

IMPACT OF ONLINE HATE SPEECH TARGETING THE LGBT+ COMMUNITY IN NAMIBIA

762
Respondents surveyed



Windhoek,
Swakopmund,
Walvis Bay,
Keetmanshoop,
Omaruru



nearly **3 in 5**
(59%) personally experienced intersecting hate speech

94%

have experienced hate speech whilst being online during the past year



More than 2 in 3 (69%) reported that intersecting hate speech increased over the past year



1 in 3
(34%) felt unsafe online

What are the facts?

Most members of the community (94%) have experienced hate speech whilst being online during the past year, and nearly 3 in five (59%) personally experienced intersecting hate speech. More than two in 3 (69%) reported that such experiences increased over the same period, suggesting deteriorating conditions in online spaces for community members, especially in the comments sections of online media platforms (79%). Nearly half (45%) described their encounters as “somewhat” or “extremely severe”, and one in 3 (34%) felt unsafe online. Hate speech takes multiple forms: derogatory language (43%), harassment (34%), threats (34%) and ‘doxxing’ (16%). The emotional impact of online hate speech is extensive (86%), and 45% reported that hate speech has affected their mental health. Most (55%) rely on friends for support. Awareness of online (9%) and legal (18%) protection is low, and responses to reporting hate speech are largely unsatisfactory (48%).

HATE SPEECH is “any kind of communication in speech, writing or behaviour, that attacks or uses pejorative or discriminatory language with reference to a person or a group on the basis of who they are, in other words, based on their religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, colour, descent, gender or other identity factor.”

UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech (2019)

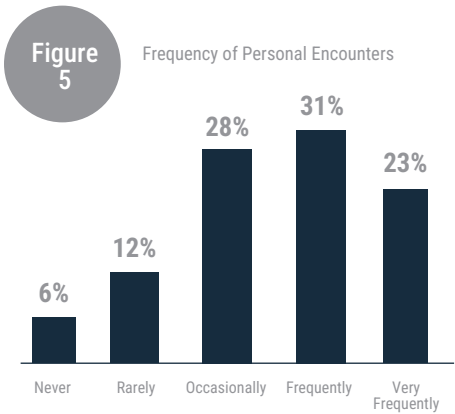


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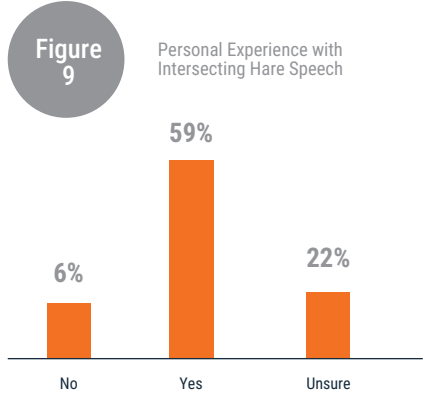
Evidence



6% who said “never” means 94% did have an experience.

For me, I think Twitter (X) is the most unbearable place to be of a minority because it is very unfiltered and it's because maybe the new owner [...] you do not control what comes to you unless you block it or you mute certain things because with other social media, you only invite something once you search it.

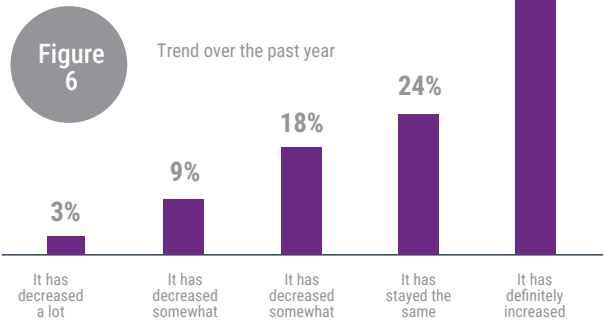
“... Facebook is more prominent with online hate speech, but I think the reason is that there is a lack of accountability and oversight in that particular platform. But also the enforcement of their regulations. They are very slow in regards to enforcing their regulations when hate speech occurs on Facebook. And the prevention measures are limited.”



