



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Asian American Commission

# COMMUNITY ACTION GUIDE: RESPONDING TO AAPI HATE INCIDENTS

COMMONWEALTH OF  
MASSACHUSETTS ASIAN  
AMERICAN COMMISSION

APRIL 2020



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## ABOUT AAC

The AAC was formed in recognition of the General Court's findings that Asian Americans constitute the fastest growing minority population in both the Commonwealth and the US, that they represent a diverse population within the Commonwealth, and that many members of the AAPI community have overcome great hardship and made outstanding contributions to the educational, economic, technological, and cultural well being of the Commonwealth, but still face many challenges in their efforts for full social, economic, and political integration within the Commonwealth.

## COMMISSION GOALS

The AAC is a permanent body dedicated to advocacy on behalf of Asian Americans throughout MA. The Commission's goal is to recognize and highlight the vital contributions of Asian Americans to the social, cultural, economic, and political life of the Commonwealth; to identify and address the needs and challenges facing residents of Asian ancestry; and to promote the well-being of this dynamic and diverse community, thereby advancing the interests of all persons who call Massachusetts home.



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## MANUAL OBJECTIVE

The AAC has created this manual in an effort to combat the recent surge in anti-Asian violence happening worldwide. This manual provides historical context, guidelines, resources, bystander, contacts, intervention. AAC will use this guide as an educational toolkit for communities to access as well as improving racial equity between all communities of color.

## IMPORTANCE OF REPORTING HATE CRIMES

### Plus side to reporting:

- To encourage AAPI communities to report hate crimes to law enforcement
- Collect data to inform legislators and law enforcement agencies about the underlying problems to enable to deal with issues more effectively to protect AAPI communities

### Downside to not reporting:

- Shows that the problem is nonexistent
- Increases attackers confidence that they can get away with this crime and not be punished



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## HATE INCIDENTS

“ 8,327 *hate crimes reported (2018)* ”

60% *stemmed from a race/ethnicity base.* ”

**Hate incidents revolve around any sort of biases against any of the following:**

race or ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability.

**Such crimes include:**

physical or verbal assault, property damage, bullying, threats of violence, arson, online abuse, graffiti, abusive phone calls or text messages, spitting, etc.





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## COMMUNITY RESPONSE

### At your meeting:

- Go over facts and concerns
- Take notes
- Brainstorm goals and tactics: Direct action, media coverage, etc.
- Make a plan and delegate leaders, Choose messaging: "We want \_\_\_!"
- Determine resources
- Arrange strong communication



## MAKE A CHECK LIST

- Compile factual information and data
- Create a list serve to disseminate accurate information
- Speak with community partners to have a unified message & build coalitions
- Share information via website and social media platforms

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## COMMUNITY RESPONSE



## The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Asian American Commission

## COMMISSIONERS

**Chairperson**

Vira Douangmany Cage

**Vice Chairperson**

Mabel Lam

**Treasurer**

Bora Chiemruom

**Secretary**

Philjay Solar

Jonjy Ananth  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date March 9, 2020

Contact: Jenny Chiang  
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BOSTON - The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Asian American Commission will not tolerate racism, xenophobia, and bigotry towards the Asian American community due to fear-mongering and misinformation about the coronavirus (COVID-19). Local Asian establishments have taken a huge hit economically, and there has been a surge in verbal insults and violent attacks against Asian Americans across the country. While we understand that it is human nature to fear the unknown, targeting and discriminating against a specific group only fuels the biggest epidemic of all—racism.

In an effort to prevent further mishappenings, the Commission encourages our communities to stand up against such discrimination and emphasize the importance proper hygiene rather than acting out insensitively against others. Additionally, we highly encourage the media to dispel the spread of misinformation. Lastly, we urge our public officials to invest in emergency response and testing efforts to prepare for this evolving situation. We recognize that this is an ever-changing situation but it remains crucial to have factual information on the virus and to practice good hygiene as one would with the flu.

