



# What happens when someone reports a hate crime or incident in Edmonton?

Report &  
Recommendations

# Land Acknowledgement

We wish to acknowledge that we developed our report on Treaty 6 Territory. This territory has long been where various Indigenous Peoples have come together to meet and gather. Diverse Indigenous groups have walked this territory for centuries, including the nêhiyaw, Dené, Anishinaabe, Nakota Isga, and Niitsitapi peoples. It is the home of the Métis people and one of the largest Inuit communities residing south of the 60th parallel.

Coalitions Creating Equity recognizes the responsibility we have to learn the history of these lands for us to understand the present and actively work to dismantle the barriers imposed by historical and ongoing colonialism. Considering the topic of this document, we must also recognize that the experiences of Indigenous peoples as they pertain to hate crimes and incidents require a great deal more attention, understanding, and prioritization.



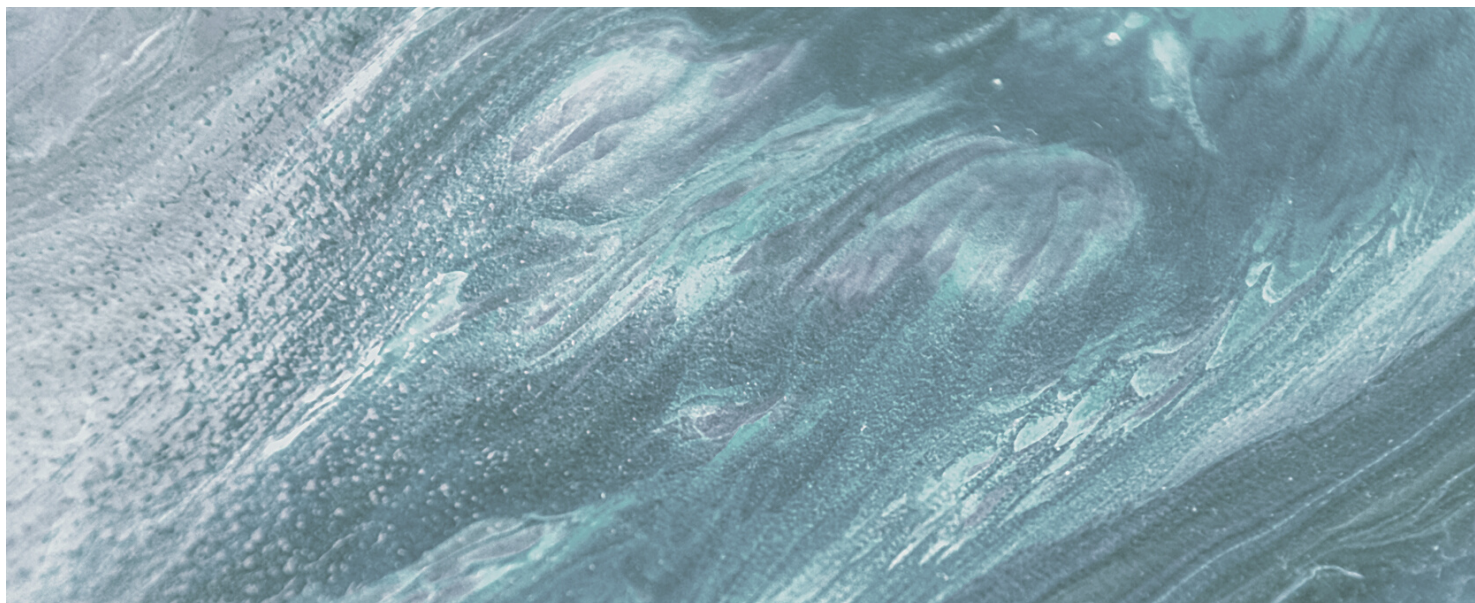
# Acknowledgements

Firstly, we want to thank all the individuals who participated in this study, and who shared their stories in the hopes that doing so could lead to positive change.

This study and the resulting report resulted from a collaborative effort between the many partners who make up Coalitions Creating Equity Edmonton. However, we want to especially acknowledge Helen Rusich with REACH Edmonton; the John Humphrey Centre for Peace & Human Rights; the Alberta Hate Crimes Committee; Farshad Labbaf with the University of Alberta; William Howe, PhD at the University of Alberta; and Shalini Sinha of Inclusiv for their roles in the research design, co-creation of data collection tools, recruitment, perspectives on themes and recommendations, funding, and knowledge mobilization of the study discussed in this report.

Landon Turlock led the interviews and analysis for this study, as well as the authoring of this report alongside Dr. Maria Mayan with the University of Alberta School of Public Health, Deborah Dobbins with the Shiloh Centre for Multicultural Roots, Helen Rusich with REACH Edmonton, and Izdhar Gaib with Catholic Social Services.

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# Executive Summary

## Overview

Coalitions Creating Equity (CCE) Alberta is a province-wide community of practice that supports the advancement of all equity issues and greater awareness of the human rights of Albertans. Coalitions Creating Equity Edmonton interviewed 18 individuals who had reported a hate crime or incident over the past five years in Edmonton to understand their experiences reporting and how organizations responded to them.

## Inconsistent Organizational Responses

When people reported hate crimes and incidents in Edmonton, responses from organizations were inconsistent, which can significantly impact survivors. Participants shared their hopes for justice, support, and advocacy when reporting. However, responses were often unreliable.

