



Sisterhood of  
Salaam Shalom®

# Rise and Resist

**Muslim and Jewish Women Shining a Light on Love  
(Not Hate)**



## **Acknowledgments:**

We acknowledge with gratitude Sheryl Olitzky and Atiya Aftab, Co-Founders of the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom, for their vision and unwavering support. We appreciate the commitment of the Sisterhood Board of Directors for their guidance and oversight, and the dedication of our chapter co-leaders and members for their commitment to building bridges. There are too many volunteers to cite by name, but our grassroots organization would not exist without their time and talents. You know who you are, and we gratefully acknowledge your many contributions.

Thanks to the Southern Poverty Law Center for their materials and framing of ideas cited in this guide, and to Nadia Nassim for her expert administrative support.

The mission of the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom is to build trust, respect, and relationships between North American Muslim and Jewish women and teenage girls. Through these relationships, the women/girls commit to work together:

- To limit acts of anti-Muslim and anti-Jewish sentiment
- Stand up to hate against one another
- Engage in social action work

Our chapters across the U.S. and Canada serve as the vehicle for building friendships. This guide is an attempt to answer the question of how we can effectively respond to hate and build more inclusive, loving communities.

© **Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom, 2019.** Feel free to use this material to support your actions to fight hate and to build a more loving, inclusive community. If you reproduce and circulate this guide in whole or in part, please acknowledge the source: “Used with permission, Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom, [www.sosspeace.org](http://www.sosspeace.org).”

**1st Edition, March, 2019.**



**Dear Sisters of Salaam Shalom,**

Acts of hate against Muslim and Jewish communities are rising at an alarming rate. The Sisterhood is committed to providing all chapters with resources to support victims and to proactively educate members of your communities. As an active network of over 160 chapters (and growing) throughout the United States and Canada, we have the opportunity and moral obligation to act.

The following guide was developed in collaboration with the Southern Poverty Law Center's Guide, Ten Ways to Fight Hate. We are grateful for their framework and guidance and hope these tools will help you answer the question, "What can our chapter do when a person or institution in our community is a target of hate?" We wrote this resource manual to support you on your Sisterhood journey, whether you write letters of support to victims or organize community-wide actions. Each step you take makes a difference, no matter how small, or large!

**Our Sisterhood #RiseandResist network has two guiding principles:**

1. We commit to supporting victims of discrimination and hate.
2. We commit to creating opportunities that support acceptance and inclusivity for all.

The Guide begins with the assumption that you will support actions as part of a larger community response. However, if there is no existing organized response, we've provided a more robust model, using the acronym FACE, which outlines four concrete steps you and your sisters can take to counter acts of hate and build a more inclusive and safe community for all. Each step includes a goal, series of objectives, and concrete steps to enable you to act with confidence and clarity.

1. **F**orge Relationships
2. **A**ct
3. **C**ommunicate
4. **E**ducate

We don't expect that you will do everything in this guide. Your action steps may not be sequential or linear. Educating a community is an ongoing process. Our journey will not be easy and it will not be short. But as a sisterhood of Muslim and Jewish women, we can work towards our goal of eradicating hate, one step at a time. We welcome you to join us on this journey, at whatever level feels comfortable for you and your chapter.

Please feel free to contact Janet at: [janet@sosspeace.org](mailto:janet@sosspeace.org) if you have any questions or would like additional information.

In sisterhood,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Janet Penn".

Janet Penn  
Director of Regional Coordinators,  
Training, and Resource Development

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sarah Haider".

Sarah Haider  
Co-Curriculum Development,  
Co-Facilitator

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>PAGE</b>
<b>Executive Summary: Join Forces</b> .....	5
<b>Step One: Forge Relationships</b> .....	7
<b>Step Two: Act</b> .....	12
<b>Step Three: Communicate</b> .....	17
<b>Step Four: Educate</b> .....	23
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	27
<b>Appendices</b> .....	28-39
1 - Pyramid of White Supremacy	
2 - Sample steps to planning a vigil	
3 - Sample letter to the editor	
4 - Sample press release	
5 - Sample letter to get invited to a press conference	
6 - Sample letter to get invited to speak through conventional media	
7 - Sample Op-Ed	
8 - Sample newspaper article	
9 - Blank work plan	
10-Agenda template	
11-Minutes template	
12-Tips for running effective meetings	

## **Executive Summary: Join Forces**

If an act of discrimination or hate occurs in your community, it's best to join forces with others in the community. Here are some guidelines for how your Sisterhood chapter can support or partner with other community organizations:

### **1. Assess your resources.**

- a. Contact members of your chapter to assess who has energy and time to act in the present moment.

### **2. Contact the Sisterhood central office.**

- a. Email Nadia Nasim at [nadia@sosspeace.org](mailto:nadia@sosspeace.org). Let her know what has happened and she will forward your email to the appropriate person. Together we will brainstorm your next steps.