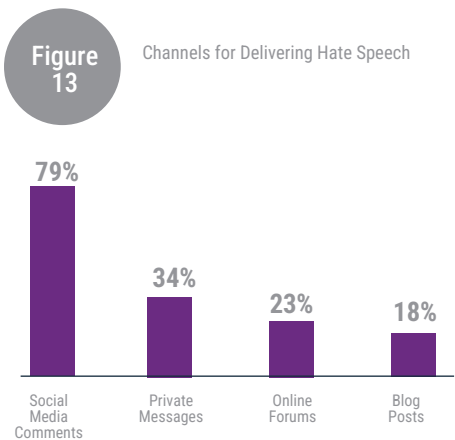
59% answered “yes”



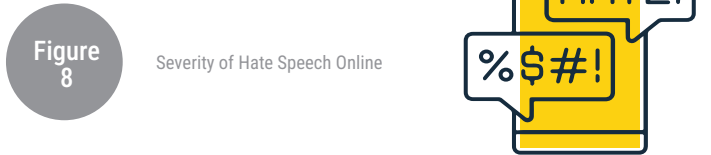
Facebook is noted for the highest frequency of hate speech, particularly in its comments section.



A substantial 45% of individuals report online hate speech as severe or extremely severe



These statistics not only reflect where hate speech is most likely to occur but also suggest where interventions might be most needed.

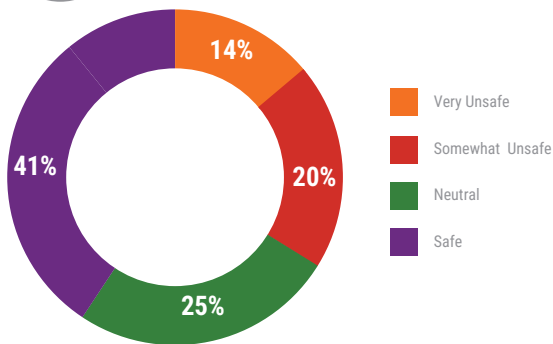


A substantial 45% of individuals report the severity of online hate speech as severe or extremely severe



Figure 16

Feeling Safe Online



Personal experiences range from public confrontations to online harassment and highlights the thin line between verbal abuse and physical violence

"... people use, for example, if they use in Oshiwambo, for example, they would use "Eshengi", ... a word that triggers people to perpetuate hate, and I think it's all about language; it's all about terms, but it's also about how the media is putting across the message ..., there is power in messages and the power that people receive from that message is the power they use to enforce hate towards a community or towards an individual or towards a group of people"

