and today we're going to look at a computer game that shines a light on some of these strategies and demonstrates how quickly they can enable violent extremists to increase their reach and impact. The game takes only*

*about 10 minutes. Before we begin, let's look at some of the terms used in the game so we can all understand what is happening.*

- Explain that the game highlights five different strategies or manipulation techniques: *trolling, sharing emotional language, bots, conspiracy theories, and magnifying differences*. Go through the techniques one at a time, first asking how the group would define the term and listing their ideas on the board. Then share the definitions that follow:

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**Trolling** is taking actions to deliberately provoke people to react emotionally with a goal of creating feelings of outrage.

**Sharing emotional language** is taking actions to try to make people afraid or angry about a particular topic, using memes, disinformation, or related online postings. *Memes* are a way to express an idea through an image or brief video clip with a caption that represents a specific thought or idea of a specific audience and is intended to elicit humor.

**Bots or bot armies** are computer-generated robots programmed with online personas that appear online to be real people. Bots can be used to make it seem like there is much larger support or interest in a topic than is the case.

**Spreading conspiracy theories** involves blaming a small secretive group or organization for controlling things that are happening in the world.

**Foreign malign influence** is any hostile effort undertaken by, at the direction of, on behalf of, or with the substantial support of the government of a covered foreign country, with the objective of influencing through overt or covert means.

**Magnifying differences** consists of taking actions designed to emphasize and magnify differences between groups with a goal of causing conflict and divisiveness.

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- Explain that they will experience all of these techniques in the game, where they will find themselves in the position of personally instigating all of these behaviors.
  - Provide the link to the game and allow participants about 10–15 minutes to play the game.

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**NOTE:** If your program site does not have Internet access, provide the youth with the link to the game and have them complete it as an at-home assignment.

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- After everyone has completed the game, lead a group discussion using the questions below as a guide.

## CONTINUING THE DISCUSSION:

- Conspiracy theories are often in the news today. What did you learn about how this technique impacted people in the game? Have you seen this happen in real life?
- Before the game, did you have a good understanding of bots and how they worked? What about bot armies? Will this game help you to assess whether someone sharing content on a website or in your social media feed is a real person or a bot? How might you know?
- The game focused on election misinformation. In what ways do you think these strategies are also used by people trying to spread extremist views?
- What were some of the other things that you learned through playing the game?

## A NOTE TO FACILITATORS

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If youth need additional information on how bots and bot armies work, you can share the following article as additional reading: [Bot Army Behind 'Reopen America' Push on Social Media, Study Finds](#), by Andrew Solender, *Forbes*, 2020.

## LESSON: CONSTRUCTING COUNTERNARRATIVES

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### PURPOSE:

During their lives, young people may encounter negative, destructive messages, some of them presented through extremist ideology. The goal of messages motivated by extremist ideology is to interest and engage youth in this way of thinking. Online postings, videos, blogs, or podcasts are available through their social media platforms, where they may be confronted with some of these narratives. In this lesson, youth will have opportunities to build effective communication skills and response strategies to counter these narratives.

### MATERIALS NEEDED:

Smartphone with the ability to show videos

### TIME REQUIRED:

30–45 minutes

### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Introduce the activity in your own words, using the information in the *Purpose* section above.
- Divide the large group into small groups of four or five people per group. Ask the groups to think about what they have learned regarding the perspectives common to extremist ideology, and the forms of prejudice that are often at the root of extremist thinking. Ask the groups to select a specific position that might be part of extremist thinking and then develop a statement that someone might say to express that view.

*Xenophobia* example statement:

- “All these immigrants are ruining the country and taking all the jobs.”

Then ask the groups to prepare a *counternarrative*, a statement that could be used to counter that position.

*Xenophobia* counternarrative example:

- Unless we descended from one of the nation’s Indigenous peoples, we are all the children of immigrants. All of the people who formed our own family trees probably had the same hopes for a new beginning as today’s immigrants have.
- Provide groups about 10 minutes to prepare their example of a typical extremist statement and develop a counternarrative. As groups work, circulate around the room to provide guidance and address any concerns that might come up.

- Reconvene the group and have two people from each small group present their prejudicial statement and counternarrative. Have pairs present their ideas as if the two of them were in a discussion with the first person giving voice to the prejudicial position and the second responding with the counternarrative. Following each small group presentation, lead a discussion:
  - What thoughts do you have about the counternarrative this group developed?
  - What other ideas for counternarratives could be used to respond to this position?
  - What could you do if a person stating this position began further arguing their position?
- In response to this last question, allow youth to generate a few strategies they could use in addition to the counternarrative.

*Examples:*

Say “I guess we’ll have to agree to disagree.”

Refuse to entertain the prejudice and walk away from the conversation.

## Unit 8

### VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND YOUTH

#### UNIT 8 SUMMARY AND ASSESSMENT

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In this unit, youth have increased their understanding of the underlying prejudices often at the root of violent extremist ideologies and some of the recruitment methods capable of leading to radicalization. Because youth can play an important role in countering recruitment efforts, this unit included both information and skill development. Youth have had opportunities to develop effective response skills and build on earlier learning, including the digital and media literacy skills introduced in Unit 7. They have worked together to develop counternarratives as responses to comments in support of violent extremist views.

New skills are strengthened through continued opportunities to revisit this learning and continue practicing skills, so they become a normal part of youth's approaches when faced with bias and hate.

If you have used all or most of the lessons in this unit with the youth in your care, you may want to assess their learning and readiness to move on to *Unit 9: Cyberhate and Counterspeech*. The following questions can guide a final discussion to provide a summary, closure, and assessment of the group's progress:

- *Why do you think we began discussions on this topic by looking at values, both societal values and your own personal values?*
- *What is the role of values in shaping how you respond when faced with bias or hate?*
- *What, if anything, surprised you about the underlying thinking of violent extremist ideology?*
- *If you encountered someone attempting to recruit you to violent extremist thinking, what would you do?*
- *What is the impact today of violent extremist ideology? How does it affect the nation? Intergroup relations? Your own community?*
- *What can one person do to counter violent extremism? What can a group working together accomplish?*

# Unit 9.

## Cyberhate and Counterspeech

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Cyberhate refers to a wide range of online behaviors that can vary in severity. Today’s youth use online technologies throughout their days and nights—for schoolwork, entertainment, socializing, researching information, and creating personal content. At the same time, individuals and groups motivated by hate and violent extremist ideologies are also using these same online technologies to spread their messages of hate and to recruit others into their ways of thinking. As young people learn more about the impact of hate speech and behaviors in their own communities and in the broader society, many are motivated to act. Learning how to respond safely is critical and, to do so, they need to be well informed about cyberhate, the ways it manifests, and some effective strategies they can use to counter online hate while still staying safe.

### IN THIS UNIT:

- *Understanding Cyberhate* provides youth with an understanding of what cyberhate is, the various ways it manifests online, and its impact on individuals and communities. It includes the handout *Some Ways Cyberhate Happens* and the worksheet *First, Consider Your Own Safety*.
- *Counterspeech: The Power of Words* provides youth with an understanding of counterspeech as an effective response strategy against cyberhate and gives them opportunities to develop skills in counterspeech. It includes the template *Countertargets Cards*.
- *The Feedback Process* provides a structure and helpful guidelines for youth so they can offer feedback to one another as they begin to plan and implement action plans and projects to counter messages of hate. It includes the handout *The Feedback Process*.

## LESSON: UNDERSTANDING CYBERHATE

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### PURPOSE:

This lesson enables youth to develop a clear understanding of what cyberhate is, the various ways it manifests online, and its impact on individuals and communities. As young people increase in their motivation to act against intolerance and hate, they need to better understand the safety issues that might arise as they choose to respond. This lesson addresses these needs.

### MATERIALS NEEDED:

[Some Ways Cyberhate Happens](#) handout and [First, Consider Your Own Safety](#) worksheet, one copy of each for each person; pens or pencils

### TIME REQUIRED:

45 minutes

### PREP WORK:

Make copies of the handout *Some Ways Cyberhate Happens* and the worksheet *First, Consider Your Own Safety*, one copy of each for each person.

### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Begin this lesson by sharing the following, in your own words:

*Often, when we spend time online, we become aware of some people using their voices to spread hate. You might read an article online, and when you read through the comments section, you find many people who disagree with the article responding with viciousness and hate. At times, publications have closed an article's comments section when entries become threatening and contentious. But you have probably experienced other places where people are responding in hateful ways. We refer to bullying that occurs online as cyberbullying, but is this behavior different?*

- Ask the group:
  - Do you think cyberbullying and cyberhate are pretty much the same thing? Why or why not? How are they different?
  - How would you define cyberbullying? (*Posting photos, videos, or private messages to hurt someone; issuing threats, intimidation, or any other act of bullying done over the Internet, social media, and on cell phones.*)
  - How would you define cyberhate?
- Ask the group to volunteer ideas for a definition of cyberhate. Add the following ideas to their definition:

**Cyberhate** is any use of electronic communication by a person or group that is motivated by hate or violent extremist ideology, and that may target a person or a group

based on some element of their identity such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or religion. Those engaging in cyberhate are seeking to attract others to their ways of thinking and build strength and support for their cause.

- Ask the group: *What differences exist between behaviors we call cyberbullying and those considered cyberhate?* List their ideas on the board. Next to each idea, indicate whether it is a way they are similar or a way they differ.

*Examples:* They are both electronic communications (same), they are both trying to hurt the person or group being targeted (same), cyberbullying is directed at a specific person (different), cyberhate is targeting a person or group because of their identity (different), they can be initiated by anonymous people (same), cyberbullying does not always include hate speech or references to the identity of the person being targeted (different).

