Hate speech

in the digital world

2019 - 2020

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Preamble

The following manual aims to raise awareness on the challenges of hate speech on social media and shed light on the ways to counter it. As we live in the era of online and social media, every citizen has become a journalist, publishing and sharing information on various platforms. This transformation has many disadvantages resulting from the behavior of social media users. While social media is intended to achieve the greater good and spread information, it is sometimes used in an unethical manner to spread misinformation that contradicts with the notion of humanity and incurs serious damage on certain values like respect, justice, and compassion.

We strongly renounce these behaviors and practices because they harm others, promote prejudice and stereotyping, negatively affect the upcoming generations, foment hate instead of consecrating the higher values and the greater good, contribute to evil, and push people to violence. Therefore, through this manual, we want to reach out to the world today and put our expertise at our community's disposal to counter the prevailing hate speech. As a matter of face, there are countless numbers of platforms inciting hate and violence and their users are estimated at hundreds of millions. We care about our global citizens who have a huge responsibility today and this prompts us to work towards safeguarding the values passed on from previous generations. These values are based on respecting our societal diversity and appreciating family and society values as well as our both internal and external environments including the virtual one. Thus, we want to work towards promoting the culture of tolerance, convergence, freedom, and dignity as we continue to coexist and live together. This manual, which we put at your disposal today, is the outcome of research work that has lasted for over a year. It was led by a group of social activists and researchers from Jordan, Lebanon, and Palestine. It started with intensive discussions among a group of youths aged 16 to 22 from these three countries. The discussions with these activists were critical for our work on this manual which interactively answers their questions and puts their problems under the microscope to find practical solutions, through providing training sessions on raising individual, collective, and community awareness on how to promote a positive rhetoric through developing critical thinking. It also provides insights on the rights and duties of social media users.

Partners

Dawaer Foundation -Lebanon

Dawaer Foundation is a Lebanese non-governmental, not for profit, non- partisan organization established in 2015 to reach a democratic peaceful society that respects human rights and gives citizens the freedom to practice their beliefs. Dawaer Foundation members leverage their extensive and diversified expertise to achieve their mission. They strive to exchange experience and share knowledge on local, regional, and international levels.

Dawaer is committed to protecting children and youths from various forms of violence and mobilizing their critical thinking through activities that target different groups who work directly with children, including educational institutions, families, service providers, orphanages, scouts and centers affiliated with the Minister of Social affairs among others.

Objectives:
- Empowering youths to build peace and building their resilience against hate speech
- Empowering youths to become central actors and key multipliers in preventing,
   reporting and critically responding to violent and discriminatory narratives
- Enhancing caregivers' capacity to ensure better child physical, mental, moral and
   social development
- Enhancing media literacy among children and youths
- Enhancing community social cohesion.

Vision:
Dawaer is committed to building a peaceful society, where children and youths become responsible citizens and are able to exercise critical thinking and to protect themselves against violence.

Mission:
Dawaer is committed to increasing the resilience of children and youths through promoting their rights and empowering them and mobilizing their critical thinking to become responsible global citizens who are capable of expressing themselves freely and be agents of change.
Dawaer works with educational institutions, families and communities to enhance child and youth rights and freedom of expression and protect youth from violence.

Ta'awon for Conflict Resolution – Palestine

Ta'awon for Conflict Resolution was established in 2002 to raise awareness on effective and peaceful methods to deal with conflicts. It aims to promote humanitarian and knowledge-based values such as respect and cooperation with others in a multi-cultural world. Ta'awon targets the youths in Palestine, integrating moral and philosophical visions to create a peaceful social change. Through its work, it focuses on consolidating notions of mediation and conflict resolution and promoting a culture of peace in all spectrums of lives among youths. Ta'awon has established an outstanding relationship with various universities, youth organizations, and civil society organizations in Palestine and abroad.

Ta'awon works at home and abroad on the basis of knowledge and awareness of the culture of conflict resolution in order to create a strong foundation that is able to make an internal change in the society and an external change represented in how this society deals with diverse communities. This has been achieved through collaborating with youths, universities, and civil society organizations in Palestine and abroad.

Objectives:
- Spread knowledge and raise awareness on the notions of conflict resulting from the absence of democracy, human rights, civil peace, and social justice
- Conduct research and prepare training material on the mechanism for peaceful interaction with conflicts
- Strengthen the participation of young men and women in decision-making, as well as implementing policy reform, democratization, and societal initiatives.

Vision:
A society that is capable of peacefully dealing with conflicts.

