



EKVALITA

Building an inclusive and respectful community

University, work life and beyond

28.8.2026

Åbo Akademi University

Eerika Ströömi
DEI expert

Expertise on Gender, Diversity and Inclusion

Ekvalita consists of a team of experts
on gender equality and diversity issues.
We deconstruct power and norms.

We offer
training, supervision and consulting
for enterprises, state and municipal
authorities,
organizations and groups

We produce
texts, videos, web portals and
handbooks



Principles for Safer Space

- Everyone has an equal chance to be heard and to participate in today's programme. We listen to each other.
- We treat each other in a friendly way and with respect. We strive to express ourselves in a constructive way.
- We take diversity into account. We understand that we may have preconceptions of other people. We recognise that our preconceptions are not the truth and try not to act on our preconceptions.
- All kinds of harassment and discrimination are forbidden.
- Contact Eerika if you experience or notice inappropriate or discriminatory behaviour. You can also give us feedback afterwards via email (info@ekvalita.fi).

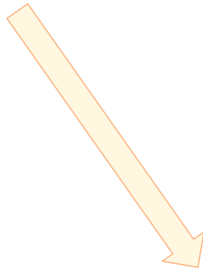
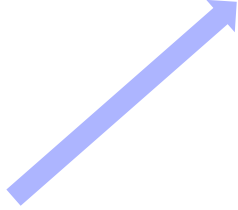
Today

- Here and now
- Four steps for change
- Grounds for discrimination
- Norms
- Microaggressions
- Sexual harassment
- Gender-based harassment
- How violence is normalized
- Do we really want a change?
- Consent
- What can we do?
- Support & tips





HERE AND NOW



FOUR STEPS FOR CHANGE

TO SEE



TO UNDERSTAND



TO BE
MOTIVATED



TO DO





TO SEE

Image: Unsplash

Grounds for discrimination



Age



Origin



Nationality



Language



Religion



Opinion



Gender, gender identity
and gender expression



Political
activity



Trade union
activity



Family
relations



State of health



Disability



Sexual
orientation



Other personal
characteristics



Neurodiversity



Level of
education



Looks or
appearance



Job role or
status



Place of residence



Socioeconomic
situation



Teflon test

1. How often do you find yourself in uncomfortable situations due to one of the identities or characteristics in the list?

2. How often do you intentionally avoid mentioning the listed characteristics because you are worried that it would lead to uncomfortable situations or unwanted attention?

Often = 3 p
Sometimes = 2 p
Rarely = 1 p
Never = 0 p



Age



Origin



Nationality



Language



Opinion



Political activity



Trade union activity



Family relations



State of health



Disability



Sexual orientation



Other personal characteristics



Religion



Gender, gender identity or gender expression

Go to www.menti.com and enter code x

What does the result mean?



Bild: Pixabay

- A low amount of points means a person is seldom or never discriminated against based on the characteristics listed. This also means that these people are privileged in some ways.
- A high amount of points means a person faces discrimination often or at least sometimes. This is not the person's fault; the issues are structural.
- If a person has some or a lot of privileges, it does not mean they haven't faced any hardships in their life. It just means that the hardships do not stem from e.g. their gender or nationality. On the other hand, those who are less privileged, face an extra burden due to one or more of their personal characteristics.
- For people with a lot of privileges, it can be difficult to notice instances of discrimination, restrictive norms and excluding practices in everyday life. To be able to see discrimination, people with privileges need to **actively** learn to see it.

POWER AND RESPONSIBILITY

Be aware of your
position of power



A glowing lightbulb hangs in the foreground, its filament illuminated with a warm, golden light. The background is a soft, out-of-focus bokeh of warm, golden and reddish lights, creating a dreamy and atmospheric setting. The overall tone is warm and inviting, suggesting a moment of inspiration or enlightenment.

TO UNDERSTAND



Norms are produced through actions and processes

- Overarching narratives about how things **are** and how they **should be**
- Structures, routines, systems
- Actions and non-actions
- Being part of the norm means a person has a privilege



Restrictive
practices

**Inclusive
practices**

What kind of thoughts or preconceptions did you have about Finland when you applied to study here?

**Discuss in pairs
and write down
at least one
thought at
www.menti.com**

**What kind of norms are there in your field of study?
For example, who is a
“typical student” in your
field?**

Microaggressions

- Everyday subtle statements or actions that communicate stereotypical attitudes towards a group of people. These are often connected to casual joking or being polite, but those who belong to minority groups may find them inappropriate or threatening.
- Can be intentional or unintentional – people often mean well with their microaggressions.
- An example of a microaggression can also be distancing oneself from or avoiding people who belong to minorities. This way these people are disregarded or made feel invisible.

