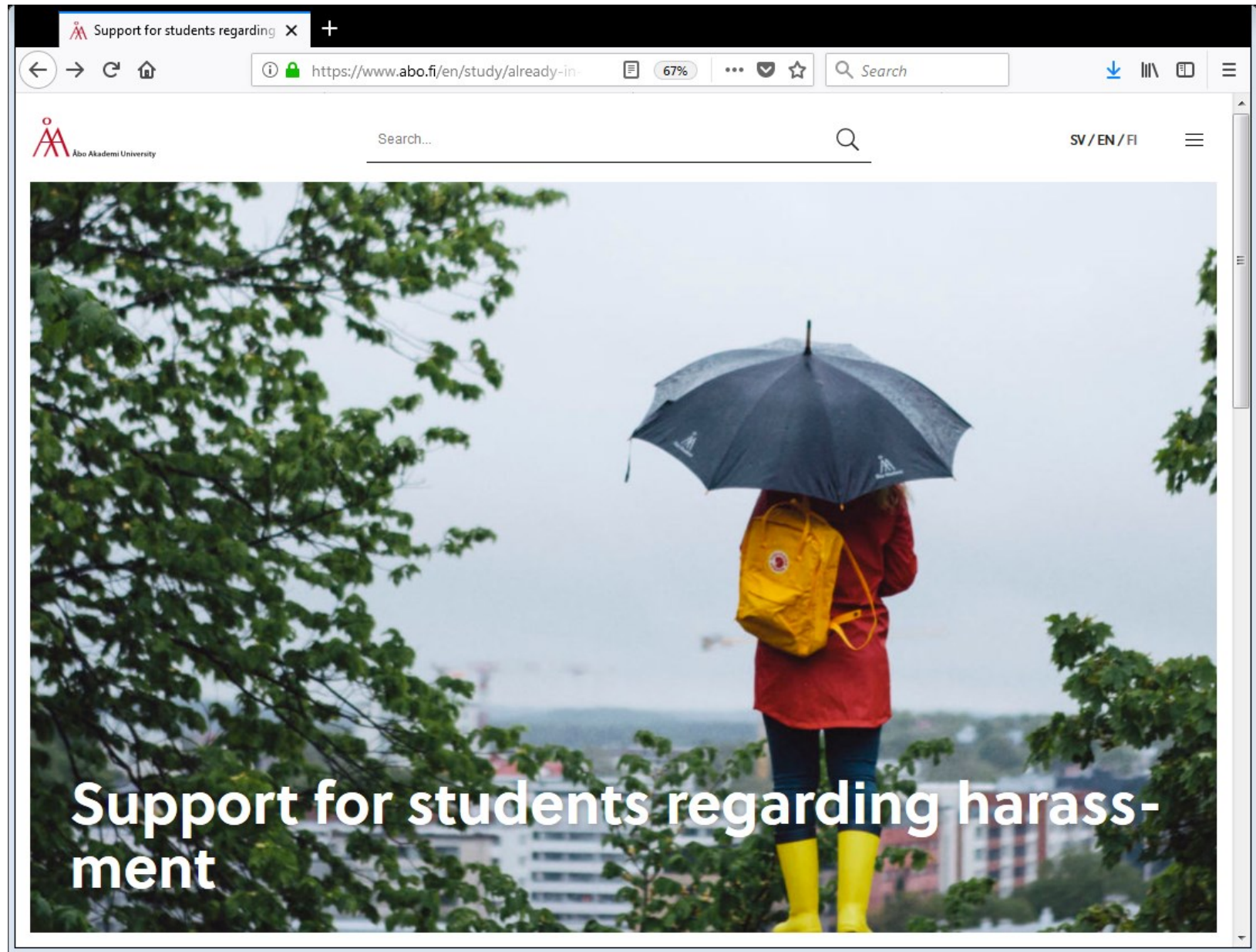




Safe Space

Jan Kraufvelin
Contact person in case of harassment
Åbo Akademi University



Introduction

- One community & one ÅAU where everyone are safe, heard and supported



Session's topics

- Harassments & Discrimination definitions
- Examples of Harassments & Discrimination
- What to do & who can help
- Who's concern?
- Spot & dare to act scenarios?

Aim & Purpose

- Help you be aware and recognize harassment, discrimination and violence when you 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, and know who to contact.
- Create an atmosphere of respect and understanding that different peoples' experiences of harassments & discrimination can differ.



