



A guide for those who encounter racism

**Pathways to resolving situations
involving racism**

A short definition of racism

The concept of racism refers to regarding a presumed group of people as inferior to other groups based on their ethnic origin, skin colour, nationality, culture, mother tongue or religion. Considering your own group better than others is often part of racism.

Sources:

[Finnish Red Cross: What is racism?](#)

[Equality.fi: Anti-racist glossary.](#)

Help and support for recognising racism:



Web address:

[Non-Discrimination Ombudsman:
Grounds for discrimination.](#)

Read more about different forms of racism:



Web address:

[Non-Discrimination Ombudsman:
Racism.](#)

The following participated in producing the guide content:

Rovalan Setlementti association (Rovala Adult Education Centre, MoniNet multicultural centre, Mediation Office of Rovaniemi, Ranua and Posio, Victim Support Finland)
Finnish Red Cross Lapland district
Multicultural men's club Mister's
Rovalan Nuoret association – Boys' House
City of Rovaniemi - International Rovaniemi project (ESF+)
MIELI Mental Health Association Rovaniemi – Rovaniemen Neuvokas volunteer centre
City of Kemi – Refugee work
Mannerheim League for Child Welfare Lapland district
Lapland Police Department – Preventive work



Where may racism be encountered?

When using services

In public spaces

In social media, entertainment and
games

In the context of policy-making and
public debate

At educational institutions

In workplaces

In hobbies and leisure activities

Using services



1



Tell them how you feel.

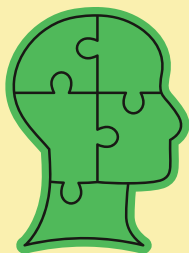
If someone treats you inappropriately, tell them what they did wrong.

2



Ask them to stop.

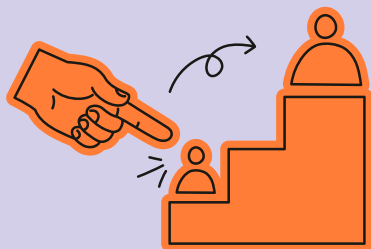
3



Stay calm.

You may feel upset, but staying calm will help you act decisively and effectively.

4



Tell their supervisor.

If the inappropriate behaviour continues, ask to talk to the supervisor. Tell the supervisor what happened.

5



If the situation cannot be resolved, you can contact:

- National Non-Discrimination and Equality Tribunal of Finland
- Non-Discrimination Ombudsman
- Patient Ombudsman
- Social Ombudsman
- Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland (ARA)
- Finnish Financial Ombudsman Bureau
- You can also ask the actor whose staff treated you inappropriately to look into it.

6

poliisi.fi/en/report-a-crime



Contact the police if necessary.

You can report a criminal offence to the police. Victim Support Finland can help you take the matter further.

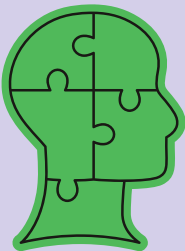
Public spaces



Source:

[Finnish Red Cross: What to do if you encounter open racism.](#)

1



Stay calm.

You may feel upset, but staying calm will help you act decisively and effectively.

2



Ask people around you for help and support.

In a threatening situation call 112. Remember to stay safe.

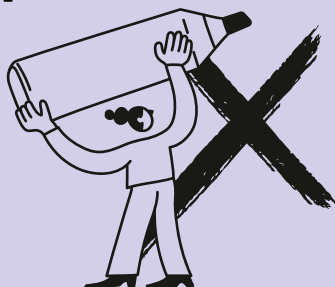
3



Put a stop to the situation.

Stop the situation by calmly saying that the behaviour must stop.

4



Correct racist claims.

If you hear racist comments, you can correct or question them calmly and appropriately.

5

Stand by.

If you don't want to talk, you can stand close to someone who is experiencing racist harassment and support them.



6

Show sympathy.

Talk to a person who has experienced racism afterwards and show them sympathy.

7

Contact the police if necessary.

Do not accept abusive name-calling. Name-calling may be punishable under the Criminal Code (defamation). You can report it to the police.

Social media, entertainment and games



You can give the police an **online tip-off**.

Web address:

[Police of Finland: Online Tip-off form.](#)

Source:

[Hate speech on social media. Support for officials encountering hate speech in social media \(in Finnish\).](#)

1



Do not allow yourself to be provoked.

Try to communicate appropriately.
You can also choose to not respond.

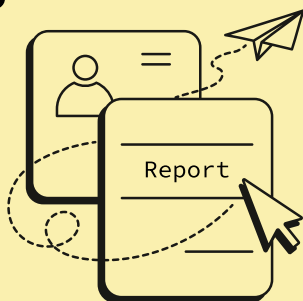
2



Preserve evidence.

Immediately save messages, images and other material in which you are harassed. Take a screenshot of the material, the author's profile and the profile's web address.

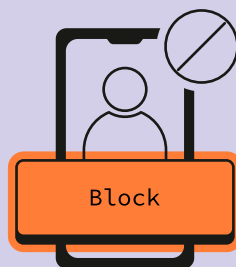
3



Report the author.