## Helpful links:

State of Massachusetts website about the Coronavirus:

<https://www.mass.gov/guides/information-on-the-outbreak-of-2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19>

Facts on the Coronavirus:

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

Report hate crimes:

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/protections-against-hate-crimes>

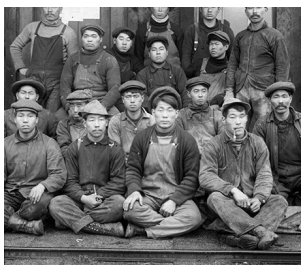
###

The Asian American Commission of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts was created by legislation on October 29, 2006. This Commission recognizes that the Asian American community is the fastest growing minority group in Massachusetts. The goal of the AAC is to recognize, as well as highlight, the vital contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders to the social, cultural, economic, and political life of the Commonwealth. Additionally, the AAC is involved in identifying and addressing the various needs and challenges that currently face the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities. The Commission provides a permanent, effective voice for Asian Americans, and is comprised of 21 diverse members who are appointed by the Governor, Attorney General, Auditor, Senate President, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Secretary of State, and the Treasurer.

For more information on the Asian American Commission please visit

<http://www.aacommission.org/>

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# ANTI-ASIAN SENTIMENT

1849

Chinese immigrants arrive in the West Coast that made up 25% of California miners. White immigrants felt threatened by this influx of foreign competition that resorted in acts of terrorism in a strong effort to remove the Chinese from mining areas. This resulted in the Chinese pursuing low-wage labor jobs in the railroads and other industries.

1850

California gains statehood and soon made it legal for discrimination against the Chinese. Public organizations were prohibited from hiring Chinese workers. Elected officials joined the movement to pressure the federal government to stop immigration from China.

1859

Chinese excluded from San Francisco public schools.

1882

The Chinese Exclusion Act was passed by the US Congress that banned all immigration from China.

1885

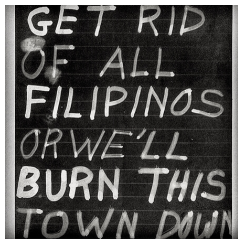
There was a labor shortage on the West Coast and Hawaii. The farming industry was in need of laborers who would perform menial jobs for low-wages. Large numbers of Japanese laborers with smaller numbers of Koreans and Indians arrived on the West Coast to replace the Chinese as cheap labor to build railroads, farm, and fish. This began the start of anti-Japanese legislation.

1885

The Gentleman's Agreement is created informally between the US and Japan for the US to not impose any restrictions on Japanese immigration and Japan would not allow further emigration to the US



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- 1924 The Immigration Act/Asian Exclusion Act was enacted that denied entry to virtually all Asians.
- 1930 Anti-Filipino riot in California began. White working class resentment against Filipino laborers resulted in riots, beatings, and gunfire.
- 1942 President Franklin D. Roosevelt signs Executive Order 9066 which incarcerated 120,000 Japanese Americans in concentration camps
- 1960-1970 Asian Americans worked on social justice campaigns: including protests against the Vietnam War, the detainment of political prisoners, the fight for reparations for World War II internees, as well as the civil rights movement with the Black Panther Party.
- 1965 The Immigration of 1965 removed race as the barrier for immigration.
- 1968 Asian, Black and Latinx students strike at San Francisco State University to demand establishment of ethnic studies programs
- 1.2 million refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos arrive in the US
- 1982 Vincent Chin is clubbed to death with a baseball bat by two white men as a result of increased anti-Asian violence after Japan's auto industry was blamed for increased unemployment among US auto workers and economic competition overseas was increasing
- 2001 Post 9/11 terrorist attacks, there was a surge of Islamophobia. Middle Eastern, South Asians, and Muslim Americans were being labeled as terrorists and were the main targets of racism and discrimination



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## BYSTANDER INTERVENTION

[www.ihollaback.org](http://www.ihollaback.org)

**The Five D's** are different methods you can use to support someone who is being harassed.

Emphasize that harassment is not okay, and demonstrate to people in your life that they too have the power to make the community safer.

