



# The lazy person's guide against hate speech

FROM LEVEL ZERO TO SUPERHERO



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

# THE LAZY PERSON'S GUIDE AGAINST HATE SPEECH

## FROM LEVEL ZERO TO SUPER HERO



**Authors:** Maria Ceraolo, Lorenzo Timpone, Elena Kundrat, Téclaire Ngo Tam, Mateusz Piędel, Katerina Michale, Meropi Koutsounaki, Owen Savage, Pauline Teruin

**Editing and layout:** Maria Ceraolo, Lorenzo Timpone

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## WHAT IS HATE SPEECH?

**Hate speech** (online and offline) can refer to different expressions of hate and discrimination against the members of a particular hated group, often under the form of insults or offensive illustrations.

Opinions differ over both understandings of what constitutes hate speech and which consequences it may imply.



"Freedom of speech" is often opposed to hate speech and consequently, some people are reluctant to "act" against hate speech because they perceive it as an unacceptable constraint on their fundamental human right to freedom of expression.

The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (1997) defines it as follows:

“ Hate speech (...) covers all forms of expression which spread, incite, promote or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism or other forms of hatred based on intolerance, including intolerance expressed by aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism, as well as discrimination and hostility against minorities, migrants and people of immigrant origin. <sup>1</sup> ”

In the context of the HateBusters project, the definition of hate speech is much broader than that provided by the Council of Europe. To keep it simple: **hate speech refers to any expression of discriminatory hate towards people.** Anything which falls under this definition, then, needs to be addressed and opposed.

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<sup>1</sup> Recommendation No. R (97) 20 OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS TO MEMBER STATES ON "HATE SPEECH", available [here](#).



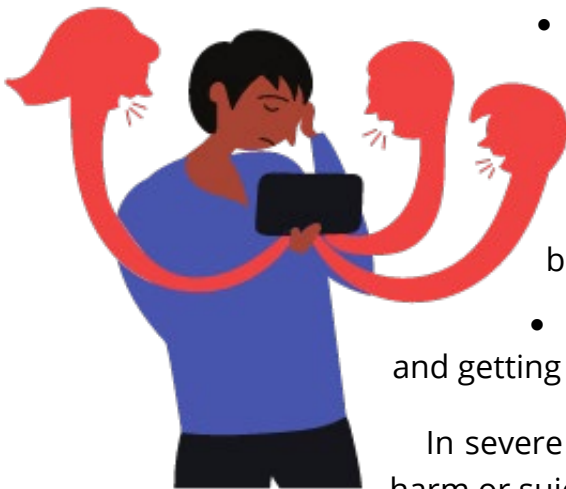
## WHAT IS CYBERBULLYING?

Online-hate speech and cyberbullying are the same in terms of the online channels used and the intentions and motives involved. However, **while hate speech usually targets a group of people, cyberbullying is directed towards individuals with online attacks over a long period.**

Cyberbullying mainly takes place on Social Media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram or Snapchat, messaging apps like WhatsApp, online forums, and chat rooms, through emails and online gaming communities.

## WHICH NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES CAN ONLINE HATE HAVE FOR THE VICTIMS?

Victims might feel that cyberbullying happens continually with no chance of escape. This pressure can lead to many **negative consequences**:



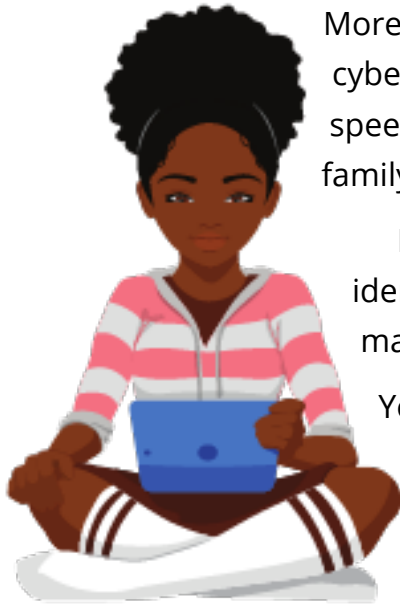
- Mental and emotional, such as: feeling upset and **embarrassed, depression, loss of concentration.**
  - Social, such as: losing interest in social activities and hobbies, relationship break-ups, social withdrawal.
- Physical problems, such as: feeling tired and getting stomach aches and headaches.