Negative experiences included being ignored, disbelieved, discouraged from making a report, and facing discrimination. Survivors shared how these responses from organizations can make them feel like they are not being heard and can have negative emotional and psychological impacts, including retraumatization and feeling like they cannot trust authorities.

However, when organizations respond positively by providing victim-centred services, believing survivors, and providing timely follow-up, survivors said they felt listened to, believed, and supported.

## Context of Discrimination

Most participants defined hate crimes and incidents similarly to how they are defined in Canada. Participants discussed how these experiences felt connected to the country's historical and ongoing practices of discrimination. People talked about how organizations, such as the police, transit, non-profits, foster care, and healthcare system, respond to hate crimes and incidents. However, they shared how these same organizations have members who sometimes carry out hate crimes and incidents. Participants observed that the organizations that were supposed to help them sometimes discriminated against them.

## Reporting Behaviours

Participants considered their personal relationships, beliefs, and past experiences when deciding whether to report a hate crime or incident. They might report these occurrences to various organizations, like the police, community organizations, or healthcare providers, among many others. However, they often discussed not having other options. Some people shared about experiencing hate crimes or incidents multiple times, but they did not always report them. Sometimes people said they did not report due to not knowing how to, being discouraged by someone they trust, or not thinking they would get help. However, if the occurrence was serious or kept happening, people were likelier to report it, especially if they knew someone at the organization or were encouraged to make a report.

# Recommendations

We offer the following recommendations based directly on interviews with people who have reported hate crimes and incidents to organizations in Edmonton. Participants in this research provided and confirmed these recommendations.

## Recommendations for Organizations Addressing Hate Crimes and Incidents

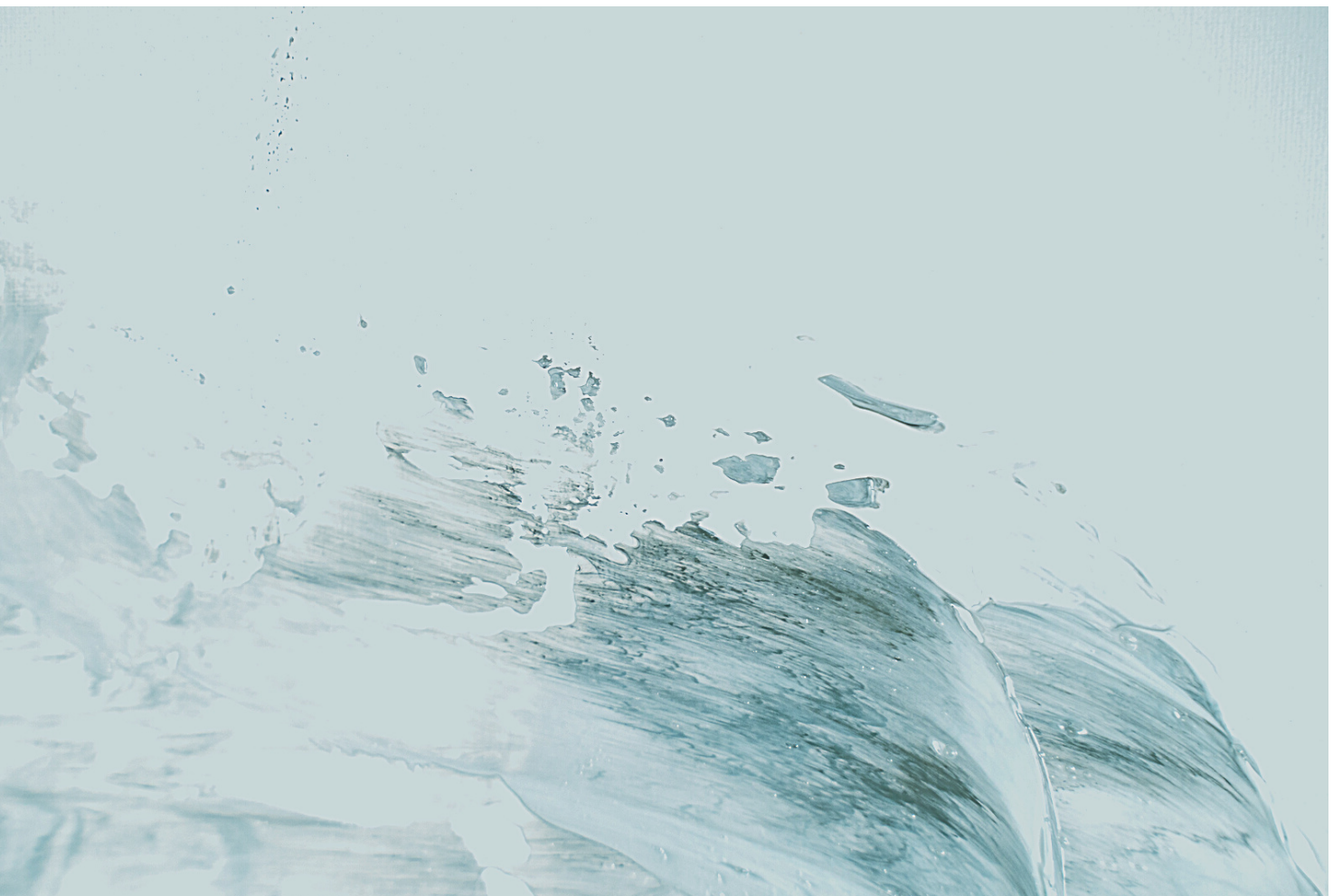
- Ensure that first points of contact (i.e., frontline staff, 911 operators, transit operators, security, and patrol officers) reliably establish the immediate safety of the survivor. These points of contact must further respond to reports of hate crimes and incidents with seriousness and immediacy while practicing empathic and active listening in a trauma-informed, culturally safe, and cost-free environment. Ensuring these responses may involve training staff about understanding and responding to hate crimes and incidents, bias awareness, trauma-informed practice, and intercultural practice. Policies to provide such responses should be developed and implemented in full.
- Regularly evaluate and update responses to reports of hate crimes and incidents to ensure a consistent, high level of service while prioritizing the perspectives of people who have made these reports.
- Provide timely, reliable client-centered services or referrals that appropriately address the physical, psychological, and financial impacts of being victimized by a hate crime or incident.
- Do not make services contingent on survivor behaviour, such as signing non-disclosure agreements or dismissing complaints.
- Make accessible emergency support and safety planning available to survivors who have reported a hate crime or incident, potentially through a hotline or other 24/7 option.
- Provide regular, timely feedback to survivors while being available to field questions, provide guidance, and respond to emerging situations.
- Accurately guide and inform survivors about the services, options, and processes they can expect while upholding the survivor's autonomy.
- Enact policies, training, and hiring practices to ensure that service providers are culturally humble and represent the diversity of communities impacted by hate crimes and incidents.