### **3. Reach out to existing coalitions.**

- a. Identify the local umbrella organizations in your area, e.g. Board of Rabbis, Muslim Council, interfaith coalitions. If you're not sure where to start, call your religious and community leaders, and of course, you can always ask Google.
- b. Contact appropriate local organizations. Let them know you care, and as a group of Muslim and Jewish women, are willing to take part in their action. As you are able, offer to help plan and organize the action.

### **4. Reach out to affected institutions.**

- a. Call the school principal, Rabbi, Imam, or other community leaders. Let them know that you are watching, that you care, and that you would like to support their response.

### **5. Support the victims.**

- a. Send cards to let victims know they are not alone. Arrange a visit to the family. Offer to go with them to talk with school administration or the police. Small acts of kindness can have a large impact.

Remember, whenever you stand up and say, "wait a minute, this is wrong", it gives other people permission to do the same. You (and your chapter) cannot do this alone, but collectively, with a network of allies, you will make a difference.



## **Detailed Guide for Spearheading Action**

If you determine that there are no coordinated efforts in your town, or you are not comfortable with the existing responses, we've put together more detailed resources so you can craft your own plan. But you are not alone. As part of the Sisterhood network across the U.S. and Canada, you can learn from and share with your sisters in other chapters by checking the national Sisterhood Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/sosspeace/>

The steps outlined in this guide may appear to be a full-time job. But don't worry! Take what you need in the moment. Over time, you will build a community network committed to providing an alternative to hate. Then, when confronting incidents of bias or hate, you can draw upon these relationships to craft a community-wide response.

And remember, the foundation of community organizing is built upon relationships. As a Sisterhood, we are already deeply grounded in relationship. We are perfectly positioned to leverage our relationships to fight hate, negative stereotyping and prejudice.

**To unify our actions, we ask that all chapters use the same name:**

**The Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom (insert your chapter name) Rise and Resist.**

**We've identified four steps to counter hate:**

1. Forge Relationships
2. Act
3. Communicate
4. Educate

We hope that, together, these steps will provide you with the resources you need to act with confidence and clarity. But remember, you're not going to personally do all these steps. And you won't be doing them alone. Take actions that align with your strengths and your passions.

## Step One: Forge Relationships

**Goal of Step One: To develop allies in your community committed to challenging defamation and standing up for one another.**

The Department of Justice warns that slurs escalate to harassment, harassment to threats, and threats to violence. Appendix One shows how unchecked hateful words can lead to violence. It can feel overwhelming to witness acts of hate and can engender feelings of powerlessness. But when we build relationships and join forces with others in the community, we can create a counter narrative that allows us to transform hate into love.

### Step One Objectives:

1. Commit with your sisters to actively fight hate.
2. Identify leaders and build coalitions

**Objective #1: Commit with your sisters.** Many of us lead very busy lives. But at the end of the day, it's up to us to act. When one of us is under attack, none are truly safe. We are our sister's keeper!

*"Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek."*

- President Barack Obama

### Steps to Achieve Objective #1: Commit with your sisters.

1. **Encourage** members of your chapter to make a commitment.
  - a. **Set** aside time at a chapter meeting to let your Sisters know about the ***Rise and Resist*** resources.
  - b. **Share** these materials and ask other sisters in your chapter or region to join with you and commit up to a couple of hours/month to fighting hate in your community. Ask open-ended questions. Will you work with me to respond to incidents of bias or hate in our community and educate others so that our town is "hate-free"? What would you like to see here? Don't be discouraged if not everyone agrees to take part. Start where you are. If not everyone in your chapter is interested in taking part in the planning, meet at another

time to develop your plan. As you gain traction, others may see your impact and come on board.

2. **Create** a “rapid response” team with a few sisters (see footnote, p. 14).
3. **Assign leadership roles.** The nature of the incident and your decision for how to respond will determine the amount of leadership structure you need. If you decide to write cards and provide emotional support to a victim’s family, you might ask one sister to organize the effort. This informal structure can work very well much of the time. When an incident occurs, see who has the time and interest to coordinate a response.

If you decide you want to be involved in ongoing efforts, you may want to agree to roles and responsibilities among your sisters ahead of time. Consider having one “point person” for:

- a. Overall group coordination.
- b. Media/social media contact.
- c. Program planning.
- d. Community outreach, e.g. contacting the school superintendent, Member of Congress.

Ask other sisters if they want to be involved in a helping role, e.g. attend events/actions, make calls, host meetings, engage on social media, write op-eds for local papers.

4. **Adopt** a preferred means of communication for your Sisterhood planning team. This can be a Facebook group, a Google group, a Slack team, or whatever people are most comfortable with. You may also want to consider a secure platform such as Signal or WhatsApp.