- Explain that some terms are used specifically for cyberhate, and they may have heard these terms. Distribute the handout *Some Ways Cyberhate Happens*. Alternatively, you can write them out on the board prior to this lesson.
- Briefly review the terms and then explain the following, in your own words:

*You can see that the online behaviors associated with cyberhate can be very dangerous, and in many cases they are illegal. Often, the motivation for cyberhate is related to a person's race, ethnicity, gender, or other difference, although this is not always the case. Some celebrities have been targets of cyberstalking. When cyberhate targets a person based on their race, ethnicity, or some other difference, you might find yourself wanting to intervene. Again, these behaviors and the people using them are potentially dangerous, so intervening may not be safe. There are, however, some ways you can act. But first, let's take a few minutes to look at personal safety whenever you are thinking of responding to bias, bullying, and hate.*

- Ask people to form pairs by turning and talking to a person sitting near them. Distribute a copy of the worksheet *First, Consider Your Own Safety* to each person and a pen or pencil. Instruct pairs to read through the scenarios and determine, for each one (1) what safety issues, if any, they would need to consider before responding and (2) how they would respond. Allow pairs about 10 minutes for this process.
- Reconvene the group and lead a discussion about the scenarios, one at a time. The questions below are provided as a guide.

### **CONTINUING THE DISCUSSION:**

- For this scenario, what safety concerns, if any, did you identify?
- How would you address those concerns?
- After first considering if there were any safety concerns, what would you do? How would you respond?

## SOME WAYS CYBERHATE HAPPENS

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**Cyberhate** is any use of electronic communication that is motivated by violent extremist ideology and that targets a person or a group based on some element of their identity such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or religion. Those engaging in cyberhate are also seeking to attract others to their ways of thinking and to build strength and support for their cause.

These are some of the ways cyberhate happens:

**SWATTING** is a dangerous behavior where someone makes a false report about a serious emergency (such as a bomb threat, active shooter, or hostage situation), typically at the location of a targeted person, resulting in armed law enforcement and emergency units rushing to the location of the innocent target.

**DOXING** is when someone searches out personal information about another person and posts it on a public platform without the person's consent, including home addresses, personal cell phone numbers, or computer passwords.

**CYBERHARASSMENT** is online behavior where a person uses smartphone or Internet technology to willfully and repeatedly upset, humiliate, intimidate, control, or verbally threaten another person, although this often does not include threatening physical harm.

**CYBERSTALKING** is online behavior where a person uses smartphone or Internet technology to willfully and repeatedly threaten physical harm on another person, resulting in significant concern and fear for the person being targeted.

## FIRST, CONSIDER YOUR OWN SAFETY

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**Scenario 1:** Your new social studies teacher is Korean American. Recently, a group of girls you know created a cruel caricature of him, which they posted on social media. The post contains stereotypical images of Asian people and anti-Asian comments.

- What safety concerns, if any, need to be considered before responding?
- What should you do?

**Scenario 2:** You are on the subway platform when two men standing near you get into an argument. Words get heated and one of the men starts calling the other insulting, racist names.

- What safety concerns, if any, need to be considered before responding?
- What should you do?

**Scenario 3:** Two months ago, you and your friends went to an event where you met someone who asked you to go out with them. You exchanged phone numbers and the next week, met at a park near your school. At that meeting, you realized you had some concerns and told the person you didn't want to date them. A few days after that, the person started texting you multiple times daily; sending harassing messages, some in the middle of the night; and writing vicious things to try to intimidate you. This has continued for more than a month.

- What safety concerns, if any, need to be considered before responding?
- What should you do?

**Scenario 4:** You and a friend are having fun playing a free video game you found online, when you notice that the enemies the game is having you target are all either Jewish or people of color. Just then, a message flashes on your screen inviting you to join a video game chat group.

- What safety concerns, if any, need to be considered before responding?
- What should you do?

## LESSON: COUNTERSPEECH: THE POWER OF WORDS

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### PURPOSE:

When young people experience cyberhate and other forms of hate speech, both online and offline, many are motivated to act. Assessing their personal safety before responding is an important initial step (see *Understanding Cyberhate* for additional curricular content on this issue). There are situations when directly responding might make sense; however, counterspeech is a broader and more varied response that asks youth to identify those places where their voices can be heard and to develop creative content that counters the ideologies of intolerance and hate and promotes civility and respect for others. In this lesson, youth will develop skills in using counterspeech to combat cyberhate and other forms of hate speech.

### MATERIALS NEEDED:

[Countertargets Cards](#) template, one copy

### TIME REQUIRED:

40 minutes

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**NOTE:** If time is limited, the idea/project part of this lesson can be limited to coming up with an idea for a counterspeech project rather than developing it. Alternatively, this lesson could be divided into two sessions, where ideas are developed in session one and the actual development of the ideas is done in session two.

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### PREP WORK:

Make a copy of the *Countertargets Cards* template at the end of this lesson. Cut the sheet into six separate cards.

Write the following instructions on the board or a sheet of chart paper:

- Identify the specific online and offline places where your voice might be heard.
- Come up with an idea for media you could create to exhibit counterspeech.

### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Introduce this lesson using the information in the *Purpose* section above.
  2. Explain that they are going to have an opportunity to think about how they can use counterspeech in response to cyberhate and hate speech against a person or group because of that person's race, ethnicity, gender, or other difference.
- Divide the large group into six small groups. Provide each small group with a different *Countertargets* card. Explain that their card has a statement someone might make if they were engaging in cyberhate that illustrates their assigned form of bigotry against a person or group's race, ethnicity, religion, or other difference. Ask small groups to work

together to come up with a way they could use counterspeech to refute their form of hate.

- Call the group’s attention to the instructions you have prepared under Prep Work. As you share these instructions with the group, you can provide a few examples if needed:

*Examples:*

- Identify the specific places where your voice might be heard, such as social media platforms, local news media, local public radio, etc.
- Ideas for media you could create to counter hate: art, humor, storytelling, video, etc.
- Provide 10–15 minutes for groups to develop their idea(s) for counterspeech in response to the form of prejudice and hate on their card. As they work, circulate around the room to check in, provide suggestions, and address any concerns that may come up (see note at the end of this lesson). If a group settles on an idea quickly, have them take the remaining time to begin developing or creating their counterspeech idea.
- Reconvene the group and have each small group come up and describe or present their idea for a counterspeech project. Following each presentation, provide an opportunity for the entire group to provide feedback. For information on The Feedback Process, see the lesson that follows.

## A NOTE TO FACILITATORS AND TEACHERS

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Remember, the goal of this lesson is to build young people’s skills in using counterspeech in response to cyberhate and other forms of hate speech. In general, these are skills youth will be using on their own. Make sure that your feedback isn’t based on your own values and perspectives and avoid responding in ways that youth might perceive as being preachy. If a group’s project concerns you, try to respond by asking questions that will enable them to critically think about the impact of various elements of what they are planning.

Additionally, the feedback process from the entire group is an important part of the learning process, providing people with unbiased attitudes about the structure and potential impact of their media project. See the lesson that follows for instructions and resources on teaching an effective feedback process to youth.

## COUNTERTARGETS CARDS

**DIRECTIONS:** Make one copy of this template and cut it into six “cards.” Divide the group into six small groups and provide one card to each small group.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Hate Ideology:</b><br/><b>RACISM</b></p> <p><i>“There are inborn differences between Black and white, which is why we were never meant to be equals.”</i></p>                              | <p><b>Hate Ideology:</b><br/><b>ANTISEMITISM</b></p> <p><i>“Jews think they can take over the world, running all the banks and Hollywood, but they need to wake up and realize this isn’t their country.”</i></p>             |
| <p><b>Hate Ideology:</b><br/><b>ANTIGAY</b></p> <p><i>“We can’t do anything about what gays do in their own homes, but they can’t be allowed to teach our children.”</i></p>                     | <p><b>Hate Ideology:</b><br/><b>XENOPHOBIA</b></p> <p><i>“All these immigrants trying to get in the country need to be sent back to where they came from. They don’t speak our language and are ruining our country.”</i></p> |
| <p><b>Hate Ideology:</b><br/><b>RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE</b></p> <p><i>“This is a Christian country and when you let people like Muslims in, you end up with terrorism, just like on 9/11.”</i></p> | <p><b>Hate Ideology:</b><br/><b>SEXISM</b></p> <p><i>“Men were meant to rule the country and their own houses. Women and their so-called rights need to be put down.”</i></p>   |

## LESSON: THE FEEDBACK PROCESS

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### PURPOSE:

This brief lesson is designed to promote learning and build effective communication skills. Key parts of the learning process are feedback, discussion, and reflection. The ability to respond to new ideas, thoughts, and experiences in positive, supportive ways will be strengths for young people as they work together to create respectful communities.

### MATERIALS NEEDED:

[The Feedback Process](#) handout, one copy for each person

### TIME REQUIRED:

10 minutes

### PREP WORK:

Make copies of the handout *The Feedback Process*, one copy for each person.

### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Share the following information with the group, in your own words:

*As you work together, share your ideas and thoughts, and listen to other people's responses. You will be developing a better understanding of how other people think and feel. At times, you may feel you want to question or even challenge another person's ways of thinking and acting. We can do this by providing feedback to one another, but how we give feedback can bring very different results. It can feel either helpful or discouraging.*

*The person receiving feedback might end up feeling empowered or discouraged, depending on what was said to them. Certainly, when we provide feedback, we want it to be helpful, and the ways to do this don't always come naturally to us. As you work together in a group, there will be times when you want feedback, especially when planning a project or implementing an idea. Let's take a few minutes to look at a process for giving and receiving feedback that will be received as both helpful and encouraging.*

- Distribute a copy of the handout *The Feedback Process* to each person. Read aloud the brief introductory paragraph at the top of the handout and the process outlined below. Then provide a few minutes for people to read through the guidelines on the handout.

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**NOTE:** As an alternative to individual silent reading, you can either read the process aloud yourself or alternate with youth reading a guideline aloud. After each guideline, add any brief comments to further clarify the point.

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- Review the examples of feedback that might make someone feel defensive and the example of helpful feedback (included on the handout).
- Explain that there will be opportunities for them to use this process and that you will be referring to it at times during class.

## THE FEEDBACK PROCESS

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The thoughts and ideas of other people can be powerful sources of new insight into our ideas and projects; however, the feedback of others is most useful if it is offered in ways that are perceived as being helpful rather than discouraging.

The guidelines for the feedback process provided below will help in this class and in your relationships with family, friends, and classmates.

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### >> THE PROCESS:

- Have the person share what they thought they did well.
  - Have them share what they might do differently another time.
  - Share your thoughts about what the person did well or what you felt positive about.
  - Share your own ideas about other ways something could be done or said.
  - *DO NOT link positive feedback with constructive feedback!* (see guidelines below.)
- 

### >> SOME HELPFUL GUIDELINES:

#### 1. BE SUPPORTIVE, NOT JUDGMENTAL.

If feedback is perceived as being critical or judgmental, it can be discouraging and can make people react defensively. It is not unusual for people to gravitate toward criticism when giving feedback—what they disagree with, what is problematic, what could have produced better results, or what could have been done differently. Although this is helpful information, positive feedback (what was done well, what indicates a personal strength) is equally useful, as it reinforces the positive behavior.

#### 2. DON'T LINK SUPPORTIVE FEEDBACK WITH CRITICISM.

Don't give positive comments as a lead-in to criticism. Not only is this unhelpful, it also destroys a person's motivation and sense of empowerment to do things differently.

For example, if a person says:

*"I know you meant well, but it was really stupid to say that to your supervisor."*

When an expression of positive feedback → *"you meant well ..."*

is closely followed with criticism → *"that was a stupid thing to say"*

The person hears and remembers → *"you are stupid."*

### **3. ACKNOWLEDGE AND REINFORCE THE POSITIVE.**

Instead, you could say ...

*“I know you meant well. It was admirable to speak to your boss about the problem, rather than just accepting the situation. People often go around and say negative things to everyone else except for the person directly involved, but you didn’t do that.”*

These kinds of comments reinforce the positive behavior of speaking directly to a person with whom you have a problem.

### **4. PROVIDE IDEAS FOR DIFFERENT OPTIONS, IF YOU HAVE THEM.**

After acknowledging what is positive, offer constructive suggestions for other ways to do something or to respond.

*“Another way you could have done this was to ask your supervisor for a meeting to discuss your contributions and some concerns you have.”*

### **5. SEE THE VALUE OF FEEDBACK AND BE OPEN TO IT YOURSELF.**

Know that feeling defensive is normal and resist the tendency to defend what you’ve said or done. Instead, take time to consider the feedback of others. You always have the freedom to accept or reject what has been said.

## Unit 9

# CYBERHATE AND COUNTERSPEECH

## UNIT 9 SUMMARY AND ASSESSMENT

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In this unit, youth have developed a clearer understanding of what cyberhate is, the various ways it manifests online, and its impact on individuals and communities. They have also learned about the impact of hate speech and behaviors in their own communities and in the broader society. Learning how to respond safely is critical, and young people need multiple opportunities to learn how to assess situations and choose responses that are more effective but also keep them safe. In this unit, they have developed a better understanding of the safety issues that might arise when they make choices about if, when, and how to respond.

Counterspeech is a response strategy they have become familiar with that enables them to identify those places where their voices can be heard and to develop creative content that counters the ideologies of intolerance and hate and promotes civility and respect for others. This enables them to take active roles in creating communities of respect.

If you have used all or most of the lessons in this unit with the youth in your care, you may want to assess their learning and readiness to move on to *Unit 10: The Respectful Community, Part 2: Creating Change*. The following questions can guide a final discussion to provide a summary, closure, and assessment of the group's progress:

- *What was the most useful part of our work on cyberhate and counterspeech?*
- *Whenever you are considering responding to bias, bullying, or hate, an important first step is to consider your own personal safety. What might you notice that would alert you that responding directly might endanger your own safety?*
- *If someone targeted you with cyberhate, what is the best way to respond?*
- *What are your thoughts about the strategy of counterspeech? What are some of the place's youth voices can be heard with counterspeech messages?*
- *What questions do you still have?*

# Unit 10.

## The Respectful Community, Part 2: *Creating Change*

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Creating and contributing to the development of a community where people are treated with dignity, regardless of their race, gender, ethnicity, religion, or any other difference, and where there is respect among people and groups does not happen without committed and purposeful actions on the part of community members. When people feel respected, they are more likely to treat others with respect, and this in turn impacts the entire community. This unit provides young people with knowledge, skills, and motivation to take actions, both individually and as a group, that contribute to making their communities and their world a civil and respectful place for all.

### IN THIS UNIT:

- *Imagining Change* asks young people to reflect on what their community would be like if all people were treated with dignity and felt safe and respected. By putting detail into that imagination, they begin to consider what steps they could personally take to make their community closer to the one they are imagining.
- *The Road to Respect, Part 2: Taking Action* is part 2 of a lesson completed in Unit 1: “The Road to Respect.” This lesson enables young people to begin formulating plans and action steps to create positive change in their communities and the world.
- *Close to Home* introduces a process where youth reflect on the challenges and strengths of their own communities and identify ways the existing strengths can be used as resources to address challenges.
- *In My Community* is an interactive, skill-building lesson that enables young people to strategize effective responses to several bias-motivated scenarios. The lesson also incorporates one of the real-time complications that often arises—the influence of one’s peers and other people in their lives advising them what to do.
- *Ally Actions* introduces the definition, benefits, and strategies youth can take before, during, or after an incident of bias, bullying, or hate to be helpful and supportive.
- *Plan To Take Action* provides youth with a process to take action within their communities, both individually and as a group. Action that moves beyond inspiring words and is translated into a workable plan of action is an important element of creating positive, sustainable change.

## LESSON: IMAGINING CHANGE

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### PURPOSE:

This lesson provides an initial opportunity for young people to think about what their community, and the world in general, would be like if all people were treated with dignity and felt safe and respected.

### MATERIALS NEEDED:

Paper, pens or pencils

### TIME REQUIRED:

15 minutes

### PREP WORK:

Write the following questions on the board or a sheet of chart paper: What would be different that would tell you the miracle had happened? What would be changed?

### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Begin by asking the group to imagine the following: While they are sleeping tonight and the whole house is quiet, an interesting phenomenon happens. The phenomenon is that their community has become free from all prejudice, intolerance, and hate; however, because they are sleeping, they don't know that the miracle has happened.
- Without opening the group to discussion, read aloud the following questions and ask people to silently think about their answers:
  - **What would be different that would tell you that the miracle had happened?** When you wake up, what will be the first thing that tells you that the miracle has happened? What would be different that would tell you things have changed?
  - **What would be changed?** How would your life be different now that this miracle has happened? How do you think your life will change?
- Refer to the board where you have listed the questions you just read aloud. Then, do one of the following:
  - Distribute a sheet of paper and a pencil or pen and ask people to take a few minutes to write down their answers to these questions, coming up with specific things they might see or hear that would let them know that this miracle had happened. Provide about 5–10 minutes for people to write their answers; or
  - Instead of writing, open the group for discussion of the questions above. Make a list of their responses on the board or chart paper.
- Lead a discussion using the following questions as a guide.

## **CONTINUING THE DISCUSSION:**

### **Questions for writing option only:**

- What did you identify as the things that would let you know the miracle had happened?
- How was your life different?

### **Questions for both options:**

- How does your community today compare to the one you imagined?
- What would it be like to try to bring change to your community?
- Do you think it would be easy or difficult to take specific steps to bring about positive change? Why?
- Which of these changes are things you might be able to work to accomplish?
- What resources or assistance would you need to succeed?
- What are some of the benefits of this process?

## LESSON: THE ROAD TO RESPECT, PART 2: TAKING ACTION

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### PURPOSE:

In Unit 1, youth created a vision of what a community of respect would look like. They identified some of the roadblocks that keep a community from becoming a place of respect and civility. In this lesson, they will revisit that process with an eye toward becoming motivated to act against the obstacles that keep their communities from being all they could be. Small changes, made consistently over time, can result in great change and, working together, their visions can move much closer to reality.

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**NOTE:** Prior to this lesson, youth need to complete Part 1, “The Road to Respect,” in Unit 1.

