

# MODULE 1



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# Understanding Legislation and National Contexts



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# Recognizing Hate Speech in EUROPE



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Addressing hate speech is a major concern across Europe, as it is in many regions worldwide. European countries have implemented various laws and initiatives to combat hate speech, though legal frameworks and definitions differ from one nation to another. Below are some common approaches to identifying and addressing hate speech in Europe.



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Over the years, the Council of Europe has taken various measures to combat hate speech. Its media and internet division approaches this issue from a “freedom of expression perspective,” emphasizing collaboration with member states to draft, assess, review, and align laws and practices with the European Convention on Human Rights, particularly those that impose restrictions on freedom of expression.



# Legal Definitions in Europe

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European countries typically define hate speech as language that incites violence or discrimination against individuals or groups based on characteristics such as race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, or disability. However, the scope and specificity of these definitions can vary across nations.



# **European Union Framework**

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The European Union (EU) has established guidelines and directives to address hate speech and discrimination. For example, the EU's Framework Decision on Combating Racism and Xenophobia mandates the criminalization of specific forms of hate speech and hate crimes across its member states.



# International Standards

European countries frequently follow international standards and conventions to address hate speech, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). These frameworks offer guidance on balancing the protection of freedom of expression with the prohibition of hate speech.

# Monitoring and Reporting Mechanisms

Many European countries have implemented mechanisms to monitor and report hate speech both online and offline. These mechanisms often involve specialized governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and reporting systems provided by online platforms.

# Educational Programs

Some European countries run educational programs to raise awareness about hate speech, foster tolerance and respect for diversity, and equip individuals with the tools to identify and combat hate speech.

# Civil Society Initiatives:

Civil society organizations are instrumental in combating hate speech across Europe. They engage in advocacy, education, and community-building initiatives to tackle the root causes of hate speech and foster social cohesion.

# Tech Industry Collaboration:

With the rise of online hate speech, collaboration among governments, civil society, and the tech industry is essential. Many European countries partner with tech companies to create policies, algorithms, and tools for identifying and removing hate speech from online platforms.

# Europe Convection for Human Rights:

*"Everyone has the right to freedom of expression"*

*Art. 10 European Convention on Human Rights*

PROTECTING THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION UNDER THE EUROPEAN CONVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS



European Convention on Human Rights



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# Understanding legislation and its negative impact:

Legislation addressing hate speech targeting the LGBTIQ+ community in Europe varies widely across countries. While some nations have strong legal protections, others may lack comprehensive laws or even have legislation that discriminates against LGBTIQ+ individuals. Here are some key factors to consider regarding legislation and its potential negative effects on LGBTIQ+ communities:

# Absence of Clear Protections:

In certain European countries, there may be no specific legal safeguards against hate speech directed at LGBTIQ+ individuals. This gap in legislation can make them more susceptible to discrimination, harassment, and violence due to their sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression.

**Criminalization of LGBTIQ+ Identities:** In some regions, laws exist that criminalize LGBTIQ+ identities or activities, further entrenching stigma and discrimination. Such legislation can create a hostile environment for LGBTIQ+ individuals, fostering hate speech and violence against them.

# Selective Enforcement:

In countries with legal protections against hate speech targeting LGBTIQ+ individuals, enforcement may be inconsistent or insufficient. Law enforcement and judicial authorities might fail to adequately investigate or prosecute hate crimes or hate speech incidents, creating a sense of impunity for perpetrators.

Impact on Freedom of Expression: Striking a balance between addressing hate speech and preserving freedom of expression is crucial. Laws designed to combat hate speech must be carefully crafted to avoid suppressing legitimate discussions, debates, or artistic expressions related to LGBTIQ+ issues.

# Chilling Effect on LGBTIQ+ Communities:

The presence of laws or the absence of legal protections against hate speech can create a chilling effect within LGBTIQ+ communities, deterring individuals from openly expressing their identities, seeking support, or engaging in public life.

Intersectional Discrimination: LGBTIQ+ individuals from marginalized groups, such as people of color, migrants, or religious minorities, may experience compounded discrimination due to the overlap of multiple factors. Legislation must take these intersecting identities and experiences into account to provide comprehensive protection against hate speech.

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# **National context in Spain**

Spain has implemented several measures to combat hate speech, particularly through its Criminal Code. Article 510 of the Spanish Penal Code criminalizes expressions that incite violence, discrimination, or hatred against individuals or groups based on attributes such as race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, or disability. This provision aligns with the European Union's Framework Decision on Combating Racism and Xenophobia, which mandates member states to criminalize certain forms of hate speech and hate crimes.

In 2015, Spain enacted a comprehensive reform of its Criminal Code, significantly affecting the regulation of hate speech under Article 510. The explanatory memorandum of the law references the Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA of 28 November 2008 on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law to justify this reform.

To enhance the effectiveness of these legal measures, Spain has developed protocols for action. The "Protocol for Action of the Security Forces and Corps for Hate Crimes and Conducts that Violate Legal Norms on Discrimination" provides guidelines for law enforcement agencies to address hate crimes and discriminatory behaviors.

Additionally, Spain has established alternative dispute settlement mechanisms to address hate speech without resorting to criminal courts. The "Protocol for Action to Combat Illegal Hate Speech" offers citizens information on these alternative mechanisms, aiming to resolve disputes related to hate speech more efficiently.

Despite these efforts, challenges remain in effectively combating hate speech. In 2024, a Spanish judge specializing in hate crimes proposed ending social media anonymity in cases involving suspected hate crimes. This proposal aims to enhance accountability but has sparked debates concerning privacy and freedom of expression.

Furthermore, Spain is considering the repeal of its blasphemy law, which imposes fines on those mocking religious beliefs. This move seeks to protect freedom of speech and reduce the misuse of the law by extremist organizations to target artists, activists, and politicians.

In summary, Spain has implemented legal frameworks and protocols to combat hate speech, aligning with international standards. However, ongoing discussions and reforms indicate a continuous effort to balance effective regulation with the protection of fundamental rights.

## **Anti-Discrimination Legislation in Spain:**

Spain has enacted comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation to promote equality and protect individuals from discrimination across various sectors. The Comprehensive Law for Equal Treatment and Non-Discrimination, approved in 2022, serves as a cornerstone in this effort.

# Recent Developments:

In August 2024, a Spanish judge proposed ending social media anonymity in cases involving suspected hate crimes. This proposal aims to enhance accountability and prevent online hate speech but has sparked debates concerning privacy and freedom of expression.

Overall, Spain's anti-discrimination legislation reflects a commitment to fostering an inclusive society by providing legal frameworks to combat discrimination and promote equal treatment across various domains.

# Prevalence of LGBTQ+ Hate Speech:

# Increase in Online Hate Messages:

An investigation revealed that hate messages against gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and trans individuals have doubled on Spanish social media networks in recent years. This surge coincides with the annual Pride celebrations, underscoring the persistent challenges faced by the LGBTQ+ community.

# Rising Anti-LGBTQ+ Rhetoric:

Reports indicate that anti-LGBTQ+ hate speech continues to be a serious issue in Spain, with anti-trans rhetoric gaining more ground. Studies show that online hate grew by 130% between 2019 and 2022, with a significant portion targeting trans individuals.

# **Government Initiatives:**

# Regulation of Social Media Platforms:

In January 2025, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez proposed measures to regulate social media platforms more strictly. These measures include eliminating user anonymity, increasing algorithm transparency, and holding platform owners accountable, aiming to protect participatory democracy and users' mental health.