## **Objective #2: Identify Local Leaders and Build Coalitions.**

Community leaders must take an active role in fighting hate. When leaders step forward and act swiftly in the wake of a hateful incident, victims feel supported, community members feel safe, and space for action and dialogue can grow. But the fear of negative publicity, a lack of partnerships, and a failure to understand the consequences of silence can create a vacuum in which rumors spread, victims



feel ignored, and perpetrators find tacit acceptance. Letting leaders know you expect their support can make all the difference!

Creating an inclusive and welcoming community is a collective responsibility and your Sisterhood chapter is uniquely positioned to add value to your community response. So, one of your first tasks is to identify other individuals and groups in the community who can partner with you to fight hate. Once established, you can call upon these relationships to mobilize quickly when a bias incident or hate crime is perpetrated. There is power in diverse coalitions.

## **Steps to Achieve Objective #2: Identify leaders and build coalitions.**

- 1. Identify Stakeholders.** Stakeholders are people who are:
  - a.** Directly or indirectly involved in the incident, e.g. the victim and his/her family, community directly impacted the hate incident, law enforcement, and school personnel.
  - b.** Responsible for reporting, e.g. media.
  - c.** Responsible for maintaining the safety of citizens, e.g. law enforcement, elected officials.
  - d.** Allies and collaborative partners who can address the issues in the community for greater impact, e.g. interfaith groups, PTA, religious umbrella organizations.
- 2. Review** your list of stakeholders and find out if anyone in your planning group or Sisterhood chapter has an existing relationship with one or more of the stakeholders. Contact these individuals. Learn about their concerns and what they are doing to fight hate in your community. Share your story and your priorities.
- 3. Brainstorm** other key community leaders. Where don't you already have connections? Who whom do you want to build relationships?
- 4. Create a network of allies.** Your goal is bring together a diverse group of individuals and groups who care about or are actively working to stop hate in your community. Look over your list and prioritize the groups most relevant to the incidents in your town. Over time, set up an appointment and meet with a leader in each group, e.g. high school principal, police chief, religious leaders, interfaith alliances. Learn about their concerns and what they are doing to fight hate in your community.

5. **Ask** one Muslim and one Jewish sister to meet personally with your key stakeholders. As Muslim and Jewish women, we make a strong statement when we stand together.
  - a. Find out what they are doing to respond to hate and to educate the public.
  - b. Ask how you can support them in fighting hate.
6. **Bring** diverse communities together. See Section Four: Educate, pg. 25 for program ideas.
7. **Share your story** with your stakeholders and others in your network. Talk about how the rise in bias and hate crimes towards Muslims and Jews has affected you, your family, and your community. Ask them how they have been personally or professionally impacted by hate in your community. Putting a personal face on the statistics goes a long way in building trust among your allies.
8. **Share your goals** to support victims of hate and to educate the community about the importance of standing up to hate and ask for their commitment to stand up to hate.
9. **Join Forces.** If a group shares your values and interests, join forces with them. There is power in a diverse coalition. If your concerns overlap but your agendas differ, identify ways you can mutually support each other, and when appropriate, ask for commitments.
10. **Know** the name and contact information of your state and national legislators.
  - a. Here's how to find them:
    - i. <http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/>
    - ii. [http://act.commoncause.org/site/PageServer?pagename=sunlight\\_advocacy\\_list\\_page](http://act.commoncause.org/site/PageServer?pagename=sunlight_advocacy_list_page)
    - iii. [www.callmycongress.com](http://www.callmycongress.com) (get contact for Member of Congress)

- b. Here are some general guidelines on how to contact them. In general, face-to-face meetings and phone calls are the most effective means to secure their involvement.
  - i. <https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials>

### **City/town Politics.**

If there are multiple incidents of hate in your town, you may want to find out what your town or city government is doing to fight hate.

1. Learn the name and contact information of your City Council members. Find out what's important to your city's legislators.
2. Get to know your local school board. Here's information on what a school board does and how you can get involved:
  - a. <https://www.nsba.org/about-us/frequently-asked-questions>

### **Government Resources:**

1. Find contact information for your state attorney general. Your state attorney general is the chief legal advisor and chief law enforcer in your state. AG's prosecute violations to state laws and are an important contact when fighting hate.
  - a. <https://www.usa.gov/state-attorney-general>
2. Find information for other federal, state, and local government agencies and elected officials here:
  - a. <https://www.usa.gov/agencies>

## **Step Two: Act**

Your actions can take two forms. You can respond after an incident has occurred and you can take action to prevent future incidents. This section focuses on taking immediate action after an incident of bias or hate has occurred. See the final section, “Educate” (p.23), for actions you can take to open hearts and minds in order to prevent future incidents.