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### MATERIALS NEEDED:

Chart paper or whiteboard and markers, or chalkboard and chalk; masking tape (optional)

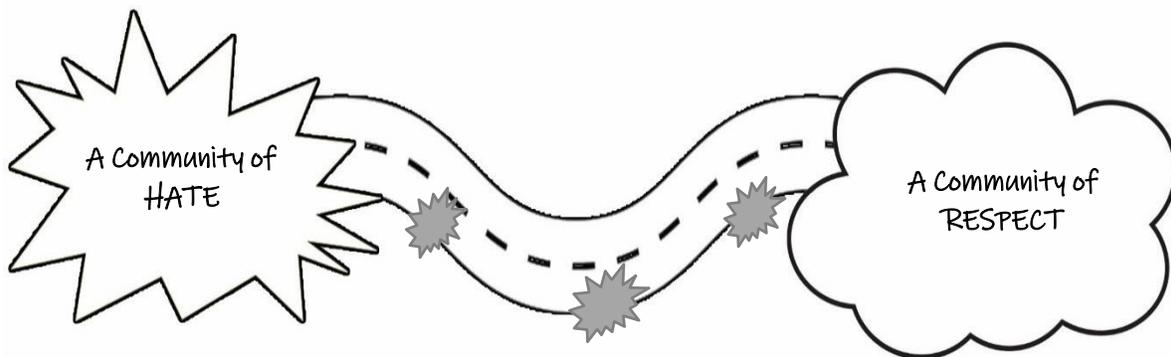
### TIME REQUIRED:

30 minutes

### PREP WORK:

Prior to conducting this lesson, retrieve the chart paper created in the Part 1 lesson, “The Road to Respect,” or reproduce the image with the ideas generated in Part 1 for qualities of a Community of Hate and a Community of Respect and the obstacles youth identified on the road.

### IMAGE:



## INSTRUCTIONS:

- Introduce this lesson, calling attention to the image created in Part 1. For those who did not participate in Part 1, explain that the group reflected first on the characteristics of a Community of Hate, followed by a Community of Respect, identifying what it would look and feel like to live in each of these communities. Point out that the road leading from hate to respect had many roadblocks, obstructing movement toward respect.
- Indicate the names of the obstacles the group identified in the first part of the lesson. Ask the group:

*Now that some time has passed since we first did this, are there any other roadblocks it makes sense for us to add?*

If the group has any additions, add them to the road.

- Now, referring to each roadblock, ask the group:
  - If you wanted to pass by this obstacle, what could you do?
  - Is it possible to remove it? If not, what other strategy could you use?
  - What needs to happen so that the obstacle is no longer capable of hindering the movement toward respect and civility?
  - What are some steps that could be taken to remove it or make it ineffectual?
  - Does change require the actions of a group or can only one person make a difference?
- Continue this process for each of the obstacles the group has identified. Alternatively, you can lead this discussion by grouping the obstacles together and leading the discussion about them collectively.

## LESSON: CLOSE TO HOME

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### PURPOSE:

As youth begin to mobilize their commitment to actively work to create positive change in their communities, an important step is to identify the unique challenges that relate to intergroup relations and prejudice in their own communities as well as some of the existing strengths that could be called upon to address these challenges. This lesson enables youth to consider how the strengths of their community can tackle the challenges.

### MATERIALS NEEDED:

Chart paper and markers, tape

### TIME REQUIRED:

40 minutes

### PREP WORK:

Write the following discussion topics on the board or a sheet of chart paper:

**Community challenges or obstacles.** Think about and discuss together some of the obstacles or challenges that exist in your own community that prevent it from being a place where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

**Community strengths.** What are some of the strengths that exist in your community?

### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Introduce the lesson in your own words, using the information in the *Purpose* section above.
- Ask the group:
  - Do you feel like your own community is one in which everyone is treated with dignity? Where people feel they are treated with respect regardless of who they are?
  - What are some of the obstacles that may prevent it in your community?
- Divide the large group into small groups of four to six people per group. If participating youth are from different communities, consider grouping people from the same community in the same group. Give a sheet of chart paper and a marker to each group.
- Explain to the group that this lesson is going to provide an opportunity to identify two things:

- A. **Community challenges or obstacles.** Think about and discuss together some of the obstacles or challenges that exist in your own community that prevent it from being a place where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.
- B. **Community strengths.** Identify some of the strengths that exist in your community.

- Ask groups to choose one member to be a recorder, writing down the obstacles or challenges of their community on one side of the chart paper and the community's strengths on the other side. Note that the discussion topics are listed on the board for their reference as they work. Allow groups about 15 minutes to have this discussion and record their ideas.
- Reconvene the group and have the recorder from each small group present a brief report of their community's challenges and strengths. After all small groups have presented, have them bring up their sheets of chart paper and tape them up on the same wall so they are close together but not overlapping.
- Ask the group to consider if any of the strengths they identified could be useful in overcoming any of the obstacles. As people make suggestions, have them come up to the front and draw a line with marker from the strength to the obstacle. Continue this process until all possible ideas are exhausted.
- Process this activity by leading a discussion using the questions below as a guide.

### **CONTINUING THE DISCUSSION:**

- What surprised you about your community from our discussions?
- When you identified a link between a community strength and an existing challenge, how might someone use that strength to address the specific challenge?
- When there isn't an obvious link between a community challenge and a strength, what other ways could you address the challenge?
- What did you learn from this process?

### **A NOTE TO FACILITATORS**

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If people are unable to successfully link community strengths to existing challenges, focus the discussion instead on the need for and benefit of working collaboratively with others to create positive change.

## LESSON: IN MY COMMUNITY

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### PURPOSE:

Youth need practical and engaging opportunities to develop skills to respond when faced with incidents of bullying, bias, and hate. They benefit from having time to develop and practice effective responses, but when these kinds of experiences happen to them in real life, they can be more complex than expected. This lesson provides helpful opportunities to practice skills while also incorporating one of the real-time complications that often arises: the influence of one's peers and other people in their lives advising them what to do.

### MATERIALS NEEDED:

[Community Scenarios](#) and [Influencer Roles](#) templates, one copy of each

### TIME REQUIRED:

30–40 minutes

### PREP WORK:

Make a copy of the *Influencer Roles* template at the end of this lesson and cut the influencer roles into separate “cards,” with one influencer on each piece of paper.

Make a copy of the *Community Scenarios* template. Decide how many scenarios you will include, select that number from the copy, and cut it into strips with one scenario on each strip of paper. Crumple up the selected scenarios' strips into individual balls of paper.

### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Introduce this lesson, in your own words:

*In the past, when you have witnessed an incident of name-calling, bullying, harassment, or hate speech, have you ever been unsure how to respond? Responding in real life can be more complicated than practice sessions in class, but the more you try out response strategies, the more confident you will become. One of the complications you may experience is when other people—your friends, family members, and others—are telling you exactly what you should do, but rather than being helpful, it ends up creating more confusion and indecision.*

- Explain that this lesson is going to give everyone a chance to experience how to respond effectively during multiple and sometimes conflicting advice from other people. Ask for five volunteers from the group who will provide advice and one volunteer to be the responder, the person witnessing a bias incident and trying to decide what to do.
- Give each of the volunteer influencers one of the *Influencer Roles* cards. Instruct them to read their influencer card and imagine how a person in that role is likely to think and offer advice. Explain that there is a “typical” way that a person in that role might respond, but they are encouraged to use their own creativity in responding, remembering that they

are not expressing their own personal views but the ones that someone in that role might have.

- Give the volunteer responder the card that says *Influencer: You*. Ask the other influencers to form a semicircle, facing the remainder of the large group, who will serve as observers. Ask the responder volunteer to stand in the middle of the semicircle.
- Before beginning, share with the group that when they are faced with bias-motivated incidents in their lives, they often receive conflicting advice from other people. This lesson will give them an experience of how this can impact their decision-making process.
- Explain to the responder that they will experience an incident, followed by a few different people giving them advice about what to do. After this, they will decide how to respond to the situation and will share what they have decided with the whole group.
- Drop the crumpled papers on the floor in and around the semicircle of influencers.
- Share the following in your own words:  
*In the community where this person lives, they will be experiencing several different hate- or bias-motivated incidents. When the person experiences an incident, they will pick up the paper, read it aloud, and decide how to respond. They will call upon the influencers to provide advice or guidance from their assigned roles to help the person decide how to respond.*
- Ask the responder to start moving around, picking up the first paper they come to. Have them read the scenario aloud. One by one, have the influencers provide advice and guidance about what should be done, first identifying what role the influencer is in. Then, have the responder share how they are planning to respond.
- Repeat this process for additional scenarios, leading a discussion after each scenario using the questions below as a guide.

### **QUESTIONS FOR THE RESPONDER:**

- How did you decide how to respond?
- Did the advice of other people help or hinder you?
- Did any particular person have the most influence on you? If so, who was that, and why do you think that was so?

### **QUESTIONS FOR THE WHOLE GROUP:**

- What are some of the benefits of the response the person chooses? What are some of the limitations?
- If you were witnessing this incident, would you have responded the same or differently? Explain.
- Are there other actions someone could take after witnessing an incident like this?

## A NOTE TO FACILITATORS

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This activity can be varied in the following ways to involve more people in the active part of the lesson:

- Change the influencer and responder roles for each scenario.
- Make extra *Influencer Role* cards (minus the responder) and have multiple people fill the different roles at the same time, each providing advice and recommendations.

## COMMUNITY SCENARIOS

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You are out for a run in the morning, and you see two boys from your school with spray paint cans writing antisemitic graffiti on the front door of a synagogue.



A few girls are walking down the street in front of you. Walking toward them is a boy in the class who has autism. The three girls start mocking him, laughing, and calling him a “retard.”



There are both Asian and white kids in your neighborhood. You are sitting on your front steps, talking to one of the Asian kids who lives next door. You see one of the white kids walking down the street toward you and when he gets near, he starts calling your neighbor a derogatory word for Asians, and telling him he better watch his back.