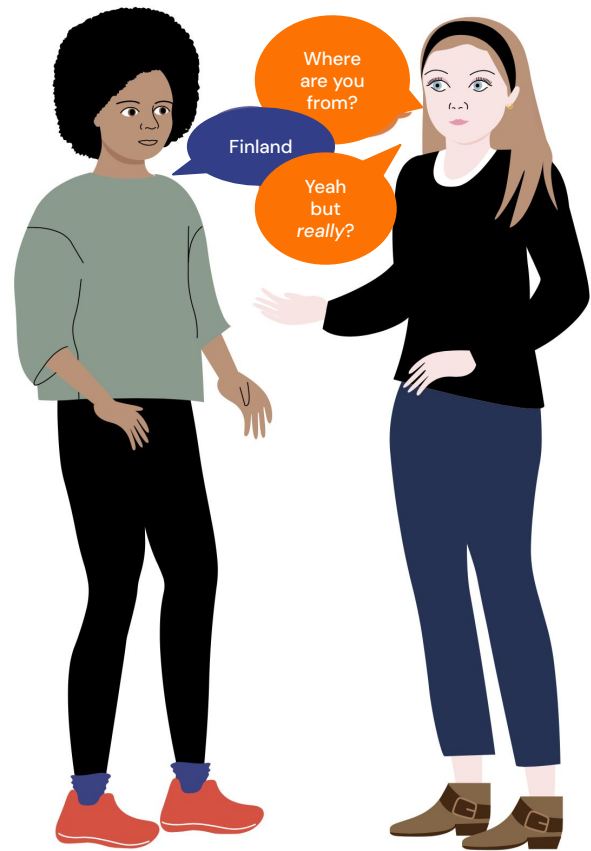


Bild: Skapa plats



Microaggressions

Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment refers to verbal, non-verbal or physical unwanted conduct of a sexual nature.

Examples of sexual harassment include:

- Sexually suggestive gestures or expressions
- Inappropriate comments, jokes or questions referring to someone's body parts, clothing or sex life
- Pornographic material, sexually suggestive letters, emails, text messages or phone calls
- Physical touch without consent, e.g. hugging, kissing, groping
- Suggestions or demands for sexual intercourse or other kinds of sexual activity

