



School of Education
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Campus and Community Resources to Address the Negative Impacts of COVID-19 for Asian and Asian American/Pacific Islander Community Members

Within the School of Education, we want to emphasize our aspiration toward an inclusive and welcoming environment enriched by the identity, culture, background, experience, status, and abilities of each member of our community; including all students, faculty, and staff. We are proud that our School community utilizes facts to inform our actions, and stand against racism and xenophobia. Our diversity adds value to our School and helps us work toward building an innovative and inclusive working and learning environment, where all members are valued and welcomed.

In the wake of increasing harassment, discrimination, racism and xenophobia related to COVID-19, the School of Education has compiled a variety of resources that help to address the legal, social, and mental health concerns of targeted School community members. While this list is not exhaustive, these resources can be informative should individuals find value in utilizing them. While the School of Education endorses the campus-related resources below, additional community or national resources are not explicitly endorsed by the School.

UW-Madison Incident Reporting and Mental Health Resources

UW-Madison has a repository of resources and the latest updates regarding COVID-19 at <https://covid19.wisc.edu/>. If you are a student who has experienced harassment or discrimination, please file a [bias incident report](#). Faculty and staff may [file a complaint with the Office of Compliance](#). If you are feeling especially isolated during these uncertain times, the university has several free mental health resources online, including: [SilverCloud](#) for anxiety and stress management; [Healthy Minds](#) for resilience and mindfulness training; and [LifeMatters](#) for faculty and staff seeking assistance with life, work, family, and well-being. Students and Scholars can also access counseling services through [University Health Services](#). Please do not hesitate to use these resources and reach out to someone you trust.

Responding to Verbal Harassment

Harassment based on race, ethnicity, gender identity, disability, and sexual orientation can be quite terrifying. Unfortunately, this sort of harassment is a common occurrence within U.S. society. Due to the frequently shocking nature of these types of incidents, it is difficult to pinpoint a single standard response. However, there are a few points to keep in mind when experiencing racially-motivated verbal attacks:

- a) Your safety always comes first;
- b) It is not your responsibility to educate or admonish a harasser if you do not feel safe doing so; and

c) Be kind to yourself even if you wish after the fact that you had reacted differently. While there is no “right” or “perfect” response to harassment, studies indicate that having some kind of response (either in the moment or later) can reduce the trauma associated with harassment. If you decide to respond, do it for you. Remember that it’s ok to do nothing. It’s even ok to smile and keep walking. You get to decide what’s right for you. Below provides a few links that provides additional insight on how one might respond to a potential harasser:

- General guidelines for responding to verbal harassment and addressing the emotional repercussions: <https://www.ihollaback.org/responding-to-harassers/>
- Suggestions for dealing with and processing racist behavior both in person and online: <https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/people/how-to-deal-with-racist-people#fnref3>
- A Muslim and Sikh man talk about their experiences, outlook on, and responses to hate speech (content warning: explicit hate speech): <https://slate.com/human-interest/2019/06/how-to-respond-to-racist-harassment-man-up.html>

Responding to Threats or Physical Harassment

In the event of threats or the occurrence of physical violence, it is important to remember that removing yourself from any situation where you feel unsafe is the first step. When one's physical safety is involved, it's important to trust your gut and listen to how you are feeling. Calling 911 or UW-Madison Campus Police (608-264-2677) to request help is always an option when you feel physically unsafe. In the meantime, appeal to bystanders for help and draw their attention to the harasser. [The UW-Madison Police offer these suggestions](#) on personal safety. Additionally, you can download [one of these apps](#) designed for personal safety which record audio/video if you find yourself in a dangerous situation, and will alert either 911 or your trusted friends/family members to your location.

Additional tips with regards to maintaining one’s personal safety includes but is not limited to:

- Staying aware of your surroundings
- Thinking ahead and planning your journey
- Avoiding unpopulated areas
- Staying alert
- Letting someone know your plan, where you are going, the route you plan to take, and when you expect to return
- Trusting your instincts

Hate Crime vs. Hate Incident

A *hate crime* is defined by the FBI as:

“[. . .] when a person or group of persons commits a criminal act, such as an assault or vandalism, with the added element of bias against the victim's actual or perceived membership in a protected class.”

Under federal law, a hate crime is when a person willfully causes bodily injury, or attempts to do so using a dangerous weapon, because of the victim's actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability of any person. See 18 U.S.C. 249. The bias motivation does not need to be the primary motivation for the crime.