In severe cases, cyberbullying can even lead to self-harm or suicide.

There are some **warning signals** that show that a child or teenager might be confronted with cyberbullying: they might reduce the use of their online devices, hide their screens from others, create new social media accounts, avoid social situations they liked before, or indeed become depressed.

Read more about online hate speech and cyberbullying in [HateBusters Guide](#).

# WHY A LAZY PERSON'S GUIDE TO HATESPEECH?



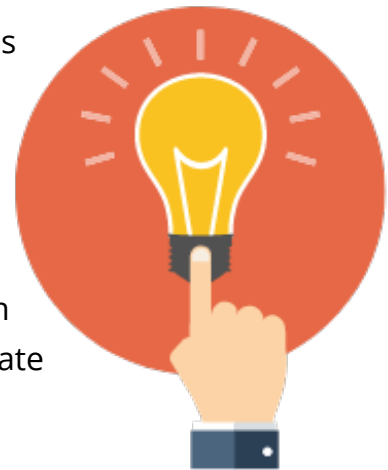
More than 30% of the adolescents experience cyberbullying or belong to a group that is a target of hate speech.<sup>2</sup> Behind that number, there is a member of your family, a friend, or even yourself.

If you belong to the group of 38%<sup>3</sup> of people that identify cases of cyberbullying on social media daily, then maybe you already want to help.

You can be the chance that to want to see. **Change starts with you. Seriously.** Every person - even the laziest one - is part of the solution. Thankfully, there are so many things that you can do, some of them so easily.

In the following pages, you are going to find actions that will help you to make the difference. The tips below are divided into four categories: help from your couch, among friends, outside the house and in the community.

Through these categories you will be equipped with knowledge in order to combat cyberbullying and hate speech online and be able to make an impact.



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<sup>2</sup> unesco.org

<sup>3</sup> pandasecurity.com

## ENTRY-LEVEL: THINGS YOU CAN DO FROM YOUR COUCH

The best part of the day for you is that moment when you can lay down on your couch in front of TV or laptop, stretch your legs out and finally stop thinking about the whole world? Do you feel your couch is the best piece of furniture in your house? You can stay on it for several hours and you feel that you will never be bored of it? We understand that. Who doesn't love this? But what about doing that together with useful activities?

Maybe you can use your free time on the couch in a more active way.... what about fighting against hate-speech and cyberbullying?

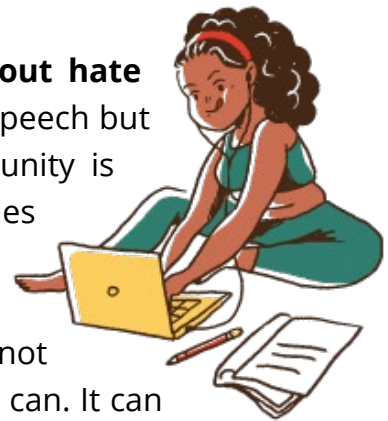
Here you can find some tips and ideas:

- **Get more information about hate speech and cyberbullying:** the first action before combating any enemy is to get to know them more. Read some articles, essays and life stories of people who experienced hate speech. Research and find information about the number of people touched by this problem, in which countries it is spread the most, what are the target groups of hate speech, what leads to this kind of violence, what tragedies it can cause. Start getting interested in this topic and become an expert in it. Remember: *knowledge is power*. The more you know about something, the stronger you are to defeat it.
- **Learn how to use social media:** Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc. There are many different types of social media nowadays. However, each of them functions differently and is used for different purposes. The aim of social media is to connect people and help spreading information in an easier and faster way. Unfortunately, some people use them to abuse, offend and threaten some groups of people. We must stop this! But to do so, we must know how to start, and which are the tools admins and moderators put at our disposal.



