



Content Guidelines

Thank you for your generous partnership and solidarity with Stop AAPI Hate.

At Stop AAPI Hate, we know that language matters. The way we talk about the AAPI community and anti-Asian hate incidents in the United States carries weight, and impacts our daily lives. As organizations and companies with large platforms, we all have the responsibility to talk about these issues in the best way, capturing critical nuances and information. As you develop content for your employees, for your followers on social media, and for your consumers, please consider the following guidelines on messaging and creative content to ensure that you avoid what we find are common pitfalls, and instead, capture the spirit of solidarity that is so needed in this moment.

Framing of the Issue

What we are seeing today is not new. The way the AAPI community is depicted and represented is an issue, and has been an issue for years. The exoticization and othering of the community can be seen across mediums, from movies to social media to comments made by elected officials who make decisions that impact our futures. More recently, the way the community has been othered during the rise of COVID-19 in the United States has led to a rise in the anti-Asian hate incidents we are seeing today. It is important that we keep in mind this long history of otherization when we frame the issues, rather than talk about recent incidents as isolated.

Anti-Asian hate incidents are rooted in systemic racism. The incidents of hate across the country that we are seeing today do not occur in a vacuum. Rather, they are reflections of broader systemic racism that plagues many communities within the United States and affects all communities of color. At Stop AAPI Hate, we support the broader racial justice movement and stand with other communities against hate. The way we talk about these issues must acknowledge the context of systemic racism as the root cause and how it affects what we are seeing today.

There is a long history of solidarity between the AAPI and communities of color in our country.

Often, the individuals and institutions that perpetuate systemic racism in our country will also pit these communities against one another. We oppose this, and recognize the long and important history of solidarity between the AAPI community and other communities of color in the United States. We know that the fight for justice means we must dismantle systemic racism wholly, and we stand alongside them.

These complex challenges require holistic solutions. Just as the root causes of racism and anti-AAPI hate are interlocking and complex, the solutions must also be holistic and integrated. We cannot fight anti-Asian hate through a short burst of attention; real change will take years. We need to see progress at all levels of society: in the workplace, in the media, and in public policy.

Language and Messaging: Do's and Don'ts

DON'T:

- **Don't exoticify or other the AAPI community.** One of the most pervasive language problems when discussing the AAPI community is that the community is often exoticified or othered – the community is described as different, fetishized, and foreign. The implications of this language are real and lead to discrimination of the community, as well as the hate incidents we are seeing today.
- **Don't center or limit messaging to the AAPI community's accomplishments.** Often in conversations about the AAPI community, conversations will use the community's accomplishments as rationale for why we belong in the United States. We want to reject this messaging; we belong simply because we exist.
- **Don't talk about racism as a virus.** This kind of messaging suggests that racism is a disease you can catch and be treated for, but in reality, it is a deeply rooted structural challenge that runs across all aspects of our lives. Talking about racism as a virus also removes our own personal accountability – we must recognize the roles we play in actively promoting or rejecting racism.
- **Do not reduce hate to violent and interpersonal attacks only.** Racism and hate takes many forms. Interpersonal violent attacks are horrible incidents – and often the most publicized. However, anti-Asian racism also encompasses incidents of verbal harassment, the use of racial slurs, refusal of service and a variety of other types of incidents that are meant to other our community and make us feel less than. It is even important to recognize that these are results of systems and structures that do not work

for us. Addressing hate requires addressing it in all its forms and to take action against it.

- **Do not perpetuate trauma by using images of harmed people.** Sharing and publicizing images or videos of violent attacks against AAPI individuals perpetuates trauma in our community — and particularly for those who have experienced this hate firsthand, who may be triggered by being reexposed to such tangible hate and discrimination.

DO:

- **Capture the diversity of the community, and acknowledge that hate impacts all AAPIs.** The AAPI community in the United States is diverse and robust, representing many different heritages and cultures. When we talk about the AAPI community in this country, we mostly talk about those who identify as **East Asian** (*Chinese, Taiwanese, Japanese, Korean & Mongolian*), but it is important to recognize the real diversity of the community, which also includes those who identify as **South Asian** (*Indian, Bangladesh, Sri Lankan, Nepal & Pakistan*); **Southeast Asian** (*Filipino, Cambodian, Vietnamese, Lao, Indoneisan, Thai & Singaporean*) as well as the **Pacific Islander** community (*Native Hawaiian, Samoan, Tahitian, Guamanian, Fijian & Papua New Guinea*). Going one step further, you can lift up those who are at the intersection of marginalization including AAPI women, LGBTQ, low-income and working class communities.
- **Note the limitations of data.** We have only tracked the incidents of data since the spring of 2020, and many incidents continue to go unreported. Oftentimes, victims are reluctant to report their experiences because of distrust of law enforcement, language barriers, and other roadblocks, which means that the level of incidents are likely much higher. Additionally, our data cannot be equated with hate crime data because we also track hate incidents. It is important not to use hate incidents and hate crimes interchangeably.
- **Encourage everyone to be part of the solution.** There is no playbook or one solution to addressing systemic racism. We all have a role to play and a responsibility to build a better community for everyone. There are myriad ways to get involved — we offer a few ideas on our [“Act Now”](#) page.
- **Build solidarity between AAPIs and other communities.** Viral videos and stories on social media have perpetuated harmful and inaccurate narratives that anti-Asian violence is committed mostly by people of color. However, it is important to recognize the issue of systemic racism reaches beyond just the AAPI community. Despite these narratives, AAPIs and other communities of color have demonstrated powerful racial solidarity efforts — it is critical that we build upon and highlight this.

- **Lift us as a resource.** We are here to support the AAPI community and to drive lasting change. We need your partnership, your reach and your resources and welcome the opportunity to collaborate creatively. You can find more partner resources in our [partnership toolkit.](#)