



COVID-19's Role in Anti-Asian Sentiment

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Although anti-Asian sentiment has been at the forefront of recent news, the Asian community in the US has had to suffer through aggression and violence since the very beginning of American history. Asians have often been labeled as the “model minority,” and while this may sound to be a positive label, it has also caused much violence towards the Asian communities in the US. The COVID-19 pandemic, however, has been one of the biggest contributors to Asian hate, inciting blame towards the Asian community for the pandemic.

In June of 2020, whilst speaking at Dream City Church in Phoenix to a group of youth about re-election, Donald Trump referred to the COVID-19 pandemic as “kung flu.” Other



nicknames for the virus include the “Chinese Virus,” which has broken down the model minority label as members of the Asian American community from every part of Asia have had to come face to face with the blame for a global issue they didn’t create. These newfound pandemic labels have increased anger and hate towards the Asian community, in turn fueling a 164% rise in attacks on Asian Americans in the first quarter of 2021, according to a study done by Voa. On January 28th of 2021, 84 year old Vicha Ratanapakdee, an immigrant from Thailand, was on his daily hour-long morning walk, which he was well known for in his San Francisco neighborhood (Lah, CNN). As he was walking, someone ran across the street and aggressively shoved him to the ground, causing him to lose consciousness and never wake up. Later, on March 18th of 2021, eight people, including six women of Asian descent, were shot at a spa in Atlanta. These events fueled increasing fear within the Asian community, as attacks on Asian Americans became increasingly common throughout the pandemic. But unfortunately, just because the pandemic is coming to an end globally (knock on wood) doesn’t mean the newfound hate will too.



This COVID sprung violence leads us to the question: what can we, both inside and outside of the U.S., do to bring an end to this hate? The first step is education and advocacy. By educating yourself on both the history of anti-Asian hate, as well as the hate that exists and grows today, you are recognizing the issue. By advocating for change, you are bringing awareness and power to the issue. Furthermore, making sure to report any hate you see, whether it’s in a workspace or at school, or even in public, is a significant step forward in admitting the issue at hand. PBS also recommends potentially partaking in hate curving training to learn how to help a hateful situation yourself. Making sure to sign petitions, a simple act where you click the “yes” on your screen and write your name, can also make a huge difference.



Many of us are lucky enough to step out of our house and never fear being attacked for something that we inherited, our race, our skin color, and our distinct features. However, many people aren't so fortunate. In the world we live in, filled with hatred and disregard, we can only take steps forward by acting and working to end the hate. The COVID-19 pandemic unlocked extreme hostility and blame towards the Asian community, which has not slowly disappeared alongside strict COVID guidelines. Don't let this issue be another that you think about for a day then put into a tab deep in the back of your brain alongside the past "issue trends." Rather, work to create change, because you would want to do so if it were you.



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Image 1: <https://www.oprahdaily.com/life/a35604044/what-is-stop-asian-hate-movement-join/>

Image 2: <https://www.rollingstone.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/AP20072608559332.jpg>