

## Youth Hate Crimes: Identification, Prevention, and Intervention

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**Objective:** Youth hate crimes are a societal problem in which young people turn extremist ideas into acts of violence. To develop methods for prevention, early identification, and intervention, mental health professionals must have an awareness and understanding of this issue. To provide a basis for developing such an understanding, the authors review the current research related to youth hate crimes.

**Method:** The authors review the literature primarily from the past 10 years on youth hate crimes.

**Results:** Studies have established that most hate crimes are committed by single or small groups of young males unaffiliated with organized hate groups. Although limited information is available about the causative factors of hatred, a variety of prevention and intervention strategies have been employed. Yet, little has been done to evaluate these various

initiatives. Unfortunately, there is a paucity of literature available to guide mental health professionals in the identification, evaluation, and treatment of offenders, despite increasing concerns and awareness regarding the profound consequences of acts of hatred and extremism.

**Conclusions:** Heightened public awareness and greater understanding of the epidemiology and nature of hate crimes is necessary if perpetrators are to be recognized and effective interventions developed. To achieve this goal, databases of juvenile hate crimes must be developed nationwide, and the success of preventive, educational, and alternative sentencing programs must be assessed. Mental health professionals play a critical role in the detection and treatment of juvenile perpetrators, and it is incumbent upon them to develop interventions for individuals and communities affected by hate crimes.

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Hatred is a complex, affective state alloyed with aggression. It is aroused by the experience of frustration and, in its most stark and uncompromising manner, by events that are felt to threaten life (1). If sustained and unresolved, hate may entail revenge in the form of a criminal act. Such crimes, known as hate crimes or bias crimes, create fear, mistrust, and hostility among the members of society. Hate crime violence in America is rooted in the persistence and pervasiveness of racism and bigotry, which are learned behaviors (2). Although the true incidence of hate crimes in America is unknown, in the past decade, more than 100 homicides can be attributed to hate crime violence (3). In addition to their effects on the individual victims, hate crimes have devastating effects on families, communities, and institutions (4).

There has been some disagreement about the use of the term “hate crime” and about the ways in which hate crimes have been defined over the years. The general consensus is that a hate crime is distinguished from any other crime by the victim’s symbolic status—the victim of a hate crime would have been interchangeable with any other person sharing the same characteristics, such as race, religion, or sexuality (5–7). This kind of crime is motivated, in whole or in part, by the offender’s bias against the victim’s

race, religion, ethnic or national origin, gender, disability, or sexual orientation (5, 8, 9). Nevertheless, hate crimes are often precipitated by mixed motivations and can be difficult to identify. We have been challenged to examine how a single act of hate violence can escalate into numerous acts of retaliation in the aftermath of the events of September 11, 2001. Hate crimes experts Levin and McDewitt (10) reexamined the causes and characteristics of terrorism, acts of hatred, and violence based not only on religion, ethnicity, race, and gender, but also on citizenship.

A major dilemma facing proponents of laws addressing hate crimes is determining exactly what a hate crime entails. Analysts have included everything from bigoted speech and political disagreements to disparagement of agricultural products as hate crimes (11). Unclear and overextended definitions have likely hindered the passage and implementation of these types of statutes (11). Expressions of hatred during the course of a criminal act do not necessarily qualify the act as a hate crime per se (12). In trying to differentiate a hate crime from a crime that merely involves hate, law enforcement officials generally follow the “but for” rule: but for the hate motivation, this crime never would have been committed (12).

Hate crimes differ from other types of criminal offenses in several ways. First, a hate crime is not merely an assault against an individual but against everyone in that individual's particular group (4, 13, 14). Thus, hate crimes are about sending messages (8). Second, in a hate crime the characteristic of the victim that has motivated the attack (e.g., race, religion, sexual orientation, etc.) is in most cases qualified and absolute (15). A person cannot modify this aspect of him- or herself and, thus, cannot reduce the likelihood of future victimization (15). A third feature of hate crimes is that the victim, from the perpetrator's standpoint, could have been anyone from within the targeted group (5, 15).

Hate crimes, in comparison to reported crimes in general, are seven times more likely to involve attacks against persons and most likely to involve multiple offenders (7, 8). According to the FBI, in 1996, about 30% of hate crimes were crimes committed against property, which involved robbing, vandalizing, destroying, stealing, or setting fires to vehicles, homes, stores, or places of worship (9, 16). The remainder, about 70%, involved an attack against a person (9, 16). In addition, more than 60% of these crimes were race based (9, 16). Offenses range from simple assault, with no weapon involved, to aggravated assault, rape, and murder. Such "person crimes" are typically experienced not only as an attack on one's physical self but also as an attack on one's identity (8, 9).

Levin and McDevitt (8) showed that hate-motivated assaults are twice as likely to cause injury and four times as likely to involve hospitalization, compared with assaults in general. However, Martin (17) reported that data in a later study show that hate crimes are not necessarily characterized by "excessive brutality." Whether or not hate crimes are excessively brutal, they appear to be particularly harmful to communities because they increase fear, which in turn increases responses such as anger, vigilantism, and intergroup tensions (17).