# Combating Online Extremism:

The Spanish government is considering legislation to end online anonymity to combat issues like the spread of inappropriate content and extremism. However, this proposal has sparked debates regarding its potential impact on freedom of expression and the safety of vulnerable individuals.

Addressing LGBTQ+ hate speech in Spain requires a multifaceted approach, including stringent regulations, effective enforcement, and a commitment to upholding fundamental rights. Ongoing dialogue among government bodies, civil society, and online platforms is essential to create a safer and more inclusive digital environment for all.

# National contexte in France:

In France, there are legal provisions and social initiatives aimed at combatting hate speech targeting LGBTIQ+ individuals. Here's an overview of the national context regarding hate speech prevention

France has established legal measures to combat hate speech, particularly when directed at individuals based on their sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression. The French Penal Code explicitly prohibits incitement to discrimination, hatred, or violence against individuals or groups on these grounds. Those found guilty of hate speech may face criminal penalties, including fines and imprisonment.

## **Anti-Discrimination Legislation:**

Beyond hate speech laws, France enforces anti-discrimination legislation that safeguards individuals from discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. These protections extend to key areas of public life, including employment, housing, and access to goods and services. The objective of these laws is to uphold the rights and dignity of LGBTIQ+ individuals while fostering equality.

The French government actively works to combat hate speech and foster tolerance and inclusion. Efforts include public awareness campaigns, educational programs in schools to prevent discrimination and promote respect for diversity, and financial support for organizations and initiatives dedicated to addressing hate speech and supporting LGBTIQ+ communities.

## **Media and Online Platforms:**

Measures are in place to combat hate speech in the media and on online platforms. French authorities work alongside media organizations and internet companies to monitor and address hateful content, ensuring its removal and enforcing community standards and legal regulations.

Despite these efforts, challenges persist in effectively preventing hate speech against LGBTIQ+ individuals in France. Sustained education, awareness campaigns, and strengthened collaboration between the government, civil society, and the private sector are crucial in combating hate speech and fostering a culture of respect, tolerance, and inclusion for all, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

## **Response:**

Law enforcement agencies in France are responsible for investigating and prosecuting hate speech incidents. Specialized units within the police and judicial system focus on hate crimes, including those targeting LGBTIQ+ individuals. Authorities strive to ensure that hate speech complaints are handled seriously and that perpetrators are held accountable for their actions.

Civil society organizations play a vital role in combating hate speech and supporting LGBTIQ+ individuals in France. They offer resources, advocacy, and support services to victims, raise awareness about the impact of hate speech on individuals and communities, and promote tolerance and acceptance.

# National contexte in Bulgaria:

# National contexte in Luxembourg

# **National Context in Luxembourg on LGBTIQ+ Hate Speech:**

Luxembourg has strong legal protections against hate speech targeting LGBTIQ+ individuals. The country's legal framework prohibits hate speech, incitement to discrimination, hatred, or violence based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression.

## **Legal Framework:**

Luxembourg's Penal Code criminalizes hate speech, including verbal, written, or online expressions that incite discrimination, hatred, or violence against individuals or groups due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. Perpetrators may face fines and imprisonment.

## **Anti-Discrimination Laws:**

Beyond hate speech laws, Luxembourg has comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation that protects LGBTIQ+ individuals in areas such as employment, education, housing, and access to goods and services. These laws aim to promote equality and safeguard the dignity of LGBTIQ+ individuals.

## **Government Initiatives:**

The Luxembourgish government actively promotes inclusivity through awareness campaigns, education programs, and financial support for organizations working to combat hate speech and support LGBTIQ+ rights. Authorities collaborate with media and online platforms to prevent and remove harmful content.

## **Role of Civil Society Organizations:**

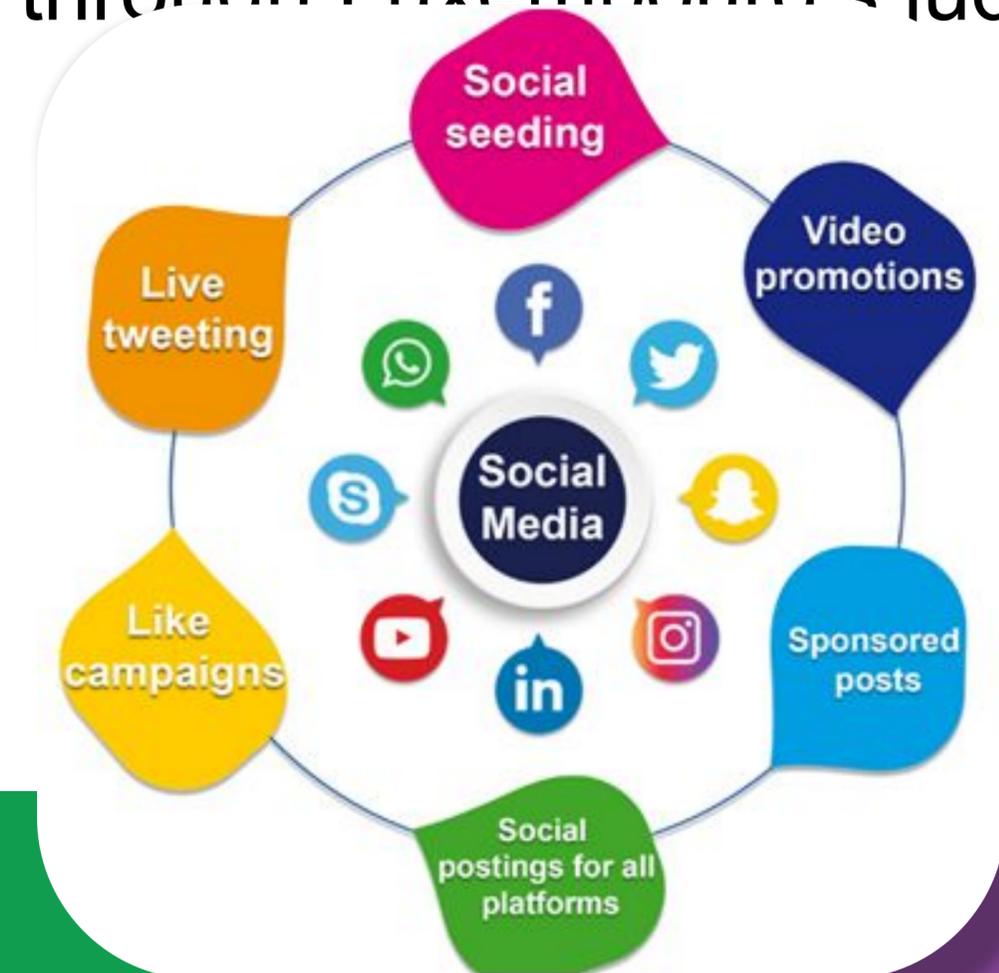
Numerous civil society organizations in Luxembourg provide essential support, advocacy, and resources for LGBTIQ+ individuals. These organizations play a crucial role in raising awareness, assisting victims of hate speech, and fostering a culture of acceptance and equality.

## **Media Oversight and Regulations:**

The **Independent Audiovisual Authority of Luxembourg (ALIA)** oversees media content to ensure compliance with ethical standards and legal provisions against hate speech. ALIA monitors television, radio, and online broadcasts, working to prevent the spread of discriminatory rhetoric against LGBTIQ+ individuals.

