

# What Can I Do?

## Be Part of the Solution

### Learn More About Power And Diversity

It's important to understand the history of discrimination and examine why people are treated the way they are. Look at whom has power and what kind of power they have in our society. Look at your own family values, cultural beliefs, and religious influences. Look at the phrases you use. You may not even realize they have prejudicial connotations, such as "I got gypped." The word "gypped" is derived from the word "gypsy" and this phrase carries a negative connotation. Learn more about the diversity of society and embrace it.

### Listen

Listen, listen, and listen. Listen to people's stories of their struggles. Read about people who have faced prejudice. Seek out discussion groups on the internet that talk about homophobia, sexism, ageism, and other "isms."

### Be Respectful Of \* Only Spaces

The \* stands for any group of people who face discrimination. This may be women, Aboriginal people, youth, Jewish people, or many other groups and communities. If you are unsure if you are welcome, ask before you plan on attending.

### Don't Be Stunted By Guilt

If you are a member of a dominant group do not carry all of the discrimination that has ever happened in the world on your own shoulders. You can only take responsibility for your own actions, words and beliefs. Try not to feel that being who you are makes you a "bad" person. Most of the

characteristics you have such as your ethnic background are things that you cannot change, just like people who face prejudice. Embrace and analyze your privilege, and use it in ways that improves conditions and opportunities for all people. By working through this, you can become a part of the solution to end discrimination.

### Humility

All members of society grow up surrounded by prejudice; we are marinated in it. Undoing prejudicial teachings is an on-going process, like keeping the dishes clean. Humility is a mark of someone who has gone down a portion of the road and has caught a glimpse of just how long the road is [3].

### Speak Out First

If you hear a joke that makes fun of Muslim women who wear the head scarf or people with disabilities, be the first to speak out. Do not wait for someone from a targeted group to object to the comment. Remember that the struggle against racism or ableism is everyone's responsibility - do your part [4].

[1] Taken from: Bishop, Anne. *Becoming an Ally: Breaking the Cycles of Oppression*. Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 1997.

[2] Bourgeault, Ron. "Canada Indians: The South African Connection." In *Canadian Dimension*, January 1988, pp.6-10.

Getty, Ian A. L. & Lussier, Antoine S. (Eds.) *As Long As The Sun Shines And Water Flows: A Reader in Canadian Native Studies*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983.

York, Geoffrey. *The Dispossessed: Life and Death in Native Canada*. London: Vintage, 1990.

[3] Taken from: Bishop, Anne. *Becoming an Ally: Breaking the Cycles of Oppression*. Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 1997.

[4] Ibid.

## Community Resources

### City of Winnipeg

Citizen Equity Committee.....986-4167  
City of Winnipeg Ombudsman .....986-5641  
.....TTY 986-7030

### Winnipeg Police Service

Non-Emergency (includes TTY) .....986-6222  
Diversity Relations Officer .....986-6453  
Hate Crimes Unit .....986-6228

### Province of Manitoba

Manitoba Human Rights Commission .....945-3007  
.....TTY 945-3442  
Multiculturalism Secretariat.....945-5632

### Other Community Resources

B'nai Brith Canada -  
League For Human Rights .....487-9623  
Islamic Social Services Association .....889-7451  
Manitoba Association  
for Rights and Liberties.....947-0213  
Manitoba Multicultural  
Resources Centre.....831-6672  
Rainbow Resource Centre  
Info/Peer Counselling Line.....284-5208  
Administration Line .....474-0212



This pamphlet is part of an information series on promoting diversity in society produced by the Winnipeg Committee For Safety in cooperation with the Winnipeg Police Service. For more information, please phone or write:

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# Stopping

## Hate-motivated Violence & Addressing Prejudice

**"The City shall provide leadership in dealing with discriminatory barriers including racism, sexism, and homophobia and shall promote the full and equal participation of all citizens in the social, political, economic and cultural life of the city."**

From *Plan Winnipeg... Toward 2010* adopted by City Council June 23, 1993 (By-law No. 5915/92)



## What is it?

### What is Hate-Motivated Violence?

Hate-motivated violence includes physical and sexual assault, written or verbal intimidation, insults, harassment, and threats of violence against persons or property. It is based on hatred of a group's ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation, race, colour, gender, or other physical or cultural characteristic. Hate crimes are an extreme expression of an individual or group attempting to reinforce their dominance or power over a targeted group. Victims are affected whether or not they have been assaulted or whether or not the incident is a crime under the law.