You and two of your friends are in your room recording a dance video to post on your social media feed. When you log on to post the video you find a message from someone you don’t know well saying “No one wants your kind around here. Get your passport ready. We called the authorities on your family. The next knock on your door will be them.”



A new student from India started attending your school this year, and some of your classmates have been taunting him, calling him an “Arab” when he waits for the bus outside school. You and a few of your friends are standing nearby and hear him when he corrects them, saying he is not Arab. They circle him and start pushing him around, laughing and calling him a “terrorist.”



Over the summer, a girl in your community came out as transgender. At the beginning of the school year, he began dressing as a boy and changed his name to Morgan. When Morgan tried to enter the boys’ bathroom, a group of boys blocked the door and wouldn’t let him enter, making vicious insults.

## INFLUENCER ROLES

**DIRECTIONS:** Make a few copies of the *Influencer Roles*. Cut them into separate “cards,” with one role on each.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Influencer:</b><br/><b><i>Good Friend</i></b></p> <p>“Live and let live. People have a right to their opinions and the best response to prejudice and hate is to do nothing.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Use your own creativity, but this is the kind of advice you would give to your friend.</i></p>  | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Influencer:</b><br/><b><i>Good Friend</i></b></p> <p>“I’ve had it with the hate. If we continue looking the other way, our community is no better than trash. This needs an immediate response. I’ll back you up.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Use your own creativity, but this is the kind of advice you would give to your friend.</i></p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Influencer:</b><br/><b><i>Parent/Guardian</i></b></p> <p>“I know you want to make things better, but if you intervene, I’m afraid you’ll be targeted yourself. Your safety means more to me than anything else.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Use your own creativity, but this is the kind of advice you would give to your family member.</i></p>  | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Influencer:</b><br/><b><i>Teacher or Counselor</i></b></p> <p>“These are the very things we have been working on. Remember, as long as you respond safely, I encourage you to take a stand against hate.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Use your own creativity, but this is the kind of advice you would give to a youth.</i></p>               |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Influencer:</b><br/><b><i>Religious or Community Leader</i></b></p> <p>“We know that there is right and there is wrong, and we are called to do the right thing.</p> <p>Hate is not the right thing, so I advise you to speak up and take a stand for what is right!”</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Use your own creativity, but this is the kind of advice you would give to the person.</i></p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Influencer:</b><br/><b><i>You</i></b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Listen to everyone who is providing you guidance and advice and decide how you are going to respond.</i></p>  |

## LESSON: ALLY ACTIONS

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### PURPOSE:

The creation, growth, and maintenance of a respectful community require people willing to be active participants in the process. Even if motivated to play this kind of role, young people need to develop and practice new skills, and one of the most important skills is to be an ally to those who are targets of bias, bullying, and hate. There are specific actions allies can take that will make a difference. This lesson provides youth an opportunity to brainstorm what it means to be an ally.

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**NOTE:** For introductory resources, see the lesson “What Is an Ally?” in Unit 5.

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### MATERIALS NEEDED:

Small Post-it notepads in several different colors; blank paper and pens or pencils or chart paper and markers; [Becoming an Ally](#) worksheet, one copy for each person

### TIME REQUIRED:

40 minutes

### PREP WORK:

Write the following definition for *ally* on the board or a sheet of chart paper.

An **ally** is someone who speaks out on behalf of someone else or takes actions that help and support someone else.

Make copies, one for each person, of the worksheet *Becoming an Ally*.

### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Introduce this lesson, in your own words, using the information in the *Purpose* section above.
- Ask the group:
  - What is an ally?
  - Why do we need allies?
  - Are there links between acting as an ally and the creation of a respectful community? Explain.
- Refer to the definition of an ally, prepared in Prep Work above. Explain that when we are talking about incidents of bias, bullying, or hate, there are many ways to be an ally and many actions that could be taken to help and support a person being targeted.
- Distribute a few pieces of Post-it notepad paper to each person. Ask them to think of at least one action a person could take to be an ally. If they have more than one suggestion,

have them write each on a separate Post-it note. Allow people about 1–2 minutes to do this.

- When they are done, invite them to come up and place their Post-it on the wall or on a sheet of chart paper. Briefly review the suggestions aloud as a group.
- Ask the group:
  - When people witness an incident of bias, bullying, or hate and don't do anything, they are typically called bystanders. What would motivate a bystander to become an ally?
  - If you were the target of bullying or hate, what would you want someone to do to support you?
  - If you wanted to act as an ally, what things would help you determine what action would be best to take?
  - What factors would be important to consider before you respond?
- Share the following, in your own words:

*When we think of acting as an ally, we often imagine jumping in to stand up for the person being targeted. Directly intervening is sometimes a good strategy, but it isn't always safe. There are lots of other ways to act as an ally, some which you might not have thought of. There are actions an ally can take **before** an incident occurs (for example, if you overhear someone planning to bully another person), **during** an incident (when you are present and witnessing what is going on), and **after** (when an incident you witness is over or when you hear about it later from someone else).*

- Divide the large group into three small groups and provide blank paper and a pen or pencil (or a sheet of chart paper and marker) to each group. Assign each group one of the times allies can act (**before, during, or after**), and ask them to come up with some creative ideas for actions allies could take to be helpful and supportive. Provide groups about 10 minutes for this process.
- Reconvene the group and have a person from each small group share the actions their group has identified. As they share, make sure to discuss any safety concerns or specific recommendations.
- After all groups have reported back, distribute the worksheet *Becoming an Ally*. Tell groups that they are now going to have time to apply these actions to a scenario where no one has done anything to intervene. Ask them to read through the scenario and identify actions a person could take to intervene before, during, and after the incident. Allow 10–15 minutes for people to complete this task.
- Reconvene the group and ask for volunteers to share their before, during, and after ideas. Then, lead a group discussion using the questions below as a guide.

## CONTINUING THE DISCUSSION:

- Why do you think we looked at these different time frames when an ally could act?
- Depending on the details of the incident, are there better times than others to intervene? How could you tell?
- What does it mean to intervene? Does it refer to directly standing up to the person instigating the bullying or bias incident? What other ways can a person intervene?
- Why would someone choose to be an ally?
- If more people engaged in being allies, how do you think it would change the climate of the school or community?

## A NOTE TO FACILITATORS

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If a group seems stuck in identifying specific ideas for taking action during their assigned time, you can provide a few examples to get them started:

**Before:** Tell an adult, reach out to the person being targeted, ask the person what you could do to be helpful.

**During:** Say something to distract the action, like saying to the person being targeted, “Hey, I wanted to sit with you at lunch today. Let’s go.” If you know the person instigating the incident well, speak directly to them and tell them you are not okay with what they are doing.

**After:** Reach out to the person who was targeted, make sure they are okay, and listen to how they feel.

## BECOMING AN ALLY

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**Directions:** The following scenario provides details of a bias-motivated incident where multiple people were aware of what was being planned and what happened. Read the scenario and identify ally actions that someone could take *before*, *during*, and *after* this incident occurred that might change the outcome.

**Scenario:** Anya is a girl in your class, and she is new to the school this year. She is very shy and hasn't made too many friends yet. You are sitting at lunch with a group of your friends when you overhear two boys at the next table talking about taking a photo of Anya when they come into class after lunch. They are planning to superimpose her face on the body of a very obese woman and post it on social media.

In Health class after lunch, Anya is sitting in one of the desks in front. When the boys come in, one of them quickly snaps a photo of her before taking a seat in the back. Anya is very concerned about why they took a photo and looks back in their direction several times. An hour later, word gets out about the photo the boys have already posted. In the hallway between classes, everyone is looking at the image on their phones and laughing. Anya has seen the photo too, and she is standing facing her locker with the door open, fighting back tears. She is already self-conscious about her weight, but now she just wants to run out of the school and never come back. In fact, if it wasn't so far back to her house, she would do it right now.

Instead, she skips her next class and hides in the bathroom until the end of the day.

You take the same bus home as Anya. When you get on the bus, you see her sitting by herself, her face turned away and looking out the window. You heard about what happened and saw the photo the boys posted. You think it was mean but wonder if there is anything you should do.

### WHAT ARE SOME ALLY ACTIONS THAT COULD HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO HELP AND SUPPORT ANYA?

| BEFORE ... | DURING ... | AFTER ... |
|------------|------------|-----------|
|            |            |           |

## LESSON: PLAN TO TAKE ACTION

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### PURPOSE:

Knowledge and skill development alone will not create positive change in any community. Working to create a community where all people and groups are shown civility and respect requires the action of committed community members. The possibilities for action are endless, but success in achieving goals is greater when people have plans, both as individuals and as a collective group. This lesson provides a simple structure to create an achievable goal with action steps, ways to assess progress, and resources needed.

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**NOTE:** This lesson includes two parts, “Taking Action Individually” and “Taking Action as a Group.” Both options have value, and you can use either one or both depending on the nature and composition of your group.

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### MATERIALS NEEDED:

Action-planning worksheets [Action Plan: The Power of One](#) and [Work Together for Change](#), one copy of each for each person; index cards; pens or pencils

### TIME REQUIRED:

30 minutes for each part, plus follow-up time at later date(s) for Part 2: *Taking Action as a Group*.

### PREP WORK:

Make copies of the two action planning worksheets listed in the *Materials* section above, one copy of each for each person.

(Part 2 only) Identify four or five group goals from the index cards youth completed in step 5 and write each goal in a separate place on the board or on individual sheets of chart paper, with room below for people to sign their names. If using chart paper, post the chart paper sheets on the wall.

### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Introduce this lesson by sharing the following, in your own words:

*If we agree that we would rather live in a community that feels respectful and where civility between people and groups is the norm, we need to acknowledge that a respectful community will not happen without the contributions of community members. Every person can take individual actions in their lives to be kind and respectful to others because we know these kinds of behaviors can be contagious.*

*If we experience being treated in kind and respectful ways, we are likely to treat others in the same way. There is power in the efforts of one person, but working together, people can accomplish great things. They can create*

*an exciting goal, develop a plan that includes action steps and resources needed, and have fun working together to achieve it. Let's look at how to do this.*

## **PART 1: TAKING ACTION INDIVIDUALLY:**

- Distribute a copy of the *Action Plan: The Power of One* worksheet to each person. Briefly review the four elements that are included on the worksheet. Ask people to take the next few moments to think about the community in which they live and come up with something they could do individually to make it more respectful. Ask people to write their idea on the line at the top of the worksheet, and then come up with two or more strategies they could do to achieve that goal. Allow about 5 minutes for people to complete this task. Check in to see if they need more time before going on.
- Ask people to find a partner and share the goal and strategies they have written on their action plan worksheets. Ask partners to provide feedback to one another (see *The Feedback Process* lesson in Unit 9). Allow 10 minutes for pairs sharing.
- Reconvene the group. Go around the room and have each person share the goal they have set on their action plans.

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**NOTE:** Individual action plans are just that—individual and dependent on the person's motivation to act alone. This lesson is meant to provide people with a simple process they could use to set an individual goal, develop action steps, and evaluate progress. Because it is not helpful to hold everyone accountable for pursuing this process, more detailed plans and follow-up are better suited for the collaborative action plan process that follows in Part 2: *Work Together To Create Change*.

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## **PART 2: TAKING ACTION AS A GROUP:**

- Prior to beginning this part, at least a day before presenting Part 2 of this lesson, distribute an index card to each person and instruct them to write down a goal they would like to see the group work on together to achieve a community of respect where they live. Give them about 5 minutes to do this, then collect the cards. Later, review them and identify four or five goals that are most listed by the group.
- Begin the lesson by sharing with the group that the actions of individuals are more powerful than most people imagine, but that when they work together collaboratively, they can accomplish significant things that can result in measurable positive change.
- Refer to the goals listed on the board or chart paper (completed under *Prep Work* above). Explain that these are the goals the group listed as the ones they would most like to achieve. Ask people to decide which goal they would like to work on and have them come up and sign their names under that goal.

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**NOTE:** The idea is to have a small group sign up for each goal they identified; however, you may want to consider limiting the number of people who can sign up for each goal so that one group doesn't become too large to manage. Alternatively, if the group is collectively motivated to work together on one of the goals, they can be divided in ways so that small groups work on different action steps developed for the shared goal.

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- Divide the large group into smaller groups based on the goal they chose. Distribute a copy of the action plan worksheet *Taking Action as a Group*. Ask groups to spend the next 15–20 minutes beginning to develop the different elements of their action plan. Although everyone in their group has a copy of the worksheet and can take notes on their copies, ask groups to have someone create a master plan that includes the ideas of everyone in their group, and someone to agree to keep the plan so that the group may refer to it and revise it if necessary.
- Reconvene and explain that regular time will be allotted during future classes to continue planning for action. Recommend that as soon as their plan is completed, they should begin to engage in the action steps they developed and to consider being in communication about their plan outside of class. To end the lesson, if time permits, lead a brief discussion using the questions below as a guide.

### **CONTINUING THE DISCUSSION:**

- How did you organize your group? How did you make decisions?
- Do you have any immediate needs?
- Do you need any additional resources? What are your plans to secure the resources you need?
- What plans does your group have for next steps?
- Do you have any questions for the whole group?

## ACTION PLAN: THE POWER OF ONE

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**STATEMENT** ⇒ **A GOAL I PLAN TO ACHIEVE:**

**STRATEGIES** ⇒ **THINGS I PLAN TO DO TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL:**

1.

2.

3.

4.

**ASSESSMENT** ⇒ **HOW I WILL KNOW IF MY PLAN IS SUCCEEDING:**

**INSPIRATION TO PERSIST** ⇒ **EXAMPLES OF TIMES MY STRATEGIES SUCCEEDED:**

# WORK TOGETHER FOR CHANGE

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OVERALL GOALS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

| DESCRIPTION OF GOAL | ACTION STEPS | TIMELINE<br>Start date | TIMELINE<br>Completion date | LEAD PERSON(S) | RESOURCES WE<br>WILL NEED | EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS |
|---------------------|--------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
|                     |              |                        |                             |                |                           |                     |
|                     |              |                        |                             |                |                           |                     |
|                     |              |                        |                             |                |                           |                     |
|                     |              |                        |                             |                |                           |                     |
|                     |              |                        |                             |                |                           |                     |

## Unit 10

### THE RESPECTFUL COMMUNITY, PART 2

#### UNIT 10 SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS

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This unit brings youth full circle from the place this curriculum began. Initially, they worked together to create a vision of the kind of community they wanted to live in, a community where people and organizations treat others with true respect. They had ideas about what such a community would look like, and what kinds of things they would see and hear there. They were also clear about the obstacles that stood in the way, obstacles that sometimes felt insurmountable, but they also learned that they had the power, both individually and collectively, to create change that would make a difference.

As you complete this unit with the youth in your care, you may be wondering what is next. The answer lies within this unit. Engaging youth in community service projects is one of the best ways they can use and strengthen the new skills they have developed to create positive sustainable change. The lesson “Plan To Take Action” is only the starting point.

The worksheet *Work Together for Change* introduced a tool to begin the planning process in detail. It includes:

- Setting a goal.
- Determining the necessary steps to accomplish that goal.
- Assigning specific people to oversee the various steps.
- Creating an anticipated timeline to begin and to reach completion.
- Developing ideas on how to measure success.

Simply writing a plan is only the first rudimentary part of accomplishing a goal. Nevertheless, there are many benefits for youth in engaging in such a project and seeing it through to completion. As they begin to formulate a goal and plan, you will need to provide guidance and support to help them create movement and progress. Here are some helpful suggestions:

- **Have youth direct the goal-setting process.** They will be far more engaged and committed when the goal is one they choose together.
- **Have them create a time and place for their next meeting.** It is important that youth never leave a planning session or follow-up meeting without establishing a time and place for their next meeting. Without this, it is easy for efforts to wane.
- **Have the group consider electing a leadership team.** The role of a leader is not to make decisions; that should be done collectively. It is to encourage participation and remind other members of deadlines, upcoming meetings, etc.
- **Encourage a first goal that is manageable and that fosters feelings of success.**
- **Help youth brainstorm ideas to manage roadblocks.** If interest drops off, for example, brainstorm with them how to bring in more youth who want to help.

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# Appendix.

## Resources and Further Reading

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- ✓ Glossary of Terms
- ✓ Resources To Explore
- ✓ Icebreakers and Closings
- ✓ Inspiring Quotes



Photo credit: iStock.com

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# *Glossary of Terms*

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## GLOSSARY OF TERMS – DEFINITIONS AND EXAMPLES

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The following glossary includes detailed definitions with examples developed by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

**BIAS:** An inclination or preference either for or against an individual or a group that interferes with impartial judgment. When bias occurs outside one’s awareness, it is called *implicit bias*.

**BIAS-MOTIVATED INCIDENT:** Noncriminal conduct, including words, slurs, or actions, directed at a person, residence, house of worship, or business because the person or place being targeted is or is perceived to be a member of a specific race, religion, ethnicity, national origin, disability, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, or other characteristic of their identity.

Biases toward certain religions can manifest in different ways. If someone is biased *toward* their own religion, they may think their beliefs and practices are superior to any other form of religion. If, however, they are biased *against* a certain religion, they might show it by making rude or insensitive comments about other people’s religions.

Someone could hold a bias against those who identify as gay. They may choose not to sit near other kids who identify as gay or refuse to eat near other students who identify as gay.

**CYBERBULLYING/CYBERHATE:** Any use of electronic communications technology that attacks people based on their actual or perceived race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or another characteristic. The most common places where cyberbullying occurs are social media (such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok), text messaging, messaging apps on mobile or tablet devices, instant messaging, direct messaging, online chatting over the Internet, online forums, chat rooms and message boards, email, and online gaming communities.

- *Doxing* – A form of online harassment used to exact revenge and to threaten and destroy the privacy of individuals by making public their personal information, including addresses; social security, credit card, and phone numbers; links to social media accounts; and other private data.
- *Spreading lies* – A group of students got into trouble at school for being drunk and accused a girl (who knew nothing about it) of reporting them to school officials. They began texting her day and night, and posted hateful, derogatory messages on social media. Other students saw their messages and joined in harassing the girl. She was bullied constantly via text and in person at school. She eventually shut down her social media accounts and changed her phone number. Still, the bullying at school continued.
- *Encouraging self-harm or suicide* – A young boy with a physical disability and scars on his face was harassed on social media and via text by other students. They called him derogatory names and told him he would be better off dead. They wrote “Why don’t you die?” on his school locker and encouraged him to take his own life.

**EMPATHY:** The ability to understand how someone else is feeling, even when you are not feeling the same way. In other words, being able to put yourself in someone else’s shoes.

**HATE INCIDENT:** An action or behavior motivated by bias or prejudice that does not involve criminal activity.

- *Name-calling* – A group of white teenagers call a Black teenager the “N-word.”
- *Insults* – Someone walks by a Latino person on the street and yells “I hate Mexicans” and “Go back to your own country!”
- *Displaying hate material on your own property* – A restaurant owner displays a sign that reads “Muslims are not welcome here.”

