

# Addressing Online Hate



LESSON PLAN

## Learning objectives

- > Be able to recognize and identify forms of hate speech and discrimination, in one's own community and in broader society.
- > Understand and explain how online media is used to disseminate hate speech/discrimination.
- > Be able to create and participate in non-discriminatory dialogue online.

	Time	Slide
<b>1. Awareness of forms of hate speech</b>	T+2	1
Messages that instill hate, promote hate or seek to exclude people based on a group are harmful and can be illegal. It is vital to be able to identify hate speech.	— : —	
<p>DO recognize and identify different forms of marginalization against identifiable groups;</p> <p>DO understand why it's a problem, and the consequences</p> <p>DO recognize and identify different forms of marginalization in closer communities and more globally</p>		



	Time	Slide
<b>2. How and why hate is disseminated online</b>	T+2	2
Social media may be used to propagate hatred, discrimination and, violence toward certain groups. It is important to understand how different online media tools are used to spread hate speech and discrimination.	— : —	
<p>DO identify online hate speech;</p> <p>DO understand and explain how Social Media has augmented the extent of hatred and discrimination;</p> <p>DO be aware of the different forms of Social Media involved in this form of online hate</p>		
<p>Notes:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>		
<b>3. Participating in non-discriminatory dialogue and being resilient online</b>	T+3	3
It is important to think critically about the information found online, particularly in terms of how identifiable groups are represented, and to develop one's sense of resilience and empathy in the context of online hate. Use these skills to find positive, tolerant sites and contribute to creating to non-discriminatory online spaces in which to participate..	— : —	
<p>DO know your rights as an individual and the rights of others</p> <p>DO actively question the credibility of what you read and watch online</p> <p>DO have offline conversations about online behaviour</p>		



## Practice

### Exercises:

#### 1. Awareness of forms of hate speech

##### Lesson on identifying hate speech (5 minutes).

The topic of hate speech and freedom of expression can be difficult to talk about.

However, discussing examples of hate speech may help clarify what hate speech is and how it might be harmful. The following scenarios for discussion are based on cases of hate speech that have been decided in Canadian Courts. Present these scenarios and promote discussion around whether these scenarios are hate speech and the reasons or considerations as to why they may have been judged as such.

Is this hate speech ?

What about it makes it hate speech ?

Why is it a problem?

##### Example 1:

A person publishes and distributes a number of anti-gay flyers in their community. The flyers use words like "filth," "propaganda" and "sodomy" to describe gay relationships and discussions of equality. The flyers have titles such as "Keep homosexuality out of our public schools" and "Sodomites in our public schools".

##### *Instructor notes:*

*Bill Whatcott was charged with promoting hate after distributing fliers in the early 2000s that condemned gay sex as immoral.<sup>1</sup> The case made its way to the supreme court through the appeals process before being concluded in 2011. The court decided that speech included in some of the fliers exposed persons or groups to hatred. Other fliers that were considered as ridiculing, belittling or an affront to the dignity of persons were judged to be outside of the ban on appeal. The ruling included \$7,500 in fines. In 2018, a warrant was again issued for Mr. Whatcott's arrest for the distribution of hate material in 2016<sup>2</sup>.*

##### Example 2:

A small group with political aspirations sets up a phone line with a pre-recorded message. They then distribute cards inviting people to call the phone number. That message contains statement denigrating the Jewish people and Religion.

<sup>1</sup> see: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/when-is-it-hate-speech-7-significant-canadian-cases-1.1036731>

<sup>2</sup> see: <https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2018/06/19/anti-gay-activist-wanted-for-promotion-of-hatred-will-surrender-in-calgary-lawyer-says.html>



*Instructor notes:*

*In the late 70s John Ross Taylor and the Western Guard Party produced recorded messages which played to those who called a number listed under "White Power Message" in the Toronto telephone book<sup>3</sup>. John Ross Taylor and the Western Guard Party were ruled to have exceeded the bounds of the freedom of expression by repeatedly communicating messages by telephone that were likely to expose Jewish people to hatred and contempt<sup>4</sup>.*

Example 3:

A school teacher as part of their classes teaches that the Holocaust is a hoax and promotes intolerance towards Jewish people. Students are marked down if their assessments do not reflect these values.

