



# **#WeWillNotBeSilent**


**What is hate speech  
and what has it got to do with gender?**

## What is hate speech?

Hate speech means such words, expressions or pictures that spread or stir up hatred against an individual or a specific group. You may experience hate speech in public places, in communications, on social media, when talking with people online or face to face. Hate speech occurs both in closed forums and public discussions. Even photographs, drawings, videos or music can contain hate speech.

Hate speech infringes human rights. Inequality in society breeds hate speech and that often leads to discrimination. Underlying reasons for people using hate speech can stem from their prejudices and classing others into stereotypes. You can come across hate speech just about anywhere and anyone can be a victim of it. Don't put up with hate speech, and if you see it happen, tell someone.

**Hate speech should never be tolerated.**



Don't react to  
hate speech  
with  
hate speech.

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Hate speech can be triggered by a prejudiced attitude to:

- ▷ gender, gender identity or expression of gender
- ▷ nationality, origin or language
- ▷ skin colour
- ▷ religion or conviction
- ▷ sexual orientation
- ▷ impairment or disability


The law prohibits expression of hate speech in forms such as incitement against a population group, defamation, illegal threats, stalking, sexual harassment and gender-based harassment. Even comments or actions that are not a crime as such can cause serious harm, and they should be stopped. If you use hate speech you are always responsible for the consequences.

Hate speech should never be tolerated.

Avoid using language that includes hate speech.



## Comments from people who have experienced hate speech:



[ I didn't sleep well because I knew that there'd probably be more messages. I just waited for the next message anxiously. ]

[ My self-confidence was in tatters. What difference does it make if I change the way I dress? I'm still going to be called a whore. ]

[ It's funny how you can hate someone so much even though you don't know them. ]

[ Then you just need to say to yourself that you don't have to change even though someone shows hatred towards you. ]

[ I wish people would just see me as a human being instead of focusing on this one thing about me. ]



# How is hate speech connected to gender?

The type of hate speech you experience depends on your gender.

Typically, boys and men experience hate speech that often relates to what they have said. Their skills can be undermined or they can be threatened by physical violence.

For girls, women and gender minorities, the hate speech that they experience is particularly related to their gender, gender expression or gender identity. It is also often related to their sexuality and outward appearance. It can include mean comments about their body, the threat of sexual violence or the spreading of intimate pictures without consent or it can be in the form of sexual harassment.

These are typical examples of hate speech experienced by different genders. However, anyone can experience any form of hate speech. Degrading comments on the way they look can also be directed at boys, while the opinions and skills of girls and women may be undermined.

Moreover, hate speech targeted at girls, women and gender minorities is related to the balance of power between the genders. It is a form of discrimination and prevents gender equality.

Hate speech should never be tolerated.

Tell someone you trust if you have experienced hate speech.

# What are the effects of hate speech?

Hate speech affects negatively both the targeted individual and the whole society. It infringes human rights and reinforces inequality in society. It creates fear and attempts to silence individuals and groups and also those who speak up for other people's rights. Hate speech limits freedom of expression. Everyone has an equal right of freedom of expression.

People react to hate speech in different ways, and it is not always clear what the effects are. It can diminish a person's self-confidence and create fear and loneliness. It can also lead to feelings of inferiority and isolation. Other possible effects are stress, lack of concentration, headache, stomach pain, difficulty sleeping and lack of appetite. Hate speech may also make people avoid events and refrain from talking.

You might be just as offended by hate speech and comments directed at others as if they were meant for you. This is especially the case when you have something in common with those who the hate speech is directed at.

Hate speech is an act of aggression. The perpetrators of hate speech are ultimately responsible for such acts of aggression. Typically, hate speech is frequently and repeatedly directed at the same person or group. Sometimes it even leads to physical violence.



Hate speech should never be tolerated.

In discussions, give room to those who often experience hate speech.

Many people drop out of discussions if they receive negative feedback or see it happen to others. If hate speech causes some people or groups to retreat from public discussions, society loses valuable voices and viewpoints.

Hate speech springs from inequality in society and discriminatory attitudes, prejudice and stereotypes. Hate speech relates to the exercise of power. It is used to silence individuals or groups on the basis of certain features, such as gender, skin colour, impairment, disability or sexual orientation.

Sometimes people do not ask for help because they have feelings of guilt or shame. For example, it might be the case that pictures or videos that you sent to someone privately end up being disseminated online. There is nothing wrong with sending your own picture or video to your partner or friend but if they forward it without your consent, it is a crime. The person forwarding the pictures or videos is guilty, not you. Tell someone you trust about the incident so that they can help you and support you. You can also report the incident to the police.

Hate speech should never be tolerated.

Do not communicate anything online that you wouldn't be prepared to say face to face to your friend.