## Epidemiology

Among hate crime offenders, juveniles and young people appear to be disproportionately represented. However, the lack of definitive data collection regarding juvenile hate crime activity has limited the development of an evidence base. Data from victims' reports in a study of jurisdictions in New York City and in Baltimore County (Md.) have suggested that offenders in bias crimes are even more likely than offenders in nonbias crimes to be young and male (16, 18). Nationally, the majority of bias-motivated offenders are young men in their late teens and early 20s (5, 19, 20). A full understanding of the scope of this problem must be developed in order to devise targeted remedies for adolescents and young adults; this understanding can be gained in part by detailed tracking of hate crimes throughout the country.

At present no U.S. federal statute prohibits hate crimes (15). The Congress of the United States in 1990 passed the Hate Crimes Statistics Act, which requires the reporting of statistics on crimes that "manifest prejudice based on race, religion, sexual orientation, or ethnicity" (21). The Violent Crime and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 later amended the Hate Crimes Statistics Act to include crimes motivated by bias against persons with disabilities (5, 22). Although reporting under the Hate Crimes Statistics Act has increased public awareness of hate crime violence and has improved law enforcement's response to hate-related incidents, records of hate crime occurrence remain incomplete (5, 22).

In response to the Hate Crimes Statistics Act, the Attorney General directed the FBI to add "hate crime" as a category in the Uniform Crime Reporting Program. Although hate crime reporting by law enforcement agencies continues to be voluntary under federal law, the Department of Justice has provided extensive training to state and local law enforcement agencies, resulting in increased reporting and improved programs for responding to hate crimes (21).

Under the auspices of the Hate Crimes Statistics Act, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention of the Department of Justice funded the National Juvenile Hate Crime Study in 1995 (23). This study obtained databases on hate crimes from 79 of America's largest cities and analyzed the quality and availability of statistics regarding juveniles and hate crimes. The findings revealed that only six states, and only seven major cities within those states, identified the ages of hate crime offenders. Where data were available, the researchers estimated that juveniles committed between 17% and 26% of all hate crimes. Overall, the National Juvenile Hate Crime Study concluded that, as of 1994, law enforcement agencies were considerably behind schedule in the tabulation and reporting of hate or bias crimes (23).

Levin and McDevitt (24) have suggested that the findings of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention grossly underestimate the involvement of juveniles in hate crimes. The office tabulated the results of the National Juvenile Hate Crime Study by dividing the number of hate crimes in a jurisdiction by the number of juveniles arrested. This calculation, however, does not account for the majority of hate crimes, which do not result in arrests. Levin and McDevitt (24) estimated that juveniles commit approximately 70% of all hate crimes.

The National Juvenile Hate Crime Study showed that 9,295 hate crimes were committed in 1994, as calculated by local law enforcement agencies (23). The study statistics from each state were compared to statistics obtained by the FBI—the main agency reporting these crimes—and the results differed in several significant ways. First, the FBI had been collecting annual reports from about 16,000 law enforcement agencies nationwide, whereas the National Juvenile Hate Crime Study conducted its survey in

only the 79 largest U.S. cities. Second, the FBI reports extended over a period of more than 50 years, while the data collected by the study reflected only activity in the most recent years. Third, and most important, the National Juvenile Hate Crime Study was configured to a much more inclusive definition of hate crime. More recently, in 1999, there were 7,876 hate crime incidents reported to the FBI. The incidents involved 9,302 separate offenses, 9,802 victims, and 7,271 offenders (25).

Regardless of the source of the data, substantial evidence suggests that hate crimes have been underreported. In 1992, extrapolating from FBI data, Levin (7) found that there were at least 35,000 hate crimes in the United States—several times more than the number officially reported by police. A Los Angeles study in 1997 by Dunbar indicated that only one third of hate crimes are reported to police (unpublished 1997 manuscript of E. Dunbar).

It is significant that very few states and law enforcement agencies reported hate crimes according to the age of the offender, thus making it difficult to extrapolate data on juveniles. Martin (17) concluded that what was most lacking were analyses that contribute to a more thorough understanding of what criminal justice statistics mean. Such analyses would include, for example, more detailed studies of how police classify particular crimes. The FBI's new data collection system, the National Incident Based Reporting System, will contain exact demographic data, including the ages of both the victims and the offenders, but this system is still several years away from implementation (17).

An obstacle in determining the prevalence of hate crimes is the reluctance of many victims to report such attacks, both because of fear of retaliation and because of posttraumatic avoidance (5, 26). Those who perceive the criminal justice system to be biased against the victim's group may not report hate crimes in the belief that law enforcement authorities will not be responsive (6). Furthermore, hate crimes may not be reported as such because of the difficulty in determining that an incident was provoked by hate. However, studies have demonstrated that victims are more likely to report a hate crime if they know that a special reporting system is in place (5, 27).