### What is Prejudice?

Prejudice is an action or set of beliefs that oppresses a group of people based on a certain set of characteristics, traits, or beliefs that the targeted group may have.

### What is Diversity?

Diversity is the acceptance and respect of differences (cultural, gender, sexual, ability, etc.) by recognizing that no one group is intrinsically superior to another. Diversity also recognizes that people's "differences" add breadth and depth to society.

### What is a Solution?

You can be part of the solution by working alongside a marginalized group to end forms of discrimination which give you privilege [1]. For example, a white person who works to end racism, or a straight person who works to end heterosexism and homophobia.

# The Realities

We need to work to end all violence, discrimination, and prejudice in our communities. Hate-motivated violence is especially alarming because hate-motivated violence is typically more brutal than other assaults. If assaulted, victims are more likely to end up in the hospital.

Offenders hurt others in order to feel powerful and make victims feel weak and vulnerable. Offenders usually travel in groups making it more likely that if assaulted, victims will be seriously injured.

Hate-motivated violence has a widespread impact. Such acts can frighten and victimize an entire group of people. When a mosque or Islamic centre is sprayed with graffiti, for example, all Muslim people feel targeted.

Hate-motivated violence can frighten and divide a community. When a lone gunman sought out, shot, and killed 14 women on a Montreal campus, women in Winnipeg, and all over Canada felt vulnerable. Many feared they "could be next."

Victims are targeted due to their perceived or real membership to a certain group. Whether directly affected or not, all members of that targeted group can become fearful and distrustful. Tension increases between the threatening and threatened groups, which can cause further hatred and violence on both sides.

Hate-motivated violence reflects our own society's prejudices and oppressive beliefs. Even though hate crimes are normally committed by a small sector of people, they actually reflect a larger part of the community's and society's feelings and attitudes towards certain groups of people.

Sadly, Canada has a long history of prejudice, which includes incidents such as the horrific treatment of Aboriginal peoples, denying Canadian entry to Jews fleeing the Holocaust and the internment of Japanese-Canadians during World War II, among others. It is a disturbing fact that South Africa's apartheid was modelled after Canada's reserve system [2].

Canadians - and Winnipeggers - continue to challenge hate-motivated violence and discrimination. Even when faced with economic, political, or cultural instability, we must work together. When change occurs, it can act as either a negative or positive catalyst. In Winnipeg, we are committed to making positive changes.



## What is being done?

For nearly 20 years, the City of Winnipeg has been actively working towards stopping racism and discrimination and promoting positive relations between local cultural groups. The Citizen Equity Committee was created by City Council in March of 2001, and is mandated to work with Council and the civic administration to improve the City's equity and diversity policies and procedures. The Committee also works with the broader community regarding issues pertaining to the City of Winnipeg as a corporation.

Since April 1993, the Winnipeg Police Service Hate Crimes Unit has been investigating offences related to race, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation. It also collects information on local individuals and groups active in hate crimes, and builds partnerships between the police and community groups.

The Manitoba Human Rights Commission investigates unlawful discrimination complaints based on age, ancestry (including colour or perceived race), disability, economic status, ethnic background or origin, gender, marital/family status, nationality, political beliefs or activity, religion, sex, and sexual orientation.

Canada's Criminal Code protects any identifiable group distinguished by colour, race, religion, or ethnic origin from hate propaganda. The Code specifically addresses public incitement of hatred through words spoken, written or recorded electronically, and gestures, signs or other visible representations. Hate-motivated acts of violence against persons or property are handled under the same provisions of the Code as other violent crimes.