



March 30, 2022

Hate in the Pandemic – Submission by YWCA Metro Vancouver

YWCA Metro Vancouver boldly envisions a just and equitable world for women, families and allies. This vision guides our work and informs the programs and services we deliver. These meet a variety of needs, including housing, child care, youth education and mentorship, single moms' support, food insecurity, employment pathways, violence prevention and more.

Our work is also informed by feedback from participants. YWCA front-line staff listen to the changing desires and needs of the people they work with and adjust delivery accordingly. What staff across the organization have reported is that while the pandemic has affected everyone, it has impacted people living on low incomes, Indigenous people, LGBTQA2S+ community members, and BIPOC people more acutely. And one of the more disturbing trends reported on is that people in marginalized communities are experiencing increasing levels of hate, intolerance and aggression.

The following examples have been gathered from YWCA program participants across Metro Vancouver.

Single Mothers' Support Groups

YWCA single mothers' support groups serve as a critical service for women who often face high levels of isolation, which was made worse by the pandemic. The group setting encourages women to create bonds, find support, access resources, and safely share on their struggles and triumphs.

Group facilitators report that participants are sharing more often their experiences of unexpected and unprovoked hate and aggression. For example, some moms of Asian ethnicity reported being subjected to rude remarks at the supermarket; a mom reported her child in daycare was teased due to his darker skin colour; group members who are Chinese reported feeling attacked/discriminated against because of their ethnicity due to the promotion of misinformation about China's role in the pandemic; and a participant of Asian ethnicity reported being bumped into on purpose and then yelled at.

Indigenous Mentorship – Circle of Sisters

Circle of Sisters offers opportunities for self-identified Indigenous girls, Two-Spirit, non-binary and trans youth to connect to Indigenous community and culture with the support of self-identified Indigenous women, non-binary and trans adults and skilled facilitators. For participants in this program, systemic discrimination is a daily experience and embedded in almost all aspects of their lives, so it is difficult to discern if hate increased due to the pandemic. However, participants have shared that they are witnessing their communities being significantly impacted by the pandemic in terms of social, health, and economic measures because of the pre-existing, ongoing and deep-rooted systemic discrimination toward their people.

Youth Education – Guide to High School

Guide to High School supports youth as they transition into high school through modules that focus on topics like healthy living, stress, conflict, peer pressure, identity and social media. Many students are members of the BIPOC community.

Staff have noticed that since the pandemic began, there have been increased disclosures regarding the impact of hearing and seeing hate in the media. The leadership team has seen an increase in the number of youth expressing concern about mental health issues they are experiencing.

Youth Education – Dating Safe

YWCA Dating Safe is delivered through several high schools throughout the Lower Mainland and provides youth with the knowledge and skills to develop healthy relationships that are free from violence and abuse.

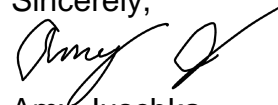
According to staff, youth in the program are more worried about hate, racism, and transphobia that they increasingly experience online and coming from people and places they didn't expect. They also report that seeing movements linked to the far right, including anti-vax movements and white supremacy groups, are becoming increasingly vocal and bold, causing stress and worry.

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We recognize that this is an incomplete submission, however we wanted to participate despite limited capacity to survey across all staff and programs.

If you require additional information, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,



Amy Juschka
Director, Communications and Advocacy
YWCA Metro Vancouver