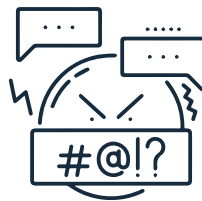


Figure 13

Types of Hate Speech Encountered Past Year

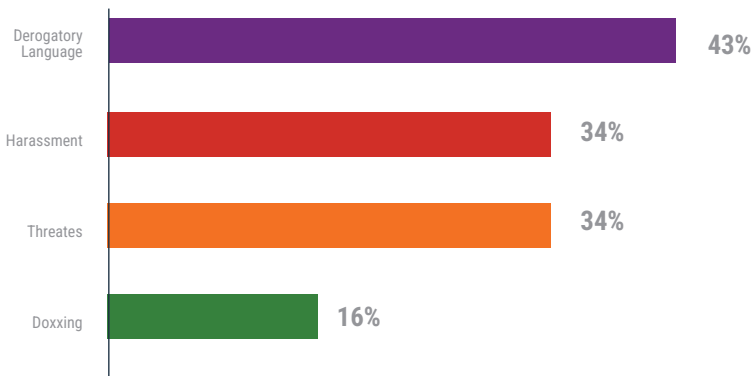


Figure 19

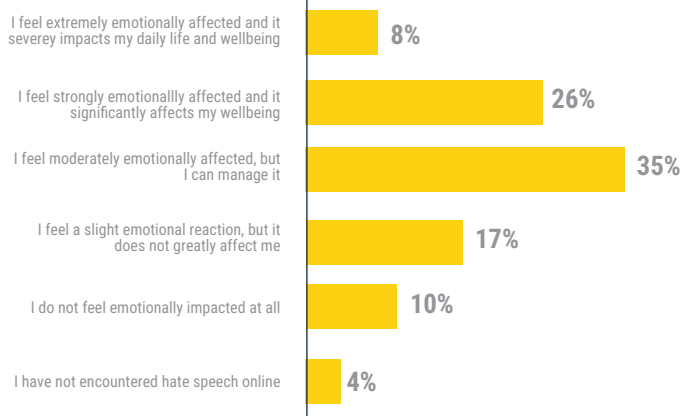
Hate Speech Has Affected Mental Health



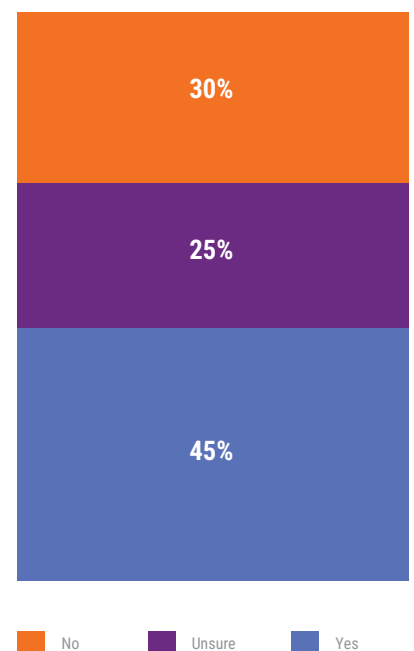
45% said their mental health has been affected.

Figure 18

Emotional Impact of Hate Speech



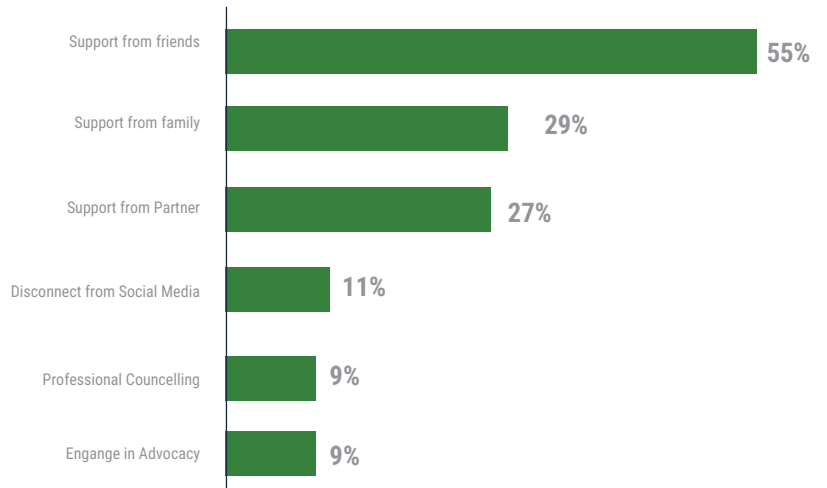
14% of people have not experienced hate speech while 10% of people have not been emotionally impacted.



No Unsure Yes

Figure 24

Personal Coping Strategies Against Hate Speech



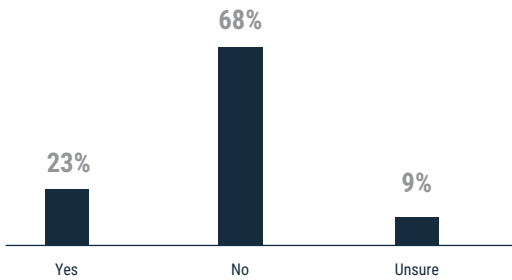
Only 9% of respondents reported using formal support mechanisms like professional counselling.



Figure 21

Awareness of Online Protection

68% of the respondents - a significant majority reported that they are not aware of any available online support mechanisms to assist the victims of online hate speech.



"[M]y experience was that literally ... this person just looked at me and then poured alcohol on me and said they don't like trans women. And that in itself was a violent attack that churns from hate. And I feel hate speech ... manifests itself verbally, [and] it [also] equally manifests itself in a physical form".

Figure 26

Awareness of Legal Protection Against Hate Speech

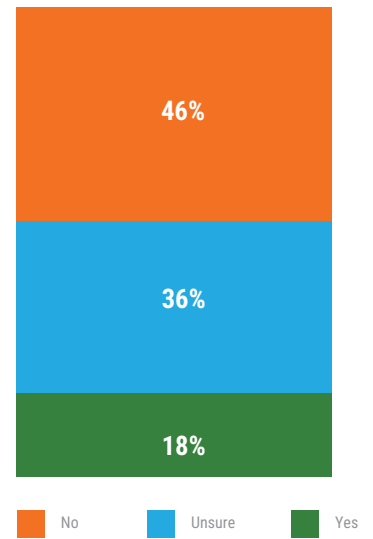


Figure 23

Satisfaction With Responses to Reporting Hate Speech on Social Media



48% said "very" or "somewhat dissatisfied".

Very dissatisfied Somewhat dissatisfied Neutral Somewhat satisfied Very satisfied