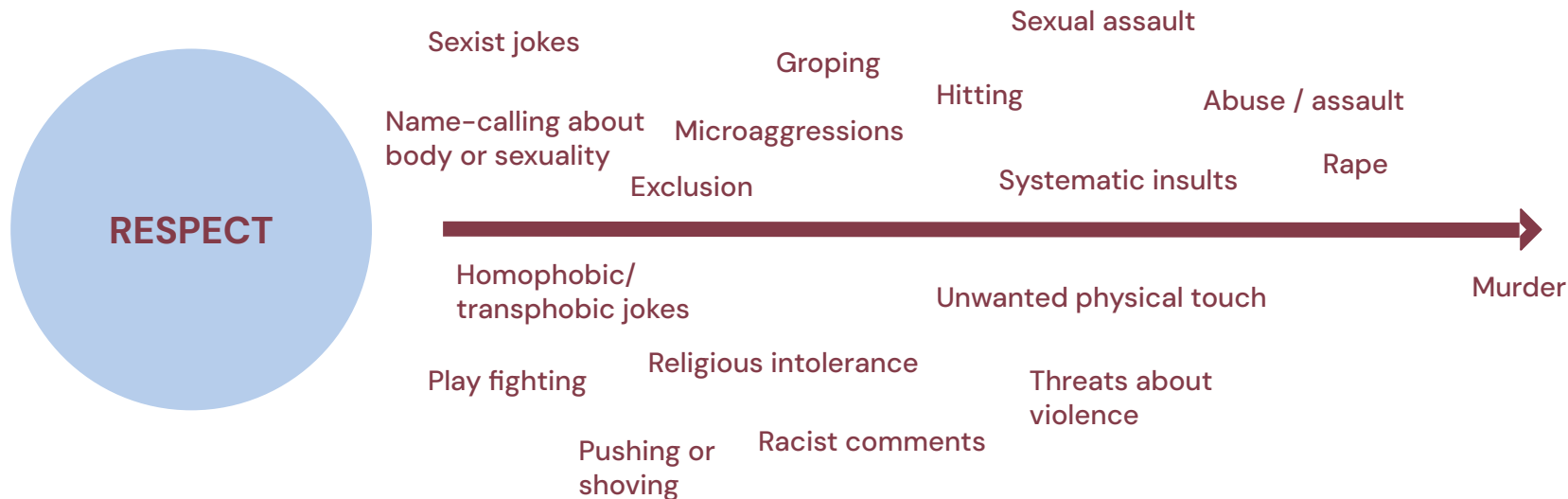
Gender-based harassment

Gender-based harassment refers to unwanted conduct that is not of a sexual nature but is related to the gender, gender identity or gender expression of a person.

Examples of gender-based harassment include:

- Degrading comments about another person's gender
- Belittling or bullying connected to gender or gender stereotypes

How violence is normalized



**A safe environment
free from harassment and violence**



RESPECT

TO BE MOTIVATED

Do we really want a change?



Is this important to us?



Is this important to you?

Do all of us really want change?



“Åbo Akademi University strives to promote and guarantee equal treatment and eliminate discrimination. Working for equality, equal opportunity and equal treatment involves creating a study environment that is free from discrimination and where diversity is respected.”

– Åbo Akademi University's [Plan](#) for Gender Equality, Equal Treatment and Accessibility as an Educational Institution

Gender
Equality Act

Non-Discrimination
Act

Law on Sexual
offences

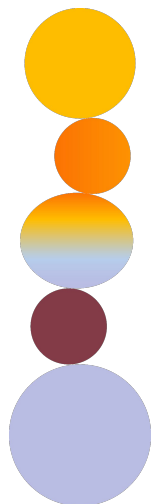
Employment
Contracts Act



TO DO

Consent: FRIES

Consent refers to a **clear, voluntary** and **enthusiastic** expression of willingness. Consent is an agreement between two or more people to engage in activities such as touching, flirting or having sex. It is about **communication** and **respect**. The absence of an explicit “no” is not considered consent. Similarly, a person who is unconscious, seriously intoxicated or asleep is never able to give consent.

- 
- Freely given
 - Reversible
 - Informed
 - Enthusiastic
 - Specific

What if...?

What if...

...you are the perpetrator?

Prevention is key.

Read the situation.

If you tell a joke or give a compliment, pay attention to the other person's reactions.

- Did they stay silent?
- Did they laugh nervously?
- Did they look uncomfortable or anxious?

If you want to touch someone, make sure you have their consent.

What if... ...you are the perpetrator?

If it happens nevertheless?

Do not protest.

If a person feels that you have crossed the line, do not try to defend your actions or challenge the other person's views or experience.

Stop. Apologize.

Remember how difficult it can be to bring up this type of issue and be respectful towards this person who has had the courage to speak to you directly.

What if...

...you are the person who has been harassed, or you are a bystander?

Try this three-step method:

- **Name the action (what is happening/has happened)**
- **Criticize the action (not the person)**
- **Say what you want to see happen next**

These steps don't need to be done in this order, they can be used in whatever way feels natural in a given situation.

What can we do?

1**Reflect on your own behaviour**

Take your responsibility and respect other people's boundaries

2**Always talk about diversity in a positive manner**

When talking, be respectful and assume people who belong in different minorities are in the same room

3**Listen to and believe those who talk about their experiences**

Offer support e.g. by contacting the harassment contact persons together

4**Do not endorse a culture of harassment and violence**

A person's identity or experiences of discrimination should never be the butt of your joke

5**Look for support in difficult situations**

Ask for help if you or someone else experiences harassment or discrimination

Support

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

Harassment contact persons at the ÅAU Student Union

The Student Union's harassment contact persons are **Amanda Ehn** and **Johan Berg**. You can contact them via trakasseriombud@studentkaren.fi.

Challenging the norms and speaking up can be uncomfortable.

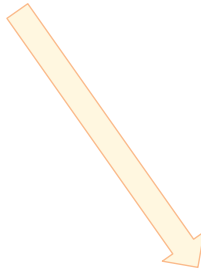
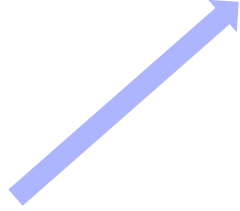
Together we have an easier time contributing to change than alone.

You should feel the change, otherwise it's not happening.





HERE AND NOW





EKVALITA

Thank you!

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www.ekvalitaeducation.fi

EKVALITA
education