- Recognize that hate crimes and incidents may be perpetrated by members of their organizations, and take steps to prevent these behaviours. Strategies to do so should be regularly evaluated and updated.
- Take complaints filed against members of their organizations seriously, investigate them promptly, and hold perpetrators accountable while respecting the wishes of the person who was victimized.
- Ensure the survivor's safety by limiting access to their identifying and personal information to prevent harassment of the person submitting the report.
- Collaborate with organizations that regularly receive reports of hate crimes and incidents (i.e., police, healthcare, social services), community groups, and specialized supports for those victimized by hate crimes and incidents (e.g., victims services, non-profits, etc.) to ensure that survivors are connected to appropriate supports and that services are aware of, and support, one another. Doing so could involve creating partnerships, communities of practice, or interagency groups that further facilitate collaboration, effective referrals, and cross-training.
- Raise awareness of services through an accessible online presence and build proactive relationships with communities impacted by hate crimes and incidents through programming, education, engagement, capacity-building, and other efforts developed in collaboration with these communities.
- Prepare those victimized by hate crimes and incidents for the potential risks they may face if the media publicize their story.
- Ensure that internal complaint processes are easily accessible and straightforward. Complaints should be received in spaces managed by staff who are at arms-length from the organization and do not cause additional exposure for survivors to organizations that feel unsafe to them.
- Ensure regulatory bodies and police investigations are coordinated when responding to complaints.



## Additional Recommendations for Police

- Have a coordinating body (i.e., Hate Crimes Unit or Coordinator) to ensure that responses to reports of hate crimes and incidents offer high quality, consistent services while prioritizing the perspectives of people who have made these reports. These services need to be accountable to Police Executive Leadership and internal policy with supported infrastructure and resources. When a report to the police is received, they should provide timely, reliable client-centered services or referrals (e.g., Reassurance Protocol) that address the impacts of being victimized by a hate crime or incident. This contact should involve offering safety planning and a referral to Victims Services, regardless of whether charges are laid.
- Ensure police-based Victims Services are trained to effectively support survivors of hate crimes and incidents. These police-based Victims Services should also implement recommendations for organizations listed above.
- Take statements seriously, investigate the matter, provide regular feedback, guidance, and referrals to survivors, and work to hold perpetrators accountable in alignment with the survivor's wishes while practicing procedural justice.





## Additional Recommendations for All Levels of Governments

- Develop and implement practical, evaluated, transparent, evidence-based, community-guided, and sustained strategies and legislation to prevent and effectively respond to hate crimes and incidents in urban spaces, rural areas, First Nations, and Métis Nations.
- Build meaningful and ongoing relationships with individuals and communities impacted by hate crimes and incidents while responding to and prioritizing their needs. Relationship building could be accomplished through staff positions dedicated to community engagement, consultation, and capacity building at municipal and provincial levels.
- Take concrete steps towards reconciliation, addressing and preventing systemic discrimination while supporting widespread anti-racism education and Indigenous awareness, education, and practices. These steps could be the purview of provincial education, children's services, justice, and Indigenous relations ministries, among others.
- Provide appropriate, ongoing funding to new and existing organizations that support people victimized by hate crimes and incidents while evaluating these organizations to ensure a reliably high quality of service for those who report hate crimes and incidents. This funding and evaluation could be the purview of municipal and provincial governments.
- Develop information sharing, coordination, and collaboration (potentially through a provincial Hate Crimes Coordination Unit) between organizations that respond to reports of hate crimes and incidents, including municipal and federal law enforcement.
- Ensure ongoing adherence of public services to the above recommendations, making these evaluations transparent and available to the public. Doing so could be enshrined in provincial legislation.
- Ensure consistency within federal and provincial courts so that perpetrators are held accountable and required to participate in programming that helps them to understand the harm caused by their actions and prevent future harm.

