



Building Safe Communities

Critical Incident Response Model

What is a critical incident?

People have different definitions for the term "critical incident." Some communities have developed their own definition to help their anti-racism work. For example, Quesnel's Anti-Racism Response Task Force defined a critical incident as "a shocking or personally upsetting racist or hate-based event that results in distress or harm to anyone within the community." You may want to develop your own definition. Talking it through with a group is a good way to brainstorm and build consensus on what you want to achieve.



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The Critical Incident Response Model is a three-year, three-step process communities can use to build healthy and safe communities and to eliminate racism. It was developed by the B.C. Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services' Anti-racism and Multiculturalism Unit (AMU).

How does it work?

Each step in the process takes one year.

Step One is to get people talking. Staff from the AMU visit your community and work with you to get as many people as possible talking about things such as:

- What do racism and hate activity look like in the community?
- What are the most important issues to address?
- What strengths and resources can you build on?
- What are some of the options for responding to hate activity?
- What's happening in other communities?

As you talk about the issues, you will also form a steering committee – a group of people who will lead your community through the next two steps.

Step Two is to get people together. The AMU provides funding and support for one or more community events. These events could be anything from educational seminars to plays at your local high school. The goal is to help you build new community partnerships and raise awareness about fighting racism and hate activity.

Step Three is to take action. The AMU provides support to help you build a community protocol – a formal agreement that says, in writing, how your community will respond to racism and other hate activities.

Each community decides for itself what the protocol should do and how it should look. For example, some focus on prevention, others focus on helping victims, and some address a full range of issues. The most important thing is that the protocol responds to local needs and interests.



E N C O U R A G I N G N E W

Community Partnerships

Building new partnerships is one of the most important steps in fighting racism – and it can be challenging. Here are some tips from people who have used the Critical Incident Response Model to build anti-racism protocols. Feel free to ask them for more information. You can get their names and contact information from the Anti-Racism and Multiculturalism Unit.

Start by building on existing networks

Every community has groups of people working together - in schools, health-care organizations, local government, police, the media, Aboriginal organizations and service groups such as the Rotary Club, to name just a few.

Keep this in mind as you put together a steering committee or hire a project coordinator. The more diverse your contacts are, the easier it will be to connect with other groups and individuals across your community, and in other communities.

Be positive

It's easier to get people involved if you approach them with an opportunity, rather than a problem. For example, when he talked to city officials, Kamloops anti-racism project coordinator Arjun Singh focused on the economic benefits of making the community welcoming to people from all backgrounds.

Other groups found it helpful to present the work as an effort to prevent racism. Some used terms such as "community response" rather than "critical incident response" for a positive approach and to avoid confusion about the meaning of "critical incident."

Be creative

There are lots of different ways to reach out to people in different parts of your community. In Terrace, for example, the anti-racism project includes a high school art contest, with small cash prizes to encourage kids to get involved.

In Cranbrook, the local Emergency Social Services team was a key partner. So was a group that serves people with HIV and AIDS. "Both groups were a great help," says coordinator Irma Henkels. "We knew they existed but, until we reached out to them, we hadn't understood how much they did and the extent of their involvement in town."

"Networking is absolutely necessary.

The more contacts you start with, the

simpler it is."

Cheryl Schamehorn,

Quesnel Anti-Racism

Task Force chair



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Encouraging New Community Partnerships, continued

Plan your response to denial/resistance

People who have not experienced racism may think it doesn't exist in your community. Or they may accept it as a normal part of life. In these cases, it's helpful for someone who has been affected by racism to share their experience if this person is comfortable about sharing.

Another good approach is the one used in Campbell River. Coordinator Lynda Drury says some people felt that racism was not an issue. So, instead of talking about hate crime and critical incidents, "we focused [on how our efforts] would give rise to a safer community for everyone."

Make it easy for people to take part

Everyone is busy these days and may not have time for things such as regular committee meetings. In Quesnel, project chair Cheryl Schamehorn says they rarely had more than six to eight people at their meetings, "but we used e-mail to keep people in the loop; we sent out minutes after every meeting and asked for comments and feedback. People really appreciated that. They stayed involved."

Stay in the public eye

The more people know what you're doing, the more support you'll get. Make presentations in public forums, such as city council or school board meetings, and be prepared to talk to the media. That way, you can get your message out twice – to the group you're talking to, and to the general public.



T I P S O N

Designing a Community Protocol

“There are lots of people out there who want to help. All you have to do is ask!”

*Arjun Singh,
Kamloops*

A protocol is a formal agreement that sets out the steps your community will follow in responding to racism and other hate activities. There’s no single “right” way to design such a protocol. The important thing is to get broad agreement on it, in every part of your community.

Below are some tips from anti-racism project chairs and coordinators who have developed protocols. Contact them directly if you want more advice. You can get their names and numbers from the Anti-Racism and Multiculturalism Unit.

Do research

Talk to people in other communities who’ve already developed protocols. Use the Internet, libraries and other research tools to look at what’s been done in other areas, too.