Mission
Ta'awon strives to limit the negative effects of conflict by promoting social justice, civil peace, human rights, tolerance, engagement, and conflict resolution mechanisms.

Hate Speech
on Social Media

Introduction

Whoever follows and monitors social media networking sites will often notice the absence of a genuine and ethical dialogue and the prevalence of racism and hate. Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights stipulates:

> **All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.**

This clause summarizes how we should deal with each other in our daily life and this includes our interaction on social media.

Moral education is a system based on respecting the Human Rights Charter as well as the principles, values, traditions, and prevailing culture in the society through family education. Instead of fomenting hate, this system seeks to promote public morality through encouraging a culture of tolerance, convergence, and brotherhood. It should be noted that there is a code of ethics that should be followed by those working in the media in general, and these very same ethics apply to social media users, in an attempt to enhance professionalism, increase the sense of social responsibility, and preserve the dignity of every human being.

Therefore, we emphasize our support for the principle of freedom of expression and constructive dialogue, but we are very keen to avoid falling into the trap of online hate speech which leads to violent and unethical consequences. Based on our societal responsibility, we should help the world shoulder the responsibilities that fall on social media users towards the society. These responsibilities include: Honestly, truthfulness, justice, respect for others' privacy, as well as the commitment to abstain from taking photos or recordings without prior permission and consent.

Because any type of work we undertake must be organized and fair, some governments have enacted laws to the preserve society from social media and online media in general, including renouncing hate speech and promoting constructive dialogue. For example, a unit to combat cybercrime has been established in Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine to limit hate speech, feud, defamation, and slander. The unit collaborates with special courts to handle lawsuits or cases of hate and violence. The same applies to the crimes of publishing information, whether in print or audiovisual media, and the ensuing public and individual liabilities.
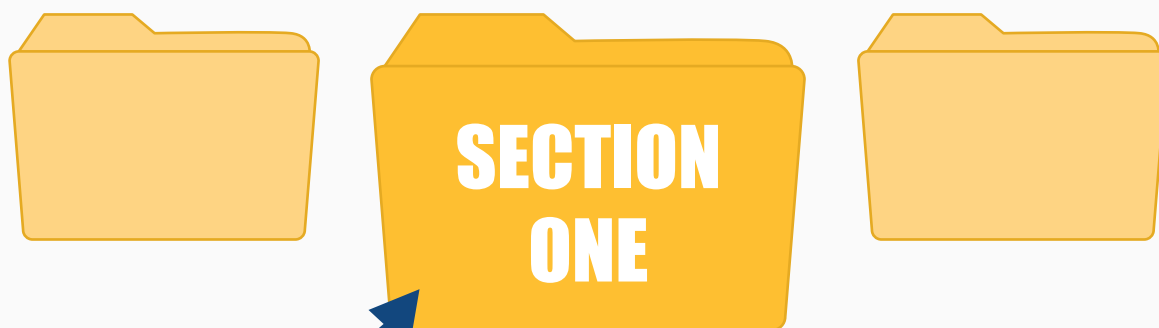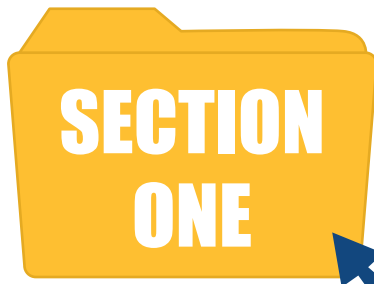
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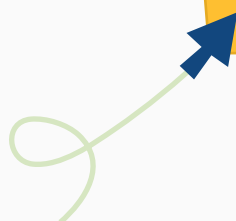
Hate Speech Challenges on Social Media

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SECTION ONE

Hate Speech
Challenges on Social Media

Individuals have found a free environment on social media to express themselves without supervision or control. Social networking sites have created a space for real and anonymous users under pseudo names to express themselves freely. Although we respect the principle of freedom of expression and renounce censorship, we are against any discourse that aims to defame, instigate, and promote certain ideas that would not have thrived had there been laws in place to regulate the publication of content.

In the absence of laws to regulate electronic content, i.e. the laws distinguishing between the freedom of expression on the one hand and defamation and incitement on the other hand, social media users are getting exposed to more abuse. Those who are against imposing electronic bans on social media are afraid the authorities could abuse the law to restrict freedom of expression on these sites.