## Online Platforms and Social Media:

Authorities collaborate with tech companies and social media platforms to combat LGBTIQ+ hate speech online. Efforts include content moderation, the removal of hateful material, and the enforcement of platform policies against discrimination. Victims of online hate speech have legal recourse through Luxembourg's judicial system.



# National contexte in Ukraine:

## General information

In June 2023, the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (KIIS) reported a 4% decrease in negative attitudes toward LGBTQ+ people (now 34%), while 61% of respondents are positive or indifferent. Support for equal rights for LGBTQ+ individuals rose by 3%.

From 2014 to 2020, the LGBTQ+ movement was influenced by three key factors:

- 1. Socio-political events** (Euromaidan, Crimea annexation, Donbas war) shifted activist tactics to online support and aiding displaced LGBTQ+ people. Visibility increased, especially through LGBTQ+ military personnel.
- 2. European integration and reforms** (2013 onward) improved cooperation with authorities, leading to safer pride events, anti-discrimination labor laws, updated transgender medical protocols, and discussions on civil partnerships. These changes boosted visibility and brought in new activists.
- 3. Opposition actions** from far-right groups forced a stronger focus on event security, police coordination, and hate crime monitoring.

# Key areas of work and achievements of the LGBTQ+ movement in Ukraine

- **Mass events and prides:** Increase visibility of LGBTQ+ rights and shift public discourse.
- **Educational campaigns:** Raise public awareness of LGBTQ+ issues.
- **Trainings:** Educate allies (police, healthcare workers, psychologists, parents) to reduce stereotypes and increase sensitivity.
- **Advocacy:** Collaborate with authorities on anti-discrimination laws, hate crime policies, gender transition procedures, and family rights.
- **Monitoring and research:** Conduct surveys and produce reports to inform policy and partnerships.
- **Community work:** Operate community centers, offer psychological and legal support, engage LGBTQ+ military personnel and youth, recruit activists, and strengthen regional initiatives.

The key issues related to the disproportionate impact of the war and the humanitarian crisis on vulnerable populations, including members of the LGBTQ+ community, especially transgender individuals, are:

- Difficulties crossing checkpoints when relocating to safer regions for transgender individuals whose identity documents do not match their gender identity.
- Potential discriminatory attitudes towards the LGBTQ+ community when being accommodated in shelters during internal relocation.
- The likelihood of losing access to or having limited access to essential medications for HIV or lifelong hormone replacement therapy.
- Challenges crossing borders for transgender individuals if the gender marker on their identity documents does not match their gender identity.

***Important:*** For all members of the LGBTQ+ community, it is crucial to take measures to ensure personal safety and avoid disclosing their LGBTQ+ identities to unknown individuals. Additionally, privacy can be ensured by making your Facebook account private, thereby limiting the information visible to unknown persons.





***In case of violations of the rights of LGBTQ+ community members, you should:***

- Contact law enforcement authorities.
- Reach out to the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights – 24-hour hotline: 0 800 50 17 20.
- Seek help from human rights organizations, including the Network of Paralegals of the NGO Alliance.Global, the LGBT Human Rights Center "Nash Svit," the NGO Insight, KyivPride, the NGO "Kohorta," the NGO "Trans\*Generation," Gay Alliance Ukraine, the ZMINA Human Rights Center, and the Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union.



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# Module 2

# Netiquette

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# MODULE 2

# ONLINE



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# CONTENTS

- 01 Definition of Netiquette
- 02 About Us
- 03 The project
- 04 Our team
- 05 Questions + Answers
- 06 Conclusion



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In this module, we will explore the concept of Online Netiquette, its significance, and practical ways to ensure that our online interactions remain respectful and constructive.

This is particularly important in fostering partnerships, such as those within the EMNHS LGBTQI community



# Definition of the Netiquette

Netiquette," short for internet etiquette, refers to a set of guidelines for respectful and considerate communication in the digital space. Just as traditional etiquette governs face-to-face interactions, netiquette emphasizes proper behavior for online interactions. This includes practices such as writing polite emails, participating thoughtfully in online chats, and engaging respectfully on social media platforms.

Netiquette encompasses a wide range of online behaviors, promoting positive, respectful, and effective interactions. By offering guidance on appropriate conduct in various online settings, it helps minimize misunderstandings and conflicts. The concept highlights the importance of treating others with respect, even in the anonymity of the digital world, where the absence of face-to-face presence can sometimes lead to a lapse in courtesy.

# The Importance of Netiquette

In today's digital world, where a significant portion of our communication takes place online, the need for netiquette is more important than ever. From social media platforms to professional emails, it is essential to ensure that online interactions remain respectful and constructive. By adhering to netiquette guidelines, we can minimize misunderstandings, avoid conflicts, and contribute to building a positive and inclusive online community.

Furthermore, practicing proper online etiquette fosters a culture of respect and courtesy, which is especially important in the absence of nonverbal cues typically present in face-to-face interactions. This promotes more thoughtful and considerate exchanges, creating an online environment that is inclusive, supportive, and welcoming for all users.



## What is Netiquette?

# “What is Netiquette?”

Watch the corresponding YouTube video, “What is Netiquette?” for further information on what Netiquette means.

# Fundamental Principles of Netiquette

“Let your internet engagement show your inner beauty through online actions with Netiquette”

Shells Advertising



EMNHS LGBTQI

# Key Principles of Netiquette

The key principles of online netiquette serve as essential guidelines to ensure civility and respect in digital communication. These foundational principles will be further elaborated on in the following slides.

- Respect for Others
- Clarity in Communication
- Privacy and Confidentiality
- Responsiveness
- Avoiding Aggression

# 1

# Respect for Others

The principle of "Respect for Others" is a cornerstone of positive and constructive online interactions. Rooted in the golden rule of treating others as you would like to be treated, this principle applies equally to virtual and physical communication. Here are its key aspects:

- **Polite Communication:** Use polite and thoughtful language in all online interactions. Avoid sarcasm and humor that could be misunderstood due to the lack of non-verbal cues.
- **Avoid Offensive Language:** Steer clear of offensive, derogatory, or inflammatory remarks. This fosters respect and helps prevent unnecessary conflicts or misunderstandings.
- **Constructive Feedback:** When offering criticism or expressing disagreement, focus on constructive feedback rather than personal attacks. This approach promotes open and positive dialogue.
- **Inclusive Interaction:** Acknowledge and respect cultural and personal differences, ensuring your interactions are inclusive and considerate of diverse perspectives and backgrounds.
- **Empathy:** Strive to understand others' points of view, especially during disagreements. Empathy enables better communication and helps resolve conflicts more effectively.

# 2

## Clarity in Communication

Clarity in communication is essential in online interactions to ensure messages are understood as intended and to minimize misunderstandings that could lead to conflicts. Here are practical ways to achieve clarity in online communication:

- **Use Simple Language:** Choose straightforward, easy-to-understand language instead of complex or jargon-heavy terms. This makes your message accessible to a diverse audience.
- **Be Concise:** Keep your messages brief and focused. Long, meandering messages can confuse readers and obscure your main points. Conciseness ensures better engagement and understanding.
- **Proper Grammar and Punctuation:** Use correct grammar and punctuation to convey your message accurately. Small errors, like misplaced commas, can change the meaning of a sentence, while proper punctuation helps express tone clearly.
- **Proofread:** Always review your message for typos, grammatical errors, and overall clarity before sending or posting it. This enhances readability and demonstrates professionalism and thoughtfulness.
- **Seek Feedback for Understanding:** In professional settings, consider asking for feedback to confirm that your message was understood as intended. A simple follow-up question or confirmation request can help clarify any potential ambiguities.