In the face of hatred, apathy is interpreted as acceptance by the perpetrators, the public, and worse, by the victims. To break the cycle of hatred, we must expose and denounce hate by drawing attention away from it, towards love and unity. There is power in numbers. Acting together brings healing, comfort and hope. Victims of hate crimes often feel alone and afraid. Silence amplifies their isolation and tacitly condones the act of hate. Small acts of kindness can help. But it is important to be prepared. You must be ready to mobilize your community before an incident occurs.

**Goal of Step Two: To publicly take a stand after an act of discrimination or hate has occurred in your community.**

### **Step Two Objectives:**

1. To support individuals and institutions that have been victims of hate.
2. To lead or take part in a rapid and coordinated community response to denounce acts of hate.

**Objective #1: To support individuals and institutions that have been victims of hate.**

### **Steps to Achieve Objective #1:**

1. **Reach** out to the family or institution. Let them know that you denounce hate and support their right to live in peace and dignity.
  - a. **Make phone calls.** Let the family know you care. Always keep the safety and well-being of the victim in mind when making phone calls, visits or sending messages. Involving their family and/or

community in the response is a good practice unless they request otherwise.

- b. **Visit in person.** Call and see if the family would like a visit from a few women from your Sisterhood chapter. If a community was targeted, there are many ways to show your support. For example, interfaith partners handed out roses to congregants at a mosque that was the subject of a hate attack in Houston, TX. The Muslim community visited a Jewish Community Center and delivered cards and teddy bears to a day school when they received bomb threats.
  - c. **Send cards of support and/or flowers to individuals or organizations targeted by hate.** Cards or flowers with messages of support and concern from a group of people are a great way to lift the spirits of the victims. Writing letters of support is a kind, personal gesture that makes a big difference. Jess, a sister in Boston, heard about death threats made to a middle school student in Worcester, MA. She emailed sisters in her chapter, asking them to write words of support. She compiled the statements into a booklet and they were delivered to the family.
2. **Ask** the victim(s) if they are comfortable reporting the incident. Some victims may fear “the system”, so be sure to ask if they would welcome the presence of others at the police station, courthouse, or meeting with school officials. It’s important to remember that it’s helpful for law enforcement to know of any incident, no matter how small, in case things escalate.
  3. **Ask** the victim(s) if they are comfortable revealing their identity publicly to the media. Sharing a personal story with the media about the impact on their family can be a powerful motivator for others to step forward and denounce the action.
  4. **Support** the family by helping them research their legal rights. Make sure they know that you are available to provide emotional support. If the family is willing, write an article to your local newspaper in support of the family.

## **Objective #2: To lead or take part in a rapid and coordinated community response.**

### **Steps to Achieve Objective #2:**

1. **Find out** if local organizations or other community leaders are already coordinating a response. If so, offer to support their efforts:<sup>1</sup>
  - a. Call contacts in the community. If the attack is against the Muslim community, contact the local mosque or community leaders. If the attack is against the Jewish community, contact a local synagogue or Jewish communal organization. Ask how you can best support the victim(s).
  - b. Contact the police. If they don't have a plan, ask to meet with them and demand a quick, serious response. Hold them accountable to respond swiftly. Please note, there are times when law enforcement recommends no public response. An example is when white supremacists distribute hate literature. Law enforcement often doesn't want to "give oxygen" to the group through media publicity. If you're considering reaching out to the perpetrators, talk to your local law enforcement to make sure they support this step.
  - c. Check on local social media.
  - d. Check to see if there is information at other online sources, e.g. town newspaper, religious institutions
  
2. **Coordinate** a vigil or rally to draw attention to your unity, while denouncing and exposing hate.<sup>2</sup> The scope and scale can be modest, depending upon your resources and time. Make sure to follow the lead of the family and respect their wishes regarding publicity. Contact the Sisterhood central office ([nadia@sosspeace.org](mailto:nadia@sosspeace.org)) for the names of other Sisterhood chapters in your area and to find out how the central office can help boost your power locally. A general outline is below. See Appendix Two for more detailed information.
  - a. Decide upon a place and time to hold your event.

---

<sup>1</sup> It may be helpful to organize a "**Rapid Response Team**" before an incident of hate occurs. Meet at least once to build group cohesion, clarify your role and identify potential "hot spots", so you're not caught off guard when a challenging situation arises, i.e. one group experiences an incident as defamation and the other sees it as exercising their right to free speech.

<sup>2</sup> If a hate group, avowed separatist, or extremist is coming to your town, focus your efforts on providing an alternative. Don't attend a hate rally as a counter protest, as that will only attract more media attention to the group. Instead, create alternatives that support loving, caring communities.