**HATE CRIME:** A criminal act motivated by bias or prejudice against property, a person, or a group where the target was intentionally selected because of their actual or perceived identity or affiliation with a group (e.g., race, religion, ethnicity, national origin, disability, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, or another characteristic).

- *Acts that result in injury, even if the injury is small* – A passerby spits in someone’s face and yells “You Asians are spreading the Coronavirus!”
- *Threats of violence* – A passenger on the train says “I hate gays” and threatens to beat a same-sex couple holding hands.
- *Acts that result in property damage* – A group of teenagers spray-paints a swastika on a building or hangs a noose from a tree.

**IDENTITY-BASED BULLYING:** When someone is targeted intentionally and repeatedly, based on an aspect of who they are or are perceived to be, for the purpose of humiliating, demeaning, ridiculing, or hurting them. Because identity-based bullying targets who the person is at their core, it can be especially harmful. It impacts not only the individual, but everyone else around the individual who identifies in the same way and who may also worry they may be targeted next. It also affects the rest of the school community by sending a message that anyone’s identity is fair game. Examples:

- Using homophobic language toward students who identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual.
- Trying to pull off a Muslim student’s hijab.
- Other forms of bullying that are not necessarily tied to a person’s identity, such as when a person is bullied for some aspect of their appearance, like their weight.

**RADICALIZATION:** Occurs when a youth transitions from having biased thoughts to violent extreme actions that match internal, irrational, and distorted beliefs about other individuals and groups. This can occur due to ongoing exposure to conflict and community violence, alienation from society at large, perceived discrimination, identity confusion or conflict, influence from radicalized peers, desire for recognition or significance, or political grievance. It can also be directed toward violence groups because of the perceived benefits the youth hopes to gain by being associated with the radicalized group, such as a sense of belonging, mentorship, protection, and safety. In youth-friendly terms, this happens when a youth believes that violence is the only means to convey an idea that’s important to them.

- For example, a youth who engages in harmful or violent acts and thinks they have a good reason to do it when there are more peaceful ways to get a message across.

***SYMPATHY:*** When you care that someone is having a tough time or experiencing something difficult, but you do not necessarily feel anything about their experience yourself. For example, your friend just broke up with their significant other and while you think it's sad for your friend, you do not necessarily feel sad about the breakup because you are still in a happy relationship.

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# Resources To Explore

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## RESOURCES TO EXPLORE

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### ORGANIZATIONS

***Anti-Defamation League, 605 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10158***

[www.adl.org/education](http://www.adl.org/education)

The Anti-Defamation League's (ADL) Education Department offers curriculum lessons on current and historical topics; *Books Matter* has views and information on books for children and youth, antibias training, and educational programs on antisemitism and Holocaust education.

ADL's Center on Extremism offers a Glossary of Extremism, a Hate Symbols Database, and other valuable resources. <https://www.adl.org/research-centers/center-on-extremism>

***American Civil Liberties Union, 125 Broad Street, New York, NY 10004***

<https://www.aclu.org>

This American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) operates as a defender of civil rights and liberties. The ACLU works in the courts, legislature, and communities to defend and preserve the individual rights and liberties guaranteed to all people in this country by the Constitution and laws of the United States.

***Arab American Institute, 1600 K Street NW, Washington, DC 20006***

[www.aaiusa.org](http://www.aaiusa.org)

The Arab American Institute Foundation (AAIF) is a national civil rights advocacy organization that provides strategic analysis to policymakers and community members to strengthen democracy, protect civil rights and liberties, and defend international human rights. AAIF organizes the millions of Arab Americans across the country to ensure an informed, organized, and effective constituency is represented in all aspects of civic life.

***Center for Media Literacy, 22603 Pacific Coast Highway, #549, Malibu, CA 90265***

[www.medialit.org](http://www.medialit.org)

The Center for Media Literacy provides information kits and training on the development and teaching of media literacy skills.

***The Justice Education Center, Inc., 62 LaSalle Road, West Hartford, CT 06107***

[www.justiceeducationcenter.org](http://www.justiceeducationcenter.org)

The Justice Education Center leads and delivers one of the nation's first Bias Crimes Diversion Programs for adults and young people who commit hate crime offenses and offers a Bias and Bullying Diversion Program for schools.

***The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, 1620 L Street NW, Washington, DC 20036***

<https://civilrights.org>

The Leadership Conference works toward the goal of a more open and just society. It is a coalition of more than 200 national organizations that work to promote and protect the civil and human rights of all people. See their page on Fighting Hate & Bias, <https://civilrights.org/value/fighting-hate-bias/>.

***The Legal Defense Fund (NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund), 40 Rector Street, New York, NY 10006***

[www.naacpldf.org](http://www.naacpldf.org)

The Legal Defense Fund is a legal organization fighting for racial justice through litigation and advocacy. Efforts include protecting voting rights, reforming the criminal justice system, achieving education equity, and ensuring economic justice for all.

***National Action Network, 106 W. 145th Street, Harlem, NY 10039***

<https://www.nationalactionnetwork.net>

The National Action Network has chapters throughout the United States. This organization works with the spirit and tradition of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to promote modern civil rights agendas that include the fight for one standard of justice, decency, and equal opportunities for all people, regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, citizenship, criminal record, economic status, gender, gender expression, or sexuality.

***National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, 4805 Mt. Hope Drive, Baltimore, MD 21215***

<https://www.naacp.org>

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) strives to achieve equality, political rights, and social inclusion by advancing policies and practices that expand human and civil rights, eliminate discrimination, and accelerate the well-being, education, and economic security of African Americans and all persons of color.

***Simon Wiesenthal Center, 1399 South Roxbury Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90035***

[www.wiesenthal.com](http://www.wiesenthal.com)

The Wiesenthal Center is a Jewish human rights organization researching the Holocaust and hate in a historic and contemporary context, confronting antisemitism, hate, and terrorism.

***Southern Poverty Law Center, 400 Washington Avenue, Montgomery, AL 36104***  
***[www.splcenter.org](http://www.splcenter.org)***

The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) is a national expert in monitoring hate and violent extremist groups. The organization issues reports and assists law enforcement efforts regarding hate groups. Learning for Justice provides education materials on racial justice for schools, <https://www.learningforjustice.org/>.

## TOPIC-SPECIFIC RESOURCES

### ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

#### **The Teen Years Explained: A Guide to Healthy Adolescent Development, John Hopkins University**

This guide describes all phases of adolescent development—physical, cognitive, emotional, and social; identity formation; and spiritual changes that occur in adolescents—and how adults can promote their healthy development.

<https://publichealth.jhu.edu/sites/default/files/2023-06/ttye-guide.pdf>

#### **Adolescent Development, Youth.gov**

This resource addresses topics relating to adolescent development and provides useful information for adults working with youth.

<https://youth.gov/youth-topics/adolescent-health/adolescent-development>

### CYBERBULLYING, CYBERHATE, AND COUNTERSPEECH

#### **Classroom Resources to Counter Cyberbullying, Media Smarts**

<https://mediasmarts.ca/teacher-resources/classroom-resources-counter-cyberbullying-portal-page>

#### **What Is Cyberbullying, StopBullying.gov**

<https://www.stopbullying.gov/cyberbullying/what-is-it>

### VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND VIOLENT EXTREMIST IDEOLOGY

#### **Building Resilience & Confronting Risk: A Parents & Caregivers Guide to Online Radicalization, Southern Poverty Law Center, 2022**

<https://www.splcenter.org/20200630/building-resilience-confronting-risk-covid-19-era-parents-caregivers-guide-online>

#### **Extreme Measures: How to Help Young People Counter Extremist Recruitment, Anti-Defamation League, 2021**

<https://www.adl.org/resources/tools-and-strategies/extreme-measures-how-help-young-people-counter-extremist-recruitment>

#### **Five Ways to Combat the Online Radicalization of Youth, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, 2022**

<https://clubexperience.blog/2022/08/04/five-ways-to-combat-the-online-radicalization-of-youth/amp/>

**Young People and Extremism: A Resource Pack for Youth Workers, SALTO-Youth Cultural Diversity Resource Center, 2016**

<https://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-3477/SALTO%20extremism%20pack.pdf>

## **HATE CRIMES**

**Evidence Shows Youth More Likely Than Adults To Commit Hate Crimes, Southern Poverty Law Center, 2004**

<https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2004/evidence-shows-youth-more-likely-adults-commit-hate-crimes>

## **IDENTITY-BASED BULLYING**

**“Identity-Based Bullying” (Lesson Plan), Jinnie Spiegler, Director of Training & Curriculum, Anti-Defamation League, 2019**

[https://adl.org/sites/default/files/identity-based-bullying\\_1.pdf](https://adl.org/sites/default/files/identity-based-bullying_1.pdf)

## **MEDIA AND DIGITAL LITERACY**

**Fake News: Misinformation, Disinformation, and Malinformation, Sara Cohn, Pace University, 2022**

<https://libguides.pace.edu/fakenews/misinformation>

**Teaching Democracy: A Media Literacy Approach, National Center for the Preservation of Democracy, 2007**

[https://www.academia.edu/26709676/Teaching\\_Democracy\\_A\\_Media\\_Literacy\\_Approach](https://www.academia.edu/26709676/Teaching_Democracy_A_Media_Literacy_Approach)

**“What Is Media Bias in News Reporting?” (Lesson Plan), Jinnie Spiegler, Director of Training & Curriculum, Anti-Defamation League, 2022**

<https://www.adl.org/resources/lesson-plan/what-media-bias-news-reporting>

## RESOURCES FROM THE OFFICE OF JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION

### Virtual Symposium on Understanding and Preventing Youth Hate Crimes and Identity-Based Bullying

OJJDP convened a national virtual symposium on preventing and combating identity-based bullying and violent extremism on October 27–28, 2021. The symposium addressed current trends and research on identity-based bullying, cyberbullying, youth-related hate crimes, and how hate groups use social media and technology to reach, recruit, and radicalize youth. Video recordings of the symposium presentations are available on OJJDP's YouTube channel.