“  
STAND UP,  
DON'T  
STAND BY.”

DISTRACTION

DELEGATION

DOCUMENTATION

DIRECT

DELAY

# 10

## DISTRACTION:

A subtle and creative way to intervene. The aim here is simply to derail the incident by interrupting it. The idea is to ignore the harasser and engage directly with the person who is being targeted. Don't talk about or refer to the harassment. Instead, talk about something completely unrelated. You can try the following:

- Pretend to be lost. Ask for the time. Pretend you know the person being harassed. Talk to them about something random and take attention off of the harasser.
- Get in the way. Continue what you were doing, but get between the harasser and the target.
- Accidentally-on-purpose spill your coffee, the change in your wallet, or make a commotion.



## Bystander Intervention

to stop anti-Asian/American and xenophobic harassment



***hollaback!***

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## DELEGATION:

Is when you ask for assistance, for a resource, or for help from a third party.

Here are examples of what you can do:

- Find the store supervisor, bus driver, or a transit employee and ask them to intervene. If you're near a school, contact a teacher, someone at the front desk, or campus security.
- Get your friend on board and have them use one of the methods of *Distraction* to communicate with the person being harassed while you find someone to delegate to.
- Speak to someone near you who notices what's happening and might be in a better position to intervene. Work together.
- Call 911 (if it is safe) to request help. Before contacting 911, use *Distract* to check in with the person being targeted to make sure they want you to do this. Some people may not be comfortable with the intervention of law enforcement. For many people and communities, a history of being mistreated by law enforcement has led to fear and mistrust of police interventions. Depending on the situation, you will need to use your best judgement.



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## DOCUMENTATION:

It can be really helpful to record an incident as it happens to someone, but there are a number of things to keep in mind to safely and responsibly document harassment.

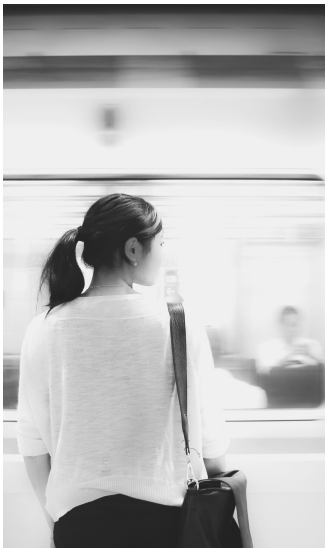
- First, assess the situation. Is anyone helping the person being harassed? If not, use one of the other four D's. If someone else is already helping out, assess your own safety. If you are safe, go ahead and start recording.
- **ALWAYS** ask the person who was harassed what they want to do with the recording.
- **NEVER** post it online or use it without their permission. There are several reasons for this:
  - Being harassed or violated is a disempowering experience. Using an image/footage of a person being victimized without the person's consent can make the person feel even more powerless. If it goes viral, it can lead to further victimization and a level of visibility that the person may not want. They may be forced to engage with the legal system in a way that they are not comfortable.
- Lastly, the experience could have been traumatic. Publicizing another person's traumatic experience without their consent is no way to be an effective and helpful bystander



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**DIRECT:**

You may want to directly respond to harassment by naming what is happening or confronting the harasser. This tactic can be risky: the harasser may redirect their abuse towards you and may escalate the situation.



Before you decide to respond directly, assess the situation: Are you physically safe? Is the person being harassed physically safe? Does it seem unlikely that the situation will escalate? Can you tell if the person being harassed wants someone to speak up? If you can answer yes to all of these questions, you might choose a direct response.

If you choose to directly intervene, some things you can say to the harasser are:

- **“That’s inappropriate, disrespectful, not okay, etc.”**
- **“Leave them alone.”**
- **“That’s homophobic, racist, (insert type of harassment), etc.”**

The most important thing here is to keep it short and succinct. Try not engage in dialogue, debate, or an argument, since this is how situations can escalate. If the harasser responds, try your best to assist the person who was targeted instead of engaging with the harasser. Direct intervention can be risky, so use this one with caution.