- b. Contact town police or town government to let them know your plans. Get a permit. The operative word here is “be prepared!” Know what you need before swift action is required.
  - c. Reach out to your team of allies and invite them to the event.
  - d. Post it on social media and on local news media (radio, cable tv, town newspaper website).
  - e. Invite other Sisterhood chapters in your region.
  - f. Let people know if they should bring signs and if so, let them know the message you want to convey. Consider hosting a sign-making party to get more people involved and to ensure that your signs have a consistent message.
  - g. If you think the event will draw more than 20 people, make sure you have a megaphone or sound system.
  - h. For a more detailed work plan on how to host a vigil, please see Appendix Two.
2. **Consider** additional actions.
- a. Write and disseminate a press release denouncing the act(s). See Appendix Four for a sample press release.
  - b. Share condemnation on social media.
  - c. Contact other appropriate town officials with an ask that is specific to the incident.
  - d. Report even small acts of hate, e.g. graffiti or posters, since they can build a paper trail necessary to prove a hate crime down the road. Make sure that your local police department keeps a record of these incidents. If they occur repeatedly, ask to meet with your police chief to see if other reporting, e.g. to state Attorney General is advisable.

Here is a great example of an immediate response to an act of hate:

After three Sacramento, CA synagogues were firebombed early one summer morning in 1999, almost as quickly as the fires were started, the community of Sacramento mobilized to take a stand against anti-Semitic hate crimes. Within days after the attacks, dozens of public officials and community leaders attended a community rally, sending a message of unity and strength. Together they donated thousands of dollars to help rebuild the synagogues. Organizers handed out a poster with the slogan "Sacramento Together United We Stand" and

“Chai,” the Hebrew word for life. The local newspaper, The Sacramento Bee decided to publish the poster as an insert and encouraged readers to display it in their windows.

“Here’s an old fashioned medium, a print newspaper, that can disseminate in one morning a message that can not only be read, but can be placed in people’s store fronts and automobiles and homes in a way that can really make you feel the power of people acting and taking a sort of affirmative step,” said Steven Weiss, vice president of marketing & public affairs for The Sacramento Bee.

The next night, 5,000 people participated in a Community Solidarity Gathering, where more than 300 clerics of diverse religious backgrounds, civic leaders, and law enforcement officials shared the stage to demonstrate their unity.



## Step Three: Communicate

Any campaign for action is only as effective as its messaging and execution. It is important to convey a focused message to all stakeholders and the larger community and to utilize the appropriate communication channels to reach them.

**Goal of Step Three: To drive stakeholders to take focused action in response to incidents of hate in the community.**

### Step Three Objectives:

1. To demand a response to the hate incident.
2. To communicate your action to the general public.

**Objective #1: To demand a response to the hate incident.** Prioritize the most important stakeholders based upon the situation, your resources, existing relationships, and the list of stakeholders you've identified. Implement the following steps and channels to demand a response from the city government, school board, law enforcement, elected officials, including Members of Congress, and interfaith partners.

### Steps to Achieve Objective #1:

1. **Make** specific asks of your leaders, using the three S's as your guide:<sup>3</sup>
  - a. **Be Specific.** Below are some examples.
    - i. To Members of Congress: (a) Vote yes on the hate crime bill; (b) make a public statement denouncing a recent incident of bias or hate; (c) co-sponsor a bill to provide money for anti-bias education.
    - ii. To police: (a) Create a team to investigate every incident of bias; (b) Provide anti-bias training for all members of your police force.
    - iii. To school leaders: Incorporate Southern Poverty Law Center free resources into your K-12 curriculum.
  - b. **Be Strategic.** Know what you want to achieve. A single ask is better than a laundry list of ideas.

---

<sup>3</sup> The three S's and the specific actions that follow are found in: *Indivisible- A Practical Guide for Resisting the Trump Agenda*, updated January 27, 2017.

- c. Ensure it's **Seeable**. Verify that they followed through.
  - i. Call your Member of Congress or school committee president to make sure that they followed through. Then write a letter or editorial in your local newspaper to thank them for their advocacy. This lets them know that the community is aware of their action.
  - ii. If there is no action, ask allies to call up and urge them to respond to your ask. The more people that call the better. Pressure from groups of constituents is much more effective than pressure from a single constituent. If you don't get a reply, post your letter on social media.

## 2. Choose the appropriate channel of communication.

- a. **Visit district offices.** The most effective medium to get the attention of Members of Congress (MOC) is to make in-person visits to their local district offices. Take detailed notes of your interaction with the representative or the staffer. The staff are required to discuss the constituent's remarks with the MOC and when you request follow up notification, they are required to respond to you with the resolution.
- b. **Make phone calls.** If you are unable to visit, pick up the phone and call. (Online petitions are much less effective.) Engage a local group of constituents to make phone calls with a script to deliver the desired message. This effective strategy works well for local government, school board, Members of Congress, and other political figures who are concerned about community engagement and response. Remember that their goal is to serve their constituents and to get re-elected. Ask to speak to the representative or a staffer. Make sure you note down their name and the details of the conversation. If you are directed to voicemail, follow up with an email or another phone call.
- c. **Attend town halls and other public events.** Attend as a group. Prepare several questions ahead of time with a clear message. Make sure everyone has the same "ask" for action and follow-up. Have people sit in different parts of the venue. Ask questions politely but demand clear answers.