Based on this, it is extremely necessary to raise individual, collective, and societal awareness, thus making it easy to distinguish between freedom of opinion and expression on the one hand, and defamation, slander and incitement

on violence on the other hand. This underscores the importance of this manual which helps us highlight the capabilities and challenges in online communication, knowing that it is difficult to put together such a manual because it addresses a large segment of users who have diverse cultures, orientations, and experiences. While the tendency to be unique might sometimes push users to adopt an inciteful discourse to garner angry reactions in pursuit of fame – though the reasons might be valid – this tendency often becomes uncontrollable as long as the discourse is unrestricted.

Even though there is no one definition of hate speech under the International Law, it is commonly defined as "any speech that offends, intimidates, defames, or promotes violence against a person or group on the basis of religion, ethnicity, nationality, color, origin, gender or other identity elements". Hate speech is a prevalent problem on social media which many individuals face at some point. Several countries have enacted laws that prevent certain types of hate speech. In order to responsibly and effectively counter hate speech, the youths should be able to correctly identify it and draw a fine line between a speech that promotes hate and a speech that falls within the freedom of expression.

Countering hate speech on social media requires a lot of work and effort and awareness-raising actions led by organizations, educational institutions, parents, and local communities.

The first key step to counter hate speech is to accept others rather than criminalizing them. Countering a certain action or statement could condemn some beliefs or generalize a crime that was done by an individual but may appear to be done by a group. This action or statement could spark a confrontation through an inciteful speech that feeds isolationist tendencies threatening the entire society, rejects diversity, and eliminates any other who is simply different.

This is why a collective effort is so important, one that is undertaken by all societal elements and groups to repudiate instigation and promote constructive criticism and convergence for the greater good. Constructive criticism is an opportunity to exchange positive or negative opinions, in a friendly manner, and helps lay the foundations for dialogue to eventually develop intellectual diversity.
This is achieved through outlining a framework or behavioral approach based on the principles of collaborating with the other and respecting diversity. Such a framework must be accepted and recognized by everyone and promoted by positive influencers and celebrities on social media.

In addition, we should launch initiatives that encourage anti-hate speech behaviors and promote the notion of freedom that ends where another's begin, in addition to respecting different and diverse opinions and individual and collective privacy.

It might seem that speaking about the challenge requires a counterattack. But in reality, any reaction to an offensive speech is a form of recognition and an indication to its existence. Rather, we must limit the impact and prevalence of this speech and this can only happen through promoting a different behavior and a tolerant speech and by fostering rapprochement and tolerance instead of divide, hate, and racism.

Therefore, it is necessary to train and guide those interested in countering hate speech by working out an agreement with those in charge of social media to explain the importance of curbing these speeches and combating misleading information. This happens by focusing on the offensive terminology circulated on social media and finding alternative positive terminology to establish the notions of brotherhood and tolerance in the society.
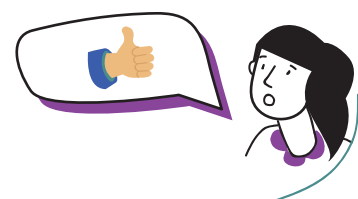
1) Role of Social Media: Pros and Cons

Before speaking about the role of social media, it is necessary to define social media sites. They are interactive platforms in the electronic space, through smartphone applications, desktop computers, or laptops on the web. Interaction on these sites happens through text, video, or audio messages or through certain numbers, data, or emojis.

Social media has gained its importance from the technology that allows the recipients to become senders at the same time. Therefore, everyone is able to publish content. The first and foremost importance of social media was seen through blogs, allowing users to express new ideas and opinions and publishing news without any financial implications or censorship. Thus, blogs began to compete with government-owned media, privately-owned media, and that funded by various parties. This has later evolved from blogs to podcasts and later to micro-blogging, including Facebook which took publishing and advertising around the world to the next level.

Today, many social media platforms exist around the world, mainly Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Telegram, TikTok, Pinterest, and Linkedin, in addition to blogs and podcasts.

Statistics on social media platforms around the world

1- Facebook
Facebook has dominated the list of social media platforms globally, with the number of users exceeding 2.7 billion per month.

2- Twitter
The number of users has reached 330 million per month.

3- YouTube
YouTube has managed to keep pace with Facebook in terms of the number of users which reached 2 billion per month.

4- WhatsApp
Owned by Facebook, WhatsApp users are estimated at 2 billion per month.

6- Instagram
This popular photo-sharing platform is used by one billion users per month.

5- WeChat
This is a popular social media site that has gained popularity in China only, with the number of users reaching 1.17 billion per month.

7- TikTok
A social media platform that relies on short videos, with more than 800 million users per month.