In Kamloops, for example, the project team got advice from people across Canada and the United Kingdom. “The responses were amazingly positive,” says coordinator Arjun Singh. “There are lots of people out there who want to help. All you have to do is ask!”

You’ll want to do some research in your own community, too. For example, it’s helpful to find out what kinds of hate-based or racist incidents have happened; what resources or policies are already in place; and who in your community (groups or individuals) is likely to join you in the fight against racism.

Set clear goals

As you will see when you do some research, there are lots of different ways to design response protocols, and lots of different kinds of protocols. For example:

- Kamloops has three kinds of protocols: one for reporting racism and hate incidents; one for responding to major incidents; and one for responding to less-serious incidents.
- In Campbell River, many different organizations have developed their own protocols, from the same template.
- In Terrace, they’ve developed a handbook with detailed advice on preventing and responding to racism in schools, workplaces and the community.



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Tips on Designing a Community Protocol, continued

Decide early on what kind of protocol is right for your community. Build in flexibility for your decision, because it may change.

Cranbrook coordinator Irma Henkels says setting goals was very helpful. “We asked ourselves questions like: What is the protocol’s purpose? What should be its focus: Response? Prevention? Education? What geographic area should it serve? What format should we use? and so on. It really helped to organize our work and our ideas.”

Involve key partners

Think about who will use the protocol, and how you will get them involved in its development. In Terrace, for example, the project team invited people from a range of organizations – and individual concerned citizens – to a “brainstorming luncheon” to talk about the issues. In Cranbrook, they held community workshops. In Campbell River, coordinator Lynda Drury says, “Our strategy was to work within our own organizations [on the steering committee] to encourage buy in, and move from there to get other groups on board.”

These are just a few examples of how to get people involved.

Don’t forget the media

The work you’re doing is important. Call your local news media and let them know what’s going on. They can help you raise awareness and build support.

Invite reporters to attend a workshop, signing ceremony, meeting or event. Keep them in the loop as you move forward with your work. The simple fact that you are working to combat racism and hate in your community is news. The more people know about it, the more support you’ll get.

Don’t expect to get it right the first time

It may help to think of your first draft (or outline) as a tool you can use to gather more feedback – and build more relationships – as you develop your protocol.

Be prepared to make lots of revisions. Remember: the people you work with will feel a greater sense of ownership and involvement if they see their ideas reflected in the document as it’s developed.

You may even change your goals or focus along the way. For example, the Quesnel project started out by focusing on community agencies. “Then we heard about a student who experienced racism in school,” says project chair Cheryl Schamehorn. “This child didn’t know where or how to go for help. Neither did the family. We realized then that what we really needed were not just tools for agencies, but tools to help victims and witnesses report these types of incidents and get the help they need.”



S A M P L E

Community Protocol

It's helpful to explain any words or ideas that are important to your protocol, right up front, so readers know exactly what you're talking about.

There are many different ways to design a community protocol. The outline below is only a guide. It's designed to help you think about the kinds of information you include, and how you might present it.

For more advice, talk to people who've already built anti-racism protocols. You can get their names and contact information from the Anti-Racism and Multiculturalism Unit.

Introduction

Most protocols start with a statement, explaining what they are, why they were developed (and by whom), who they're for, how they're structured, etc. This helps readers use the document and understand it.

Definitions/Public Education

It's helpful to explain any words or ideas that are important to your protocol, right up front, so readers know exactly what you're talking about. For example, the Cranbrook protocol includes a section that defines "hate and race based incidents and crimes" and describes how they may look in the community.

Some longer protocols also include an educational section that helps people understand racism and discrimination. For example, the Terrace protocol discusses "recognizing our own behaviours" and explains "why it is important to challenge racism."

Background/Key Facts

In this section, use information from your research to help readers understand the situation in your community.

Is racism a problem? Have there been many incidents? Do you have any specific information or statistics? What kinds of helping resources are already in place? What kinds of efforts are already under way to build a safer community? And so on.

Response Protocol

Explain, very clearly, the steps that will be followed by the people or organizations who sign the protocol. You may want to include different sections for different groups, reflecting their individual roles. Or you may want to include different types of steps.



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Sample Community Protocol, continued

For example, the Cranbrook protocol includes a list of steps for reporting, assessing, responding to and following up on hate- and race-based incidents; a list of steps the local response team will follow; and a list of the team's commitments in terms of community education. The Terrace protocol also includes different types of steps for responding to racism in the community, in the workplace and in schools.

Depending on your focus, you may want to include steps for preventing racism. You may also want to offer guidance for the general public. For example, the Quesnel protocol includes steps for victims and witnesses to follow, if they experience a race- or hate-based incident.

Signatures

You may want to include a section where people can sign the protocol (as individuals, or on behalf of their organizations) to make their commitment official. If you are going to have the document signed, remember: a signing ceremony is a great way to get public and media attention and support.

