

Joint Statement on the Impact of COVID-19 on Vulnerable Groups

A rise in bigoted behavior towards those of diverse racial and religious backgrounds has become a growing concern across Canada. Before the threat of COVID-19 became a daily concern in our lives, antagonizing behavior towards Canadians and newcomers of Asian heritage, as well as those who may practice other religious beliefs, had already become an increasing disruption to our communities. When COVID-19 began to spread, a rise in instances of shameful behavior blaming racialized communities did as well.

It is our job, as people, as parents, as residents of BC and for all Canadians, to combat racist behaviors and discriminatory practices wherever we can. Canada is a country of inclusion by choice. It is imperative that we remain united in our diversity and steadfast in upholding the rights of every resident to life, liberty and security of the person, as stated on the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In Canada, every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

Queenie Choo, CEO of S.U.C.C.E.S.S. commented: “We call on all communities to stand in solidarity against any divisive behavior, whether it be racially motivated or antagonizing against faith-based or community-based organizations. Further, we ask that all of our communities continue to support those vulnerable and impacted by these extraordinary circumstances. As we all build Canada’s future, we must remain united as a society, and support our intercultural communities through inclusive behavior. Together, when we share our compassion, generosity and support, I am certain that we will get through this challenging time and come out stronger.”

To learn more about the laws against hate crime in British Columbia, please visit www.hatecrimebc.ca.

To report a hate crime, dial 9-1-1, ask to speak with a member of law enforcement, and tell them that you are reporting a hate crime.

For those who witness such acts, we urge you to respond safely by providing or asking for assistance and offering support. The Tri-Cities Together: Coalition against Racism and Hate has developed a community response protocol with strategies on how to respond safely and can be found at <https://tricitieclip.ca/community-protocol/>.

The Tri-Cities communities, its stakeholders and residents are committed to the shared principles of respect, empathy and inclusion. Each of us have a role to play to ensure that everyone who lives here remains safe and included. Together, we can build a healthy, vibrant and inclusive community.

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