# Background

## Hate Crimes and Incidents in Alberta

The reporting of hate crimes and incidents in Canada increased by 72% from 2019 to 2021 (Moreau, 2022). In their survey of 1,310 Albertans, St-Amant et al. (2023) found that 35% of respondents reported experiencing some form of hate. Among racial and ethnic minorities, this rate was 49%. While violence was not common in all reported hate incidents, it happened more often to visible minority groups, especially Indigenous respondents. Studies by St-Amant et al. (2023) and the Alberta Hate Crimes Committee (2023) corroborate concerns about hate crimes increasing in Alberta.

## Hate Crimes

Defining hate crimes is challenging, and definitions vary (Alberta Hate Crimes Committee, 2009; Chakraborti, 2015). Perry (2001) offers this definition:

"... acts of violence and intimidation, usually directed toward already stigmatized and marginalized groups... [hate crimes are] a mechanism of power, intended to reaffirm the precarious hierarchies that characterize a given social order." (p. 10)

Perry's (2001) definition emphasizes the societal context contributing to hate crimes. There are five charges and one sentencing principle related to hate crimes in the Criminal Code of Canada:

- Section 318(1): Advocating genocide
- Section 319(1): Public incitement of hatred
- Section 319(2): Willful promotion of hatred
- Section 319(2.1): Wilful promotion of antisemitism
- Section 430(4.1): Mischief relating to religious property, educational institutions, etc.
- The 718.2ai sentencing principle allows the court to increase sentencing if the prosecution proves that an offense was motivated by hate or bias.

## Hate Incidents

Non-criminal acts motivated by hate can still cause significant harm and should be taken seriously (Bell & Perry, 2015). These non-criminal acts are known as hate incidents (Chaudhry, 2021; Facing Facts, 2012).

## Impacts of Hate Crimes and Incidents

Hate crimes and incidents can significantly impact the individuals directly victimized (Perry & Alvi, 2011), potentially causing more physical, psychological, and behavioral injuries than other crime types (Iganski & Lagou, 2015). Emotional and psychological injuries may include (Government of Wales, 2020; Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, 2020):

- Anger
- Annoyance
- Depression
- Loss of confidence
- Panic attacks
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Trouble sleeping

Hate crimes and incidents can harm communities that experience marginalization, sending messages of exclusion (Perry, 2001). When people learn about hate crimes targeting their community, they can experience (Bell & Perry, 2015; Mercier-Dalphoné & Helly, 2021; Perry & Alvi, 2011):

- A desire for revenge
- A lack of belonging
- A reduced sense of safety
- Concern about lack of intervention
- Distrust in the perpetrator's community
- Doubts about Canada's multiculturalism and tolerance
- Emotional and psychological harm
- Fear that a similar incident could happen to themselves or others
- Feeling unwelcome
- General fear
- Shame
- Suspicion
- Feeling they do not have the same rights as others
- Vulnerability

Hate crimes can cause survivors and their communities to change their behaviors. These can include avoiding places of worship, changing their appearance, and being cautious about speaking or

expressing affection in public, as well as who they spend time with (Iganski & Lagou, 2015; Chaudhry et al., 2022; Government of Wales, 2020; Perry & Alvi, 2011).

## Underreporting of Hate Crimes

Hate crimes often go unreported in Canada. In 2019, the General Social Survey conducted by Statistics Canada found 223,000 self-reported hate-motivated incidents, significantly higher than the 1,946 police-hate crimes reported that year (Canada Race Relations Foundation, 2022; Moreau, 2021). People may not report hate crimes due to (Alberta Hate Crimes Committee, 2023; Angeles & Robertson, 2020; Erentzen & Schuller, 2020; St-Amant et al., 2023):

- Believing their concern was not serious enough to report
- Concerns about racism in policing
- Confusing reporting processes
- Fear of retaliation
- Humiliation about their experience
- Fear of jeopardizing immigration status
- Distrust in the efficacy of police or that the perpetrator would be prosecuted
- Lack of support systems
- Normalization of hate crimes/incidents
- Past police discrimination
- Privacy concerns

Survivors may instead report to their social networks, mental health services, government officials, human rights commissions, community organizations, and local businesses for support (Alberta Hate Crimes Committee, 2023; Angeles & Robertson, 2020; Chakraborti et al., 2014).

## Policing and Legal Responses to Hate Crimes in Canada

Research on hate crimes in Canada highlights challenges with how police and the legal system approach these incidents. Police in Canada may face delays and low prosecutions due to the requirement for written consent from the attorney general before proceeding with hate crime charges (Corb, as cited in Hardy & Chakraborti, 2019, p. 29). The ambiguousness of existing hate crime legislation and prosecution challenges also affect how police address hate crimes. Furthermore, a lack of trust between police and communities limits collaboration and information-sharing, which is necessary for police to address hate crimes in a way that reflects the voices of community members (Perry & Samuels-Wortley, 2021). Additionally, cultural and enforcement-oriented biases, lack of understanding, and training limitations impact police responses to hate crimes. There is also a lack of unity between police services in their definitions of hate crimes, and differences between their more victim-centred policies and actual, more traditional enforcement responses (Alberta Hate Crimes Committee, 2009; Camp, 2021; Bryan and Trickett, 2021).