# 3

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# 4

# Responsiveness

Responsiveness is a key element of online netiquette, ensuring smooth and respectful communication. It focuses on promptly acknowledging messages to maintain the flow of conversations and demonstrate respect for others' time and effort. Below are the main aspects of responsiveness in digital communication:

- **Timely Acknowledgment:** Strive to respond to emails, messages, and other communications within a reasonable timeframe. While immediate replies aren't always necessary, aim to meet the expected response times based on the context and platform.
- **Setting Expectations:** If you cannot provide a detailed response right away, send a quick acknowledgment of receipt and let the sender know when they can expect a full reply. This approach manages expectations and shows you value their communication.
- **Prioritizing Responses:** Evaluate the urgency and importance of each message to address high-priority communications promptly while handling less urgent ones as time allows.
- **Using Automatic Replies:** Set up auto-responders to inform others of your availability or provide an estimated timeline for your reply when you're away or unable to respond regularly.
- **Closing Conversations:** Ensure all discussions or requests are appropriately wrapped up. Confirm completion to prevent misunderstandings or unresolved matters.
- **Respectful Follow-Ups:** If you don't receive a response to an important message, send a courteous follow-up. Be mindful of your tone and the frequency of follow-ups to maintain professionalism and avoid being overbearing.

# 5

## Avoiding Aggression

Avoiding aggression is essential for maintaining civility in digital interactions, particularly when disagreements arise. This principle emphasizes fostering constructive dialogue and preventing conflicts from escalating. Here are key guidelines to follow:

- **Maintain Politeness:** Approach online interactions with courtesy. Even when you disagree, expressing your views respectfully can prevent conversations from becoming hostile.
- **Use Calming Language:** Choose neutral and calming words that avoid provoking or inflaming emotions. Phrases like "I see your perspective, but here's my take..." or "I respectfully disagree because..." help maintain a constructive tone.
- **Avoid Personal Attacks:** Focus on discussing ideas and facts rather than targeting personal traits. Critiquing arguments rather than individuals fosters a respectful and productive exchange.
- **Take a Pause:** If emotions run high, take a break before responding. This pause can help you avoid reacting impulsively and ensure a more thoughtful reply.
- **Seek Common Ground:** In disagreements, identify shared interests or points of agreement. Finding common ground can reduce tension and lead to more collaborative solutions.
- **De-escalation Strategies:** If a conversation escalates, use techniques like acknowledging the other person's feelings, rephrasing your points in a non-confrontational way, or agreeing to revisit the discussion later when emotions have settled.



Embracing the principles of online etiquette is key to creating a positive and productive digital space. By following essential guidelines—showing respect to others, communicating clearly, maintaining privacy and confidentiality, being responsive, and steering clear of aggression—we can ensure that our online interactions remain effective and respectful.

These guidelines improve both personal and professional communication while fostering a more inclusive and supportive online community. As digital interactions play a larger role in our daily lives, the significance of practicing good netiquette becomes even more vital. By adhering to these practices, we can cultivate stronger and more respectful connections in the digital world.

# Netiquette Across Various Online Spaces

Netiquette, or online etiquette, differs greatly across various digital spaces, aligning with the unique expectations and norms of each platform.

Recognizing these distinctions is essential for engaging respectfully and effectively in the digital world. Here's an overview of how netiquette plays out in different online environments.





## Social Media Netiquette

On social media, practicing good netiquette is essential due to the public and potentially viral nature of content. It's important to be thoughtful about what is shared, ensuring that personal content is only posted or reposted with the explicit consent of those involved. Engaging respectfully with others in comments and discussions is also crucial. This means avoiding inflammatory or derogatory remarks and responding in ways that promote positive interactions. Given that social media platforms can rapidly spread content to a wide audience, maintaining a considerate and respectful online presence is vital for fostering positive digital communication.

# Instant Messaging and Chat Apps

In instant messaging and chat apps, netiquette highlights the importance of prompt responses to maintain conversation flow and demonstrate attentiveness. Using appropriate and clear language is essential to prevent misunderstandings, whether in a professional or casual setting. Emoticons help convey tone, reducing the risk of misinterpretation. Being mindful of the recipient's time is also key—messages should be concise and to the point. These practices promote effective, respectful, and engaging communication.



# Virtual Meetings

Good netiquette in virtual meetings ensures a productive and respectful environment. Being punctual shows respect for others and keeps the agenda on track. Muting your microphone when not speaking prevents background noise and ensures clear communication. Maintaining a professional appearance and staying attentive—rather than multitasking—demonstrates engagement and respect for the discussion. These practices contribute to an efficient and professional virtual meeting experience.



# Online Gaming

Practicing good netiquette in online gaming is essential for creating a positive and enjoyable environment. This includes showing sportsmanship by being respectful in both victory and defeat, following community guidelines to prevent cheating and abusive behavior, and communicating in a constructive manner. Avoiding toxic behavior such as harassment or bullying helps maintain a welcoming space for all players. Additionally, teamwork and support for fellow players can improve gameplay and foster a stronger, more inclusive gaming community.



# Strategies for Improving Online Interactions

In the digital era, effective online interactions are essential for success in education, professional settings, and customer engagement. The quality of these communications plays a crucial role in shaping outcomes. This section highlights key strategies to enhance online interactions, making them more engaging, inclusive, and productive. By setting clear objectives, leveraging interactive tools, and optimizing for mobile accessibility, these approaches help create a seamless and enriching digital experience for all participants.

# Common Mistakes in Online Interactions

- **Lack of Clarity:** Failing to communicate clearly can lead to misunderstandings and confusion. Using jargon, overly complex language, or vague statements can obscure the intended message.
- **Ignoring Cultural Differences:** Online platforms often bring together participants from diverse backgrounds. Not considering cultural sensitivities can lead to miscommunications and unintentional offence.
- **Overlooking Privacy Concerns:** Sharing sensitive information without proper consent or security measures can breach privacy and trust.
- **Neglecting Response Times:** Delayed responses in digital communication can create frustration and give the impression of disinterest or disrespect.

# Strategies for Resolving Conflicts

- **Active Listening:** Encourage all parties to express their viewpoints fully before responding. This shows respect and helps clarify misunderstandings.
- **Address Issues Directly and Politely:** Tackle conflicts head-on but maintain politeness. Avoid aggressive language and focus on the issue rather than personal attacks.
- **Seek Common Ground:** Find areas of agreement to build a foundation for resolution. Highlighting shared goals can redirect focus from conflict to collaboration.
- **Use Mediators if Necessary:** In unresolved or escalated conflicts, bringing in a neutral third party can help mediate and offer solutions that might not be apparent to those involved.

# Preventing Future Conflicts

**Establish Clear Guidelines:** Set expectations for communication and behaviour online. Clear rules help prevent misunderstandings that could lead to conflicts.

**Training and Awareness:** Regular training sessions on effective communication, cultural competency, and conflict resolution can equip individuals with the skills needed to navigate online interactions smoothly.

**Regular Feedback Mechanisms:** Implement systems where participants can provide and receive feedback on interactions. This helps identify issues before they escalate and fosters a culture of continuous improvement.

**Promote a Positive Culture:** Encourage an environment of respect, inclusivity, and open communication. A positive online culture diminishes the chances of conflicts and increases collaboration.