Federal law also protects interference with housing rights, damage to religious property or interference with the exercise of religion, and the exercise of a federally protected activity or other right granted by law or the Constitution. See 42 U.S.C. 3631; 18 U.S.C. 241, 245, 247."

A ***hate incident*** is defined as "Acts of prejudice that are not crimes and do not involve violence, threats, or property damage." Whether the discrimination you experienced was a hate ***crime*** or hate ***incident***, or even if you are ***not sure*** if the person's actions were motivated by racial prejudice, **contacting your local police** may still be an appropriate course of action.

The Department of Justice website has [further information and examples on what constitutes hate crimes vs. hate incidents](#).

Immediate Steps if a Victim of, or Witness* to, a Hate Crime

1. If on campus, call UWPD (608-264-2677) or the local police (911) immediately and make sure a report is taken.
2. If there are injuries, call 911 and request paramedics immediately.
3. Leave all evidence in place. Do not touch or remove anything. Record photo or video evidence if doing so is safe/possible. If not, write down everything that happened as soon as possible after the event.
4. Inform the police that you were a victim of a hate crime.
5. If the police hesitates to report the incident, insist on it. Ask for a copy of the police report for your personal records, and note the reporting officer's name and badge number.
6. If you do not feel comfortable reporting to law enforcement, or if they do not take adequate steps to resolve your case, consider contacting a local [victim advocacy organization](#) or contacting your [regional FBI office](#).
7. If on campus, inform school administrators about the hate crime and utilize victim's support resources offered by [UW-Madison](#). Inform [civil rights organizations](#) about the incident.

*Please note: If you are a witness to a hate crime, it is important to check with the victim, as you are able, as to what they wish to do in regards to reporting the crime.

Coping Strategies in the Face of Racism and Xenophobia

- **Recognize experiences of racism are real and not you being "oversensitive."** Racism is a persistent social problem, and if you feel you have been targeted by prejudice and discrimination, it is important to recognize that these are real issues that take a toll on your physical and mental wellbeing. You can also emphasize taking moments to care for

yourself and others when hurt by discrimination and remember that you have the right to be seen, welcomed, supported, served, and helped.

- **Recognize the strength of your communities and reject attacks on your values.** Communities of color and immigrants hold many strengths, including the strengths of your cultural values and social contributions. Identify and elect to receive information sources and communities that offer accurate, sensitive information on the outbreak.
- **Hold together in solidarity.** Supporting one another can help your communities utilize their strengths in the face of racism. During these times, racist individuals and systems may attempt to drive your communities apart, holding some actions and communities as “better” (e.g., the “Model Minority”) while rejecting others. Find ways to connect when practicing social distancing, such as through social media groups and other virtual communities. Stand together in the fight against racism to anyone.
- **Connect to resources from your community.** Sharing and utilizing resources, such as the ones linked here, can help you find support from others experiencing similar struggles. Connect with others and share your stories. This enables you to process experiences and garner support and solidarity from friends and loved ones.

Speaking Up Against Racism during COVID-19: Tools for Allyship

As it relates to harmful rhetoric, during this pandemic specifically, it is apparent that racist comments and jokes can easily become rants that have the propensity to turn into violence. As observers of negative, offensive, and/or racist behavior, it can be tempting to either ignore or brush off this type of ignorance. However, racist and xenophobic words have real-world effects that have the propensity to negatively impact mental health, sense of security and safety, and physical health. To that end, one of the key aspects of unlocking the power of diversity is *allyship*. Anyone has the capability to be an ally. An ally recognizes that though they may not be a member of a marginalized group they may support, or a current target of bias or discrimination, they make a concerted effort to better understand the position, challenges, or struggle another individual might be in. Because an ally might have more privilege (and recognizes said privilege), they are powerful voices alongside marginalized ones. Two important aspects of allyship are to listen more than you speak and to follow the lead of those with who you stand in solidarity. One way to engage in allyship is to speak up against racism, bias, and discrimination. [Teaching Tolerance](#) recommends a four-step process (interrupt, question, educate, echo) for speaking up against bias. While the steps below are just a few useful tools to utilize for engaging in allyship, more tools can be found in this [Guide To Allyship](#).