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## DELAY:

Even if you can't act in the moment, you can make a difference for the person who has been harassed by checking in on them after the fact. Many types of harassment happen in passing or very quickly, in which case you can wait until the situation is over and speak to the person who was targeted then. Here are some ways to actively use the tactic of *Delay*:



- Ask them if they're okay, tell them you're sorry that happened to them.
- Ask them if there's any way you can support them.
- Offer to accompany them to their destination or sit with them.
- Share resources with them and offer to help them make a report, but don't force them to.
- If you've documented the incident, ask them if they want you to send it to them or share it.

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## RESOURCES FOR VICTIMS

**Victim Assistance Programs provideS a number of helpful services:**

- Information about the criminal justice system and legal procedures
- Assurance that your civil rights are met
- Assistance in preparing protection orders if necessary
- Help in recovering property being held by police
- Communication with employers about court appearances
- Assurance of client/attorney confidentiality
- Referrals to social services and mental health professionals

## STATEWIDE

(Clickable links below)

[MA Attorney General - Civil Rights Division](#)

[Greater Boston Legal Services: Asian Outreach Unit](#)

[Anti-Defamation League New England](#)

[Council on American Islamic Relations – MA](#)

[Fenway Health Violence Recovery Program](#)

## NATIONWIDE

[Asian Americans Advancing Justice](#)

[Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council - Stop AAPI Hate](#)

[The Leadership Conference Education Fund & the Lawyer's](#)

[Committee for Civil Rights Under Law - Communities Against Hate](#)

[Women's Law](#)



# SELF-CARE FOR AAPI'S

MENTAL HEALTH

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS ASIAN AMERICAN COMMISSION

COVID-19

**AAPI'S SELF-CARE TIPS:**

MENTAL HEALTH

**Check in on your friends & family and have discussions with each other.**

Talking to other people that are going through the same things can validate your thoughts and feelings.

**Just know, YOU ARE NOT ALONE.**

Keep having tough conversations.

TIP NO. 1

MENTAL HEALTH

**Be kind to yourself. Practice self-compassion.**

Allow yourself to sit in your grief, frustration, overwhelming feelings. But don't stay in those feelings for too long. All feelings are valid.

TIP NO. 2

MENTAL HEALTH

**Reach out to a POC Mental Health Therapist.**


Talking to a mental health professional that can empathize and understand your experience as a person of color is crucial. If you are looking for some POC therapists in MA, please look for the link on our website under AAPI COVID-19 Resources > Mental Health Resources.

TIP NO. 3



# SELF-CARE FOR AAPI'S

MENTAL HEALTH



## Keep your mind & body busy.

TIP NO. 4

Participate in your hobbies and activities.

**Mind:** Write in a journal • Meditate • Attend webinars hosted by POC leaders • Learn a new skill • Reach out to social justice groups

**Body:** Talk a walk • Exercise • Yoga • Make art

MENTAL HEALTH

## Surround yourself with AAPI literature and entertainment.

TIP NO. 5

**Netflix:** Tigertail • First They Killed My Father • The Patriot Act w/ Hasan Minhaj

**Alli Wong:** Baby Cobra • To All The Boys I Loved Before


**Hulu:** Parasite • Fresh Off the Boat • The Mindy Project

**Films:** Who Killed Vincent Chin? • The Farewell • Resistance at Tule Lake

**Books:** America for Americans: A History of Xenophobia in the US by Erika Lee

**\*\*PLEASE COMMENT BELOW if you have any recommendations!**

MENTAL HEALTH



## Limit your time looking at the news.

TIP NO. 6

Looking at all the headlines can be draining and also overwhelming. Practice limiting yourself to what you consume when it comes to the media. When you do scroll, try looking out for some good news.

MENTAL HEALTH

## If you experience any form of discrimination, put your safety first.

TIP NO. 7

Though you may want to speak up for yourself, make sure you are safe to do so. Be aware of your environment and trust your judgement according to the situation.

Report it on the Asian American Commission website.