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# MODULE 3

## FINDING HELP AND RESOURCES FOR LGBTIQ YOUTH

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# CONTENTS

- 01** Identifying Reliable Support Networks and Organizations
- 02** Understanding Your Rights and Advocacy
- 03** Accessing Mental Health and Counseling Services
- 04** Practical Steps to Take Action
- 05** Conclusion



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LGBTIQ youth often face unique challenges, including discrimination, mental health struggles, and social isolation.

Access to reliable support networks, legal rights, and mental health services is crucial for well-being.

**This module will help you:**

- Identify trusted support networks and organizations.
- Understand your rights and how to advocate for yourself.
- Find mental health and counseling services.



# 01. Identifying Reliable Support Networks and Organizations

## *The Importance of Support Networks*

- A strong support network provides emotional, social, and practical assistance.
- Trusted organizations can offer legal help, crisis support, and community engagement.

# Types of Support Networks

- Peer Support Groups – Safe spaces for sharing experiences.
- LGBTIQ+ Organizations – Provide legal, social, and advocacy resources.
- Online Communities – Forums, helplines, and social media groups.



# How to Find a Trustworthy Support Network

Finding the right support network is crucial for LGBTIQ+ youth. A safe and reliable community can provide emotional support, guidance, and practical assistance. Here are key steps to ensure you connect with a trustworthy network:

## **1. Research the Organization's Reputation**

- Look for well-established organizations with a history of supporting LGBTIQ+ individuals.
- Check if they are officially registered or partnered with larger advocacy groups.
- Read reviews and testimonials from other members of the community.

## **2. Verify Their Mission and Values**

- Ensure the organization promotes inclusivity, confidentiality, and non-judgmental support.
- Look at their website and social media presence—do they align with your needs and values?
- Avoid groups that push specific agendas that don't respect individual identities.

## **3. Seek Recommendations from Trusted Sources**

- Ask friends, teachers, or counselors for recommendations.
- Engage with LGBTIQ+ online communities and forums where members share experiences.

#### ***4. Check for Safe and Inclusive Practices***

- A good organization should have clear policies on privacy and confidentiality.
- If it's an in-person group, consider visiting an event to observe the environment.
- Be cautious of any group that asks for excessive personal information upfront.

#### ***5. Look for Professional Affiliations***

- Many trustworthy organizations collaborate with mental health professionals, legal aid providers, and educational institutions.
- See if they have partnerships with reputable human rights or youth advocacy groups.





# International and Local Support Organizations

Examples of global organizations:

- ❑ ILGA World
- ❑ The Trevor Project
- ❑ OutRight International

For finding local support groups in your area we recommend read "Reach and Teach Toolkit Towards Combating LGBTIQ+ Hate Speech Online."

# Local Support Organizations in Ukraine

Name	Adress	email
GenderZed	<u>GenderZed</u> , Zaporizhzhia, Zaporizhzhia region, 69000	<a href="mailto:zp.gender@gmail.com">zp.gender@gmail.com</a>
KyivPride	<u>KyivPride</u> , Kyiv, Yaltynska street, building 42-B,	<a href="mailto:info@kyivpride.org">info@kyivpride.org</a>
NGO Insight	<u>NGO Insight</u> , 02166, Ukraine, Kyiv city, Lisovy avenue, building, 19, office, 108	<a href="mailto:hello@insight-ukraine.org">hello@insight-ukraine.org</a>
NGO "Military LGBT"	<u>NGO "Military LGBT"</u> , 04050, Ukraine, city of Kyiv, street Ilyenka Yuria, building, 81a, office, 318	<a href="mailto:info@lgbtmilitary.org.ua">info@lgbtmilitary.org.ua</a>
LGBT Association LIGA	<u>LGBT Association LIGA</u> , Mykolaiv, 54001, st. Potemkinska, 110/5	<a href="mailto:liga.lgbt@gmail.com">liga.lgbt@gmail.com</a>

# 02. Understanding Your Rights and Advocacy

## *Why Knowing Your Rights Matters*

- Legal protections vary by country, but awareness is key to self-advocacy.
- Rights cover areas such as education, workplace equality, and personal safety.

LGBTIQ youth have fundamental rights that protect them from discrimination and ensure equal opportunities. While laws vary by country, several key protections exist in many regions:

- **Anti-Discrimination in Education and Employment:** Schools and workplaces should provide a safe and inclusive environment, free from discrimination based on gender identity or sexual orientation. In many countries, laws protect students and employees from unfair treatment or dismissal.
- **Right to Access Healthcare Without Discrimination:** LGBTIQ youth have the right to receive medical care, including mental health support, without bias or denial of services. Some regions also provide legal recognition of gender-affirming healthcare.
- **Protection Against Hate Speech and Violence:** Many legal systems criminalize hate speech, harassment, and violence against LGBTIQ individuals. These laws aim to create safer communities and provide legal recourse for those affected.
- **Legal Recourse and Support Services:** If you experience discrimination, organizations and legal aid services can help you understand your rights and take action.

Knowing and advocating for your rights is a powerful step toward equality and safety.

# How to Advocate for Yourself

- *Know Your Rights* – Research local laws and policies.
- *Speak Up* – Report discrimination or seek legal assistance when needed.
- *Join Advocacy Groups* – Collaborate with organizations working on policy change



# Reporting Discrimination and Seeking Legal Help

If you experience discrimination at school, work, or in public spaces, it is important to take action.

Start by documenting the incident, including dates, locations, and any witnesses who can support your claim. If discrimination occurs at school or work, report it to a teacher, school counselor, HR department, or a designated equality officer. In public spaces, you may file a complaint with local authorities or human rights organizations. Many countries have legal aid services that provide free or low-cost assistance to LGBTIQ individuals facing discrimination. Pro bono lawyers and advocacy groups can help you understand your rights and guide you through the legal process.

Online resources, such as LGBTIQ legal rights websites, can offer self-education materials and step-by-step guides on filing complaints. Social media and online communities can also connect you with others who have faced similar challenges and found legal support. If you feel unsafe, reach out to a crisis hotline or support organization for immediate assistance. Knowing your rights and where to seek help empowers you to take a stand against discrimination.

# 03. Accessing Mental Health and Counseling Services

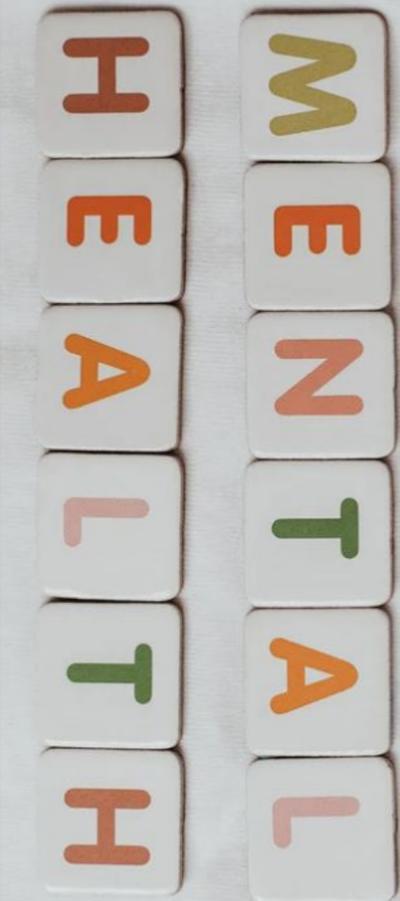
## *The Importance of Mental Health Support*

- LGBTIQ youth are at higher risk of anxiety, depression, and self-harm.
- Seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness.

# Types of Mental Health Support

Taking care of your mental health is essential, and different types of support are available to help LGBTIQ youth navigate challenges.

