

Safe Space

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Aim and purpose

- Help students recognize harassment, discrimination and violence when they witness or experience it.
- Prevent instances of harassment, discrimination and violence related to students.
- Empower students to react and speak up in situations of harassment, discrimination and violence.
- Create an atmosphere of respect and an understanding that different peoples' experiences of harassments and discrimination can differ.

Introduction

One community and one ÅAU where everyone are safe and supported.

Session topics

- Harassments, discrimination definitions and Finnish law
- Whose concern?
- Examples of harassments and discrimination
- What to do and who can help
- Spot the harassment/discrimination and dare to act scenarios
- Next steps and things to remember

Harassments, discrimination and Finnish Law

Definition at ÅAU

Harassment violates the individual's right to personal freedom and integrity, as well as creates a threatening, violent, humiliating and aggressive atmosphere. Harassment can be defined as unwelcome, unwanted and one-sided physical or verbal behavior towards someone for whom the impact always is negative. What is viewed as harassment, depends on the own perception of the one who is subjected to unwanted behavior. Bullying refers to repeated violation of a person, while harassment often refers to particular situations.

Åbo Akademi University does not accept any kind of harassment, discrimination or bullying within the university, and protects those who report it.

Law on Discrimination

8.1 No one may be discriminated against on the basis of age, origin, nationality, language, religion, belief, opinion, political activity, trade union activity, family relationships, state of health, disability, sexual orientation or other personal characteristics. Discrimination is prohibited, regardless of whether it is based on a fact or assumption concerning the person him/herself or another.

Law on Harassment

The deliberate or de facto infringement of the dignity of a person is harassment, if the infringing behavior relates to a reason referred to in section 8(1), and as a result of the reason, a degrading or humiliating, intimidating, hostile or offensive environment towards the person is created by the behavior.

Whose concern and responsibility?

Everyone's!

Examples of discrimination

- Direct and indirect discrimination
- Exclusion from certain activities
- Unfair treatment/special treatment for others
- Racial, religious or gendered etc. stereotyping
- Victimization
- Harassments

Examples of direct harassments

Harassments can be expressed in the following ways (but not only)

- Sexually and racial etc. suggestive gestures or expressions
- Indecent talk, suggestive jokes and unwelcome comments or questions concerning the body, race, gender, clothing or private life etc.
- Biased materials, messages or phone calls
- Unwanted physical contact
- Physical abuse
- Suggestions or demands for sexual intercourse or other kinds of sexual activity
- Rape or attempted rape

Examples of indirect harassments

- Hearing a comment not directed to you. For example racist, sexist or ableism jokes.
- Saying bad things about someone in the room but in another language so it may not be directed at them.
- Being part of the harassment or supporting it, but not being the main offender. For example letting friends cat-call women on the streets.
- Being silent when knowing about harassment.

Harassment and discrimination – a personal experience

- **Microaggressions** refers to direct or indirect daily comments or behaviour towards a person, often from a marginalized group such as an ethnic minority or people with disabilities etc. The one acting out may not do it with the purpose of degrading someone but is yet still provoking this unintentionally.
- Which means:
Think! Perhaps your questions, jokes or comments are something that the person hears everyday and is tired of hearing.

"You're so articulate."

"That's so gay."

"Is that your real hair?"

"You're transgender? Wow, you don't look like it at all!"

"Oh sorry, wrong person."

"No, where are you really from?"

"You people..."

What to do and who can help

If you are being harassed or discriminated:

- Whichever response you have, understand that it is valid. Your safety is the number one priority and whatever you had to do to keep that, is understandable.
- Start thinking about what you would like to do and what options you have. If you choose not to file a report, that is okay, and if you choose to file a report, that is also okay.
- Harassments and discrimination can be confusing, but if you are feeling that something that happened made you feel uncomfortable or uneasy; trust your instincts and go and talk to someone. It can be a friend, us personnel at ÅAU and the Student Union, organisations or the police.