These are only a fraction of the platforms dominating the electronic space, allowing every user to become a content producer and publisher at the same time. The quality of content and its reach differ from every person to another, depending on his experience and public relations. It is no longer about specialization in a certain field, but it is all about becoming an influencer. Thus, it is no longer easy to distinguish scientific-based and thoughtful content from that aimed at grabbing attention and garnering reactions. Accomplishments are not possible if they do not prompt waves of reactions, which might be valid or invalid. Many popular opinions, although they might not be the best, might garner far way more reactions than important and useful content. For the most part, this is because it is always easier to resonate with instincts than minds. Some say that agreeing on the axioms is no longer possible at a time every citizen has the ability to reject, oppose, and launch counter campaigns. It does not take a lot of knowledge nowadays. Posting and reposting is very easy through a niche network controlled by artificial intelligence or through Trolls that focus on grabbing attention and garnering angry reactions.

Characteristics of Internet Communication:

- Anonymity: No one necessarily knows the identity of the users on social media. Therefore, they are free to say whatever they want. According to statistics, "13 to 46% of cyberviolence victims do not know the identity of the harasser. 22% of cyberviolence offenders do not know the identity of their victims. 47% said the perpetrator was a colleague at school or a relative."

- Anonymous appearance: One should not worry about their own appearance or voice when speaking to others or about the appearance and voice of others when say something to them.

- Delayed reactions: Users can say anything they want or think about or feel, without censorship, at any given time. They can log off immediately without waiting for a response and they might never log in again. .

- The perception that interactions only happens in one's imagination: Everyone considers it difficult to say things to others face to face.

- Identifying the status: In face-to-face interaction, a person may fear saying something to someone because of their job, authority, gender, or race. But on social media, users feel they can express their opinions more freely.

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[1] Kowalski RM, Limber SP. Electronic bullying among middle school students. J) Adolesc Health 2007 ;41 (Suppl):S22–S30

Instructions:

1) Ask the participants what "freedom of expression" means for them. Write the ideas down on a flip chart and ask the participants to discuss the following points:
- Does freedom of expression mean we can say whatever we want?
- If you think certain "statements" should not be allowed, how do we determine what should be prohibited? Who is entitled to decide that?
- Aside from speaking and writing, what other ways can allow us express ourselves (music, theatre, drawing, photography, and body language...)?

2) Try to explain that resolving human rights issues is a long journey (we will explore that through the exercise).

3) Ask the participants if they have ever been banned from saying anything at home, school, or in front of people. Why do you think it is important to express your opinion regardless of the consequences?

4) Inform the participants that they will be working in groups to discuss cases of people publishing information that harms others and offends their human rights online. The groups should decide if the posts must be removed whether or not this restricts freedom of expression. It is important to be honest and clear when discussing why some posts must be removed and others must not.

5) Hand a copy of the case to each group to discuss within 30 minutes.

1. A group called "Restoring Our Nation" creates a website calling for preserving "traditional values and national pride." Many of the site's posts are racist and trigger a lot of comments and heated discussions that mostly use an offensive language. Many users lash out at the racist content of the website and the ideology it promotes.
Should some website content be removed? If so, how much content should be removed and why? If not, what else can be done?

2. Rami is a politician who uses his personal account to call for evacuating the Syrian community from his constituency. He blames them for the rising levels of crime and for distorting economic competition. As a result of his calls, some Syrians become exposed to numerous offenses across the country. Some media outlets start publishing stories on the crimes perpetrated by Syrians and overlook the crimes committed against them.
Should some website content be removed? If so, how much content should be removed and why? If not, what else can be done?

3. On her personal blog, Mira posts a caricature featuring a famous politician with bloody fingers and corpses scattered everywhere. Many users comment on the post and express their support.
Should some website content be removed? If so, how much content should be removed and why? If not, what else can be done?

4. Haifa posts a video on her personal website making fun of people with special needs, portraying them as incompetent and "alien" creatures. Site statistics show that almost no one has viewed the video and the site lacks any comments from visitors.
Should some website content be removed? If so, how much content should be removed and why? If not, what else can be done?

5. A journalist watches the video posted by Haifa (previous example) and launches a campaign to remove Ella's personal story from social media, resulting in thousands of views on the video. Some users who saw the video commented by saying "this is the best video ever" and that "we must be realistic about the people with special needs" and so on.
Should some website content be removed? If so, how much content should be removed and why? If not, what else can be done?