Hate crime laws in Canada have been criticized for failing to address right-wing extremist movements adequately (Meyers, 2019) and being ambiguous (Swiffen, 2018), which makes proving hate motivation difficult. These legal

challenges are evident considering that the sentencing principle that considers hate motivation at sentencing was successfully applied 31 times nationwide between 2008 and 2020 (Provost-Yombo et al., 2020). While Section 718.2(a)(i) would not apply to all reported hate crimes, 31 applications over 12 years is minimal when observing that 2,669 hate crimes were reported to police in Canada in 2020 alone (Wang & Moreau, 2022).

## Addressing the Needs of Survivors

Policing and hate crimes legislation might not be enough to prevent hate crimes or help those targeted (Ashley, 2018; Bryan & Trickett, 2021). That is why it is crucial to understand the experiences of survivors of hate crimes and incidents in Canada. In 2018, the Edmonton Centre for Race and Culture (CFRAC) examined the experiences of racialized and Indigenous individuals who experienced racial or cultural discrimination or harassment. They found that these individuals sometimes faced discrimination when seeking support (de Koninck & Lauridsen, 2018). In 2022, the Canadian Race Relations Foundation assessed services available to survivors of hate crimes and incidents across Canada and discovered that the quality and quantity of services were inconsistent. As a result, survivors may experience trauma, retraumatization, and secondary victimization due to fragmented and inconsistent services. The Alberta Hate Crimes Committee (2023) found that 50% of participants who reported a hate crime or incident had a negative reporting experience.



# Research Methods

## Research Questions

1. What are the experiences of people who report hate crimes and/or incidents to organizations in Edmonton, Alberta?
2. How do individuals who have reported hate crimes and/or incidents experience organizational responses to these reports?
3. What are the policy and practice implications of these experiences for organizations that respond to hate crimes and incidents?

## Methods

Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) is an equitable research approach that involves collaboration between researchers and community members to address social issues that affect them (Janzen & Ochocka, 2020). With this approach in mind, we developed our research design using a descriptive qualitative research method. This method can effectively capture the emotional and psychological impacts of hate crimes and incidents (Healy, 2020).

## Recruitment

To recruit participants for our study, we made a graphic and message for social media, an email template, and a recruitment script. We interviewed 18 people who met our criteria of being 18 or older, speaking English or having access to a translator and had reported a hate crime or incident to an organization in Edmonton over the last five years.

## Data Generation

Between January and June 2022, we interviewed 18 people who had reported hate crimes or incidents to organizations in Edmonton within the last five years. We reviewed the consent form before each interview, provided a resource list, and offered all participants the option to have a support person present. Due to COVID-19, most interviews were done virtually or on the phone. We asked how individuals reported their experiences, their expectations when reporting, and how organizations responded. We also asked about the impact of the response on them, what an ideal response to a report of a hate crime or incident should look like, and how they defined hate crimes and incidents. We compensated each participant with a \$50 gift card and checked in with them after the interview.

## Analysis

To analyze the data we gathered in this study, we decided to use a method called qualitative content analysis (Mayan, 2009). This method involves reading through the interview transcripts and identifying important patterns, which we then organized into categories (Mayan, 2009). We also made sure to consider any unusual or different cases that may have come up (Morse et al., 2002). After we completed this process, we shared our findings with the participants to make sure we accurately understood their experiences in alignment with CBPR practices (Janzen & Ochocka, 2020). Ten of eighteen participants responded and shared a high degree of agreement with the findings.

## Ethics

This study was done with careful attention to ethics, recognizing the sensitive nature of the topic. The research project received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board 1, "Understanding organizational responses in Edmonton to reports of hate crimes and/or incidents from the perspective of those reporting," Pro00115909, on December 15, 2021. In addition, CCEE partners worked together to determine ethical approaches to ensure the study was culturally aware and trauma-informed.

# Research Findings

**Finding #1: The ways organizations respond to reports of hate crimes and incidents do not reliably meet the needs of people victimized by these occurrences and can significantly impact survivors.**

## Types of hate crimes and incidents reported

Participants reported various hate crimes and incidents, including:

- Assault
- Doxing
- Online and in-person harassment
- Death threats
- Discriminatory insults and slurs
- Neglect and abuse in healthcare and foster care
- Police intimidation and profiling
- Rape
- Sexual assault
- Stalking

Participants reported hate crimes and incidents motivated by transphobia, homophobia, Islamophobia, anti-Black racism, anti-Indigenous racism, ableism, and sexism, as well as intersections of these motivations.

When they first decided to report their experience of a hate crime or incident, participants shared hoping:

- For justice
- To stop the harm they or others were facing
- To raise awareness so these issues could be recorded and addressed

- For advocacy and support reporting to the police
- For guidance
- For financial aid
- For assistance with mental healthcare, physical healthcare, and housing
- For perpetrators to be investigated, held accountable, and understand the harm they caused

However, what participants received from organizations sometimes differed from what they hoped for. This report separates the services that met survivors' needs from those that did not. Nonetheless, in reality, organizations often had complex responses that may or may not have met survivors' needs. Sometimes, survivors had to report their experiences to multiple organizations and staff before their needs were met, if they were met at all.