### 3. Examples of specific requests to make to **Members of Congress**:

- a. Use their vote to support legislation that represents your values, or to withhold support for legislation that doesn't represent your values.
- b. Introduce legislation that advances your policy priorities and actively recruit co-sponsors.
- c. Co-sponsor legislation, regardless of their committee assignments.
- d. Use their oversight authority, including investigation and subpoenas.
- e. Write directly to a Cabinet secretary or agency head to voice your concern.
- f. Use leverage procedural tools, e.g. filibuster, to slow down agendas that don't represent your values.
- g. Join a caucus.
- h. Publicly urge leadership to give greater attention to an issue.

### 4. Examples of specific requests to make to **school personnel**:

- a. Report all incidents immediately to the police.
- b. Call the affected families and offer support.
- c. Provide opportunities for the students to share their personal experiences with bias.
- d. Provide training for teachers and staff so they understand how to best support students and help student perpetrators understand the consequences of their actions.
- e. Provide training to teachers and staff, giving them guidelines for reporting incidents of bias or hate.
- f. Incorporate anti-bias curriculum, e.g. Southern Poverty Law Center, at each grade level.

If the schools are responding quickly and effectively, call and let the principal and superintendent know you appreciate their efforts. It's likely that the entire community is not aware of these efforts, so write a letter to the editor in support of their actions. (See [Appendix Three](#) for how to write an effective letter to the editor.)

If you perceive gaps or inadequacies in their response, or they are not responding, remember the three S's:

- i. Be **Specific**. Ask them to incorporate free lesson plans from the Southern Poverty Law Center into the K-12 curriculum.
- ii. Be **Strategic**. Know what you want to achieve, e.g. address bias incidents swiftly.

- iii. It's **Seeable**. Call to verify that they followed through.
  - a. Express your concerns at a PTA meeting. Encourage other parents to speak out. Ask to meet with the principal or superintendent, using the three S's as your guide.
  - b. Invite students to join you in coming up with solutions.
  - c. If your concerns aren't addressed, bring them to a school committee meeting. Don't give up!

**5. Examples of specific requests to make to your local police department:**

- a. Conduct ongoing anti-bias and cultural competency training for police officers.
- b. Train staff at local schools to understand the difference between bias incidents and hate crimes. Make sure they understand their legal and moral responsibility to act.
- c. Ask police to file reports of all hate and bias incidents to the State Attorney General and ask if it's appropriate to also file with the Dept. of Justice and FBI. Although the incident may appear small, it is significant for the victim(s).

**6. Stay in touch.**

- a. Call community leaders regularly to express your concerns. Ask what they are doing to fight hate in your community. Keep them informed about your issues, updates and actions.
- b. Sign up for their email list to learn about when they're hosting open meetings. Show up at these meetings to reinforce your concerns and ask what they are doing to fight hate. Invite everyone you know to show up and pack the hall.
- c. Know the committees that your leaders are part of and call them when there is an issue that relates to fighting hate.
- d. Invite community leaders and local staffers of members of Congress to your vigil or public response.

**Objective #2: To communicate your action to the general public.** It is important to send a message of unity and strength to the community at large, both to inform them of the actions you've taken, as well as to urge them to attend future actions.

## Steps to Achieve Objective #2:

1. **Utilize** multiple channels to engage the community.
  - a. **Press Release.** A prompt and well-worded press release to condemn the incident of hate and urge the community to rally in support of the victims is critical to condemning the hate. A press release can also be used to urge the local government leaders to make a public statement in response to the incident. Refer to Appendix Four for a sample press release.
  - b. **Press Conference.** Join a press conference convened by others. Through your network of allies, reach out to the organizers of the press conference to introduce the Sisterhood and ask for an opportunity to speak and present a statement. If no press conference is scheduled, contact community leaders and local law enforcement to publicly pressure them to arrange a press conference. For a sample letter to get invited to a press conference refer to Appendix Five.
  - c. **Conventional Media.** Find out who covers religious affairs and community news for different newspapers and local TV channels. Contact reporters via phone (best), email, or social media. Let them know you are a member of the Sisterhood, a grassroots organization in the U.S. and Canada dedicated to fighting hate against Muslims and Jews. Ask to be interviewed for commentary and coverage in response to an incident. For a sample letter to get invited to a speak through conventional media outlets, refer to Appendix Six.
  - d. **Facebook and Instagram.** Post you actions on Facebook and Instagram for more visibility and to keep the pressure on. You might want to create a separate, public-facing account if you're not comfortable using your personal social media account for public interactions. Utilize Facebook Live Video to expand the scope of your participation in a live event, such as a town hall or prayer vigil.
  - e. **Twitter.** Twitter hashtags are a handy way of grouping, linking, and categorizing tweets and social media conversations. They help people follow topics of interest and make it possible for others to easily find messages with a specific theme or content. Users create and use hashtags by placing the number sign or pound sign # usually