6. Najwa, a famous writer, publishes an article on the internet claiming that transgender women represent a "violation to humanity". A campaign "to bring down Najwa" was launched, revealing details about her personal life. Pia starts receiving hundreds of abusive messages and tweets and some threats.
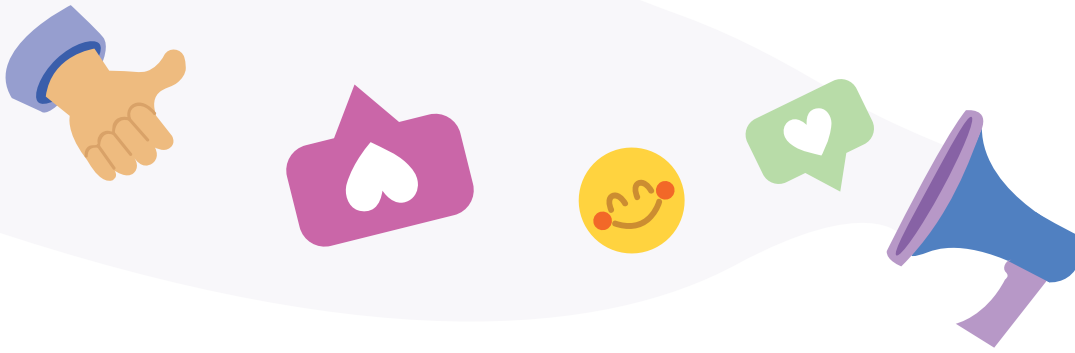Should some website content be removed? If so, how much content should be removed and why? If not, what else can be done?

Debriefing

Review the case studies the groups worked on and ask for feedback. Briefly discuss the reasons that led the groups to make their decisions. Use some of the following questions to draw key points:

- Have you, as a group, failed to reach an agreement over certain cases? What were the main differences in opinion?

- Has the identity of the user publishing the post made a difference? Have the engagement rates or comments made a difference to you?

- Did you come up with general guidelines to decide when freedom of expression can be restricted? What are the risks associated with excessively restricting freedom of expression? What are the risks associated with being too lenient in that regard?

- Do you think that shutting down websites or removing harmful posts is an effective way to combat hate speech online?

- Are there any laws in your country restricting what can be said online and offline? Are the rules any different when it comes to online communication?

Tips for Facilitators

When participants discuss the cases, remind them to take into consideration the volume of content they will remove from the internet if they decide to do so. For example, they might decide to remove the account entirely or remove a post / video, or even ban the user and so on. It may be useful to remind the participants that the European Court for Human Rights considers any restriction to the right to freedom of expression as extremely serious. Restrictions must be imposed only if there is a strong justification to do so.

- You may wish to explain that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and freedom of expression are related to governments' behavior. Restricting freedom of expression online is often more complicated because the network is mostly privately owned (for example, sites providing hosting services and news websites are owned by companies, etc).

- Remind the participants that removing offensive content or banning the website itself might not be the only response. After all, doing that might be extremely difficult given the huge amount of content published online.

- Before you start the exercise, try to find out if any of the cases violate the applicable laws in your country.

Exercise: Discussing the pros and cons of social media

Exercise objectives: Revealing pros and cons of social media and how to deal with them to avoid negatively affecting any person.

Exercise outcomes: Limiting social media disadvantages and building on the advantages, particularly in terms of repudiating hate speech.

Requirements: Prepare a post or a video featuring the pros and cons of social media

Duration: 30 to 45 minutes.

Debate, dialogue, and discussions without reaching common grounds

Promoting hate speech and bullying

Social Media Cons

Affecting religious, national, and cultural identity

opening up to the world and respecting various beliefs

Getting to know different religions, cultures, and people

Social Media Pros

Promoting acting online dialogue, reinforcing national identity, and repudiating hate speech

Directions:

Identifying the cons in general, mainly in relation to hate speech. Identifying the pros on Google Sheet or any other tool before starting the workshop (see below). Once completed, an example must be given, either before or after the exercise.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ƐgUVFueMow
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BaruovVEꟼRo

Please comment on the video and reinstate that only humanity brings us together.

2) Freedom of expression and digital citizenship: Duties and Responsibilities

Social media has given everyone the ability to express opinion and publish content on a large scale, in line with the principle of freedom of expression. Each citizen has a voice that matters by participating in advocacy campaigns. Social media has contributed in transcending government censorship and societal restrictions and banning many regulations or limiting their impact. Therefore, the government, its affiliated circles, and capitalists are no longer running the show alone.

