



PRESENTED BY OVER ZERO

# Virtual Conversations: Communications Strategies for Communities Standing Up to Hate

OVER  
ZERO

First and foremost:

Consult with members of targeted communities. Find out the ways in which targeted communities members want to be supported.

# Messaging “Do’s”

DO

Speak to — and  
from — a unified  
“we”

“We walk together.  
When one of us is  
hurting, all of us are  
hurting.”

DO

Communicate  
your values

“In our community, we  
value respect and safety  
for *all* of our members.  
And we show it.”

DO

Speak to “who we  
are” not just “who we  
aren’t”

“In our community, we  
stand up for each other.  
We respect each other.  
We care about each  
other. ***This*** is what  
makes us strong.”

DO

Make it clear that the  
majority of the  
community stands  
against hate

“While a few loud voices try to sow hate and division in our community, the countless voices standing up for what’s right remind us that the overwhelming majority of our community is committed to unity and equity.”

DO

Showcase how  
community members  
are showing solidarity

“We are proud to live in a community where we show up for each other. May we all look to the example of the First Presbyterian Church who have sent members to maintain a peaceful presence outside of the Korean United Presbyterian Church so their friends and neighbors can worship safely.”



DO

Remind people of  
their agency and the  
power of their actions

"We are stronger when we  
take action together. Every  
voice, every individual  
action matters. Through  
the week, we will be  
sharing actions everyone  
can take to build a  
stronger, safer community  
for everyone."

DO

Use empowering language, including metaphors that reinforce agency

“We are all in the driver’s seat here. Let’s use our actions and words in a way that gets us to safe and equitable place as a community.”

# What to avoid in your messaging

# AVOID

Avoid raising the profile of bad actors; Focus instead on the experiences and needs of the people impacted and how the community is showing up for them

**AVOID:** “Here is everything we know about the hate group circulating flyers calling for violence against the AAPI community...”

**INSTEAD:** “As a community, we are united. While a few loud voices try to get their messages of hate and division to circulate in our community, we are proud of all the ways in which we stand in solidarity with our AAPI neighbors, such as...”

# AVOID

Avoid inadvertently  
“othering” AAPI  
community members  
with “us” and “them”  
language

**AVOID:** “We as the town of  
Johnsonville stand with the AAPI  
community”

**INSTEAD:** “The town of  
Johnsonville stands as one and  
refuses to accept the targeting  
of our AAPI friends, neighbors,  
and family members”

# AVOID

Avoid creating a victim/savior narrative, which can be dehumanizing and reinforce power dynamics

**AVOID:** "The AAPI community needs our help. We need to support them as they struggle to make their voices heard."

**INSTEAD:** "We stand in solidarity with our AAPI friends, neighbors, and family members. A threat to any member of our community is a threat to all of us."

# AVOID

Avoid making hate  
seem like the norm

**AVOID:** "Hate is everywhere and is overwhelming."

**INSTEAD:** "While a few loud voices try to convince us that hate is everywhere, we are heartened to see the overwhelming majority stand up and speak out against hate and violence targeted at AAPI communities."

# AVOID

Avoid language and metaphors that can reduce a sense of agency

**AVOID:** "We are caught in a flood of hate. It is out of control."

**INSTEAD:** "We all have a hand in building our community. What tools do *you* have to help build a community that is safe and welcoming for everyone?"



# Messaging tactics

# TACTICALLY

## Mobilize messengers

- Share messages that come from diverse sources in your community.
- Make sure to ask for and get messages from public and elected officials - building commitment and accountability.

# TACTICALLY

Communicate across  
channels

- Utilize the full range of information sources in your community
- Don't underestimate the power of one on one conversations and "word of mouth".

# TACTICALLY

*Show* people what  
you mean in addition  
to telling them

- Tell stories that show people how they can engage, what you want them to do, and what others are doing.
- Use images, videos, posters, flyers etc. - visuals in addition to statements.

# TACTICALLY

Get specific in  
thinking about  
different stakeholder  
communities

- Who am I reaching?
- What do they need to hear?



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