The past decade has seen the issue of hate crimes receive more serious attention than ever before. In *R.A.V. v. City of St. Paul, Minn.*, the U.S. Supreme Court in 1992 examined legislation that made particular bias an element of crime (5, 28). In 1993, the Court ruled in *Wisconsin v. Mitchell* that augmented penalties for hate crimes do not violate the First Amendment (5, 11, 29). More recently, the Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 1999 sought to remove the stringent requirements that federal prosecutors must meet in order to prove the occurrence of a hate crime (30, 31). Under the previous law, prosecutors needed to show that a crime occurred both because the victim was a member of a protected group, such as those identified by race, color, religion, or national origin, and because the victim

was engaged in specifically named, federally protected activities such as serving on a jury, voting, or attending public school (11). The Hate Crimes Prevention Act expanded the categories that are covered by hate crime legislation, allowing federal prosecutors to act also in cases involving death or serious bodily harm based on gender, disability, and sexual orientation (30). In 2003, the 108th Congress will vote on the Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2003, which includes further penalty enhancements and addresses adult recruitment of juveniles to commit hate crimes. The Hate Crimes Statistics Improvement Act of 2003, which is before the United States House of Representatives, would include gender as a category included in hate crime reporting. Although there have been many challenges to hate crime legislation, these laws send an important message to victims, perpetrators, law enforcement authorities, and all individuals living in the United States, assuring that constitutional rights will be protected now and in the future.

In summary, while hate crimes continue to be underreported, the federal government has made efforts to better document such incidents, including obtaining as much relevant information about the crime as possible. Previously, hate crime reporting generally failed to include many important details, such as a thorough profile of the offenders as well as the victims of the crime, the motivation for the offense, the symbolic nature of the crime, and the offenders' affiliation. In the future, careful attention should be paid to the distinct characteristics/subtypes of various hate crimes as well as the development of uniform data collection by state law enforcement agencies.

## Scope of the Problem

Social scientists' attempts to highlight and explain the motivation for hate crimes have been expanding over the past several years. In classifying types of hate crimes based on the offenders' motivations, Levin and McDevitt (8) defined three distinct categories. The first, "thrill-seekers," the largest group, most often consists of youths and most often represents individuals who commit such crimes because of boredom, to have fun, and to feel strong. The second category, "reactionists," are interested in protecting their resources from intruders. "Mission offenders," the last category, is composed of those who believe they are appealing to a higher authority by eradicating an inferior group.

Economic competition by minorities has been proposed as an aggravating factor in some hate crimes (32). However, results of a recent study show that hate crime perpetrators, compared to nonperpetrators, are not significantly more frustrated economically or more pessimistic about the financial futures of their communities (33). In fact, what perpetrators fear is diversity, and it is this discomfort, rather than heightened feelings of resentment due to economic pressures, that sets these individuals

apart. These findings seem to challenge the notion that hate crimes are a result of envy or jealousy on the part of the offenders.

The main determinant fueling hate crimes appears to be personal prejudice, a phenomenon that colors judgment, blinding the aggressors to the immorality of what they are doing (6). Such prejudice is most likely rooted in an environment that disdains someone who is "different" or sees the difference as threatening. One expression of this prejudice is the perception that society sanctions attacks on certain groups. Franklin (34) found that, in some settings, offenders perceive they have societal permission to engage in violence against certain minority groups.

Contrary to popular belief, most hate crimes are not committed by members of organized hate groups. Although hate groups actively recruit youths, they account for a mere 8%–15% of all hate crimes (3, 8). Of 1,459 hate crimes committed in the Los Angeles area in the period from 1994 to 1995, in fewer than 5% were the offenders members of organized hate groups (unpublished manuscript of E. Dunbar). Most hate crimes are carried out by youths who have no prior involvement with juvenile justice but who see little wrong in their actions (5, 6, 35).

Although organized hate groups are responsible for only a small percentage of hate crimes, these groups still deserve appropriate consideration. Many youths who are not aligned with these hate groups still have access to information from these groups, mostly through the Internet. As computers and Internet access become more widespread, many people, including troubled youths, are gaining access to hate materials (36). The World Wide Web also gives extremists an easy way to communicate among themselves, further reinforcing ideas and sentiments of hate (36). The issue of imposing regulatory standards for Internet hate materials becomes an increasingly difficult endeavor due to the exponential growth of available information and the use of the First Amendment to protect expression by means of the Internet (37).

What makes hate groups particularly frightening is their ability to mobilize a segment of the population that might not otherwise act on its hatred. These groups tend to focus their recruitment attempts on youths. By recognizing the appeal of violence to many young people, especially those who are lonely and insecure, these groups use impressionable juveniles to advance their causes (38, 39).

## Targets of Hate

The largest determinant of hate crimes is racial bias, with African Americans the most likely target group (5, 6, 9). In 1999, there were 7,876 hate crimes reported, of which 4,295 were motivated by racial bias, 1,411 by religious bias, 1,317 by sexual orientation bias, 829 by ethnicity/national origin bias, 19 by disability bias, and five by multiple biases (25). In 1996, 60% of hate crimes reported

to the FBI were promulgated because of race, with close to two-thirds (62%) targeting African Americans (9). Ethnic minorities in the United States have increasingly become the targets of hate crimes because they are perceived to be new to the country, even if their families have been here for generations. Resentment of ethnic minorities is frequently caused by a fear of losing jobs when so-called immigrants succeed (40, 41). It can also surface when these minorities are viewed as acting against the established norm by practicing their native customs and traditions (6).