Appendices

You may want to attach, as appendices, copies of any important documents or background information you used or prepared in developing your protocol. For example, the Cranbrook protocol includes a list of helping agencies and their contact information. The Terrace protocol includes a “cultural breakdown” of the B.C. and local populations. And the Quesnel protocol includes, as an appendix, a community involvement questionnaire. Appendices should add to people's understanding of the issues your community is working to address.



ANTI-RACISM & HATE CRIME

Terminology Guide

The list of terms is not exhaustive and many debates exist about how these terms can be defined.

This terminology guide is designed to help people work together to prevent and respond to racism and other types of hate activity. Terms like “prejudice” and “discrimination” are defined to assist you in a discussion about these issues. At the end of this guide is a list of sources that have been used for the definitions.

The list of terms is not exhaustive and many debates exist about how these terms can be defined. This guide has been created as only a starting point for discussion and for you to consider the terminology you may want to use. You can learn a lot about the people you are working with, and yourself, by discussing terms and – if you have time – agreeing on your own definitions of important words and phrases.

Section I: Words related to attitudes and beliefs

Race is a social construct that divides people into groups, based on physical characteristics (such as skin colour, etc.), origin or ancestry. This term raises debates. Many people state that ‘race’ is meaningless and the acceptance of it as a legitimate category has been harmful. Instead, some people have used the word ‘ethnicity’ or ‘ethnic identity’ (these are used interchangeably). In human rights law the word ‘race’ is used because the courts have determined that what is important is not the actual physical characteristic of a person, but how the perpetrator perceives the person.

Ethnicity refers to a person’s cultural background, including language, origin, faith and heritage. Ethnicity comprises the ideas, beliefs, values and behaviour that are transmitted from one generation to the next. Ethnicity is also a concept created by society and is perceived in terms of common culture, history, language or nationhood.

Racism is a set of mistaken assumptions, opinions and actions resulting from the belief that one group of people categorized by physical characteristics or ancestry are inherently superior to another. Racism can happen one on one, or it may be practiced by groups, organizations or institutions. It can take many forms, including:



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Anti-racism and Hate Crime Terminology Guide

Stereotyping refers to a belief that certain people are exactly the same, just because they have some things in common (like their skin colour, origin or ancestry).

Prejudice preconceived judgment or assumption, not based on any facts or evidence, towards an individual or group that results in treating that individual or group as inferior or different. It is similar to stereotyping.

Bias is an inclination or preference based on something other than facts or evidence.

Intolerance is a lack of acceptance or respect for people from diverse backgrounds, beliefs or practices.

Section II: Words related to actions

Hate Activity is any expression of hate or hostility towards a group or individual, based on things such as race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or ethnicity.

Hate Crime is a criminal offence, motivated by a person's hate, prejudice or bias against an identifiable group or individual. This includes, for example, people who share a common language, ethnicity, skin colour, gender, age or religion.

Hate Propaganda is a type of hate crime. Spoken or written words that encourage or promote hate, dislike, or harm towards a person, a specific group or groups.

Discrimination happens when people are treated unfavourably because of prejudice, especially prejudice based on things like race, gender, class, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, or ethnicity.

Oppression is unjust or cruel treatment, usually designed to keep people from gaining or using power. Oppression can include physical, psychological, social or economic threats, or the use of actual force.

Harassment is the act of annoying, insulting, or treating someone badly. It can include such things as name-calling, jokes, insults or general rudeness.

Marginalization happens when a person or group is considered unimportant, their voices and views are ignored and they do not have full equal access to the social, economic, cultural and political institutions of society.

Section III: Words related to anti-racism

Anti-racism is the practice of identifying, challenging, preventing, eliminating, and working to change the ideas and values (such as prejudice, bias and stereotypes) that contribute to racism.

Cross-cultural understanding knowledge and awareness gained by interacting with people from diverse cultures without imposing one's own cultural values on someone.

Diversity means variety. When we talk about anti-racism, diversity refers to the range of unique qualities that all people have as individuals. It recognizes that we are all different, and that our differences can be a source of strength.

Inclusive describes any effort to include people – regardless of their differences. For example, inclusive language uses terms like “police officer” rather than “police man” so that women aren't excluded. Inclusive organizations have policies and practices that respect peoples' differences, such as hiring employees who reflect their communities' diversity.

Equality is about treating everyone the same. For example, Canadians are equal under the law. We all have the same rights and responsibilities, regardless of our differences.

Equity is about fairness. It involves accommodating differences and recognizing that some people may face barriers or disadvantages in areas like the workplace.

Anti-racism and Hate Crime Terminology Guide

Mosaic is a picture or pattern made of many different pieces that all fit together. The term is often used to describe Canadian society and communities because they include many people from many different backgrounds, all working together.

Multiculturalism is the recognition that people of all diverse backgrounds and cultures contribute to, and enrich, a community or society. It promotes a cross-cultural understanding and respect of all diverse cultures.

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**All definitions were adapted and written from sources 2 and 4. The other sources were consulted for additional information.