<https://ojjdp.ojp.gov/programs/preventing-youth-hate-crimes-bullying-initiative#virtual-symposium>

### Webinar Series

OJJDP brought together experts and practitioners in a webinar series that provided content, strategies, and resources on preventing youth hate crimes and identity-based bullying. These 13 webinars are available and can be viewed on OJJDP's YouTube channel.

<https://ojjdp.ojp.gov/programs/preventing-youth-hate-crimes-bullying-initiative#webinar-series>

### Literature Review

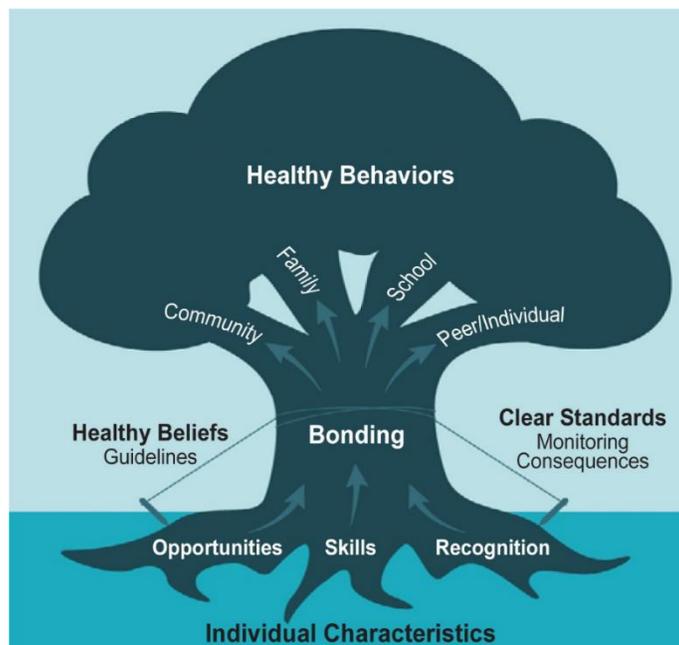
OJJDP's comprehensive literature review provides a resource that addresses the involvement of youth in hate behaviors and crimes. It provides definitions of hate crimes and related terms, an overview of the history of hate crime legislation in the United States, hate crime rates and trends on recruitment of youth into hate groups, and information on interventions to prevent or reduce the occurrence of youth hate crimes. <https://ojjdp.ojp.gov/model-programs-guide/literature-reviews/hate-crimes-and-youth>

## Protective Factors for Youth: A Case for Educating Youth Against Hate Crimes and Identity-Based Bullying

According to researchers Dr. David Hawkins and Dr. Richard Catalano, protective factors, also known as “assets,” are conditions that buffer youth from exposure to risk by either reducing the impact of risks or changing how young people respond to risks.<sup>10</sup> Protective factors identified through research include strong bonding with family, school, community, and peers. These groups support the development of healthy behaviors for youth by setting and communicating healthy beliefs and clear standards for their behavior. Young people are more likely to follow the standards of behavior set by these groups if the bonds are strong. These bonds help motivate young people to engage in healthy behaviors and follow guidelines set by those they are bonded with. This relationship is illustrated below.

The OJJDP Youth Hate Crimes and Identity-Based Bullying Curriculum was designed to build protective factors in youth, change the attitude and behavior of the youth hate crime offender, and help individuals working with youth to better understand the potential of advanced communications technologies to break down vulnerable barriers and address bias.

This multi-phased curriculum is intended for youth-serving organizations, schools, and other interested community groups to help raise awareness and prevent youth from engaging in identity-based bullying and hate crimes/incidents.



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<sup>10</sup> Catalano, R.F., Hawkins, J.D., Kosterman, R., Bailey, J.A., Oesterle, S., Cambron, C., and Farrington, D.P. 2021. “Applying the Social Development Model in Middle Childhood To Promote Healthy Development: Effects From Primary School Through the 30s and Across Generations.” *Journal of Developmental and Life-Course Criminology* 7: 66–86. <https://doi.org/10.1007%2Fs40865-020-00152-6>; and Haggerty, K.P. and McCowan, K.J. 2018. “Using the Social Development Strategy To Unleash the Power of Prevention.” *Journal of the Society for Social Work and Research* 9(4): 741–763. <https://doi.org/10.1086/700274>.

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# Icebreakers and Closings

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## ICEBREAKERS

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### Identity Pie

Encourage youth to celebrate the parts of each other that make them special, build rapport, and show that people have more than one identity that makes them who they are (e.g., I am a soccer player, an animal lover, a Catholic). Give youth a sheet of paper with a circle on it representing their Identity Pie and ask them to create pieces of the pie with various parts of their identity.

- The facilitator will help the youth to think about three to five parts of their identity they think are most important. This could be who they are as a member of their family (e.g., sister, brother, daughter), as an athlete (e.g., soccer player), or as having a certain standing in the community (e.g., dog walker). The youth can be encouraged to think of whatever comes to mind first without judgment and to write down those parts on their identity pie. The facilitator can encourage the youth to substitute images, drawings, or symbols to represent the distinct parts of their identities. Further, the youth can choose to have different sizes of pie “slices” to represent the impact each of the identified aspects of their identity has on their life. Therefore, if being an athlete is the most important part of a youth’s identity, then the youth can choose to make that slice of pie the largest.
- The facilitator will share with the youth that they have about 3 minutes to create their identity pie and another 2–3 minutes to share with a partner or in a triad group.
- The facilitator can ask the youth to note any identity parts their fellow youth shared with them that may have surprised or stood out to them. After the youth have had about 3 minutes to share, the facilitator will thank all of the youth for sharing.

### Around the Circle

Go around the circle and have each person answer a question (choose one or make up your own):

- What would you be doing if you weren’t here now?
- Name three things you do every day.
- Name your favorite food, breakfast cereal, dessert, etc. (choose one)
- Choose a word that describes the state of this community.

### The Beat Goes On

Ask one person to volunteer to begin by making a rhythmic sound and continuing until the end of the icebreaker. Others join in whenever they want, making a sound of their own that fits with the sounds others are making, until everyone joins in. Continue for 1–2 minutes after everyone has joined in.

## Voicemail

Stand or sit in a circle. Use a one-sentence message and whisper it in the ear of the person on the right. If they don't understand, they can say "replay" just once before passing it on. The message travels around the circle to the final person who repeats the message out loud, followed by the person who originally sent the message.

## Group Count

The group is asked to count to 10 by different people calling out the number that follows in sequence. One person begins by calling out 1. Someone else then must call 2, etc. until the group reaches 10; however, if more than one person calls out a number, the group must go back to 1 and start again.

## Find Your Group

Explain that you will call out a few groups and people need to find new groups with people who share their membership in that group. For example, call out "favorite flavor of ice cream" and groups will form based on whether their answer is chocolate, vanilla, or a different flavor. Other categories can include number of siblings you have, favorite kind of music, month you were born, kind of family pet, etc.

## Conversation Toss

Pick a topic to discuss. Sitting in a circle, one person begins and says one sentence about the topic to another person in the circle. That person adds a second sentence about the topic, said to another person in the circle. Continue the process until everyone in the circle has spoken.

## BRIEF CLOSING ACTIVITIES

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### One Word

Ask youth to stand in a circle. Go around the circle and have each person share one word to describe their feelings at the end of the lesson, with the following condition: Everyone must come up with a different feeling word, one that has not already been mentioned by someone else. Begin by modeling the process and sharing how you are feeling in one word (modeling an unusual feeling word that others are unlikely to pick).

### Takeaways

Ask youth to stand in a circle. Explain that they are going to share one thing they will take away from the lesson that they valued. Begin by modeling the process and sharing something that you valued and will take away from the session.

### The Power of One

Ask youth to stand in a circle. Acknowledge that they have talked about positive changes they could make in their community. Remind them that great changes can happen because of their willingness to make small changes. Ask each person to share aloud one small change they are willing to make toward the greater changes they want to see. Provide a minute or so for youth to think about a small change before beginning by sharing your own small change.

### Parts of the Whole

Go around the circle and have each youth share a quality they appreciate about someone else in the group, and how the quality will help the group create change in their community. Begin by modeling the activity for the group.

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# Inspiring Quotes

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## INSPIRING QUOTES

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*The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is that good people do nothing.*

Martin Luther King, Jr.

*We are striving to forge a union with purpose, to compose a country committed to all cultures, colors, characters, and conditions of man. And so, we lift our gazes not to what stands between us but what stands before us.*

Amanda Gorman

*As different as we are from one another, as unique as each one of us is, we are much more the same than we are different.*

Fred Rogers (known as Mr. Rogers)

*The one thing we need more than hope is action. Once we start to act, hope is everywhere. So instead of looking for hope, look for action. Then, and only then, hope will come.*

Greta Thunberg

*It's nice to be important, but it's more important to be nice.*

Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson

*How wonderful it is that no one need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.*

Anne Frank