Although much of the scientific literature and media attention tends to focus on hate crimes committed against African Americans and Jews, other communities struggle with protecting themselves against hatred. People from Latin America as well as Asian/Pacific Islander Americans are increasingly targets for bias-motivated crimes (42, 43). In 1995, the FBI found that 63.3% of hate crimes were directed against Hispanics; this was felt to be largely because of their immigration status (42). According to the National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium, 429 anti-Asian incidents were reported in 1998, more than 30% more than in 1993 (43). Another immigrant group experiencing a rise in hate crime, in large part due to the events of September 11, 2001, and the Middle East crises, are those of Arab descent (6). According to a study of more than 400 media reports in the week immediately after the September 11 events, 645 incidents of verbal harassment, threats, and violence were reported against individuals of, or appearing to be of, Arab descent (44).

Experts in the field suggest that hate crimes committed against certain groups are significantly undercounted (5, 6, 43). For example, victims in some groups are often reluctant to report the crime. This tendency is apparent within the Asian and Pacific American community, in which language and cultural barriers may impede the reporting of hate-related incidents (43).

Most religiously motivated hate crimes are acts of vandalism, although personal assaults do occur as well. The overwhelming majority of religiously motivated assaults, 82% in 1996, have been directed against the Jewish community (9).

Gender-based hate crimes, or crimes against women, are perhaps the most prevalent form of hate crime in general, but the most socially acceptable and prevalent type of hate crime among teenagers and young adults is that targeting sexual minorities (34). A study in Sacramento, Calif., involving nearly 2,000 gay and lesbian people, found that roughly one-fifth of the women and one-fourth of the men reported being the victim of a hate crime since age 16 (26). Lesbian and gay victims may also suffer more serious psychological effects from hate crimes than they do from other kinds of criminal injury (26), because the attack constitutes an assault on their already vulnerable core identity and efforts to integrate their new status as a sexual minority.



## Development of Juvenile Hate Crime Perpetrators

Although current data on juvenile involvement in perpetration of hate crimes are limited, what is known about the involvement of youth in hate crime is unsettling. Despite the fact that hate crimes represent a small percentage of all violent crimes, a significant proportion of hate crime incidents are perpetrated by adolescents and young adults (5, 8, 17, 20, 45).

Juvenile hate crime results from the intersection of two epidemics facing youth: violence and prejudice (45). Youths who perpetuate hate crimes act out on prejudicial beliefs and emotions concerning people who are perceived as different. Where it involves a group at large, a particular prejudice may become a widely shared and enduring element of the culture in which it occurs (15). Such prejudices pose a particular threat to young people, who are the most impressionable members of society. Violence and prejudice have become unavoidable in schools; rather than a refuge from hate attacks, schools have become fertile ground for violent bigotry. In a 1989 study of 1,570 elementary, middle, and secondary schools in Los Angeles County, 37% of schools reported incidents of hate-motivated violence during the school year (46). A report by the Southern Poverty Law Center posited that as the country grows more divided along racial and ethnic lines, the problem of youth violence is likely to increase (45).

In light of the recent rash of lethal crimes committed by America's youth, the rationale behind young people's acting on their hate and prejudices in violent ways has garnered much media speculation. The last 25 years have been marked by tremendous societal and cultural change, and children are growing up in complex and challenging family and social environments, often without a parent remaining in the home to supervise or guide their behavior, peer selection, etc. Some researchers have questioned whether today's youths have been cheated of the means to meet basic, profound human needs, including the need for security, positive identity, a sense of effectiveness and control, connection to other human beings, and a meaningful understanding of the world and their own place in it (47). This hypothesis suggests that shifts in our society's values and beliefs have had a significant role in the increasing incidence and lethality of such crimes (47).

Many adolescents and young adults receive secondary gains from their deviance and destructiveness. The motivations of perpetrators of hate crimes are complex, but through violence, youths may be able to obtain money, to feel powerful, and to protect themselves (15). Frustration, boredom, and the idea that the victims are appropriate targets for violence are other contributing factors (48). Youths frequently lack the meaningful social involvement and educational tools necessary to view the stereotypes they encounter with clarity. As a result, much of what youths absorb from their surroundings directly influences

their perceptions and challenges them to act on their feelings (49). Youths need proper mentors to guide them.

The prevalence of the stereotyping and glorification of violence in schools and homes is often catalyzed by peer influences, as the belief system for many youths revolves around establishing bonds with a group of peers (50). Many youths attempt to prove themselves with their peers, feeling the need to behave aggressively toward outsiders in order to establish a bond with the group. Thus, the rules of the peer group determine what triggers the violence. Young people turn to their peers for signs of acceptance, respect, and approval and to seek someone who will listen to their concerns, assist them with their problems, and commend their achievements (49). Often, the peer group establishes codes of behavior around issues of identity, protection, safety, and power, becoming a "substitute family" in the absence of family members who might serve in the same capacity (50).

## Psychological/Psychiatric Profiles

Understanding the psychology of the hate crime offender is the first step toward intervention and prevention of the crime. Without full comprehension of the motivation for the crime, it is impossible to determine the far-reaching psychosocial implications for the victims or understand the psychology of the offender in the context of social intolerance, racism, and prejudice.