## What can you do?

You can counteract hate speech by speaking out. Speak up boldly in discussions, state your opinions clearly and give justifications for them. In this way, you can show support for the person who is experiencing hate speech and let the perpetrator know that hate speech will not be tolerated. But bear in mind that you can also ignore hate speech and not react. You can decide how much energy you want to use. Set your own limits.

### What can you do if you experience hate speech?

▶ **Don't face it alone**

Tell someone you trust about the incident and say that you want it to be solved. You can also inform the police about it. Remember that hate speech directed at you is never your fault.

▶ **Share your experience without delay**

Talk about your experience as soon as possible. This way you can get help and support and the hate speech can be dealt with.

▶ **Save the message, picture or video**

Take a screen shot of the message or picture and save any videos so it's documented, even if the message, picture or video is later deleted from online sources.

▶ **Report content on websites**

Many websites allow you to report inappropriate content that is published on their web pages. You can report content that is illegal or that which is against the principles of the website. If you cannot report inappropriate content directly to the owner of the website, you can use the [\*Whois\*](#) service to check who is maintaining the website. The [\*Whois\*](#) service is maintained by the Finnish Communications Regulatory Authority (Viestintävirasto).



## What can you do if you notice that someone else is experiencing hate speech?

### ▷ Support your friend

Listen to your friend and believe what they are telling you. Don't downplay your friend's experience or blame them for the hate speech. Encourage them to tell a trustworthy adult about the incident and/or to inform the police about the incident.

### ▷ Tell a trustworthy adult

It is important to tell an adult about the incident you saw. This way, you can support your friend and help deal with the hate speech. But act on behalf of your friend only if they have given you permission to do so. This ensures that you won't reveal your friend's private matters by mistake.

### ▷ Don't spread hate

Don't like or disseminate messages, pictures or videos that contain hate speech. Don't ever react to hate speech with hate speech.

### ▷ Be matter of fact if you respond

If you respond to hate speech, be straightforward and justify your opinions. Bear in mind that you can ignore hate speech and not react. Reacting to it does not necessarily make the situation any better because what the perpetrator wants is for you to react. It may even encourage the perpetrator to continue with the hate speech.

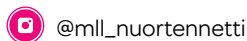
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# Links to places where you can get help

## **mll.fi/nuortennetti**

Nuortennetti is a phone service for children and young people. You can contact them and discuss any matter that troubles you. You can also contact them by chat or an online letter. The service is in Finnish only.



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## **netari.fi**

Netari is an online club where you can chat about anything in confidence. The service is in Finnish only.



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## **nuortenexit.fi/toimintamme/in-english/**

Youth Exit provides information on sexual abuse and sexual activity in exchange for some form of payment and offers support to young people between the ages of 13 and 29. They will reply to you in English.



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## **poliisi.fi**

The police have to investigate and put a stop to incidents of hate speech. The website of the police has information on how to report an incident.



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## **poliisi.fi/nettip**

You can use the online form to file a police report on hate speech you've experienced on the internet.

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## **www.nollalinja.fi/in-english/**

Nollalinja is a nationwide, free-of-charge helpline for anyone who has experienced violence from an intimate partner and for women who have experienced violence.

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## **tasa-arvo.fi/web/EN**

If you feel that you have been discriminated against because of your gender, gender identity or expression of gender, you can get help and advice from the Ombudsman for Equality.



### **[syrjinta.fi/web/EN](https://syrjinta.fi/web/EN)**

You can get help and advice from the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman if you have experienced discrimination or if you see someone else experiencing discrimination.



@yhdenvertaisuusvaltuutettu



Yhdenvertaisuusvaltuutettu

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### **[pelastakaalapset.fi/tyomme-kotimaassa/lapset-digitaalinen-media/nettivilhje](https://pelastakaalapset.fi/tyomme-kotimaassa/lapset-digitaalinen-media/nettivilhje)**

You can report illegal internet activities related to the sexual abuse of children to the Finnish Hotline Nettivilhje.



@pelastakaalapset



Pelastakaa Lapset

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### **[e-talo.fi/info/in-english](https://e-talo.fi/info/in-english)**

E-Talo (e-House) is an advisory and support service for children and young adults between the ages of 10 and 28. E-Talo is divided into three parts: Girls' House, Boys' House and Rainbow House.

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### **[poikienpuhelin.fi](https://poikienpuhelin.fi)**

Poikien puhelin (Boys' Phone) is a helpline for boys and young men under 20 years of age. It also has a chat service. The service is in Finnish only.



@poikienpuhelin



Poikien Puhelin

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### **[naistenlinja.fi/en](https://naistenlinja.fi/en)**

Women's Line (Naisten Linja) is an advisory and support service for women and girls experiencing violence or the threat of violence.



@naistenlinja

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### **[thl.fi/gender-equality](https://thl.fi/gender-equality)**

The website of the Centre for Gender Equality Information (National Institute for Health and Welfare) contains information on gender equality and hate speech. There is also a glossary (in Finnish and in Swedish) on terms and definitions relating to gender and gender equality.

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