- **Therapy & Counseling:** Speaking with a licensed therapist or counselor, either one-on-one or in a group setting, can provide guidance, coping strategies, and a safe space to express feelings. Group therapy can also help individuals connect with others who share similar experiences. Online therapy options are available for those who prefer remote support.
- **Hotlines & Crisis Services:** Immediate emotional support is accessible through crisis hotlines and text-based services, often staffed by trained professionals or volunteers. These services provide confidential assistance for those in distress, offering crisis intervention and referrals to further resources. Some hotlines specifically cater to LGBTIQ youth, ensuring culturally competent support.
- **Self-Care Strategies:** Practicing self-care can help manage stress and improve emotional well-being. Activities such as meditation, journaling, breathing exercises, and creative expression can foster resilience. Establishing a support system of trusted friends, engaging in hobbies, and setting personal boundaries also contribute to mental health stability.



# How to Find an LGBTIQ-Friendly Therapist

Finding a therapist who understands the unique experiences of LGBTIQ individuals is crucial for receiving affirming and effective mental health support. Look for professionals who have experience working with LGBTIQ clients, as they are more likely to provide inclusive care and understand issues related to identity, discrimination, and mental well-being. Checking their credentials, areas of specialization, and whether they mention LGBTIQ-affirmative therapy in their profiles can help in making an informed choice.

Online directories such as TherapyDen, LGBTQ+ Health, and local mental health organizations offer listings of professionals who specialize in LGBTIQ mental health. Many national and local LGBTIQ organizations also maintain therapist directories or can provide recommendations. Additionally, online platforms often include reviews and ratings that can help assess the therapist's approach and effectiveness.





**When choosing a therapist, consider asking the following questions to ensure they are a good fit for your needs:**

- What experience do you have working with LGBTIQ clients?
- How do you approach issues related to gender identity and sexual orientation?
- Do you use affirming and inclusive language in your practice?
- What is your stance on conversion therapy? (A reputable therapist should oppose it.)
- How do you ensure a safe and non-judgmental environment for LGBTIQ clients?
- Do you offer sliding-scale fees or online sessions for accessibility?
- Can you provide references or testimonials from LGBTIQ clients (if applicable)?

# Online Mental Health Resources

## 1. Crisis Helplines for Immediate Support

For urgent emotional support, LGBTIQ youth can reach out to crisis helplines that provide 24/7 confidential assistance. Examples include:

### European Union:

- Le Refuge (France): Provides temporary accommodation and support to young adults who are victims of homophobia or transphobia. [rainbowelcome.eu](http://rainbowelcome.eu)
- Samaritans (UK): Offers 24/7 confidential support for anyone in emotional distress, including LGBTIQ individuals. [mind.org.uk](http://mind.org.uk)

### Ukraine:

- Insight Public Organization: A Ukrainian human rights organization offering free psychological and legal assistance to LGBTIQ+ individuals. [insight-ukraine.org](http://insight-ukraine.org)
- OutRight Action International's Ukraine Fund: Provides emergency support and resources to LGBTIQ communities in crisis situations. [outrightinternational.org](http://outrightinternational.org)



## 2. Digital Therapy Platforms

Online therapy platforms connect individuals with licensed therapists who specialize in LGBTIQ mental health. Some trusted platforms include:

- BetterHelp: Offers professional counseling with options to choose an LGBTIQ-friendly therapist.
- Pride Counseling: Specifically designed for LGBTIQ individuals, offering online therapy in a safe and inclusive space.
- Talkspace: Provides text, audio, and video therapy sessions with licensed professionals.

## 3. Mental Health Apps for Self-Guided Support

Self-care apps can help manage anxiety, stress, and mental well-being through guided exercises. Some useful apps include:

- Sanvello: Offers cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) techniques, mood tracking, and guided meditation.
- MindDoc: Helps users track their emotions and provides insights into mental health patterns.
- Calm: Focuses on relaxation, sleep improvement, and mindfulness through guided meditations.

These online resources offer valuable support and guidance, making mental health care more accessible to LGBTIQ youth worldwide.

# Supporting a Friend in Crisis

## ***How to Recognize Signs of Distress***

Recognizing when a friend is struggling is the first step in offering support. Signs of distress may include withdrawal from social activities, frequent mood swings, expressions of hopelessness, changes in sleeping or eating habits, or increased anxiety. If a friend talks about feeling worthless, isolated, or overwhelmed, it may indicate they need help.

## ***Ways to Offer Emotional Support Without Overstepping***

Being there for a friend means listening without judgment and validating their feelings. Offer a safe space where they can talk openly, using phrases like *"I'm here for you,"* or *"You're not alone."* Avoid pressuring them to share more than they're comfortable with, and respect their boundaries. Simple actions like checking in regularly, sending supportive messages, or inviting them to spend time together can make a big difference.

# Supporting a Friend in Crisis

## *When and How to Encourage Professional Help*

If your friend's distress seems persistent or severe, encouraging them to seek professional support is important. You can suggest reaching out to a therapist, counselor, or helpline, reassuring them that seeking help is a sign of strength. Offer to assist in finding resources or accompany them to an appointment if they feel anxious. If they are in immediate danger, such as expressing suicidal thoughts, contact a crisis hotline or a trusted adult for urgent support.



# 04. Practical Steps to Take Action

## *Building Your Personal Support Plan*

- Identify at least three trusted people or organizations to reach out to
- Create a list of emergency contacts (hotlines, friends, professionals)
- Set mental health check-in reminders

# How to Stay Safe Online

- Protecting personal information in online LGBTIQ+ communities
- Recognizing and reporting online hate speech or harassment
- Engaging safely in activism and advocacy



# Getting Involved in Community Initiatives

*Being part of a supportive community can be empowering for LGBTIQ+ youth. Getting involved in activism, volunteering, or advocacy helps individuals build resilience, connect with like-minded people, and create positive change in society. Here's how engagement in community initiatives can make a difference:*

## ***1. How Volunteering and Activism Can Build Resilience and Empowerment***

Volunteering and activism give young people a sense of purpose and belonging. By advocating for equality, organizing events, or supporting others in need, individuals develop confidence, leadership skills, and emotional resilience. Taking action against discrimination can also foster hope and reduce feelings of isolation by reinforcing the idea that collective efforts lead to progress.

## 2. Opportunities to Join or Create Youth-Led Initiatives

There are many ways to get involved in existing organizations or start new initiatives:

- **Join LGBTIQ+ youth groups** that focus on advocacy, education, or mental health support.
- **Volunteer with NGOs** working on human rights, inclusion, and policy change.
- **Organize local events** such as pride celebrations, community discussions, or educational workshops.
- **Use social media to raise awareness** by sharing personal experiences, news, and resources.
- **Apply for leadership programs or grants** that support youth-led initiatives for social change.



### 3. *Success Stories of LGBTIQ+ Youth Advocacy*

Young activists around the world have successfully led initiatives to promote LGBTIQ+ rights and support their communities:

- **Gendered Intelligence (UK):** A youth-led organization that empowers trans and non-binary young people through mentorship and advocacy.
- **KyivPride (Ukraine):** A movement that organizes pride events, educational programs, and legal advocacy for LGBTIQ+ rights.
- **Fridays for Future Queer Collective (Global):** A group combining climate activism with LGBTIQ+ advocacy, highlighting the intersection of human rights and environmental justice.

