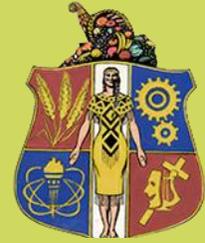


# OWATONNA HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION SUMMER 2021 NEWSLETTER



## Respect, Reflect, Include, Invite, Value

If you have never experienced the following scenario, then imagine it, then realize many people LIVE IT.

You are walking down a neighborhood street. Everyone looks different than you. You notice people staring at you as you walk by – curiously, questioning, and maybe even unwelcoming. This continues to happen as you walk by a park, onto another neighborhood street, all the way to the neighborhood coffee shop.

As you enter the coffee shop, you still look different from others around you. It is not because you have a 3<sup>rd</sup> eye growing out of your forehead, it is simply because your skin is a different color or because you don't look like you came from this country. Basically, you are being looked at because the perception is you don't belong there.

How does it make you feel? Bad about yourself? Angry? Depressed? Anyone who has traveled abroad has surely felt like this at times. But what about in your own country or your own neighborhood?

Ignorance breeds contempt. Contempt breeds anger. Anger breeds intolerance. Intolerance is why the above scenario is happening. This is why society does not always mesh and make sense. This thinking is archaic, sad, and should be intolerable. Society must make positive changes that will eventually change this kind of ignorant thinking and behavior which, as we have seen, is leading to more and more violence.

It is not going to happen overnight and maybe there will always be the ignorant few. However, it starts with one individual and continues to multiply until acceptance is universal and no one has to experience that unwelcome stare or behavior.

### WHAT CAN YOU DO?

***Owatonna Human Rights Commission Mission Statement:***  
*Promoting cultural diversity by educating the community on issues of discrimination and advising the City Council on Human Rights Issues.*

## HELPFUL CONTACTS:

Minnesota Department of  
Human Rights: 651-296-5663

Owatonna Police Department:  
507-451-8232

Owatonna Human Rights  
Commission: 507-774-7341 OR  
[HRC@ci.owatonna.mn.us](mailto:HRC@ci.owatonna.mn.us)

## COVID Resources:

<https://mn.gov/mdhr/news-community/covid-19/>

## Increase vaccination rate by:

- Communicate availability of vaccination options.
- Communicate vaccine is free.
- Communicate and promote the need for the vaccine.
- Offer some type of incentive.
- Identify leaders within the minority group to promote the need to vaccinate.
- Ask schools to distribute information to parents.
- Identify leaders within the minority group to promote the need to vaccinate.
- Promote continued awareness.
- Promote Steele County Public Health's Vaccination Clinic on Wednesdays..