



**DAY AGAINST HATE • FEBRUARY 13, 2020**  
**HOME & WORKPLACE DISCUSSION GUIDE**

**TOGETHER, NYC WILL TAKE  
A STAND AGAINST HATE.**



## WHAT IS NYC AGAINST HATE?

NYC Against Hate is a coalition of nine community-based organizations working across difference to make New York safer for our communities. Jewish, Arab-American, Muslim, LGBTQ, and Black and Brown New Yorkers are uniting to create community safety for our communities and build a stronger New York City. We believe hate violence and bias incidents can only effectively be prevented and responded to in our communities, not by the police or by prosecutors.

We would never shame anyone for wanting to feel safe, least of all survivors of hate violence who want more police protection. But we believe there is a better way. Policing has thus far been the primary citywide response to hate violence, and it is at best an ineffective deterrent and makes many New Yorkers feel less safe rather than more protected. Meanwhile, New York City and State have profoundly under-resourced virtually all of the infrastructure that would actually prevent hate violence: mental health and homeless services, community-based organizations, transformative justice, and cross-cultural and Anti-Violence education. We will never arrest our way out of hate violence – NYC Against Hate advocates for policies that divest from our already massive police and prison system, and invest in approaches that truly work to prevent hate violence.

The goal of the NYC Against Hate coalition is to identify the strategies and skills that will make *all* of the communities impacted by hate violence safer today, and build the inter-communal relationships and shared understanding that will prevent hate violence tomorrow.

## WHAT WAS THE DAY AGAINST HATE?

The Day Against Hate was a series of events occurring at various locations and times all across NYC on February 13th, 2020. The goal of the Day Against Hate was to draw attention to the epidemic of hate violence that New York is experiencing right now, and for communities across New York to come together, learn concrete skills, and build the relationships we need to better protect ourselves and each other from hate violence. The core of most Day Against Hate events was an “upstander” training, coordinated by the experts at The Center for Anti-Violence Education.

## WHY IS THE DAY AGAINST HATE NECESSARY RIGHT NOW?

New York is experiencing a surge in hate violence that mirrors a rising tide of hate nationwide. According to the F.B.I., hate violence reached a 16-year high in 2018. The NYPD says reports of anti-Semitic crimes specifically rose by 24 percent in 2019, while gender-related hate crimes nearly doubled and homophobic hate crimes rose as well. Nationally, hate violence against Latinx people is at 10-year high. Animating this is the 30 percent increase in hate groups that began with the election of Donald Trump, following three years of decline at the end of the Obama presidency.

One of the painful effects of hate violence is to divide our communities. All of us deserve safety, and hate violence makes us feel unsafe. However hate violence impacts every community in different ways, and what makes one group feel safer may make another group less safe.

Learning to be an upstander is a concrete way for all of us to protect each other from hate violence, without making assumptions about what an individual survivor of violence needs, or investing in approaches like policing or surveillance that can make other communities less safe. None of us is responsible for the bigoted ideologies that undergird hate violence, but all of us have the ability to fight back. By becoming upstanders, we can take greater responsibility for the safety and character of our city, and ourselves.

## WHAT IS AN “UPSTANDER”

A bystander witnesses an incident, an upstander is someone who witnesses an incident and chooses to intervene. An upstander intervenes to support someone being harassed, intimidated, discriminated against, attacked, bullied or otherwise dehumanized.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS, PROMPTS, AND ACTIVITIES

*This guide is intended to inform dialog and learning about the complex topic of hate violence. Whether or not you participated in the February 13, 2020 Day Against Hate, you can take greater responsibility for your city and your neighbors by getting familiar with the tips and strategies (included) provided by the Center for Anti-Violence Education. Start by hosting a conversation with friends, family, or colleagues about hate violence using the guide below. Take action by getting involved with a community organization that you trust, such as one of the NYC Against Hate coalition organizations (listed on the last page and at [NYCAgainstHate.org](https://NYCAgainstHate.org)).*

*You can choose to do any of these, all of them, or generate other ideas!*

### CREATE CONNECTION AND SET THE TONE WITH AN OPENING GO-AROUND

Have participants share something about themselves that people would find surprising, or ask your guests to tell the story and meaning of their name.

### THOUGHTFUL FACILITATION AND GROUP AGREEMENTS ENABLE A RICHER CONVERSATION

Check out these great suggestions from AORTA: [https://aorta.coop/portfolio\\_page/anti-oppressive-facilitation/](https://aorta.coop/portfolio_page/anti-oppressive-facilitation/)

### ACTIVE LISTENING PAIRS OR SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

**Upstanding:** Being an upstander involves taking risks. The risks may be different based on the identities you hold, your health, and many other factors. How much risk do you think it makes sense for you to take on? How much risk feels comfortable to you? What is a moment in your life when you have gone beyond your comfort zone and taken a risk? What made that possible for you?