## Services that met survivors' needs:

- Survivors were listened to, believed, taken seriously, and not judged or shamed.
- The organization responded quickly and respected the participants' wishes.
- Organizations gave participants encouragement, guidance, and support while providing regular follow-up.
- Organizations provided access to safety planning and appropriate services or referrals, including mental and physical healthcare, housing, identification, and legal assistance.
- Non-police organizations helped people report to the police when requested.
- Organizations did not pressure participants to make reports.

- The survivor was believed by the police. The police responded quickly and took statements. They worked to find the perpetrator, made decisions in collaboration with the participant, provided regular follow-up, and made referrals to victims' services. In some cases, perpetrators were apprehended and held accountable in ways that incorporated the participant's wishes.

When responses like these happened, participants shared that they felt:

- Satisfied
- Grateful
- Hopeful
- Listened to
- Relieved
- Increased confidence in responses from organizations and the reporting process
- Not alone
- That they could keep going
- Safe

#### Services that did NOT meet survivors' needs:

- Participants felt ignored or disbelieved.
- Participants were discouraged from reporting.
- Participants faced discrimination and disrespect in a culturally unsafe environment.
- Participants were laughed at and victim-blamed.
- Organizations told participants their experience was not serious enough to respond to.

- Organizations told participants that what they experienced was not a crime.
- Survivors received little or no follow-up.
- Participants received delayed responses that took months or years.
- Reporting procedures were sometimes complex, demanding, and inaccessible.
- Some organizations were unaware of appropriate referrals.

These negative responses had a range of emotional impacts on participants, including anger, anxiety, confusion, defeat, depression, disappointment, doubt, and frustration.

Negative responses impacted participants' beliefs, including:

- A loss of faith in authorities and the reporting process
- A loss of pride in being an Edmontonian
- The belief that Canada is unjust
- The belief that they are not valued
- The belief that justice is not available to them
- The belief that those who perpetrated hate crimes or incidents could do so without facing consequences
- The belief that they are unsafe

Negative responses also resulted in behavioural and psychological impacts on participants, including:

- Abandoning their reports altogether
- Untreated ongoing physical and psychological impacts from the original crime or incident
- Retraumatization
- Financial losses
- Online harassment
- Suicidality



Participants shared their experience and hopes for how organizations can improve:

"I'd like them to know what it feels like.... when people feel just disappointed... I want them to know that like, 'Yo, we don't feel heard.' We just feel defeated. And like it's just a huge disappointment. Like, who cares about us?"

"To do it differently, remember that there's fucking people at the end of your phone call."

The vast majority of participants experienced significant impacts from how organizations responded to their reports of a hate crime or incident. However, in one case, the participant identified that they were not particularly impacted by the hate incident they reported. Further, they neither had significant expectations or concerns related to the responding organization's lack of response.

## **Finding #2: Understandings and experiences of hate crimes and incidents and how organizations respond to them are based in lived experience of historical and ongoing systemic and societal discrimination.**

### **Definitions of hate crimes and incidents**

When asked how participants defined hate crimes and incidents, the majority answered in ways that are similar to definitions of hate crimes and incidents often used in Canada. However, one participant understood hate crimes and incidents to mean being harmed because of interpersonal conflict and not hatred based on their identity. This understanding is different from most definitions used.

Almost all participants understood their experiences of hate crimes and incidents within a social and systemic context of discrimination:

- Participants connected historical, intergenerational, and ongoing discriminatory practices and beliefs within Canada to the hate they experienced when victimized by a hate crime or incident.
- Participants reflected on how their negative experiences when reporting a hate crime or incident sometimes felt connected to discriminatory attitudes held by those responding to their reports.

- At the same time, participants sometimes faced these discriminatory practices and beliefs when organizations responded to their reports of a hate crime or incident. For example, many of the same systems that participants reported hate crimes or incidents to were also named as perpetrators of hate crimes and incidents in this study. These perpetrators included:
  - Police officers
  - Healthcare workers
  - Foster parents in the child welfare system
  - Transit operators
  - Supportive housing staff
- Many participants identified having regular experiences of hate crimes and incidents, as well as microaggressions and other forms of discrimination, throughout their everyday interactions. For example, participants were victimized during daily activities by strangers and acquaintances while walking in public areas, riding public transit, participating in social activities, and, in one case, during interactions with a sexual partner.

When discussing this connection between hate crimes and their daily lived experiences, a participant shared:

“So hate... was given to me as a child.”

### **Finding #3: Interpersonal relationships, existing knowledge and beliefs, and previous experiences influence the choices to report a hate crime or incident.**

#### **Where hate crimes and incidents were reported**

Participants and their supports reported hate crimes and incidents to:

- Community organizations
- Community leaders
- Healthcare providers
- Lawyers
- Media
- Ombudsperson and human rights offices
- The police
- The police's Professional Standards Branch
- Politicians
- Psychologists
- Professional regulatory bodies
- Religious leaders
- Social media
- Support groups

Despite the many organizations they reported to, participants often conveyed that who they contacted felt like the only option available to them. They were unaware of other reporting options.