What to do and who can help

What to do if someone tells you they are being harassed or discriminated

- Listen and express empathy!
- Believe them, or, at least, do not question the story of the person who is telling it to you. It is not up to you to judge whether what they have experienced is valid.
- Direct them or go with them to the relevant points of contact.
- Confidentiality. Being harassed is a very personal experience so respect the persons wishes regarding confidentiality.
- Respect their decisions on what to do.
- Take care of yourself. Being a support to someone or hearing their experience can be hard so make sure you find a suitable person who can support you if needed.

What to do if you are witnessing harassments or discrimination?

- Assess situation, assess your own safety and think of best action to take.
- Think of context, who can help, severity of the harassments, alcohol scenarios, within know groups ex. University classrooms.

ÅAU and Kåren harassments officers

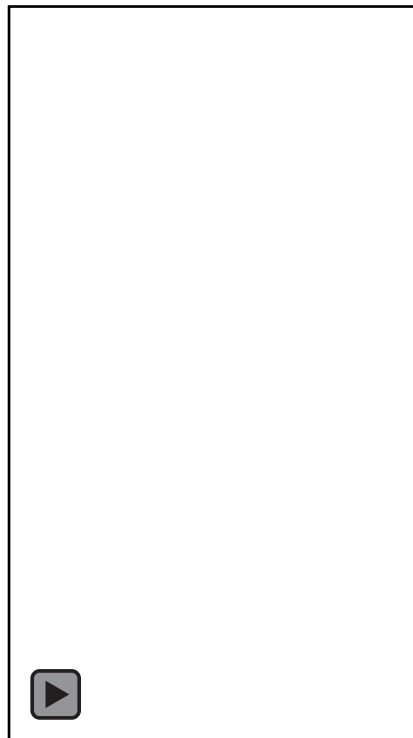
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Kåren / Student Union

The Students Rights Expert:

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CONSENT

IT'S SIMPLE AS TEA

Safe space and safe Finland



Spot the harassment/discrimination & dare to act scenarios

Spot the harassment/discrimination & dare to act scenarios

- Your biology class is going on a field trip to one of the islands but one in your class who is in a wheelchair cannot come because the boat that will take you from the mainland is not disabled accessible. Your professor say “well, you can never arrange so it works for everyone anyway and there’s nothing we can do”.
- One of the older female PhD students in your department always comes out to party with you, which is great because she is hilarious. She usually jokes and flirt with one of your male classmates who does not always seem comfortable with it, but he is a shy person and as the PhD woman say “men are just not use to strong women who take charge and it’s just some harmless flirting”.
- A group of friends, including one person who is from a Middle Eastern country, are spending the night going from bar to bar. Each time they enter a new bar, people in the group make jokes about the Middle Eastern friend's backpack making a ticking sound (insinuating that he might be a terrorist) and that hopefully the security guards in the bar won't notice. The friend who is the focus of the jokes laughs along with the group.

Spot the harassment/discrimination & dare to act scenarios

- When going with a friend who use the pronoun hen, and not the pronoun he or she to Gripen to student services. One in the staff keeps referring to hen as him even though hen told her it is hen. The staff member explains that when she grew up men were men and women were women, and you did not use non-binary pronounce as hen.
- John and Patrick lives in the same building in the student village. As many other times, they head to a party and John has quite a lot to drink. Patrick did not have as much and have to practically carry John back to his room but realizes when they get there that John has forgotten his key. Patrick offers John to stay at his room and John agrees. Both goes to sleep in the same bed. When John wakes up he finds his pants on the floor and Patrick's hand in his underwear and he cannot remember what happened. John leaves before Patrick wakes up.

Things to remember

- We are all here to make spaces that are safe, inclusive and respectful to everyone!
- Don't accept harassment or discrimination towards you or others!
- Take care of each other!

Contact persons

Contact persons for students at ÅAU in cases of harassment

- Coordinator Jan Kraufvelin (jan.kraufvelin@abo.fi, +358 505365886)
- Coordinator Anita Sundman (anita.sundman@abo.fi, +358 505489505)

Contact persons at Kåren the Student Union in cases of harassment

- The Students Rights Expert: Petra Lindblad
- E-mail: trakasseri@studentkaren.fi



Pure
Love.
Pure
Science.