in front of a word or unspaced phrase in a message. Anyone searching for a specific topic can find relevant tweets immediately rather than having to scroll through their Twitter feed<sup>4</sup>.

Use the hashtag **#RiseandResist** in conjunction with the title: **Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom (your chapter name) Rise and Resist** to publicize your upcoming actions and to live stream actions in process. This umbrella wording will connect you to all Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom Rise and Resist efforts across the U.S. and Canada. In case you're not familiar with hashtags, they can be used in private or public social media posts. In order to show up in general searches for that hashtag, your post needs to be public.

- f. **Letters to the Editor.** Write a letter to the editor in your local newspaper. Stick to one point to keep it focused and concise. Refer to Appendix Three for a template on how to write a solid letter to the editor.
- g. **Op-eds.** Share your story in a concise manner, state your point and engage the audience. Op-eds are the gold mine section of the paper, where you can shape public opinion using your own voice. For a guide on how to write an effective Op-ed, refer to Appendix Seven.

## **Important Limits to Communication**

As a 501(c)(3) non-profit, the Sisterhood is not allowed to endorse or speak against a political candidate running for office. The Sisterhood is also not allowed to attempt to persuade anyone to vote for or against a person running for office. You may endorse a candidate as an individual, but NEVER when you are speaking on behalf of the Sisterhood.

In addition, the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom has a policy to not enter into any public discussion or to make any public statements for or against the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. When you speak or write on behalf of the Sisterhood, it is critical that you abide by this policy. This does not impact your ability to respond as an individual.

---

<sup>4</sup> [w.sendible.com/insights/twitter-hashtags](http://w.sendible.com/insights/twitter-hashtags)

## Step Four: Educate

Bias and prejudice have long been present in American history. When bias motivates an unlawful act, it is considered a hate crime. Both bias and hate crimes can tear communities apart. In the “Act” section of this guide, we identified ways you can quickly mobilize your community and support victims following a specific incident of bias or hate. But our ultimate vision is to create an inclusive, loving community where bias and hate crimes are relegated to the history books. This section outlines ways you can educate your community to change hearts and minds over a period of time. Be sure to speak with members of the affected community. What would they like the community to know about them? Explore different ways they want to educate the wider community.

**Goal of Step Four: To promote acceptance and inclusion, and as a result, decrease bias and hate crimes in your community.**

### Step Four Objectives:

1. To educate yourself, your family, and your chapter in order to understand your own biases.
2. To educate the community-at-large about the power of an inclusive community and the negative impact of unaddressed bias and hate.

**Objective #1: To educate yourself, your family, and your chapter in order to understand your own biases.**

You can mount a more informed, effective campaign when you understand our own biases.

### Steps to Achieve Objective #1:

1. **Explore** your own biases and stereotypes through self-reflection. What have you learned about the “other” in your past that might negatively impact your views? Talk with friends within your own religious community about the stereotypes you hold/were taught, not just about other religious communities, but also about branches or sects within your own tradition. Do this without shame or blame. You did not create these messages. But being aware of your biases is the first step towards dismantling them. Read *Speak UP! Responding to Everyday Bigotry*, a concise publication developed by Teaching Tolerance, a project of the Southern Poverty Law



Center. It gives concrete examples of positive ways you can respond to everyday bigotry.

2. **Dedicate** a Sisterhood meeting to collectively exploring your own stereotypes and commit to disrupting them. Look at the world through the eyes of your partner in faith. Ask your sisters to respectfully and lovingly point out any “ouch” moments.
3. **Understand** the difference between a bias incident and a hate crime. Bias is conduct, speech, or expression that is motivated by prejudice but doesn’t involve a criminal act. A hate crime is a crime such as physical assault, intimidation, arson or vandalism, that is motivated, in whole or part, by bias.
4. **Action steps for parents:**
  - a. Encourage your chapter to meet as families, so your children can benefit from a wider circle of friends and experiences.
  - b. Encourage your children to become activists. Let them know that if they “see something, say something”. That goes for you as well.
  - c. Examine the media your children consume, from internet sites to commercials. If you notice stereotypes or examples of intolerance, discuss the issues openly.
  - d. Model inclusive language and behavior. If you demonstrate a deep respect for other cultures and religions, it’s likely they will too.
  - e. Read *Speak Up at School: How to Respond to Everyday Prejudice, Bias and Stereotypes* with your child. This publication from Teaching Tolerance is a guide for teachers, but it will help you support your child to recognize everyday bias and give your child language to use to interrupt it. Contact the Southern Poverty Law Center Teaching Tolerance Program (<https://www.splcenter.org/teaching-tolerance>) to get copies of this resource.
5. **Learn** about the symbols and agenda of the hate group. Although, according to the Southern Poverty Law Center, fewer than five percent of hate crimes are committed by a hate group, many individuals are strongly influenced by their dehumanizing rhetoric and propaganda. Learning their symbols and agenda will allow you to respond more quickly if they show up in your community.