- **Report a post or comment containing hate speech:** this is one of the easiest and fastest ways to prevent the negative consequence of hate speech on the victims. Each social media platform has a monitoring team working on the functionality and rules to follow. If you report a content, the moderators get a notification. Each example of reported "online violence" will be taken into account and, according to the platform's policy, deleted or kept. So, do not scroll down, take an action! Keep evidence of what you report (e.g., print screens) and if you have the opportunity, be specific about what you have found offensive and why.

- **Use social media to keep people informed about hate speech:** it is frustrating to know a lot about hate speech but doing the whole work by yourself... Remember: unity is strength! Use social media to post interesting articles or websites related to combating hate speech. Whoever will be informed about the topic relevance is a new potential Hatebuster. Do not hesitate to post as much useful information as you can. It can help you to find people who, like you, will start paying more attention to online contents, becoming more attentive when it comes to cyberbullying and hate speech phenomena. Become a digital ambassador!



- **Discuss when you see abusive comment or use counter speech:** show that you do not agree with their point of view, but do not use the same language, always be respectful. Explain why there is no point in spreading this kind of messages online, what they can cause, and try to bring examples. Impress them with your knowledge about the issue. If after sending your message you become a victim of abusive comments yourself, summarise the whole conversation with funny GIF or picture related to the topic of hate speech (you can find some good ones in [here](#)). However, remember to be considerate: don't play their game! Sometimes sense of humour can be a better medicine than billion words.

- **Show your support to the victims of hate speech:** your actions don't have to focus only on combating hate speakers but also on healing the wounds they caused. A nice message sent to people who are victims of online violence can be extremely helpful, showing them that they are not alone. Show your support, explain your viewpoint, talk about the situation, give some compliments... You will see that the only thing you will get back are words of



thankfulness and appreciation. Maybe that person will share with you his/her life story and let you know more about him/herself. It could be the beginning of a good friendship.

- **Don't forward or post messages that use offensive language or can be considered as hate speech or cyberbullying:** the less a harmful message is shared, the less is cared! Even if your friends post offensive messages, refuse to share them, show some kind of opposition and responsibility from your side.

These are some examples of the actions which you can do while spending your free time on a couch, laying down and relaxing with your smartphone or laptop. Being a good Hatebuster doesn't look so difficult, right? There are thousands of chances to be a good and proactive member of the online community!

## **INTERMEDIATE-LEVEL: THINGS YOU CAN DO IN YOUR SCHOOL/UNIVERSITY**



Schools and universities are the right places to raise awareness among the youth and act against hate speech and bullying online and offline.

Here are some actions that will help you to make an impact, in order to combat cyberbullying and hate speech:

- **Raise awareness of the problem.** Talk to your friends and teachers about why hate speech is not a problem just for the internet, but for our societies at large.
- **Involve students, parents, teachers/professors or colleagues** in discussions about bullying and hate speech occurring online and try to find solutions. Develop student councils or panels to talk about the issue to their peers at school. Have parent-student-teacher meetings or fairs and events –

in a school or in a university environment - dedicated to those phenomena. Get everyone involved!

- **Take a stand as a group.** Your group of friends can strengthen the movement. You can start or join an online activism group, improve your counter speech skills. Inform, prevent, solve, support!
- **Encourage victims and witnesses to report hate speech related crimes:** Hate speech remains largely invisible simply because many victims do not know where to report the cases or even understand that they are victims of hate speech.
- **Support people who are targets of hate speech.** Fight back against harmful messages in public places by publicly standing with victims and showing solidarity.



- **Tell the bully to stop.** Once you have their attention, communicate clearly to the person who is bullying and simply tell them to stop. Make sure that your voice is assertive, yet calm and collected.
- **Shift the focus away from bullying.** When bullying happens, people tend to freeze up and wait to see what will happen next. Instead of watching passively, you can determine what happens next and redirect everyone towards something positive. Change the subject or create a diversion and try to include the person being bullied in a positive way.