*Instructor notes:*

*There have been at least two cases in Canada of this being judged. Malcom Ross taught students anti-Semitic opinions in the 1980s<sup>5</sup>. In the 1970s and 1980s, James Keegstra was similarly teaching anti-Semitic opinions and holocaust denial<sup>6</sup>. This case provided that an alternative history or truth is not sufficient and that the truth must be demonstrated to be so on a balance of probabilities. Both cases, across numerous appeals, found restricting this speech to be an acceptable limitation on the freedom of expression.*

## 2. How and why hate is disseminated online

### a. Identifying online hate speech

Discussion Questions:

What is hate speech online and is it different to hate speech offline?

Discussion: which of the following examples of online behaviour may be hate crime?

- Trying to damage your reputation by making false comments
- Accusing you of things you haven't done
- People who have been tricked into threatening you
- Stealing your identity
- Setting up profiles in your name
- Electronic sabotage

<sup>3</sup> See: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_Ross\\_Taylor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Ross_Taylor) and <https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/697/index.do>

<sup>4</sup> See: [https://www.cdn-hr-reporter.ca/hr\\_topics/jurisdiction/communication-hate-messages-telephone-prohibited](https://www.cdn-hr-reporter.ca/hr_topics/jurisdiction/communication-hate-messages-telephone-prohibited)

<sup>5</sup> See: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malcolm\\_Ross\\_\(school\\_teacher\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malcolm_Ross_(school_teacher)) and <https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/1367/index.do>

<sup>6</sup> See: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James\\_Keegstra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Keegstra) and <https://www.canlii.org/en/ca/scc/doc/1990/1990canlii24/1990canlii24.html>



- doxxing: publishing personal information about you (including sex videos and photos, which is sometimes called 'revenge porn')
- Cyber-stalking
- Blackmail
- Encouraging other people to be abusive or violent towards groups of people.

(Source: <http://www.galop.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/What-is-online-hate-speech-and-hate-crime.pdf>)

## b. Lesson on critical thinking (30-45 minutes):

Discussion based on Fournier-Sylvester's "Think Critically!"

Preparation:

choose a subject of discussion (e.g. social issue, political issue, current event). Find links to three sites that discuss the chosen issue. E.g.: news story covered by Breitbart, CNN, Al Jazeera.

Discussion guide:

Introduce the issue and the links (5 min). Have students examine and evaluate the three chosen sites, compare and contrast, in small groups (15-30 min). Debrief in whole group (10-15 min).

Some guiding questions:

1. Who runs the site? Does that impact how information is being portrayed?
2. What arguments are being made by each site in favour or against a certain issue?
3. Is evidence provided? Where does the evidence come from?
4. Is a perspective or a voice missing from the website? Are there underlying assumptions within the website (e.g. does the writing use difficult vocabulary, and therefore assume a high degree of literacy)?
5. What is your position in this issue? How do these links support your position? Are you left with any questions?

## c. Lesson on extremism (45 minutes): Screen the documentary Facing Extremism and hold a discussion (based on Das's "Literary Peace Project")

The video may be purchased for view online: <http://www.visiontv.ca/facing-extremism/> (45 min).

Ask students to take notes on a few of the guiding questions listed below or use some of these as discussion guides

Video discussion guide:

1. What kinds of extremism are shown in the video (for example: racist, extremism, etc.)?
2. What reason does Arno Michaels give for explaining his interest and involvement in violent extremism?
3. What does educational psychologist Dr. Karen Mock say about hatred?



## Glossary of Terms

<b>Hate speech</b>	Messages that instill hate, promote hate or seek to exclude people based on their group
<b>Astroturfing</b>	Automated virtual personas on Social Media created to give the impression of a social movement.
<b>Digital citizenship</b>	The norms of appropriate, responsible technology use.
<b>Social Media</b>	A service designed to provide tools for socializing with others across the Internet.
<b>Hate</b>	Extreme dislike or intense hostility usually out of fear, anger, or feeling injured.
<b>Resilience</b>	Having the skills and resources necessary to fare well in the face of adversity
<b>Empathy</b>	Experiencing an understanding of another person's condition from their perspective; walking a mile in their shoes.
<b>Discrimination</b>	Unfair treatment of a person or group based on an opinion formed before having the relevant facts.
<b>Racism/ Racial discrimination</b>	Any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin, which has the purpose or effect of impairing the recognition, or equal enjoyment of human rights and freedoms.
<b>Islamophobia</b>	A fear or dislike of all or most Muslims.
<b>Anti-Semitism</b>	A discriminatory perception or hatred toward Jewish people.
<b>Homophobia</b>	A fear or dislike of all or most Homosexuals.
<b>Gender</b>	A culturally specific set of characteristics that relate to the social behavior and relationships of men and women.
<b>Propaganda</b>	Information used to promote or publicize an ideology or point of view that is often biased or misleading.