From a developmental perspective, each child's individual circumstances and developmental stage are important in assessing his/her understanding of morality and ethics. An adolescent who has the capacity for abstraction is capable of planning and committing an evil act. No one theory explains all evil behavior; numerous variables, including social, psychological, biological, and genetic factors, are involved in a dynamic interplay that results in evil behavior. Genetic hypotheses have suggested that a person's biology may predispose the individual to choose criminal behavior under certain situations (51, 52). Both twin and adoption studies have suggested a genetic component for criminal and violent behavior (52). To our knowledge, no genetic research has specifically addressed hate crimes.

Despite the diversity of youths, it is often during adolescence that the major manifestations of tendencies toward hatred become fully apparent. Youths become "armed" with the cognitive and moral apparatus to comprehend the enormity of terrible deeds such as hate crimes and are also thus empowered to commit them (53). If they have not learned to inhibit and control their sexual and aggressive tendencies, the troubled adolescents and young adults are at risk for committing these crimes (53). With the catalysts of the media, drugs and alcohol, group pressure, anger, poverty, and school failure, destructive behaviors can occur.

Young-Bruehl's psychoanalytical approach (54) linked the lack of fulfillment of basic needs in many at-risk youths

to the commission of hate crimes. Without a supportive environment in which to express the normal apprehension, fears, and the uncertainty of adolescence, these youths have an inadequate sense of identity and a fragile ego strength. Because of these deficits, adolescents may use prejudices in their surroundings to project unacceptable feelings, not to an individual close by but to a whole group, even a group beyond personal acquaintance. The result is an intolerance of others and indignation at the attributed faults. The typical adolescent who acts on his hate feels rejected and isolated from friends and family and uses hatred to compensate for feelings of inadequacy. Hate groups are successful in their recruitment of youths because their ideals provide a kind of external superego. The group's activities provide gratification, and an individual adolescent can thus be induced to submit to the group and fully relinquish previous values and beliefs (54).

Beck (55) has viewed hate as a cognitive problem—a thinking disorder. In this cognitive framework, thinking guides behavior, and the violence-prone individual, including the hate crime perpetrator, has a basic flaw in his perception of social interactions. He sees himself as moralistic and righteous, while the enemy is to be blamed for his problems. As a result of the interaction between personality and social environment, the individual may develop a cluster of antisocial concepts and beliefs. The offender's sense of personal vulnerability is reflected in a hypersensitivity to specific kinds of social confrontations, such as domination or disparagement. He reacts to such perceived assaults by fighting back or by attacking a weaker, more accessible opponent. Fearing retaliation, he becomes even more violent. Essentially, he views his beliefs as fact, never questioning them and blocking out anything that is contradictory. He is continually mobilized to fight because of his never-ending pattern of perceiving belligerence in other people's behaviors. Whether a juvenile or adult, the violent offender considers himself the victim and the others as the victimizers.

Youths who perpetrate hate crimes demonstrate impulse control problems, thrill-seeking behavior, bullying, conduct or aggression problems, a drive to be competent, or feelings of betrayal and underlying hurt (8, 55). Beck (55) noted that similarities exist between those with rigidity of thinking and those who are diagnosed with depression or paranoia. Both feel that they have been betrayed, believe that someone is responsible for the betrayal, and believe that the person or group has to be punished for their betrayal (50). Beck (55) argued that the same cognitive distortion or difficulty in processing information accounts for the symptomatic expression.

Although betrayal appears to be a cause of violent behavior, the role of self-esteem has been contested for some time. For many years, it had been widely asserted that low self-esteem is a cause of violence (56–58). According to this hypothesis, certain people are prompted by their inner self-doubts and self-loathing to lash out against other

people, possibly as a way of gaining esteem or simply because they have nothing to do. A contrary view proposed that violence tends to result from positive views of self that are impugned or threatened by others (59). In this analysis, hostile aggression is an expression of the self's rejection of esteem-threatening evaluations received from others (60). These authors also recognized the use of the narcissistic defense.

Home environments that provide a “rejecting, neglectful, and inconsistent style,” as well as consistent criticism and harsh physical punishment have been described as predisposing individuals to prejudice (61). Attitudes of prejudice begin to form between the ages of 3 and 4 years, with immediate family members having the most profound effect on the development of attitudes and values (62). Aronson (63) focused on parents of juvenile offenders in an attempt to explain the propensity of youths to commit violent acts. He described certain adolescents as having “authoritarian personalities.” These individuals tend to be rigid in their beliefs, to have conventional values, and to be intolerant of weakness, suspicious, and, above all, unusually respectful to authority. The adolescents he studied had parents with prejudiced and rigid beliefs against certain groups and showed a high level of conformity to societal norms. The findings of this study indicated that children tended to identify with their parents, thus demonstrating some of the same beliefs, including intolerance of certain groups.

A review of the contemporary clinical literature underscores the limited attention paid to the role of psychopathology in the endorsement of socially intolerant beliefs (64). Indeed, the psychological study of prejudice has been almost completely silent with respect to assessment and treatment of individuals who demonstrate aversive ideation regarding persons of different racial or ethnic groups, gays and lesbians, and immigrants—the traditional social “outgroups” (65). Although measures are available to assess the psychological significance of adverse outgroup beliefs (such as the MMPI Pr scale), they are utilized minimally by practicing clinicians (65).

