

DON'T BE A BYSTANDER COUNTERING HATE & BIAS ONLINE

CONFRONT HATEFUL OR BIASED SPEECH

Glazing over slurs, hateful language or stereotypes can be **easy online**. Internet conversations can feel detached – but the pain and trauma that can result are very real. Research has shown that targets of hate speech may experience negative emotional, mental, and physical consequences which can include: low self-worth, anxiety, fear for their lives, and even self-harm or suicide.

Learning ways to intervene online, can **create a safer environment** and **mitigate the impact** of hateful language. Try using these four strategies when addressing **online hate and bias**.

LABEL THE SPEECH

Words have power.

It is crucial to label the words honestly as hurtful or dangerous.

If the person is not malicious.

Explain why the words are bias, unfair, false, or insulting.

When someone posts or tweets, step in.

You can say, "what you are saying is racist and unfair and here is why..."

CHANGE THE TONE

Meet individuals with empathy.

Research shows communicating with a friendly and peaceful demeanor helps deescalate.

Make a connection with the person.

This makes it more difficult to ignore or dismiss your comments.

Reply with unrelenting kindness.

Those using hateful speech are often hoping for angry reactions, instead respond with kindness.

USE HUMOR & MEMES

New trends include using memes/images to spread extreme messages.

The danger is these turn messages into a joke - making sentiments not seem serious.

Use Memes/Images to Spread Kindness.

Using images to tell an empathetic and kind story is more powerful and more likely to be shared. Although not always appropriate, humor can be an effective tool.

DON'T GET DISCOURAGED

The person will likely respond defensively.

In a public platform it allows others to echo you.

Responses may not create immediate change.

But may cause someone to pause before perpetuating hateful language in the future.

One voice can easily be ignored.

But if we all contribute our individual voices, we can create change.

Our Commitment to Inclusion:

The Y is made up of people of all ages and from every walk of life working side by side to strengthen communities. Together we work to ensure that everyone, regardless of ability, age, cultural background, ethnicity, faith, gender, gender identity, ideology, income, national origin, race or sexual orientation has the opportunity to reach their full potential with dignity. Our core values are caring, honesty, respect and responsibility—they guide everything we do.