These examples show that young people can make a real difference by taking action, building networks, and pushing for a more inclusive society. No effort is too small—every voice matters in the fight for equality and acceptance.



# 05. Conclusion



# Summary of Key Takeaways

## ***1. Importance of Support Networks and Mental Health Resources***

Having access to reliable support networks is essential for LGBTIQ+ youth. Community organizations, peer groups, and online platforms provide safe spaces for connection, understanding, and emotional support. Mental health resources, such as crisis helplines, therapy services, and self-care tools, help individuals navigate challenges and build resilience.

## ***2. Knowing and Advocating for Your Rights***

Understanding legal protections is crucial in combating discrimination and ensuring equal opportunities in education, employment, and healthcare. LGBTIQ+ youth should be aware of their rights, including protection from hate speech and discrimination. Learning advocacy skills—such as speaking up, seeking legal aid, and joining human rights campaigns—can empower individuals to push for social change.

# Summary of Key Takeaways

## ***3. Seeking Professional Help and Engaging in Community Support***

Recognizing when professional help is needed and knowing how to access it is vital for well-being. Finding LGBTIQ-friendly therapists, using digital mental health platforms, and reaching out to crisis services can provide valuable support. Additionally, engaging in activism, volunteering, or peer-led initiatives fosters a sense of belonging and strengthens both personal and community resilience



“

*By staying informed, seeking help when needed, and actively participating in supportive communities, LGBTIQ+ youth can create a more inclusive and empowering future for themselves and others.*



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# MODULE 4 BUILDING POSITIVE NARRATIVES (BULGARIA)

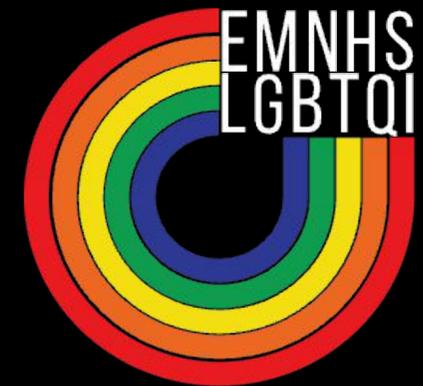
## CREATING INCLUSIVE AND RESPECTFUL STORIES EMNHS LGBTQI



# CONTENTS

## MODULE 4 – Building Positive Narratives

- 01 Definition of Positive Narratives
- 02 About Us
- 03 The Project
- 04 Our Team
- 05 Questions + Answers
- 06 Conclusion



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In this module, we explore how stories shape attitudes, norms, and behaviours—online and offline. You will learn how narratives can fuel stigma or build inclusion, and how to create positive narratives and counter-narratives that promote human rights, equality, and democratic values, especially in contexts affecting LGBTIQ+ communities.



# 1. Definition of Positive

## What is a “Narrative”? **Narratives**

A narrative is more than a story: it is a meaning-making frame that helps people interpret events, identities, and social roles. Narratives influence:

- what is seen as “normal” or “acceptable”
- who is viewed as “belonging”
- how responsibility and blame are assigned
- whether empathy or hostility is triggered

# What are “Positive Narratives”?

Positive narratives are intentional stories and frames that: affirm dignity and equal rights represent people fairly and accurately reduce stigma and stereotypes support social cohesion and participation.

They do not “hide” problems; they avoid dehumanisation and sensationalism.



# Why Narratives Matter (impact)

## Narratives shape:

- individual wellbeing (self-esteem, safety, help-seeking)
- peer culture (bullying vs solidarity)
- institutions (schools, services, policing responses)
- public opinion and policy

A repeated harmful frame becomes “common sense”; a repeated inclusive frame becomes a new norm.

# Dominant Narratives vs. Lived Reality

Dominant narratives often:

- simplify complex identities into labels
- privilege “majority” viewpoints
- use fear-based framing (“threat”, “agenda”, “danger”)

Inclusive storytelling prioritises:

- complexity, context, and agency
- lived experiences and authentic voices
- respect and safety for the people represented





# Fundamental Principle

“Stories do not just reflect reality; they help create it.”

**Let your narratives reflect dignity, accuracy, and human rights.**

# Key Principles for Inclusive Storytelling

- Accuracy & context
- Respect and dignity
- Avoiding stereotypes
- Representation & agency
- Do no harm
- Responsibility in distribution

# Accuracy & Context

Inclusive narratives require:

- clear facts and careful wording (avoid exaggeration)
- context (social, legal, historical)
- avoiding “single story” framing

Practical checks:

- What is the source?
- What is missing?
- Does the framing imply blame, shame, or deviance?

# Respect and Dignity

**Respect** means: using affirming, non-stigmatising language avoiding “othering” (e.g., “normal people vs them”) describing people as more than one attribute maintaining a tone that does not invite ridicule or hostility

# Avoiding Stereotypes

*Common stereotype patterns to avoid:*

- *portraying groups as monolithic*
- *reducing characters to clichés (comic relief / threat / victim only)*
- *“exceptionalism” framing (worthy only if extraordinary)*
- *sensationalising bodies, relationships, or trauma*

*Replace stereotypes with:*

- *nuance, ordinary life, multiple dimensions, diverse roles.*



# Representation & Agency

**Good representation:** includes people as subjects with choices, not objects of debate shows diverse experiences (age, ethnicity, disability, faith, migration, rural/urban) avoids speaking over communities

Agency questions:

- Who tells the story?
- Who benefits from the story?
- Who may be harmed by the story?

# Do No Harm (safeguarding)

“Do no harm” requires:

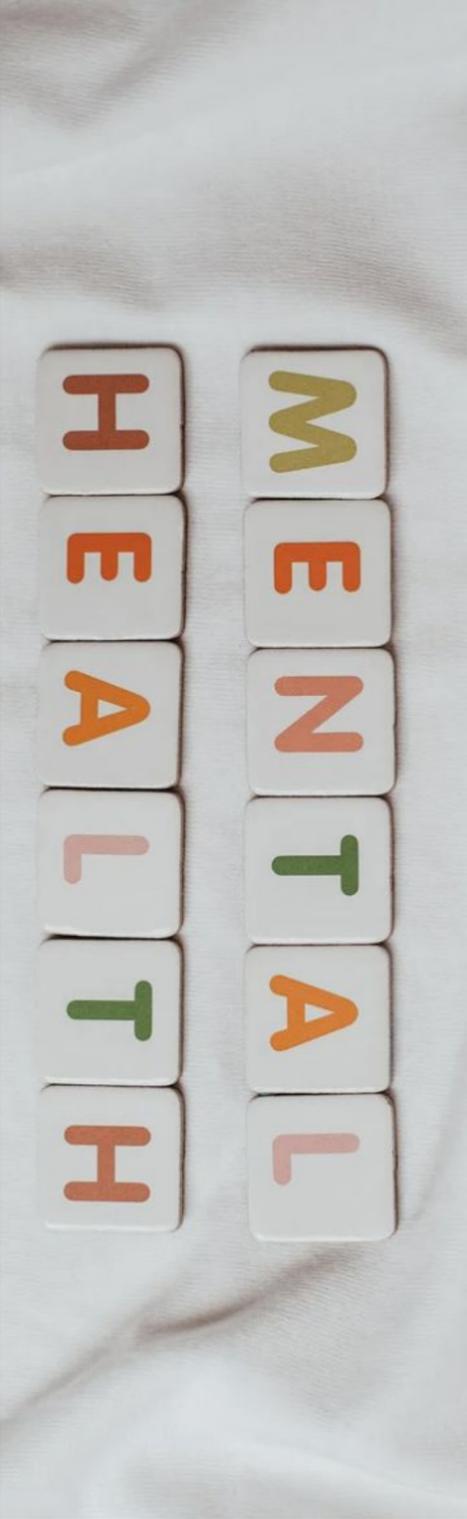
- informed consent (especially for minors/vulnerable persons)
- privacy-by-design (no doxxing, no identifiable details without permission)
- trauma-informed approaches (avoid forced disclosure; avoid graphic detail)
- risk assessment for online publication (virality, harassment risks)

# Responsibility in Distribution

The same story can have different effects depending on where/how it's shared.