Data on convicted hate crime perpetrators have revealed that many of the more serious forms of hate violence are committed by individuals with prior criminal histories, those who are economically marginalized, and those who have a propensity for substance abuse (8). In addition, violent perpetrators evidenced characteristics that predict antisocial and recidivistic behavior. However, little is known about the majority of hate crime perpetrators in terms of psychological or demographic status, including factors such as economic level, religion, and national origin. Still less is known about these characteristics in juvenile hate crime offenders.

Within the psychiatric community, there is disagreement about whether extreme racism can be considered symptomatic of psychopathology. Some have proposed that extreme racism is a serious mental illness and have

considered whether DSM should include a diagnosis of delusional disorder—racist type (66). Others have cautioned against turning a group's extreme views into psychopathology for fear that the view that a hate crime perpetrator may be "not guilty by reason of insanity" will undermine the idea of culpability (66). Regardless of the diagnostic implications, the various forms of prejudice need to be considered not only as a social problem, but as a mental health issue worthy of significant attention (65).

## Prevention and Intervention

Researchers have concluded that society can intervene to reduce or prevent many forms of violence, especially among young people, including the hate-induced violence that threatens and intimidates entire categories or groups of people (6). To prevent future hate crimes, law enforcement agencies, state and federal agencies, public interest groups, and schools have been working together to identify and track hate crimes and to mitigate the conditions that foster them. (Appendix 1 provides a list of Internet resources for information about hate crimes.) A number of programs to combat and prevent hate crimes have been instituted, while others are still in the development stages. Protection of society's most vulnerable members—children—needs to become a central tenet of hate crime prevention efforts; primary prevention of hate crimes has yet to be developed (67). Although existing programs appear to be yielding positive results, very little work, to our knowledge, has been done to evaluate these initiatives systematically and longitudinally.

The criminal justice system has made efforts to better serve the needs of young people through enhancing the skills of those who work directly with young offenders. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention maintains a National Training and Technical Assistance Center whose goals are to upgrade and expand the professional skills of juvenile justice and delinquency prevention practitioners, increase the capacity to reduce youth crime, and improve the juvenile justice system (5). Training is also underway for law enforcement organizations on hate-crime-related issues. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention has allocated federal funds for programming relating to the dissemination of information and for training and technical assistance on promising approaches to prevent and reduce incidents of hate crime and hate-related behavior by youth; the Bureau of Justice Assistance supports intensive training for teams of criminal justice professionals from a single region, with a programmatic focus on developing concrete strategies to coordinate hate crime prevention and response efforts (68, 69).

Other criminal justice efforts include secondary and tertiary prevention programs, which are developing slowly. These programs have focused on working with youths who have already been identified as being at high risk

through prior involvement with the juvenile justice system because of hate-related acts of violence. In 1993, Operation Grow Hair, a counseling and diversion program, was developed after the prosecution of members of the Fourth Reich Skinheads (unpublished 1993 report, U.S. Attorney's Office, Central District of California). The 3-day program attempted to expose and sensitize youth to their victims and included meetings with individuals representing the communities victimized by the group's violence, a tour of the county jail, viewing of *Schindler's List*, interaction with youths from different racial and ethnic backgrounds, and a visit to the Simon Wiesenthal Center. The primary goal of the program was to expose the youths to other ways of perceiving the world, as well as to present them with alternative, prosocial choices.

The Anti-Defamation League, in its Juvenile Diversion Project, has worked with the criminal justice system to provide sentencing options for juvenile hate crime perpetrators. The New England regional office's Youth Diversion Program for alternative sentencing of juvenile hate crime offenders provides participants with guidance in learning to respect diversity. The New Jersey office helped to institute the statewide school-based Prejudice Reduction Education Program, which has provided alternative sentencing for juvenile hate crime perpetrators. Instead of punishing the youths, participating schools intervene with educational measures, prevention programs, and outreach (70).

Schools are not immune to intolerance and violence and, in fact, are often the breeding grounds for hate-fueled acts (71). Several national educational initiatives have been developed to stop hate in schools. The Education Development Center, Inc., has implemented two projects dedicated to the eradication of hate crime: the National Center for Hate Crime Prevention and the National Bias Crime Training Project (72). The National Center for Hate Crime Prevention works in partnership with other agencies and organizations active in hate crime and violence prevention. The National Bias Crime Training Project is funded through a grant from the Department of Justice Office for Victims of Crime and provides law enforcement and victim-assistance professionals with training in hate crime prevention. Their curriculum, "Healing the Hate: A National Bias Crime Prevention Curriculum for Middle Schools," is designed for use in schools and organizations serving youths; they have also established a three-part agenda for educating young people about the roots of hatred and how to prevent hate crimes and incidents.