Participants shared that they were aware of the organizations they reported to for a few reasons:

1. The organization was a widely accessed public service or platform like the police, public transit, healthcare, media, or social media.
2. They were already familiar or previously involved with the organization.
3. They were aware of the organization due to a referral by a trusted person, such as a friend, family member, co-worker, or professional.

### Decision-making factors for reporting hate crimes and incidents

Participants detailed repeat experiences of hate crimes and incidents throughout their lives and often had to decide which ones to report. When participants chose not to report the crime or incident, they shared the following factors that influenced their decision:

- A lack of awareness about how to report
- A trusted person discouraging them from reporting
- A need to focus on recovery from the occurrence or other commitments
- The belief that they would not receive an effective response
- The belief that organizations handling these reports are racist
- The belief that what they experienced was not serious enough to report

Participants stated:

"I don't like to report everything because wait 'til I get, like, shot or stabbed up, then maybe they'll take me seriously... but if they're just name calling, I'm not gonna report a concern... I'm scared that after a while, they won't take me seriously."

"I feel for the... women that I've... stood up for because when I'm like, 'Let's go do something about it.' They're like, 'Why? They're not going to do anything.' And it's like ... for those women to feel defeated like that. It's... discouraging to be an Edmontonian."

Participants shared that they were more likely to report a hate crime or incident due to one or more of the following factors:

- The seriousness or frequency of the occurrence (for example, someone was harmed, a weapon was involved, and/or the situation was recurring)
- A previous connection to the organization
- Encouragement from a trusted person
- A desire to protect others

# Discussion & Conclusion

Research has helped us understand why people do not report hate crimes (Alberta Hate Crimes Committee, 2023; Angeles & Robertson, 2020; Erentzen & Schuller, 2020; St-Amand et al., 2023). However, there is limited Canadian information about what happens when survivors report a hate crime or incident. Our study helps fill this knowledge gap by focusing on how survivors of hate crimes and incidents experience the responses they get after they report a hate crime or incident. The participants we interviewed provided insights into how survivors view hate crimes, why they report these experiences, how organizations respond to these reports, and how these responses affect survivors. This information can help organizations, police, and governments better support survivors of hate crimes and incidents. However, inconsistent and unreliable responses from organizations can damage individuals' and communities' trust in them. Therefore, providing consistent, evidence-based, and victim-centered support to those who report hate crimes and incidents is essential.

## Building on Previous Research

This study tells us more about why survivors of hate crimes and incidents decide to report them or not. It resonates with what other Canadian studies (Alberta Hate Crimes Committee, 2023; Angeles & Robertson, 2020; Erentzen & Schuller, 2020; St-Amand et al., 2023; Walfield et al., 2016) have found about concerns regarding racism and inadequate responses to hate crimes.

However, this study goes further by showing that survivors also consider their social connections and other priorities when deciding whether to report.

Understanding these factors could help increase reporting rates. With this information, organizations could better serve survivors of hate crimes and their communities by building relationships with and offering programming alongside impacted communities.

Our research insights are similar to those from other studies in Canada about the experiences of people who report hate crimes and incidents, as well as racism and discrimination. For example, in their Edmonton study seven years ago, de Koninck and Lauridsen (2018) also found challenges for people reporting racism and discrimination when accessing services, facing discrimination and racism when reporting, and receiving unsympathetic responses. CCEE's findings also align with the Canadian Race Relations Foundation's (2022) observation that there is a lack of consistent and quality services supporting survivors of hate crimes and incidents. The Alberta Hate Crimes Committee (2023) found that 50% of study participants that reported a hate crime had a negative reporting experience. Together, these findings show that survivors have ongoing needs that are not being fully or consistently addressed and require immediate action.

Our study agrees with community and government guides identifying the shared needs for survivors of hate crimes, such as



personal safety, emotional and practical help, and being listened to and taken seriously (Chaudhry et al., 2023; Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, 2020). However, our study is unique in identifying survivors' financial and housing needs. We found that survivors may need support from organizations to address financial losses and find new housing.

These findings highlight that service providers must be prepared to meet these needs. These results also support Camp's (2022) call for a transdisciplinary approach to supporting survivors of hate crimes and incidents, considering their needs for justice, healthcare, and financial and housing support.

### Impacts of Responses to Reports

Many studies and reports have examined how people are impacted by hate crimes and incidents (Chaudhry et al., 2023; Iganski & Lagou, 2015; Government of Wales, 2020; Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, 2020; Perry & Alvi, 2011). Our study uniquely focuses on how organizations respond to reports of hate crimes and incidents in Canada. We found that when organizations do not provide appropriate support to survivors, it can cause similar kinds of harm as the reported hate crime or incident itself.

Our study found that some survivors of hate crimes and incidents in Canada were treated poorly or harmed by organizations meant to help them, which is called

secondary victimization. This is similar to what the Canadian Race Relations Foundation (2022) has observed. However, our study is unique in Canada for showing that secondary victimization occurs for some survivors and the impacts of such experiences on survivors' emotions, beliefs, and behaviours. 'Secondary victimization' is:

"...victimization that occurs not as a direct result of the criminal act but through the response of institutions and individuals to the victim. This includes, but is not limited to, not recognizing and treating the victim in a respectful manner, an insensitive and unprofessional manner of approaching the victim and discrimination of the victim in any kind." (European Crime Prevention Network, as cited in Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, 2020, pp. 13-14)

### Hate Crimes and Incidents in a Context of Discrimination

Perry (2001) defines hate crimes as a way of exerting power to maintain social hierarchies. This definition echoes in the experiences shared by participants in the study. They reported encountering discriminatory beliefs during hate crimes and incidents and sometimes experienced the

same beliefs during responses from supporting organizations. The study also shows that hate crimes and incidents happen within a broader social and systemic context of discrimination.

