

What is a bias incident?

*"A bias incident is conduct, speech or expression motivated, in whole or in part, by bias or prejudice."**

—tolerance.org

*A bias incident is an act directed against a person, group, or property, expressing hostility or bias on the basis of perceived or actual gender, race, color, national or ethnic origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, religion, disability, size or age. Bias incidents may consist of verbal, written, graphic, and/or physical conduct such as epithets, jokes, graffiti, negative stereotyping, and threatened or actual physical assault.**

—Providence College

Identifying a Bias Incident: 8 Questions to Ask

NOTE: A bias incident may qualify as a hate crime under state and/or federal law. By definition, all hate crimes are bias incidents but not all bias incidents are hate crimes. If you think a bias incident that happened in your school may be a crime, you are advised to contact your local authorities for assistance.

1 Was the target called any names? What were they?

2 Were there any pictures or symbols involved in the incident—drawn, left around, talked about—that could be considered hateful or intimidating?

4 What does the target believe the incident was motivated by?

5 Did the target(s) openly engage in activities related to their race, ethnicity or other identity characteristics—e.g., a peaceful protest, participation with a student identity affinity group, or membership in a gay-straight alliance?

6 Is the target part of any group of kids that is considered less welcome in the school? What makes the group different? Why are they considered less welcome?

7 Is the student who made the threat/caused the incident part of a group that feels the same way about any student who shares an identity with the target?

3 Did the perpetrator admit their conduct was motivated by prejudice or that they selected the target(s) based on their race, ethnicity, religion, disability, gender, sex, sexual orientation or other identity factors?

8 Was this incident unusual or have students who share the targeted identity characteristic of the target been having similar experiences over time? For how long?

Revised 1-9-18

*Adapted from the tolerance.org Teaching Tolerance article titled "Identifying and Responding to Bias Incidents" (www.tolerance.org/professional-development/identifying-and-responding-to-bias-incidents) and from Providence College's bias response protocol, (www.providence.edu/student-affairs/bias-response/Pages/key-definitions.aspx).



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