Harassments & Discrimination definitions in Finnish law

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

14.1 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**.

Non-discrimination Act <https://www.finlex.fi/en/laki/kaannokset/2014/20141325>



Definition at ÅAU

Åbo Akademi University does not accept any kind of harassment, discrimination or bullying within the university (or in situations related to the university like evening events, parties etc.) among anyone (student, staff, visitors, etc.) and strive to make the university environment a safe space for all.

Harassment violates the individual's right to personal freedom and integrity, as well as creates a threatening, violent, humiliating or 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.

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 or inappropriate materials, messages or phone calls
- Unwanted physical contact
- Demands for sexual intercourse or other kinds of sexual activity

- Physical abuse
- Rape or attempted rape



Examples of Indirect Harassment

- Hearing a comment not explicitly directed to you ex. racist or sexist jokes
- Saying bad things about someone in the room but in another language so it may not be directed at them but to degrade them
- Being part of the harassment or supporting it, but not being the main offender. Ex. letting friends' cat-call women on the streets or tell inappropriate jokes that you laugh along with
- Being silent when knowing about harassment.



Harassment & 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 this out may not even do it with the purpose of degrading someone yet still provoking this unintentionally.
- Which means:
Think! Perhaps the person you direct your jokes, questions or comments at hears it every day and is tired of hearing it.

“You have so exotic hair?”

“You people ...”

“That’s so gay.”

“You’re transgender? Wow, you don’t look like it at all!”

“No, where are you from originally?”

[Microaggressions as annoying as mosquitos](#)



What to do if you are witnessing harassments or discrimination?

- Assess the situation, assess your own safety and think about the best action to take.
- If possible, try to stop the events unfolding.
- Think of context, who can help, severity of the harassments, do you know who oversees the event/happening etc.

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

- Listen & 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.
 - Respect their decisions on what to do.
- Confidentiality. Being harassed is a very personal experience so respect the persons wishes regarding confidentiality.
- 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 & who can help

If you are being harassed or discriminated:

Whichever response you have, understand that your response is almost always ok. You feeling safe is the number one priority.

Start thinking about what you would like to do and what options you have. If you choose to file a report, that is okay, and if you choose not to file a report, that is also okay.

Harassments & discrimination can be confusing, but if you are feeling that something – anything – that happened made you feel uncomfortable or uneasy trust your instincts and go and talk to someone. Could be a friend, staff at the ÅAU & Student Union (in particular the contact persons in cases of harassment), other (support) organisation and/or the police.



Who's concern & responsibility?

Everyone's



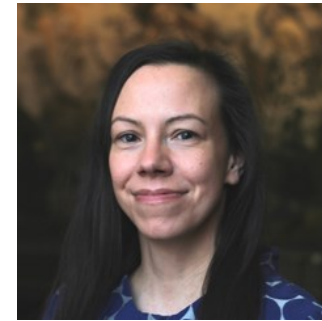
ÅA & Student Union Safety net - contact persons in case of harassments



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Kåren / Student Union

The Students Rights Expert: **Petra Lindblad**
The Service Expert in Åbo: **Sandra Österlund**

E-mail: trakasseriombud@studentkaren.fi

“We are here for you”

<https://www.abo.fi/en/study/already-in-2/student-wellbeing/harassment/>



Spot & dare to act scenarios?



- Your 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 mainland is not accessible. Your professor say, “well you can never arrange so that it works for everyone anyway and there is nothing we can do about it now”.



- 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 used to strong women who take charge and it's just a bit of harmless flirting anyway.

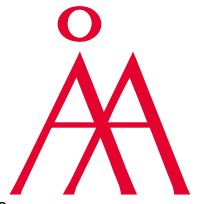


- At the end of a lesson one of the students goes up to the teacher and says with a high voice: “I think you are very nice and good looking; do you already have a boyfriend, or do you want to go out on a date with me?”



You are going with a friend to the student services. Your friend prefer to use the pronoun they, and not the pronoun he or she to the student services. One of the staff keeps referring to they as him every time even if they told her it is they. She explains that when she grew up men were men and women were women, and you did not use non-binary pronouns such as they.





- A group of friends, including one person who is from the Middle East, are spending the night going from bar to bar. Each time they enter a new bar, Pelle, one of the group members, makes 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.

