



How to Push Back Against Hate Online

– tip sheet

Most kids see hate and prejudice online, and most of them say it's important to do something about it. But whether you've seen a video that's full of racist conspiracy theories or have just seen a friend share an offensive meme, it can be hard to know what to do about it.

"My dad always told me if you have an opportunity to help someone, you really should."

The most important thing is to know that *you can make a difference*. A lot of kids think that nobody will listen if they speak out, but the fact is that we get our ideas about what's normal and what's okay in a community from what the people there say and do. Like how in an online space like a social network or a game, we all typically listen to the *loudest* people. So that means that when we do speak out, we can change other people's ideas of what's okay. It also means that if we *don't* speak out we're letting the loudest people decide what's right and wrong for your community, even if most of the people in it don't agree.

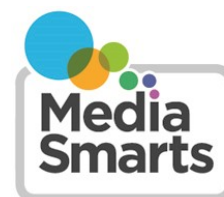
It's important to be the first person to speak out, and it's also important to be the second. Being the first one to speak out can make other people see it's okay for them to do it. And being the second can help both the first person feel supported, and can also encourage others to speak out too! Every time you speak out, you make other people more likely to do it next time.

"I do not want to draw attention to myself. I do not want to become a victim by speaking up."

Sometimes you may not feel safe speaking out, or you may be worried that it will make things worse for somebody else. That makes sense, especially when the comments have been hurtful.

Here are some ways you can speak out that probably won't make things worse for you or anyone else:

- Change the subject. At the very least, you're showing that you don't agree with what was said or posted.



CANADA'S CENTRE
FOR DIGITAL AND
MEDIA LITERACY

- Ask a question. Say "I don't get it, what did you mean by that?" so that they have to either take back what they said, say that they really mean it or change the subject themselves.
- If you think someone might have been hurt, let them know privately that you don't agree.
- Get a screenshot (see www.take-a-screenshot.org) in case you or somebody else want to report what happened to the platform later.
- Don't be a part of it. You can choose not to Like or share things you disagree with. You can also leave the conversation any time people post or share things that are hateful and prejudiced.

"The big thing is recognizing it at the time. Too often it goes by so fast, it is over before you realize what just happened."

You don't have to respond right away. Instead, take a few seconds to think about how you want to respond. Press your mental "pause" button and ask yourself: What do I think is the right thing to do?

"Sometimes my friends say they're just kidding, but the damage is done and they're backtracking to cover what they really mean."

Most kids agree that hate and prejudice online hurt them, even if they're not the target.

People sometimes will act like something doesn't hurt their feelings because they don't want to admit that it affected them.

Even if nobody who sees or hears hate at that time is hurt by it, it's making a space where people who would be hurt by it, to not feel welcome.

"It's my best friend who says something shocking."

It can be hardest to push back against prejudice when it's coming from people who are close to you. But those are the people who are most likely to listen to you, so it's extra important to say something.

"I think we are all guilty of it from time to time."

When you want to push back against hate online, you should assume that the person didn't mean to be hurtful. Don't criticize or blame them.

Even if you think that they are trying to be hurtful, it doesn't help to get angry at them.

Talk about the message instead: why it's not accurate, why it's hurtful, and why you don't agree with it.



"Most gamers just want to play and have fun, not get involved in racial slurs that ruin the game."

Don't think that you have to win every argument to make a difference.

No matter what you say or do, you may not change a person's mind.

What's more important is that you send a message to everyone else that this isn't okay.

"I think that sometimes they aren't trying to be prejudiced, they just think it's funny."

Nobody wants to be the one who takes a joke too seriously. Instead, you can answer humour with humour. For example, you can use a GIF or a meme that makes it clear you don't agree with what was said or posted.

Here are a few classic *Simpsons* memes to get you started:

bit.ly/homerheadlock

bit.ly/simpsonalphas

"Why would adults want to do that? Why would they want to fool kids? How could I fall for it?"

Remember that anybody can post anything online. Sometimes websites made by hate groups look better than websites for universities or government agencies!

When you're looking for information, don't assume a person or website is who they say they are. Do a search on their name or check Wikipedia to see what other people say about them.

Whether it's a website, a video or a forum, hate groups don't usually show you who they are right away. Instead they try to get you to laugh at hurtful jokes or make you blame a particular group for your problems, and tell you to look up search terms that they know will lead to sites or videos that were made to spread their message.

Just like it isn't fair to think that everyone like you is the same, don't be tricked into thinking that any members of any other group are all the same, no matter their race, religion, or gender. If somebody is telling you that a whole group of people is a threat to you, it's because they want you to think it's okay to hurt those people.

If you see someone spreading stuff like that on a social network or video sharing site, report it. (See <https://cyberbullying.org/report> for how to do that.)

Whether you're speaking out against hate, reporting it, or just showing you don't agree, we all have the power to stake a stand against hate online.

