> "The limits of my language are the limits of my world."
>
> *Ludwig Wittgenstein*

Our Daily Sexism

Level 2

60 to 20

**45 minutes
(Part one)
120 minutes
(Part two)**

Complexity: Level 2

Group size: 6 to 20

Time: 45 minutes (Part one), 120 minutes (Part two)

Overview: In this activity, participants need to decide how they would respond to different examples of sexist hate speech online. They then develop an online action that they could implement to act against examples of gender-based violence.

Objectives:
- To learn to recognise sexist hate speech and the consequences it has on the people targeted
- To develop an online action against sexist hate speech
- To identify different ways of responding to sexist hate speech online

Materials:
- Flipchart paper, markers and masking tape
- Copies of the Action cards (at least one for each group)

Preparation: Make 4 signs on pieces of flipchart paper and stick each one in a different corner of the room. The signs should read:

- Nothing
- Respond to the person who did it
- Report the behaviour
- Something else

Make sure there is enough space for participants to move around the room.

Instructions

This activity is done in two parts.

Part 1 (45 minutes)

1) Ask participants if they know what hate speech is, and whether they have come across hate speech online. Provide participants with a definition of sexism:

   Sexism means perceiving and judging people only on the basis of the particular sex/gender category they are thought to belong to. Sexism involves unequal treatment of the person on the same basis. It applies to both men and women; however, women are normally considered to be more frequent targets of sexism. Extreme sexism includes sexual harassment, rape, female genital mutilation and other forms of sexual violence. However, everyday sexism takes different forms, sometimes not easily recognisable – for example, telling jokes about blond girls, commenting on the female body (objectifying women), reacting to the way women are dressed ("what does she wear? She's asking to be raped"), giving women easier tasks in online games ("she is a woman, she won't manage the next level"), or objectifying women in advertising, etc.

2) Tell participants that in this activity they will look at examples of sexist hate speech. Point out the signs in the corners of the room and explain that you will read out several different scenarios. Participants should choose which of the following options best fits what they would do:

   · Nothing
   · Respond to the person who did it
   · Report the behaviour
   · Something else

3) Explain that after each scenario has been read out, participants should go to the corner which is closest to the way they would probably respond. Tell them to be honest about what they think they would do!

4) Read out the first scenario and give participants time to select their corner. Once they have taken a position, ask a few in each group to explain why they chose that response. Then read out the next scenario and continue until you feel enough cases have been discussed.

5) Ask participants how sexist hate speech affects people who are targeted, how it affects bystanders (people who witness it) and how it affects society generally. You could also ask specifically: how does sexist hate speech affect women/men/LGBT+?

6) You may want to continue with the first part of the Debriefing and Evaluation (see below) or move immediately to part 2.

Part 2 (120 minutes)

1) Tell participants that in this part of the activity they will work in smaller groups to develop an online action, aimed at raising awareness about sexist hate speech and the ways of dealing with it.

2) Split participants into 3 groups and give them the Action Cards that can be found at the end of this activity. Different groups will have different tasks:

· Group One will develop a mini-campaign addressing the issue of sexist hate speech online
· Group Two will develop a script of a video clip against sexist hate speech to be posted online
· Group Three will develop counter narratives against sexist hate speech online

3) Tell the groups where they will be working. Allow about 60 minutes for this part of the activity.

4) After the participants have finished developing their actions, bring them back into plenary and ask to present their work.

5) Help participants to plan the actions that each group designed. They should think about such things as:

Who will be in charge of taking the action forward?

When, and how will it be done?

6) Move to the debriefing and evaluation.

Debriefing and evaluation

This part of the activity can be done in two parts. You could use the first set of questions after Part One of the activity:

• How did you find the activity? Which scenarios did you find it most difficult to respond to and why?
• Have you ever come across sexist hate speech online – either as a person targeted by hate speech, or as a witness? How did you feel?
• Should people have the right to say whatever they want on the internet? If not, what should be the limits?
• Which human rights are violated by hate speech?
• How can you help to prevent or act against sexist hate speech online?
• After Part two, you could ask the following questions:
• Are you happy with the results of your work? What was the most difficult part of the task for you?
• Do you think it is important to act against sexist hate speech online? Why?
• How easy will it be to carry out the actions you have developed?
• Do you need supporting in order to implement them?
• What do you hope will be the result of your action?

Tips for facilitators

The activity can be run in a single session, or part 2 could be run at a later date. You could also run either of the two parts without the other: just the responses to sexist hate speech, or just the action planning. This will depend on the learning needs of your participants and the aims you want to set for the activity.

As the activity is conceived (in two parts), participants are first able to explore different ways of reacting to sexist hate speech, and they then go on to draw up plans for action. This order allows them to see that anyone can work to bring about change and fight against hate speech online; and to recognise that it is everyone's responsibility to do so.

The second part may be challenging for participants. Allow them to be creative, and try not to limit them in their ideas, but be available for support, and remind them – if necessary - not to be too ambitious, but to stay focussed. If three actions seem to be too many, select just one of the cards for participants to work on.

The group working on alternative and counter narratives may need additional support: you could recommend that they choose about 3 examples of sexist hate speech, and brainstorm ideas for how they could respond to these. For further information on using counter narratives, refer to the manual "*WE CAN! Taking Action against Hate Speech through Counter and Alternative Narratives*" which can be found online.[1] The web site of the Council of Europe's campaign against hate speech also offers inspiring examples of actions against hate speech online, as well as educational strategies for addressing the problem: *https://www.nohatespeechmovement.org*.