However, social media has ensured uncontrolled freedom of expression through fake accounts. This freedom has gone as far as infringing others' freedom. The worst thing is that this freedom is now practiced by the political parties and their supporters, thus playing an instigating role and promoting propaganda just like mainstream media. As a matter of fact, parties are skilled at promoting political propaganda, thus each party has established the so-called "electronic army" and some activist groups are promoting ideas and beliefs that offend other parties, which foments hate within communities.

Therefore, it is the responsibility of the citizens to understand their duties and rights on social media in an ever-evolving world that has no borders, a world that is witnessing a new form of communication and interaction and new principles and standards.

On the other side, there are those who refuse to impose any form of restriction, in an attempt to evade any control. For them, freedom will therefore mean mocking others and suppressing people with different beliefs. But does this mean we want to eliminate restrictions and unleash angry reactions, thus setting up electronic armies to attack any person or comment? Doesn't freedom, in this form, lead to the lack of justice and deprive people of their chances to regain their rights through legal means and judicial institutions?

Today, the so-called concept of digital citizenship has emerged. As technology continues to advance, the virtual world or the "electronic space" has become a reality for us, especially the youths among us who realize the importance of this world. Digital citizenship includes a group of rules, standards, customs, values, ideas, and principles that are designed for optimal use of technology. Human beings should rely on them in their daily lives in order to elevate the nation and citizens altogether.

Duties & Responsibilities

They allow us to benefit from modern technology and protect us from its risks. Digital citizenship is a set of rules and behaviors designed for the use of technology, including online engagement and information exchange in various fields to promote community integration.

Digital citizenship, or virtual citizenship, is a combination of free and responsible citizenship. The internet has played a key role in spreading the concept of free citizenship through publishing and sharing issues and topics regardless of religious or cultural challenges or any language barrier.

Digital citizenship has created digital citizens who use the internet and rely on it for their daily lives. Digital citizens are regularly using the internet which shapes up their values and choices in life. The virtual world introduces the digital citizens to the advantages of the internet and its associated risks.

Since digital citizens have a special identity, they are able to use these websites and acquire various skills such as research, communications, and intellectual and cultural self-development. They are also able to exchange ideas and cultures and express ideas and opinions in a free and just environment.

Digital Citizenship

Characteristics of digital citizenship

1- Knowledge and awareness of the virtual world and its components.
2- Proficiency in using the virtual world's devices and computers.
3- Interaction among users from all around the world on a small scale.

It is worth noting that the concept of citizenship is restricted to politics only, but it also refers to civil rights including freedom and justice. These rights are under the judicial authority.

Example:
A group of young men and women created a Facebook group to discuss some societal and political issues and diversity. The conversation heated up as they touched on the topic of origin and clan. They went as far as discriminating each other based on religion, belief, and sect and spoke about who represents a minority and a majority. When faced with such incidents among young men and women, ones that deepen the divide on the basis of one's religious identity or clan affiliation, we cannot but ask ourselves: What about our unified national identity? National identity is not only demonstrated in daily life, but it also appears in conversations in the virtual world too.

² محمد ريان، ٢٠١٣، الاعلام الجديد، مركز الاهرام للنشر والترجمة والتوزيع، ط١، القاهرة ص ٩٠
³ المركز الديمقراطي العربي المانيا برلين، شباب اليوم في ظل المواطنة وأزمة الهوية، الطبعة الأولى، ٢٠١٤، ص ١٤٩
⁴ محمد لعقاب، ٢٠١١، المواطن الرقمي، دار هومه للطباعة والنشر والتوزيع، الجزائر ص ١٢

Exercise: Comparison between Responsible and Irresponsible Digital Citizenship

Objective: How do we construct or destruct society through digital citizenship? A sensory exercise – Participants are expected to interact.

Outcomes: Underscoring that the importance of digital citizenship in elevating the society is no less important than the role of active citizenship on the ground, particularly with the progress and openness on social media.

Requirements: Choosing an online post (infographic, image, video…) to illustrate the elements of digital citizenship.

Duration: 45 minutes.

Directions:
Divide the participants into groups to work on the posts. Each group presents three elements to illustrate the responsibilities of the digital citizen and how to fulfill them on social media. At the end of the exercise, each group presents its work to show the commonalities in the exercise outputs.

Exercise: Brainstorming on digital citizenship

Objective: Exchange points of view on the concept of digital citizenship.

Outcomes: Introduce the participants to each other's points of view and enriching their minds by explaining the concept of digital citizenship.

Requirements: Computer, internet, and LCD Projector.

Duration: 60 minutes.