In California, a number of programs have been implemented in schools, including Educating for Diversity and the Youth Together Project. Educating for Diversity was implemented by the Los Angeles School District in 1994 and includes guidelines, strategies, and resources for addressing issues in the district's instructional program. The Youth Together Project was developed by a coalition of human rights groups, teachers, school administrators, parents,

and students in response to reports of increasing racial and ethnic tensions among youth in northern California. The goal of the Youth Together Project is to foster cross-cultural understanding between ethnic groups, establish preventive programs designed by youths, and ultimately affect hate crime policy (68). Another program in one of California's regions of greatest hate crime perpetration, Juvenile Offenders Learning Tolerance, offers intensive training for school faculty and preprosecution diversion for juveniles who have engaged in bias-motivated misconduct (68).

Massachusetts officials launched a program to create harassment-free school environments as part of their effort to reduce the incidence of hate crimes. Stop the Hate Week, a public awareness and education campaign targeting schools and communities, has been implemented throughout the Commonwealth; in addition, the Student Civil Rights Project works to eliminate hatred, prejudice, and violence among youths at greatest risk for hate crime perpetration (73). These efforts are augmented by a youth-focused Web site (<http://www.stopthehate.org>), an online educational and reporting mechanism designed to provide students and teachers with resources and information on diversity awareness, peer counseling, and victim assistance (73).

The Southern Poverty Law Center began the Teaching Tolerance project in 1991 as an extension of the center's legal and educational efforts. Teaching Tolerance offers resources to educators and a magazine that features programs designed to promote respect for differences in the classroom and beyond (45). The WORLD OF DIFFERENCE Institute's Stop the Hate program, developed by the Anti-Defamation League, has been implemented in a number of schools across the United States. Stop the Hate is designed to combat hate-related incidents by altering the ways in which schools respond to intergroup tensions. Stop the Hate provides comprehensive antibias and conflict resolution training for high school students, teachers, administrators, parents, and community members (74). The Simon Wiesenthal Center and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum are centers for Holocaust remembrance, hate crime prevention, and education. Both work toward fighting anti-Semitism and other forms of prejudice and bigotry through programs targeting both students and educators. Recently the Anti-Defamation League and the Center for the Prevention of Youth Violence have implemented the Partners Against Hate program, which provides outreach, education, and training (75). Although private agencies such as the Southern Poverty Law Center and the Anti-Defamation League provide consulting services and promote program initiatives, the database, change variables, and specific outcomes for hate crime prevention and intervention programs have not been published. In summary, the evidence base for the efficacy of these programs is in the earliest stage of development.

The college and university campus has emerged as an important setting in the struggle against organized and

politicized discrimination (13). A variety of programs that have been implemented in schools have been adapted for institutes of higher learning, and others have been developed specifically for the college community to promote multiculturalism on campuses and to provide clear guidance for administrators who must respond swiftly and visibly to violations of campus policies (76). Twenty-three percent of college campuses with more than 2,500 enrolled students have a special hate crime program or unit operated by campus law enforcement agencies, although the nature of these programs is unclear (68).

School-based programs have resulted in youth-led initiatives. As a response to "high-impact" hate crimes, including the Columbine school shootings and the antigay murder of Matthew Shepard in Wyoming, more than 400 young people attended a national summit called "Stop the Terror: Youth United Against Hate Violence" in March 2000 (77); the second national symposium on this topic is scheduled for March 2003. The first-time summit, held in Atlanta and hosted by the Center for Democratic Renewal, explored issues such as the role of the Internet, music, symbols, and other means used by hate groups and others to perpetuate attitudes of hate. The goal was to focus more attention on helping young people to become aware of ways to stay clear of the spread of hate. A similar conference on combating hate and prejudice that targeted college-aged students took place at Northeastern University in March 2000 and included more than 300 college students from 70 campuses around the country (J. Levin, personal communication, 2000).

Educators have also begun to meet jointly with law enforcement personnel, hate crimes researchers, and mental health professionals in an effort to intervene in an effective manner. A conference on youth and hate crimes, held in Philadelphia in October 1998 offered prevention recommendations derived by interdisciplinary group consensus, including ideas for implementation of creative, recreational, prosocial after-school activities to reduce the vulnerability of youths to recruitment by hate groups. Interventions with at-risk youths were felt to be most relevant if tailored to address recruitment of youths by hate groups, motivational and psychological factors, and contextual factors (78).

Despite the implementation of interventions and educational programs after hate crimes have occurred, bias-motivated crimes will only decrease with the design and implementation of effective measures and strategies that stop the hate before it is manifested in a criminal act.

## Conclusions

It is imperative that psychiatrists, psychologists, and other mental health clinicians develop an understanding of the nature of prejudice and hate crimes. Clinicians need to ask about hate-motivated acts of violence, as such background is typically not revealed without this inquiry. Only



heightened clinical awareness and earlier identification will lead to appropriate interventions. Antibias teaching should begin in early childhood and continue through high school. At present, vertical and interdisciplinary training is lacking; students, teachers, and administrators all need help to respond appropriately when they see abuse occurring in the classroom or on the playground. Further research and data collection on hate crime activity, with particular attention to youth perpetrators, are needed.

In the long run, effective hate crime prevention must focus on promoting tolerance and an appreciation of diver-

sity among school children. Hate crimes will continue as long as schools breed intolerance. The community should also be involved with educational efforts to dispel prejudice and extremism. There is a need for programs that support training for police and victim-assistance professionals to help hate crime victims cope with trauma. Juvenile diversion programs for high-risk youths should be designed in the context of the issues faced by the particular community in which the youths live. Last, penalties for hate crime offenders must reflect the truly reprehensible nature of their acts.