I. Interrupt. Interrupting means taking a time out. It shows the person you’re talking, texting or chatting with that what they’ve said is important enough to pause your conversation to address—that you need to talk about the racism before you talk about anything else. A few example phrases are as follows:

- “Hang on. I want to go back to what you called the virus.”
- “Just a second—let’s get into your point that the virus is somebody’s fault.”
- “Before we talk about that, I want to talk about the language you just used.”

II. Question. While questions can sometimes be relayed in more of an antagonistic or warning tone (e.g., What did you just say to me?!), it is important to frame and present your question with

the goal of better understanding why the person said what they said or did what they did. For example, you might ask:

- “Why did you call it the ‘Chinese Coronavirus’?”
- “Why do you think that?”
- “Where did you get that information?”

Importantly, asking someone to explain why a racist joke is funny is a great way to stop them from making racist jokes to you again. However, if you interested in having a real discussion about what they’ve said, it might work better to ask something like, “What made you say that?”

III. Educate. The key to educating is to continue the conversation. The goal is not simply to provide facts about the topic generally to the person you’re talking to with, but to explain why what they’ve said needs rethinking. That means that, to educate folks around racism associated with the coronavirus, we need to understand not only the virus but also the racism. For example, you might explain that it’s actually not common anymore to name a disease after its place of origin, that there’s a long, bad history of associating diseases with specific groups of people and that the name [COVID-19 was chosen](#) very carefully to avoid repeating those mistakes. If someone doesn’t understand why a comment they made was racist, [you can educate them](#) about the [long history](#) of stereotyping immigrants—and [Asian people, specifically](#)—as people who bring disease. You can explain how this stereotype is [both wrong](#) and harmful. Additionally, if someone tries to play down racist phrases as “just a joke,” you can [educate them](#) about the [discrimination and racism](#) many Asian and Asian American/Pacific Islander folks are [facing right now](#), so they better understand the impact of their words.

IV. Echo. It takes an effort to speak up against racist ideas and language. This is particularly true of people who are targeted by that language. That’s why we need to have each other’s backs. When someone else speaks up, echo them. Thank them, and emphasize or amplify their message any way you can. This not only encourages more speaking up—it also ensures that no one thinks your silence in response to biased ideas or language means you’re OK with it. Of course, echoing is harder while we’re social distancing, but there are many ways to do it. Online, we can re-share antiracist messages. And in chats or conversations, we can respond to offer support and agreement.

Resources

The Division of Diversity, Equity, and Educational Achievement put together a comprehensive list of resources. You can access the [DDEA’s list of resources here](#), and many are also included below as well. The [Multicultural Student Center has additional resources on responding to hate and bias](#).

UW-Madison Offices that Provide Support and Listen

- [Asian-Pacific Islander DESI American \(APIDA\) Student Center](#)
- [International Student Services](#)
- [Multicultural Student Center](#)
- [School of Education Global Engagement Office](#)
- [School of Education Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#)

UW-Madison Affinity-Based Organizations and Groups

- [Asian American Student Union](#)
- [Chinese American Student Association](#)
- [Chinese Student Undergraduate Student Association](#)
- [China Students and Scholar Association](#)
- [Filipino American Student Association](#)
- [Hmong American Student Association](#)
- [Hong Kong Student Association](#)
- [Indian Graduate Students' Association](#)
- [Japanese Student Association](#)
- [Korean-American Student Association](#)
- [Korean Undergraduate Students Association](#)
- [Korean Students and Scholars Association-UW-Madison](#)
- [Lao and Cambodian Student Association](#)

Madison-Based Resources

- [Dane County Office of Equity & Inclusion](#)
- [Madison Civil Rights Office](#)
- [Madison Mayor's Office](#)
- [Urban League of Greater Madison](#)
- [UW-Madison Division of Diversity, Equity & Educational Achievement](#)
- [The Hmong Institute](#)
- [Hmoob Kaj Siab Community Center](#)
- [Madison Area Chinese Organization](#)

Additional Resources

- [Asian Americans: PBS documentary](#)
- [Bias against Asian-American students is real. Affirmative action isn't the problem](#) by Stacey J. Lee and Kevin K. Kumashiro
- [NYU Global's presentation on Coping with and Contextualizing Anti-Asian Racism and Pandemics](#)
- [Teaching Tolerance's four-step process for speaking up against bias in the face of COVID-19](#)
- [U.S. Department of Justice](#)