Report the author to the administrators of the website, game or platform.

4



Block the author.

5

Look for support.

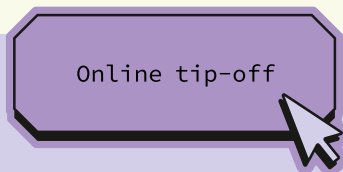
Talk to a person you trust or an expert.



6

Contact the police if necessary.

You can report a criminal offence to the police. Victim Support Finland can help you take the matter further.



You can also give an online tip-off to the police. An online tip-off is not a report of an offence.

Policy-making and public debate

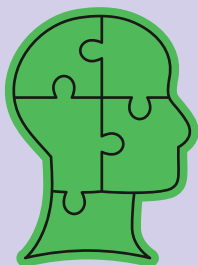


Read more about the Finnish Red Cross's **campaign against racism**.

Web address:

[Finnish Red Cross: Week against racism.](#)

1



Stay calm.

When you are calm, you can act decisively and effectively.

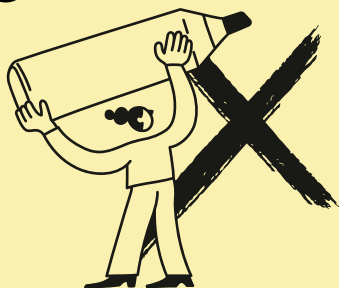
2



Look for support.

Talk about the situation to someone you trust and ask for their support. Acting together can have a higher impact.

3



Correct racist claims.

If you hear racist comments, you can correct or question them calmly and appropriately.

4



Participate in anti-racism activities.

You can join organisations or groups that work against racism and promote equality.

5

Influence public debate.

1. Media and discussion programmes:
Participate in media discussion programmes or suggest topics.

2. Discussion events:
Organise a discussion, for example in your work community, or ask a competent actor to organise one.

3. Citizens' initiatives:
You can submit a citizens' initiative to try and change legislation.

4. Letters to the editor:
Write letters to the editor and send messages to decision-makers.

6

Complain about an authority.

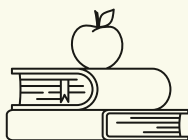
You can complain about a local authority's actions to the Regional State Administrative Agency. To complain about a Government representative, contact the Chancellor of Justice.

7

Contact the police if necessary.

You can report a criminal offence to the police. Victim Support Finland can help you take the matter further.

Educational institutions



1



Ask them to stop.

If someone treats you inappropriately, tell them what they are doing wrong and ask them to stop.

2



Preserve evidence.

Immediately save messages, images and other material in which you are harassed. Write down what happened and when, and who was there.

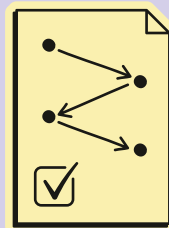
3

Tell the staff.

You can talk to a teacher, instructor, school social worker, public health nurse, principal or contact person for harassment. The institution may also have an anonymous reporting channel. If you are a minor, also tell your guardian or some other safe adult.

Tell them what happened, when and where as accurately as possible.

4



Find out about the institution's operating model.

Find out if the educational institution has instructions (an operating model) for such situations.

5

For support, you can contact:

- Mediation
- Victim Support Finland
- Non-Discrimination Ombudsman
- Ombudsman for Equality
- Regional State Administrative Agency (AVI)

When the situation is discussed, responsible persons and those involved in the situation must be present.



6

Follow up on the progress and resolution of the matter.

7

Contact the police if necessary.

You can report a criminal offence to the police. Victim Support Finland can help you take the matter further.

Workplace



Sources:

[Regional State Administrative Agency \(2024\).](#)
[Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(2024\).](#)
[Trade Union Pro \(2024\).](#)

1



Ask them to stop.

If someone treats you inappropriately, tell them what they are doing wrong and ask them to stop.

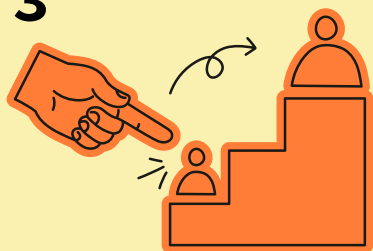
2



Preserve evidence.

If you have evidence of what happened, preserve it. This includes emails or messages. Write down what happened and when.

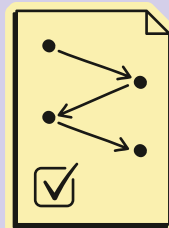
3



Tell the supervisor.

If the inappropriate behaviour continues, contact the supervisor. If the supervisor behaves inappropriately, contact their supervisor.

4



Find out about the workplace's operating model.

Find out about any instructions or operating model for intervening in inappropriate treatment or harassment.

5

Look for support for dealing with the situation.

- You can turn to a shop steward, safety representative or occupational health care services of your workplace for help.
- You can ask your trade union for advice if you have joined it.
- You can also contact the Ombudsman for Equality, the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman or the Regional State Administrative Agency.



6

Follow up on progress made with the issue in the workplace.

You can call the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's helpline for instructions.