The study found that some perpetrators of hate crimes and incidents belong to institutions like policing, healthcare, transit, and social services. As such, institutions should act to prevent their members from perpetrating hate crimes and incidents. Finally, more research is needed to understand better how institutions carry out hate crimes and incidents and how to address this issue.

### Human Rights and Anti-Oppression

Anti-oppressive research aims to identify and understand oppression in individual, institutional, and systemic circumstances while providing ways to dismantle this oppression (Holley et al., as cited in Bilotta, 2020, p. 399). The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms protects people from discrimination, but survivors of hate crimes may not always receive equal protection under the law. This study shows that institutions are not entirely successful in preventing or responding to hate crimes, and there is a need for systemic change across governments and institutions.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015) called for Canada to improve child welfare, cultural competency, and awareness training for professionals, collect data on victimization of Indigenous people, and create Indigenous-specific

victim programs. These recommendations align with those made by survivors of hate crimes in this study. Answering the calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report is still needed today.

### Understanding Indigenous Experiences of Hate Crimes and Incidents in Canada

There is minimal recent research in Canada on the experiences of Indigenous peoples regarding hate crimes and incidents, aside from McCaslin (2014) and St. Amant et al. (2023). McCaslin (2014) observed that Indigenous people were rarely found to be victims of hate crimes. Further, Indigenous peoples, and Indigenous women specifically, do not have categories of protection in legislation or case law. Out of the Indigenous people surveyed in St-Amant et al.'s (2023) Alberta study, 82 percent said that not trusting the police was a primary reason why they did not report hate incidents to them. Further, while most reported hate occurrences did not involve violence in St-Amant et al.'s (2023) study, the instances where violence did occur were mostly experienced by visible minority groups, especially among Indigenous respondents.

In our study, some participants reported experiencing hate crimes motivated by anti-Indigenous racism. However, we did not collect enough demographic data to draw definitive conclusions. As such, this observation highlights the need for more research on this topic.

## Limitations

Our research study has some limitations that we should keep in mind. Firstly, it did not include the experiences of individuals under 18. Secondly, our sample did not include the viewpoints of people targeted by hate crimes motivated by antisemitism, hatred towards Catholics, or racism against people of Asian descent. These types of hate crimes are becoming more common in Canada, as noted by Moreau (2022).

Additionally, our study did not specifically gather information about people's demographics, like age, gender, or ethnicity. As such, we can not confidently say how different communities experience the responses they receive when reporting hate crimes or incidents, or what specific support they may need.

Moreover, our study had limited ability to accommodate individuals who are not comfortable communicating in English. However, we did manage to interview one person who wished to speak another language, thanks to a research partner who provided translation.

In the future, there are opportunities for further research to build upon our findings. For instance, future studies could explore how various groups of people, with different backgrounds and living in cities, rural areas, First Nations communities, and Métis Nations, experience responses from organizations when reporting hate crimes and incidents. This information would help us better understand and address these critical issues across a range of communities.

## Conclusion

This study examines the experiences of people who report hate crimes and incidents in Edmonton. We found that it is crucial for organizations that respond to these reports to listen to and believe survivors. They need to provide consistent, reliable, timely, trauma-informed, and victim-centred support. People who report hate crimes and incidents need to trust that the services they receive will meet their needs and not further traumatize them. We sincerely hope this study is one step among the many needed to ensure that survivors of hate crimes and incidents receive consistent, high-quality, empathetic, and evidence-based practices that meet their needs when they report a hate crime or incident.

# Learn More

## [CCE Response Model to Hate Incidents in Alberta](#)

Coalitions Creating Equity (2020)

## [CCE Understanding and Responding to Hate, Racism, and Discrimination on the Frontlines: Modules and Curriculum](#)

Coalitions Creating Equity (2023)

## [Hate Crime: What Do Victims Tell Us?](#)

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (2018)

## [Hate in Alberta: Problems to Solutions](#)

Organization for the Prevention of Violence (2023)

## [Healing the Harms: Identifying How Best to Support Hate Crime Victims](#)

Chakraborti, N., & Hardy, S. (2016)

## [Missed Connections: Improving Supports and Services for Those Experiencing Racial and Cultural Discrimination and Harassment in Edmonton](#)

de Koninck, V., & Lauridsen, K. (2018)

## [Quality Specialist Support Services for Hate Crime Victims Training Course](#)

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (2022)

## [Supporting Victims of Hate Crimes and Incidents: A Community Centered Approach](#)

Alberta Hate Crimes Committee & MacEwan University (2023)

## [Victimized Community Perceptions About Hate Crimes and Incidents in Alberta: A 2019-2022 Analysis](#)

Alberta Hate Crimes Committee (2023)

## [Working with Victims of Crime: A Manual Applying Research to Clinical Practice](#)

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