- **Ask your teachers if they can address the issue of hate online in class.** In this way, you and your classmates will learn something about the issue of hate on the net and, in the best case, will be also motivated to get involved. You can also suggest making a school-exposition with hate speech and cyberbullying posts, which the students have found online, to raise awareness for these topics in your school.

- **Watch the HateBusters Awareness Raising videos and discuss with your classmates starting from the suggested questions!** You can find the videos and the questions [here](#).

## Events & exhibitions:

- **Video productions:** produce a video in which you address the topic of hate speech or cyberbullying to send a clear signal against hate on the net.
- **Photo actions:** make an own photo-action against hate speech or cyberbullying or participate in already existing photo-actions.
- **Expositions:** make a school-exposition with hate speech and cyberbullying posts, which the students have found online, to raise awareness for these topics in your school or university.
- **Banners or flags:** create banners about hate speech or cyberbullying and hang them up on the building of your school or university.
- **Human chains:** make a human chain around the school building and raise awareness for the topic of hate speech or cyberbullying.
- **Comic competitions:** make a comic competition in your school or university.

Also, you can **form a committee or club** to address bullying on an on-going basis. Ask a teacher or professor to help you start a group that will focus on bullying.



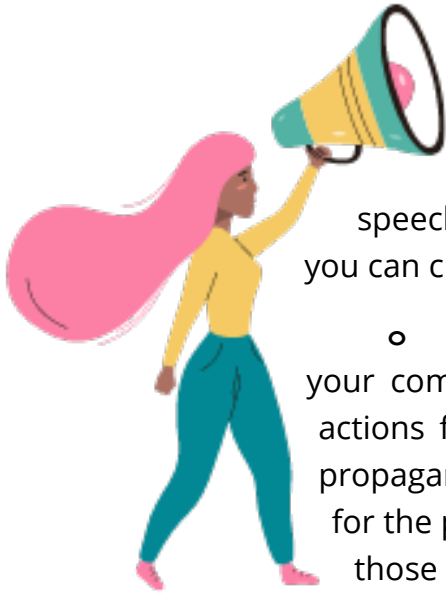
- The committee can either be an informal group or an official school club, but it should include both students and teachers.
- Some important actions you can take include: mapping where bullying typically takes place and making sure those areas are better supervised, holding regular assemblies to raise awareness, and making sure that your school or university have firm rules and guidelines for addressing bullying.

## MID-LEVEL: THINGS YOU CAN DO IN YOUR COMMUNITY

More than just a student at your school, you are also a member of the community composed of people living around you, in your neighbourhood, city or country. People of different ages and those you might not know can also be victim of hate speech, so why not to extend your action beyond your school and your friends? As a member of the community, you have the right and the power to change the awareness of hate speech in the area you live in, as big or small your community might be. To broaden the fight against hate speech and cyberbullying, you can for example:



- **Get involved in an organisation**
  - *Find the organizations around you* that combat cyberbullying and hate speech online. Such organizations trace incidents of hates online, help the bullied groups and target the groups that tend to be offensive and apply specific solutions.
  - *Volunteer or work* in such organizations and be part of the solution. This way you would be able to research, think, advocate, support and comfort others, in an organized environment. You could for instance join the No Hate Speech Youth Campaign of the Council of Europe in your country.
- **Report and show support**
  - *Stand on the side of the victims of hate speech.* Respond back to offensive messages online and in public places, even when the victims are not directly your peers. Use public speech or even politics to show support and promote tolerance and solidarity with the victims.
  - *Be aware of* all government related agencies or non-governmental organizations near you that are responsible to legally accept reports of hate speech and cyberbullying. Report hate speech you encounter online to those organizations, encourage people around you and victims of hate speech to do the same.