7

Contact the police if necessary.

You can report a criminal offence to the police. Victim Support Finland can help you take the matter further.

Hobbies and leisure activities



Source:

[Finnish Red Cross: What to do if you encounter open racism.](#)

1

Don't speak to
me like that!

Make the situation visible.

If someone treats you inappropriately, tell them what they are doing wrong and ask them to stop. Ask people around you for help and support. Stay calm, and stay safe. In a threatening situation call the emergency number 112.

2



Preserve evidence.

Immediately save messages, images and other material in which you are harassed. Write down what happened and when, and who was there.

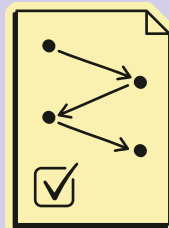
3



Tell the person in charge.

You can talk to a leisure activity instructor, coach or someone else in charge. Also ask your parents, friends or trusted adults for help if necessary.

4



Use the channels of the club or organisation.

Find out if the club or organisation has an operating model for cases of discrimination or harassment.

5

Look for support.

Talk to your loved ones, trusted friends or support services, including Victim Support Finland or the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman.



6

poliisi.fi/en/report-a-crime



Contact the police if necessary.

You can report a criminal offence to the police. Victim Support Finland can help you take the matter further.

Other actors

Ombudsman for Equality

If you think you have been discriminated against because of your gender, gender identity or expression, pregnancy, parenthood or family responsibilities, the competent authority is the Ombudsman for Equality. For more information, see the website of the Ombudsman for Equality.

Regional State Administrative Agency

Handles complaints related to education and early childhood education and care, requests for administrative reviews, statements, and requests for reviews of pupil assessment. For example, you can contact the Agency to request a review of a decision to admit a pupil. It also directs and supervises municipal and private social welfare services as well as public and private health care services. For more information visit the Agency's website.

National Non-Discrimination and Equality Tribunal

Is an independent legal protection body for those who feel they have been discriminated against. The Tribunal can issue a legally binding statement on whether the prohibition of discrimination laid down in the Non-Discrimination Act has been violated. All cases are processed by the Tribunal free of charge. For more information on the Tribunal, visit its website.

Source:

[Non-Discrimination Ombudsman: Have I been discriminated against? Other actors.](#)

Patient Ombudsman

Contact the Ombudsman if you are unhappy with the treatment you received or feel someone behaved inappropriately in health care. The Patient Ombudsman's task is to provide advice and information about the patient's status and rights. For more information, see Valvira's website.

Social Ombudsman

Contact the Ombudsman if you feel someone behaved inappropriately or you are unhappy with the service you received in social welfare. For more information, see Valvira's website.

Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland (ARA)

Supervises restrictions on the use of ARA rental apartments, resident selection and rent determination.

Finnish Financial Ombudsman Bureau

The Finnish Financial Ombudsman Bureau advises customs in problems involving insurance, banking and similar. See the Bureau's website for more information.

Contact the actor for an explanation

In some situations it may be appropriate for you to contact the actor you suspect of discrimination and ask them to explain why they acted like they did. This may already help resolve the situation. If, for example, you later complain to the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman, having this explanation will speed up the processing of the matter.

Useful links

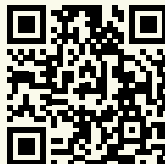
Anti-racism work:



Web address:

[Finnish Red Cross: Anti-racism activities.](#)

Report an offence to the police:



Web address:

[Police of Finland: Criminal cases.](#)

What is a racist crime?



Web address:

[RIKUteema: Racist crimes.](#)

Contact the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman:



Web address:

[Non-Discrimination Ombudsman: Customer service.](#)

Information about hate crimes: [Police of Finland: Hate crimes.](#)

Online course on anti-racism for professionals:

[Finnish Institute of Health and Welfare: Online course on anti-racism for professionals.](#)

A lawyer explains: What kind of racist acts are punishable under criminal law in Finland? (in Finnish): [Victim Support Finland: Juristi vastaa.](#)

A template for drawing up a procedural guide for your leisure time society or recreational club (in Finnish):

[Sivista: Malli menettelytapaohjeiksi syrjintä- ja häirintä tapauksissa.](#)

The Guide for those who encounter racism is a tool for anyone who has experienced or witnessed racism, supports someone who has experienced racism, or would like to know in advance what to do when encountering racist harassment. The guide encourages everyone to resist racism together and safely. It provides clear pathways for different situations in which racism may be encountered. It explains where to seek help if you come across racist behaviour in the workplace, a hobby or a public discussion, for example.

The guide was produced by Rovalan Settlementti, Finnish Red Cross Lapland district and Mister's together with professionals from different fields. It implements a regional action plan for combating racism and promoting good relations between population groups. The guide was funded by the Good relations project.



ROVALA-OPISTO



MONINET
Monikulttuurinen työ



Elinkeino-, liikenne- ja
ympäristökeskus

Punainen Risti



Lapin piiri



Euroopan unionin
rahoittama



HANKE HYVIEN
VÄESTÖSUHTEIDEN
EDISTÄMISEKSI



Mister's RY