Consider:

- audience and platform norms
- comment moderation and reporting plans
- accessibility (language level, subtitles, alt text)
- whether visuals reinforce stereotypes even if the text does not



# What are Counter-Narratives?

A **counter-narrative** is a response to an oppressive or harmful narrative that:  
challenges misinformation and stereotypes  
offers a more accurate frame  
restores dignity and complexity  
reduces social permission for hate or exclusion





# Counter-Narratives: What They Are NOT

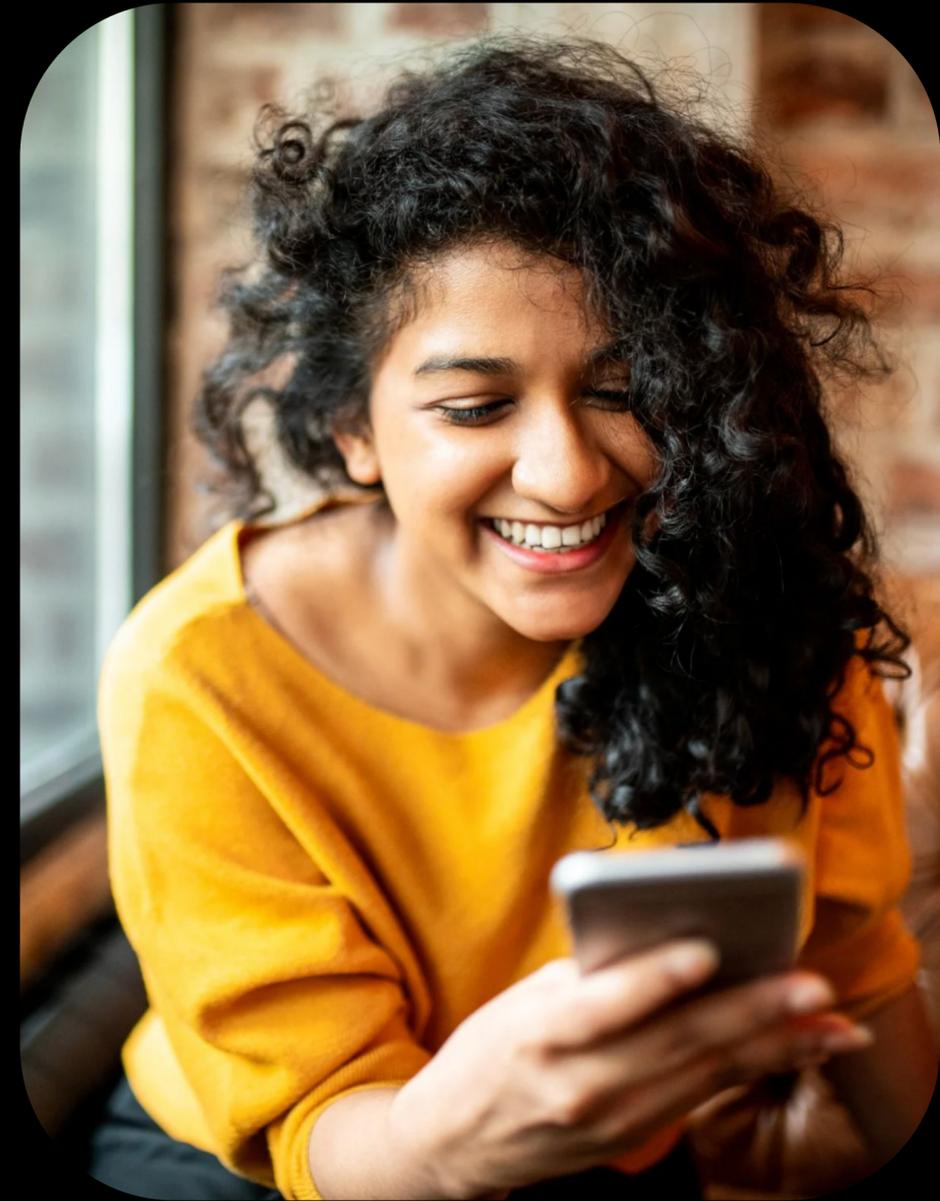
Counter-narratives should avoid: mirror aggression (“fighting fire with fire”) humiliation or dehumanisation of opponents moral superiority messaging that shuts down dialogue “fact dumping” with no emotional or human connection.

A counter-narrative is **strategic**, not just reactive.

# Effective Counter-Narrative Components

High-performing counter-narratives typically include:

- Values: fairness, safety, dignity, freedom, community
- Credible voice: trusted messengers (peers, educators, community figures)
- Human story: relatable situations, concrete details
- Specific call to action: what the audience can do next



# Strategies to Build Alternative Narratives

To develop narratives promoting human rights and democratic values:

- start with shared values (respect, equality, non-violence)
- highlight common goals (safe schools, dignity, wellbeing)
- showcase everyday solidarity and allyship
- represent institutions functioning fairly (support services, reporting, accountability)
- focus on solutions, not only harm

# Narrative Structure (basic elements)

- Setting (where/when, context)
- Characters (with agency and depth)
- Conflict (the tension or challenge)
- Turning point (learning, support, accountability)
- Resolution (what changes; what remains realistic)

# Checklist: Inclusive Language and Framing

- Is the language neutral, accurate, affirming?
- Are identities described respectfully (self-identification where possible)?
- Are stereotypes avoided?
- Is the conflict framed without blaming the targeted person/group?
- Is there unnecessary detail that risks privacy or safety?



# Common Mistakes When Creating Stories

- Tokenism: one character representing “all”
- Trauma-only framing: suffering as the only storyline
- Saviour narratives: allies as heroes, community as passive
- Overgeneralisation: “they always...”
- Platform neglect: posting without moderation/safety plan

# Practical Exercise (individual or group)

## Reframe a Harmful Narrative

Identify a harmful frame (e.g., “LGBTIQ+ people are a threat”). Map what it triggers (fear, disgust, blame). Choose a value-based anchor (dignity, safety, fairness). Write a 5–7 sentence counter-narrative with:

- a relatable situation
- a credible voice
- a concrete next step (support/report/learn)



# Practical Exercise (storyboard)

Exercise: Build a Positive Narrative

Create a short storyboard (6 panels / 6 slides):

- panel 1: context
- panel 2: character + goal
- panel 3: barrier (bias / misinformation)
- panel 4: support action (allyship / service / policy)
- panel 5: turning point (accountability / learning)
- panel 6: resolution + takeaway message

# Questions + Answers

Use this time to clarify:

- what counts as a counter-narrative vs debate
- safe storytelling boundaries (consent/privacy)
- adapting narratives to youth audiences and platforms



# Conclusion

Building positive narratives is a practical skill: it combines ethical storytelling, strategic communication, and human rights framing. By using accurate context, respectful representation, and “do no harm” safeguards, we can create stories that reduce stigma and strengthen inclusive communities—online and offline.





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