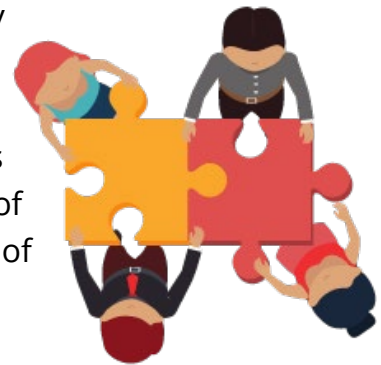


- **Organize and advocate**
  - *Organize a campaign* against hate speech, both online and offline. For tips and guidance, you can check the [HateBusters Guide](#).
  - *Create a petition* and share it with members of your community. You could for instance demand stronger actions from the government against website that include propaganda and hate speech, more severe consequences for the perpetrators or cyberbullying, or more education on those topics in school.

## **EXPERT LEVEL: THINGS YOU CAN DO TO ENGAGE YOUR PEERS**

Hanging out with friends is a great opportunity to act more personally and substantially against cyberbullying and hate speech. The practical tips that you can find below, could help you and your friends to understand and prevent offensive incidents but also smooth the pain of people being targeted.

- **Talk with your friends about the existence and impact of hate on the internet:** talk with them about what they experienced, whereas they identify hate speech messages and cyberbullying incidents and which consequences they can have for individuals, groups and society as a whole. Discuss different points of view and get informed about the phenomena of bullying and hate speech online.



- **Support**, individually or as a group, a friend or a schoolmate being bullied online or being the target of hate speech online. Listen, do not judge, and let them know that you care. It is important to be supportive and encourage them to report the hate incidents to a trustable adult (e.g. a teacher or parents), a counselling centre or even the police.

- **Help in a practical way**, inviting online excluded persons to real life groups and events. Help them feel accepted. When you and your friends act in that way, you stand against the bullies and hate in general.
- **Be a good role model and set a good example:** show a clear stance against hate and for civil courage. Also take responsibility for your actions on the internet: if you see hate speech online, report it online and don't counter it with hate, but with humour, arguments and new perspectives.
- **Take action together against hate in the net:** actions against hate can also mean to react on hate with civil courage, for example volunteers cleaned up a Jewish cemetery in University City, Missouri, after it was vandalized in 2017. Another example is the action of the Muslim Youth Austria, in which they guarded the public exhibition commemorating the Nazi victims in Vienna in 2019, after some of the pictures had been damaged beforehand. If you do something like this, don't forget to involve the media to show everyone that civil courage is stronger than hate. Here are some other examples for actions against hate:

- *Sign a suitable petition and share it with your peers online.* In this way, you support actions against hate on the net and show a clear stance at the same time. You can also collect signatures together with your peers or school class;
- *Take part in a suitable demonstration* and invite your peers and school class;
- *Make an information table*, for example in your school, sport club or on the street.



- **Get creative to raise awareness:**
  - *Produce a video* in which you deal with the topic of hate in the net and share it with your peers: share your video afterwards on your or your school's YouTube channel. You can also invite your peers to produce the video together;

- o *Make an own photo-action against hate in the net* or participate in already existing photo-actions and invite your peers such as the photo action “Stand together against hate” of Amnesty International;
- o *Create postcards, flyers, logos, stickers, posters or GIFS* which deal with the topics of hate in the net and spread them among your peers. You can also share already existing materials such as the one´s from the German No Hate Speech Movement, that you can find [here](#);
- o *Invite your peers to create audio guides or podcasts* about hate in the net and to spread them.



## ULTIMATE LEVEL: THINGS YOU CAN DO TO APPROACH LOCAL AUTHORITY

Active participation in community offers a more organized character to the fight against bullying and hate speech online. As a member of a whole, you will be inspired, supported, and encouraged. Furthermore, the environment of loyalty and the atmosphere of the common goal will motivate you. Finally, the more people think about a solution, the more the ideas are. The tips below may function as an inspiration to you in order to act and fight against cyberbullying and hate speech with the support of the local authority, making a difference and having a big impact on your society.