**Objective #2: To educate the community-at-large about the power of an inclusive community and the negative impact of unaddressed bias and hate.**

**Steps to Achieve Objective #2:**

1. **Educate the public about the impact of hate.** Write an article for your local paper. Share the impact of hate on your family and community. Share information to educate others about the difference between bias and a hate crime. (See [Appendix Eight](#) for how to write an effective article.)
2. **Learn** how bias and hate has manifested in your community, with your sisters, network of allies, or other local leaders. Are there incidents in the schools? What is the frequency? Who are the targets? Are they directed towards specific communities? Houses of worship? Based upon your analysis, develop priorities for proactive educational efforts.
3. **Bring** diverse communities together for learning and celebration. We've outlined just a few of the many possible alternatives below. Remember, the best cure for hate is a united community!
  - a. Plan a multicultural day with food and celebration.
  - b. Plan educational programs in houses of worship.
  - c. Speak in schools. As Muslim and Jewish women together, share your experiences with discrimination and provide concrete examples of how students can interrupt hate. Hand out copies of *Speak Up at School: How to Respond to Everyday Prejudice, Bias and Stereotypes*. Contact the Southern Poverty Law Center Teaching Tolerance Program (<https://www.splcenter.org/teaching-tolerance>) to get copies of this resource.
  - d. Break bread together and host kitchen table conversations throughout your town.
  - e. Ask your local library to host a series of community conversations about religious pluralism through discussion groups, book clubs, evenings where residents share their immigration history and encounters with discrimination.
  - f. Host interfaith events and learning opportunities to regularly connect with the affected community. Develop joint programs for youth to engage across the faith boundaries.

- g. Create opportunities for children to participate in any of the above programs. These can include art projects, music, and play opportunities.

Although these programs are different, they share two important things in common: (1) They are ongoing and provide multiple opportunities for interaction; and, (2) They share the common goal of learning about others as human beings.

Even though the programs may target different audiences and take different forms, the planning process is remarkably similar. You can find a sample work plan for how to develop a program in [Appendix Nine](#). You'll find a template for how to organize your meeting time in the Agenda Template in [Appendix Ten](#).

It's helpful to keep a record of your decisions and action steps, so we've included a template for taking minutes in [Appendix Eleven](#). Finally, we've included some tips for running an effective meeting in [Appendix Twelve](#). We hope these tools will help you effectively plan actions to support victims of hate and bring educational programs to your community. Remember, this journey is a marathon, not a sprint, so also plan to share food and have fun in the process!

## Conclusion

According to the Southern Poverty Law Center:

*“An informed and unified community is the best defense against hate. You can spread tolerance through social media and websites, church bulletins, door-to-door fliers, letters to the editor, and print advertisements. Hate shrivels under strong light. Beneath their neo-Nazi exteriors, hatemongers are cowards and are surprisingly subject to public pressure and ostracism.”<sup>5</sup>*

As Muslim and Jewish women we have the obligation to protect one another. **Rise and Resist** is a road map to help you on your journey. We hope these tools give you the confidence you need to build a more inclusive and safe community.

We know that each of you comes to this process with different levels of interest and different desires for involvement. You live in unique communities. That’s why we developed this resource guide as a cafeteria plan with multiple options and steps, so that you can engage as your situation dictates. We encourage you to examine your personal strengths and interests to assess how you can best support love and understanding in your community.

Some of the examples in this guide may not be possible for you or your chapter because of limited time, interest, or resources. Or they may feel too risky. For example, if you live in a state where there is “open carry” of guns, you may not want to host a program where anyone can enter without an invitation. These are individual decisions you will make based upon your unique situation. However, we want you to remember four things:

1. Start wherever you are.
2. Every action you take has an impact and no action is too small.
3. The Sisterhood is there to support you.
4. Use FACE (Forge Relationships, Act, Communicate, Educate) to counter hate!

---

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.splcenter.org/20170814/ten-ways-fight-hate-community-response-guide>