Suggestions for follow-up

If participants are interested in exploring further the topic of gender-based violence in the media, you could run the activity "Digital media bash", in which participants use research and observation techniques to address the problematic use of violence in the digital media.

You could also work further on alternative and counter narratives against hate speech. Using the manual WE CAN! Taking Action against Hate Speech through Counter and Alternative Narratives, prepare a workshop on how to develop narratives against hate speech.

Ideas for action

Help participants to finalise their actions and carry them out online. Think about how they can evaluate the impact of their actions.

1. "WE CAN! Taking Action against Hate Speech through Counter and Alternative Narratives", Council of Europe, 2017: *https://rm.coe.int/wecan-eng-final-23052017-web/168071ba08*

Source: This activity is adapted from the activity "Confronting Cyberbullying" in: *Bookmarks – Combatting Hate Speech Online through Human Rights Education*, Council of Europe 2014

Scenarios

A boy from your school commented on one of your photos on Facebook, saying: "You look hot. I would not mind putting my tongue into your mouth"

Someone posted a photo of you on snapchat. The picture had been taken secretly, while you were taking a shower after a sports lesson.

In a discussion on social network, your brother boasts about how many girls he shagged. He also says that all women are just "bitches".

A girl in your class told you that she has received nasty text messages calling her "pervert tomboy", "disgusting lesbian" and "ugly pig", and making fun of her "big tits". Some boys from your class have been pulling her hair and laughing at her in school.

Your best friend put the following post onto his social network: "Women are made to stay at home and take care of children. History teaches us that they are good only at that."

You noticed that a person from your class is very unhappy and does not talk to anyone. During the break, you approached them and asked what the problem was. They told you that they had received messages on online messenger from classmates calling them: "a dirty bitch", "sissy with the vagina" and "a freak, neither a man nor a woman".

Your friend told you that she had been raped by her boyfriend. He also posted a photo of her online, with the comment: "I finally got her".

During an online game, other gamers sent you messages like: "you should cook something instead of being here" or "did you check your man has enough beer at home".

In an online discussion about refugees, in which you tried to explain why it is important to receive them in your country, a person you do not know said: "I can see you fantasise about being raped. You do not need refugees. I can provide you with that, with pleasure".

Your friend regularly posts online jokes picturing women as inferior to men and as "sex machines".

ACTION CARD

Group 1: Mini–campaign against sexist hate speech

You will develop a mini-campaign to be carried out online that raises awareness about sexist hate speech online and motivates people to take action against it.

Online campaigns are usually meant to attract people's attention to a specific issue/problem. A good campaign needs to:

• Be clear about what it wants to communicate
• Ideally, be about just one issue: keep it focussed!
• Engage the public in a conversation/discussion
• Be interesting, both in form and content
• Include visuals (photos, memes, etc.)
• Happen over a period of time (e.g. once a week, over the period of a month)

You do not need to prepare everything immediately. Focus on developing a general idea for a mini-campaign. The following questions may help you:

• What is your aim? E.g. you could aim to raise awareness of different responses to sexist hate speech online, or responses or strategies for victims of sexting.
• Who is your campaign addressed at? e.g it might be addressed at pupils in your school, or at the general public
• What would you like to communicate and how? Will you use visuals? What could they show, and which medium will you use (photos, drawings, etc.)?
• How will you engage your audience in the conversation?

ACTION CARD

Group 2: Video against sexist hate speech online

You need to develop an idea for a video against sexist hate speech online. The video should aim at raising awareness about sexist hate speech online and motivate people to take action against it. Do not make the video itself, but think about what should be included and how it can be done. The following points will help you to plan:

• Choose the issue that you would like to present in the video, for example stereotypes about women
• Think about who your video is addressed to: e.g. your friends, pupils at school, etc.
• Decide on the way you want to present it and the message you want to communicate
• Think about how the video will be made – e.g. in the form of a role play, cartoons, photos with a voiceover, etc.
• Develop a detailed script – scene by scene
• Think about timing: the best and strongest videos are short!
• Where will you post the video?

If you have enough time, try to make the film itself.

<u>ACTION CARD</u>

Group 3: Alternative and counter narratives against sexist hate speech

Your task is to develop alternative and counter narratives against sexist hate speech online. Counter and alternative narratives combat hate speech by discrediting and deconstructing the narratives on which they are based. They also propose (alternative) narratives based on human rights and democratic values, such as openness, respect for difference, freedom and equality. New narratives may be effective by providing alternative and accurate information, by accounting for different perspectives and views, or by using humour and appealing to emotions (without discrediting the person who posted the hate speech. Two examples of alternative and counter narratives are given below:

1) Message posted on social media

<u>Message</u>	<u>Alternative or counter narrative</u>
Men deserve better. We should be complaining - not these stupid sensitive bitches (women). We get called rapists a lot of the time when most of us haven't done anything.	Men being called rapist is just as unacceptable as women being called stupid sensitive bitches. None of this should be condoned: there should be respect for all genders.

2) Hate Destroyer - An action run by the Finish National Committee of the No Hate Speech Movement Campaign used creative art to challenge hateful images. The activity challenged a racist, homophobic and neo-nazi graffitti, expressed in symbols and words on a wall. The challenge used the same space to paint new symbols and words next to, and over the original paintings. The new symbols and words proposed a different narrative - of love, and respect for diversity and human rights. A video is available at *https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V4Pc4uY0HiE*

You can use examples of sexist hate speech from the earlier examples, or propose your own. When developing these narratives, think about the following:

• What is the best way to approach these specific examples of sexist hate speech?
• What do you want to say, and how would you frame the response – e.g. providing accurate information, using humour etc.
• How or where would you disseminate the message online, so that other people can learn from your example?