- **Be prepared, informed, and persistent on your ideas. Have a clear idea of the current situation, be prepared to present your expectations and be patient until you will find the person or the team of the local authorities with the right information.** The preparatory stage is essential, and you should be totally ready and organized to present a complete and concrete ideas. You should also have in mind to always keep everyone you are working with informed regarding the goals achieved.

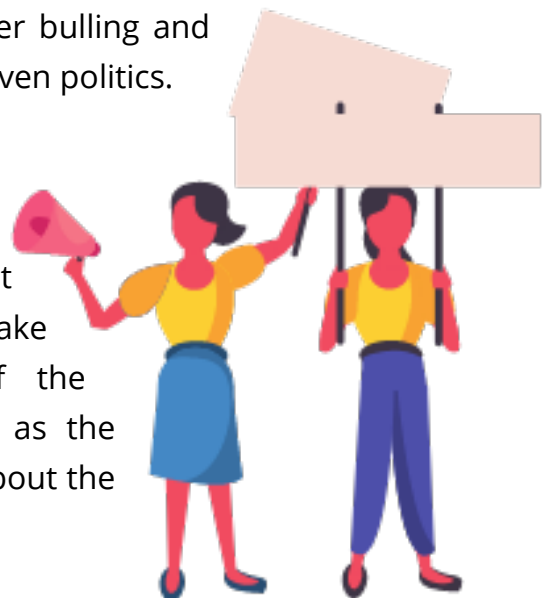
- **Identify a single contact person in your local authority or local agencies / non-governmental organizations in your region that are responsible to legally accept reports of hate speech and cyberbullying and are cooperating with local authorities.**



Be a part of the awareness and distribution activities that those people or agencies forward and be informed about the legal policies of hate reporting.

- **Find out from a councillor, or council officers, what issues are likely to be discussed at the next relevant committee and go along.** You can arrange a meeting with the responsible people of the social life and protection of human rights of your local authority, in order to exchange ideas on the matter of hate speech and cyber bullying in your region.
- **Try to become an active member of a youth council, approach people with social influence and stand on their side to combat hate speech and fight offensive messages in public places.** The highest level of involvement with the fight against cyber bullying and online hate speech is public speech or even politics.

- **Volunteer or even apply for a job in such organizations and be part of the implemented solutions.** From that further position, you could be able to take part in the events as a part of the organization team. Now you can act as the person that provides the information about the problem and the solutions.



- **Try to get involved in local campaigns or activities regarding hate speech and online bullying.** The earlier you get involved in this process, the better, as the responsible people also involved will give you time and space to express your opinion on the schedule, as well as the details when these emerge.



- **Stay up-to-date through the official online accounts of your local authorities for activities and actions related to cyberbullying and hate speech online.** Follow their events and learn more about the



problem of hate online, and the solutions that exist. You can practically help to spread the disconcerting situation of online hate and the solutions already implemented or planned to be activated. Be part of the distribution chain posting information about the events on your social media pages or even invite your friends, schoolmates, colleagues, and family to be present.

*The most important of all to remember is that there are numerous actions to undertake in order to be part of the solution!*

## FIND MORE INFORMATION AT:

- <https://www.parents.com/kids/problems/bullying/18-tips-to-stop-cyberbullying/>
- <https://www.unicef.org/end-violence/how-to-stop-cyberbullying>
- <https://usa.kaspersky.com/resource-center/preemptive-safety/top-10-ways-to-stop-cyberbullying>
- <https://www.momsteam.com/health-safety/10-tips-teens-prevent-cyberbullying>
- <https://civilrights.org/edfund/resource/combat-online-hate-speech/>
- <https://en.unesco.org/5-ways-to-counter-hate-speech>
- <https://www.wikihow.com/Help-Someone-Who-Is-Being-Bullied>
- <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/teens/bullying-safety-privacy/bullying/what-if-i-see-someone-being-bullied>
- <http://uis.unesco.org/en/news/new-sdg-4-data-bullying>
- <https://www.pandasecurity.com/en/mediacenter/family-safety/cyberbullying-statistics/>
- <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/takeaction/>



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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.canva.com/policies/contributor-agreement/>