**Upstanding:** What aspects of your gender, racial identity, language skills, physical size, or other identities give you power and privilege that can either help or hinder your role as an upstander?

**Upstanding:** Have you ever seen an upstander you admire? What was the situation and what did they say and do?

**Hate Violence:** What don't people know about how my community has been impacted by hate violence? What's hidden or confusing?

**Hate Violence:** Have you, your family, or your friends been personally impacted by hate violence? How did it make you feel? Did your thinking change as a result?

**Hate Violence:** Why do so many communities have a direct interest in fighting hate violence? What links our collective experience? How is the threat to our communities connected?

**Community Safety:** Do I feel comfortable calling the NYPD? Do I feel like the police are there to protect me and people like me?

**Community Safety:** NYC is the 4th-most segregated city in the United States, has the most segregated schools, and has the greatest income inequality in the country as well. Do you think this contributes to hate violence in New York City? If so, why?

**Community Safety:** What makes me feel safe in my neighborhood, my favorite places, or my place of worship? Is it possible that what makes me feel safe might make someone else feel scared, vulnerable, targeted, or unwelcome?

**Culture & Identity:** What questions do I have about my neighbors – what have I always wondered, no matter how basic? Are there things that I believe about them that might not be as true or simple as I think?

**Culture & Identity:** What do you want to learn about the history, culture or oppression of people based on race, gender, sexuality, national origin, religion, or other identities in order to respond more effectively to incidents of hate? How would you go about doing that?

**Culture & Identity:** What are thoughtful ways that you can move toward, rather than away from people with racial, nationality, and gender identities that you are unfamiliar with?

**Culture & Identity:** What are some of your invisible identities, such as your class background, or physical or mental health, that might contribute to the way you think about and respond to incidents of hate violence?

## IN-DEPTH DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

“Despite the good intentions of its many supporters, [the term “hate” focuses] on individuals and groups considered to be ‘extreme’ in their political views and actions actually draws attention away from structural inequalities, exclusions, and violence that are foundational to the ordinary workings of so-called ‘respectable’ public and private institutions...It’s so much easier to place the blame for violence directed against entire groups on criminal misfits, loners, and crackpots than to challenge the unspoken public consensus that permits broader cultures and structures of violence to exist.” – *Reconsidering Hate*, by Kay Whitlock, Political Research Associates

- *As we think creatively about how we want to respond to the increase in hate violence in NYC, what can we do to effectively “challenge unspoken public consensus that permits broader cultures and structures of violence to exist” within our communities here in NYC?*
- *How do we step into the hate violence conversation without participating in exclusively blaming “criminal misfits, loners, and crackpots” for hate violence?*

[The language of “hate”] is compelling and appealing precisely because it delineates “us,” the non-haters, from “them,” the haters, permitting “us” to deplore, denounce, and distance ourselves from virulent and open expression of bigotry. Few people want to be labeled “haters” or “supporters of hate.” Most of us prefer to think of ourselves as decent people who support that which is fair, good, and moral over violent forces that seek to intimidate and do harm to others. We are seldom encouraged to recognize that conscious hatred and bigotry are not required in order for structures of oppression to inflict violence on marginalized communities. – *Reconsidering Hate*, by Kay Whitlock, Political Research Associates

- *In what ways do we all carry the messages society teaches us that lead to these behaviors?*

- *How can our work to combat hate violence call for everyone to reflect and be accountable to ways we participate in this framework?*

"If hate is a social problem, and not just a matter of individual psychology, then the intensified policing/enhanced punishment strategy being used here cannot produce the results we want in terms of reducing violence and creating safe and just communities. To accomplish that, we must turn to community-based strategies that seek to address structures of violence as well as individual acts." – [Reconsidering Hate](#), by Kay Whitlock, Political Research Associates

- *What are the dangers of police and punishment based responses to hate crimes?*
- *What community based strategies have you or your organization tried, or seen others try? What ideas do you have about this?*

[Hate crimes laws] ...can readily morph into instruments of the kind of injustice they seek to remedy. For example, a South Carolina anti-lynching statute intended to protect African Americans against White mob violence transformed over time into a legal tool used disproportionately against young Black men [because of] wording broad enough... to embrace even minor forms of violence, such as fistfights. The disproportionate charging of Black youth occurred "even in cases less serious or comparable to those involving [W]hites."