#### APPENDIX 1. Internet Resources for Information About Hate Crimes

Source	Content Summary
Anti-Defamation League ( <a href="http://www.adl.org/adl.asp">http://www.adl.org/adl.asp</a> )	A wide array of resources to combat anti-Semitism, bigotry, and terrorism is provided; a database of hate symbols is also provided.
Partners Against Hate ( <a href="http://www.partnersagainsthate.org/">http://www.partnersagainsthate.org/</a> )	Detailed resources for antihate outreach and education and for prevention training are provided; a searchable database of hate crime statistics and legislation is included.
Brudnick Center on Violence and Conflict ( <a href="http://www.violence.neu.edu">http://www.violence.neu.edu</a> )	The center, based at Northeastern University, focuses on intergroup conflict and violence research.
Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism ( <a href="http://www.hatemonitor.org">http://www.hatemonitor.org</a> ; <a href="http://fighthate.org">http://fighthate.org</a> )	The center, based at the University of California, San Bernadino (previously located in Stockton, N.J.), provides information resources.
Center for the Prevention of Hate Violence ( <a href="http://www.cphv.usm.maine.edu">http://www.cphv.usm.maine.edu</a> )	The center, based at the University of Southern Maine, focuses on developing and implementing hate crime prevention curricula and programs. The site provides descriptions of current projects.
Southern Poverty Law Center ( <a href="http://www.splcenter.org">http://www.splcenter.org</a> )	The site, operated by the renowned nonprofit law center; contains descriptions of the center's antihate programs, summaries of current and past litigation, and a nationwide database tracking known hate groups.
Prejudice Institute ( <a href="http://www.prejudiceinstitute.org">http://www.prejudiceinstitute.org</a> )	The site is operated by a nonprofit organization focusing on policy research and education; fact sheets and information on internships for students are provided.
Hate Crimes Research Network ( <a href="http://www.hatecrime.net">http://www.hatecrime.net</a> )	Resources to connect academics and researchers working in the area of bias-motivated crime are provided.
Stop the Hate ( <a href="http://www.stopthehate.org">http://www.stopthehate.org</a> )	Created by students and targeting youth; this site provides information and resources for youth to help them implement programs in schools and communities.
Stop Hate ( <a href="http://www.stophate.org/stophate/index.html">http://www.stophate.org/stophate/index.html</a> )	Information on several hate crime prevention education tools and training programs, primarily targeting college campuses, is provided.
Civilrights.org ( <a href="http://www.civilrights.org">http://www.civilrights.org</a> )	Current civil rights news and information is provided; searchable archives of news information in various multimedia dissemination formats are included.
Simon Wiesenthal Center ( <a href="http://www.wiesenthal.org">http://www.wiesenthal.org</a> )	The center, an international Jewish human rights organization; provides information on Holocaust remembrance and contemporary concerns, including racism, anti-Semitism, terrorism, and genocide.
United Against Hate ( <a href="http://www.unitedagainsthate.org/main.cfm">http://www.unitedagainsthate.org/main.cfm</a> )	A division of civilrights.org, the site focuses on dissemination of information about current events related to hate crimes and lobbying efforts for political action.
Tolerance.org ( <a href="http://www.tolerance.org/">http://www.tolerance.org/</a> )	A project of the Southern Poverty Law Center, the site provides resources for adults, teens, children, parents/caregivers, and teachers.
National Center for Hate Crime Prevention ( <a href="http://www.edc.org/HHD/hatecrime/id1.htm">http://www.edc.org/HHD/hatecrime/id1.htm</a> )	The site describes the center's current projects, which are primarily targeted toward educators, juvenile justice practitioners, and professionals working with youth.
National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center ( <a href="http://www.safeyouth.org/home.htm">http://www.safeyouth.org/home.htm</a> )	Information on prevention and intervention programs, research summaries, and statistics are provided; the site provides resources for professionals, parents, and teens.
National Criminal Justice Reference Service—Hate Crime Summary ( <a href="http://www.ncjrs.org/hate_crimes/summary.html">http://www.ncjrs.org/hate_crimes/summary.html</a> )	Operated by a division of the U.S. Department of Justice, the site provides statistics, summaries of legislation, information about available grants and funding, and a list of human rights groups.
Hate-Crime Network ( <a href="http://hate-crime.website-works.com">http://hate-crime.website-works.com</a> )	The site provides resources and support for victims of hate crimes and a forum for reporting incidents of hate crime.
National Crime Prevention Council ( <a href="http://www.ncpc.org">http://www.ncpc.org</a> )	The site provides summaries of recent hate crime publications, links to current news stories about youth hate crimes, and additional resources on youth hate crime prevention.
Matthew Shepard Foundation ( <a href="http://www.matthewshepard.org">http://www.matthewshepard.org</a> )	The site provides information and resources intended to raise awareness about discrimination and diversity, particularly as they relate to antigay hate crimes.
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee ( <a href="http://www.adc.org">http://www.adc.org</a> )	The site provides information about hate crimes and discrimination against Arab Americans in the aftermath of September 11.

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