

# Not Okay!

What is hate speech  
and how can we take  
action against it?

# What is hate speech?

Hate speech is words, images or other types of expressions that spread or encourage hatred towards a person or a group on the basis of attributes. It can be expressed through words or through facial expression or body movements. Hate speech can take place in messages, chatting, social media and in online comment fields. It can appear in closed groups and in open discussions. No matter where it happens or who the hatred is aimed at, it is not okay.

Hate speech is often about

- gender
- ethnicity
- religion or life stance
- disability
- sexual orientation, gender identity or (gender) expression

Some hate speech is illegal. According to the Icelandic Penal Code public use of hate speech directed towards an individual or a group of individuals, because of their complexion, national or ethnic origin, religion, gay orientation or gender identity may be illegal and punishable by fines or up to two years imprisonment. To decide whether something is illegal or not, the police must consider what has been said or done in the specific situation.

>> Shut up, you damn cunt <<

>> You are not Icelandic, you  
fucking muslim pig <<

>> OMG, you look like a whore <<

>> Ugly fag <<

>> Go back to the fucking country you  
came from <<

# What does hate speech lead to?

Hate speech is uncomfortable and can have serious consequences.

Although it is not always visible on the surface, hate can make you feel sad and develop a negative self-image. You may feel less valued or you may feel excluded and alone. People react differently, but one thing is for sure: this is not okay.

Other consequences can be stress and lack of concentration, headaches and stomach aches, sleep problems and poor appetite. At worst, you may not be able to participate in activities and discussions. Nevertheless, many victims do not seek help in fear of more harassment and threats.

Watching others being targeted by hate speech can have as serious consequences as being targeted yourself. When you witness others being called names or receiving threats, it can be perceived as if it is aimed at yourself as well. It is still not okay.

Many choose not to participate in discussions when they experience harassment, bad comments or when they witness others receive hate.

When hate speech makes someone withdraw from the public debate, society loses important voices and perspectives.

That's not okay.

# What can you do?

## Do you experience hate speech?

- Tell someone you trust. The school and teachers are required to assist you when you ask for help.
- Say right away, so you can be taken care of and get help to stop the hate speech.
- Save the message or image (by taking a screen shot) so that you can show others what you have been subject to.
- Many websites have reporting features. You can report the event regardless of whether it violates the websites policies or is illegal. If the website does not have a reporting feature, you can find contact information about the owner of the domain at [whois.com](http://whois.com). You can also report illegal or unsuitable material on [www.saft.is](http://www.saft.is).

# **Do you witness others being exposed to hate speech?**

- **Tell someone you trust. The school and teachers are required to assist you when you ask for help.**
- **Do not like and share messages and images that contribute to hate.**
- **If you answer to hate speech, do it in a proper way without personal attack.**
- **Many websites have reporting features. You can report the event regardless of whether it violates the websites policies or is illegal. If the website does not have a reporting feature, you can find contact information about the owner of the domain at [whois.com](http://whois.com). You can also report illegal or unsuitable material on [www.saft.is](http://www.saft.is).**

**People who have been  
exposed to hate speech  
say:**

>> I did not sleep well because I knew I could get a message and I was stressed because I did not know when it would happen. <<

>> I have lost my self-esteem. No matter if I change the way I dress, I know there will be messages telling me I am a whore. <<

# Here you will find help

## **[www.1717.is](http://www.1717.is)**

On the helpline 1717 and internet chat 1717.is, you can speak to people about anything, for example hate speech, threats, bullying, cyber harassment and anxiety.

## **[www.saft.is](http://www.saft.is)**

There you will find useful information about safe internet use, hate speech and cyber harassment.

## **[www.facebook.com/logreglan](https://www.facebook.com/logreglan)**

You can send a message to the police from their facebook page.

## **[www.logreglan.is](http://www.logreglan.is)**

You can send an email to the police from their website.

## **[www.barn.is](http://www.barn.is)**

On the Ombudsman for Children website you will find useful information on internet use. You can also contact their office.

## **[www.barnaheill.is/forsida](http://www.barnaheill.is/forsida)**

There you will find useful information and you can also contact their office.

## **[www.reykjavik.is/bjarkarhlid](http://www.reykjavik.is/bjarkarhlid)**

Bjarkarhlíð is a centre for victims of violence and abuse. There you will get support and counselling as well as education and information on the effects of violence.

## **[www.facebook.com/bjarkarhlid](https://www.facebook.com/bjarkarhlid)**

You can send a message to Bjarkarhlíð from their facebook page.



MANNRÉTTINDASKRIFSTOFA ÍSLANDS  
ICELANDIC HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE



Nordisk  
ministerråd