Directions:
Brainstorming exercise followed by a dialogue on the concept of digital citizenship from the perspective of every participant. After that, a video is displayed: How has your perspective of digital citizenship changed? How has your knowledge changed?

المواطنة الرقمية: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VUzIXdIqV٠٤

مقدمه عن #المواطنة_الرقمية ومحاورها التسعه:

ما بعد الدّقيقة الثّانية https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RYsHzhrV٩MA

قصة راشد وصديقه - مشروع المواطنة الرقمية: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EDA-XʌiʔFʔc

3) Differences between a dialogue and a debate in the digital space:

Different opinions are normal. Verbal communication is a key type of communication and with the rise of social media, written communication, or "non-verbal communication" is a pivotal part of any dialogue and debate, just like verbal communication. Satellite internet has given rise to this phenomenon, as it creates room for publishing and expressing opinions and comments that do not meet publication standards because they are, for the most part, published under pseudo names. As a matter of fact, the sense of responsibility towards oneself and others is what makes people act logically, care about reaching an understanding with others, and think and act rationally.
Authorities' role in controlling attitudes and opinions has diminished, and while this is a positive sign, it has its disadvantages which we must address. It all falls within the spectrum of education, as long as the ultimate goal is to promote positive values and principles and counter the mentality of violence. In addition, the websites are also responsible in evaluating the interaction of users and their posts and this is not considered a form of censorship or ban but is rather aimed at ensuring the quality of discussions and the credibility of the website. In this regard, we hope the website would remove any comments that include slander and add the following message: "The comment was not published as it violates the regulations."

The predominance of verbal violence on social media is extremely harmful because it hinders the transition to democracy. This transition cannot happen without promoting a culture of dialogue and underscoring diversity, pluralism, and respect. After all, democracy is all about managing our differences peacefully whereas tyranny produces violence because it relies on coercion and intimidation to prevail.
The common factor between dialogue and debate is that they both represent a conversation between two parties, but they have different objectives. Debate is based on rivalry, stubbornness, obstinacy, and intolerance. Dialogue, on the contrary, is a conversation between two sides to exchange knowledge without rivalry because science and education are based on evidence and require initiating a discussion and presenting a hypothesis so that the participants get to know each other thoroughly. Therefore, they build relations on the basis of respecting their differences and ideological and cultural diversity.

In other words, a dialogue is a conversation between two or more people who equally exchange views. No party monopolizes the discussion as they aim to reach the truth. Instead of interrupting one another, they tend to understand one another and respect their opinion. They do not take the conversation to a different level or use abusive language. People engaged in a dialogue mention the common grounds and inform others that they understand them. They address each other by using their names, admit a mistake if any, and accept one another.

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⁵ عبدالستار إبراهيم الهيتي، الحوار: الذات والآخر كتاب الامة العدد ٩٩، ص ٣١، ٤، ٢٠٤

Dialogue is an advanced form of communication and understanding and a means to pursue knowledge. On the contrary, a debate is an argument that does not aim at reaching the truth but rather force the other party to abandon their opinions and believe the other opinion. In a debate, participants believe they are solely right. A debate is based on stubbornness, obstinacy, intolerance, quarrels, and challenge. It often feeds on negative talk and criticism and does not lead to positive outcomes. Rather, it leads to rivalry, rising antagonism, and the use of profanity such as insults, defamation and offense in order to stop the other side from thinking and expressing his / her opinion. It also aims at keeping others silent or changing their opinions, and putting an end to critical thinking. This is a negative indicator that jeopardizes relations.

Key principles of a dialogue:
- Healthy dialogue: Adherence to polite expressions and the use of easy and transparent terminology.
- Flexibility: Good listening and high level of tolerance.
- Wisdom: A consensual approach to ideas, facts, and proofs.
- Politeness: Respect and lack of insults or unpleasant language.
- Humbleness, lack of arrogance and negligence of others, and good listening.
- Justice, equality, and fairness.
- Consultation: Democratic dialogue and lack of dominance.

The following are the skills required for conducting an online dialogue:
- Reading skills: Reviewing information and opinions with full focus and speed; identifying important supporting evidence-based notes and remarks.
- Communications skills: Interacting with others, being able to engage in discussions and dialogues, being trustworthy and reliable, choosing the right time, and using the right verbal and body language.
- Writing skills: Through sharing opinions, focusing on the main points, gathering information and data, and being considerate to the culture, and religious and ideological orientation of the recipient.
- Listening skills: Organizing the message, giving enough time to actively listen to oneself and others, contemplating and thinking, asking questions at the right time, being knowledgeable and sharing information, reading between the lines, avoiding prejudgments, and taking into consideration personal experience, information, evidence, tone of voice, and patience.