Police treat many LGBTQ and HIV-affected people who attempt to report hate violence as offenders rather than as people who have suffered violence. Such "re-victimization" is especially likely if the person reporting is a person of color, transgender or gender nonconforming, poor, or presumed to be a sex worker or immigrant. In some cases, LGBTQ people who have suffered harassment and violence are charged as offenders. Thus, in too many cases, laws intended to protect become a portal for additional forms of abuse. – [Reconsidering Hate](#), by Kay Whitlock, Political Research Associates

## CREATIVE & ALL-AGES ACTIVITIES

### Songs

[Somebody's Hurting My Brother](#) - from the Poor People's Campaign Songbook. [Teaching video here.](#)

**I Gave My Heart to Justice** - a call and response song that can be adapted, for example by substituting the word "justice" in the lyrics. [Teaching video by Jewlia here.](#)

[Which Side Are You On?](#) - legendary union and civil rights anthem by [Florence Reece](#). (This can also go with the altar activity – participants can name the ancestor/ freedom fighter/ loved one that you're calling into the room in the song.) [Teaching video here.](#)

**I'm Gon' Stand** by Sweet Honey in the Rock. [Teaching video here.](#)

### Art-making

Bystander intervention comic-making (inspired by ["What to do if you are witnessing Islamophobic harassment" by Maeril](#)): Fold regular paper into 8 sections. Participants can make up scenarios, or tell the story of an experience they actually had – on the subway, the classroom, or wherever. Show us what actually happened, and imagine what do you want to do next time?

### Ritual & spirit

**Courage Token:** To be an upstander is to be grounded in a courage and committed to risk. Create a space in the room where you are hosting the training where people can take a

small token away with them to keep in their pocket as a reminder of the training and their commitment to intervening on violence. Something they can rub or hold in their hand when they need courage. It could be a bowl of pebbles, acorns, large seeds, or something that's culturally significant to your people. You could invite people to write a word on it: courage, solidarity, for my father, etc, or simply to take a piece with them. The bowl could be passed to close the training, or laid out on a table with a candle, a piece of cloth, a quote, etc.

**Altar of Loved Ones:** In the same place or elsewhere in the room, consider creating an altar or designated space where participants can write the names of those who they wish to bring into the room to help ground their courage. They could be specific folks who have been killed or wounded by violence, people who are living or dead (or historical), or people they don't know personally (for example: "the woman I saw being harrassed on the subway and always wonder about"). Have small pieces of paper or post-it notes and pens available. Participants write "I will be brave for:" and then the name of the person or group they are uplifting. Consider ways to display them such as: clothespins on a string or wire mesh; bring in some branches and place them in vases with sand or rice in the bottom, so the branches stand up well. Attach the pieces of paper to the branches, and at the end you'll have leaves made of paper.

**Portraits in Courage Photo Booth:** Create an Instagram photo booth; Use cardboard to make a sign that will appear in all the pictures, saying something to affirm folk's commitment to standing up: "I stand up to hate" or "we turn up for our neighbors." This would work best if people can embrace some silly: what does your superhero alter ego look like? How do they hold themselves? If you're feeling ambitious, create a tableaux and provide a costume box of some hats and props for people to choose from. Ask: what hat or cape or prop helps you get into character as someone who is fierce and justice loving? This activity might seem goofy, but your body will remember that feeling of power and clarity when you need it again.

---

## CREDITS

**Day Against Hate Discussion Guide written and edited by:**

Emma Alabaster, Sonia Alexander, Barat Ellman, Leo Ferguson, Robin Messing, Emily Simons, Hana Sun, Zahara Zahav. Additional material sourced from Kay Whitlock.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

**To report hate violence or discrimination:**

[NYC Commission on Human Rights](#)

[NYC Anti-Violence Project](#)

**More information about hate violence, and resources to stay safer from state violence and hate violence.**

[Understanding Antisemitism](#), Jews For Racial & Economic Justice

[How to Address Antisemitism in New York City, and Beyond](#), Arielle Korman & Martha Ackelsberg

[Safer Party Toolkit](#), Audre Lorde Project

[The Accompany Project](#), Arab American Association of New York



*Anti-Street Harassment*, Brooklyn Movement Center

*Trans Justice Solutions*, *Trans Justice Factsheet*, Make The Road NY

*Freedom to Thrive*, Center for Popular Democracy

*Reconsidering Hate*, Kay Whitlock, Political Research Associates

*Know Your Rights, Defend Your Rights*, Mijente

*Know Your Rights, Defend Your Rights (En Español)*, Mijente

*Facts About The Right to Know Act*, Communities United for Police Reform



The Audre Lorde Project

Arab American Association of New York

Brooklyn Movement Center

The Center for Anti-Violence Education

Desis Rising Up & Moving

Global Action Project

Make The Road New York

Jews For Racial & Economic Justice

The New York City Anti-Violence Project

[www.nycagainsthate.org](http://www.nycagainsthate.org)