[6] محمد خليفة حسن احمد، الحوار منهجاً وثقافة، ٢٠٠٨، طا، ص ص ٤٠-٤٣
[7] مجدي شرارة، الحوار الاجتماعي، ص ١٣١-١٦٤

Example:

As the coronavirus pandemic continued to spread, education, trainings, workshops, and sessions have turned virtual. We are shifting towards a dialogue on social media applications such as Zoom among others. A group of young men and women launched a platform for dialogue to address post-corona unemployment. They hosted delegates from the Ministry of Labor and the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) in addition to young unemployed men and women. The foundations of the dialogue were laid and a framework for the discussion was outlined but 20 minutes later, the dialogue became undisciplined. They started hurling accusations over the role of the Ministry of Labor, NSSF, the government, and the private sector, leading to the withdrawal of the Ministry of Labor's delegate from the discussion as accusations continued to be exchanged between the hosts and organizers.
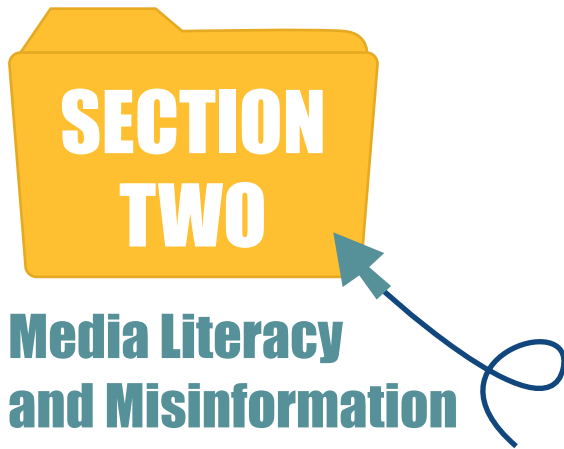
4) Summary of section one in five key points:

1- Social media platforms allow us to connect with others to build a society that is rich in cultural, intellectual, religious, and ideological diversity.

2- The absence of laws governing and regulating electronic publishing does not justify the confusion between expressing opinions on the one hand, and practicing incitement, defamation, and slander on the other hand.

3- The sense of responsibility is what primarily deters and guides social media users and prompts them to counter all forms of hate speech through social media.

4- Digital citizenship, or virtual citizenship, does not exempt us from rights, duties, and responsibilities.

5- A dialogue based on active listening allows us to connect with others and promotes a culture of peace.

SECTION TWO

Media Literacy and Misinformation

2 ♥
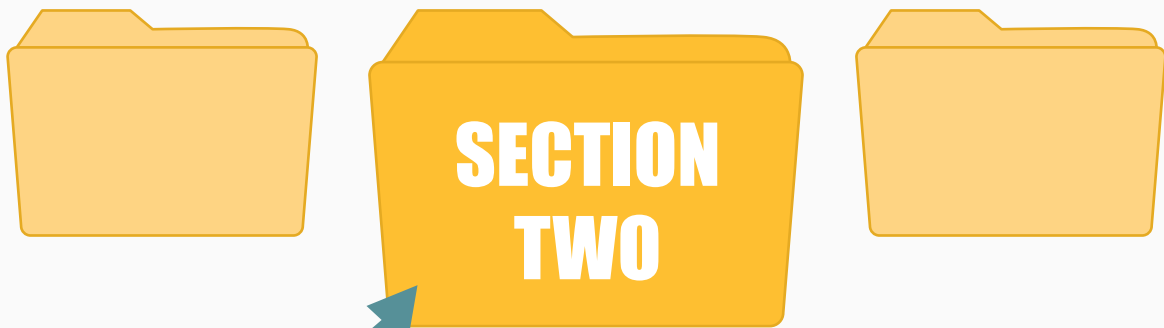
SECTION TWO

Media Literacy and Misinformation

1) Media Literacy: A critical Step

Len Masterman, a researcher, believes that "media literacy is a critical step in the journey of a thousand miles towards a genuine participatory democracy. Media literacy is imperative if citizens want to be powerful, make logical decisions, turn into change makers, and effectively participate in the media." This definition of media literacy explains the close relationship between media literacy and participatory democracy and considers the former a prerequisite to achieve democracy. The concept of media literacy had first emerged in the 1960s in an attempt to use media in education. It has evolved with time to focus on how to raise awareness among young men and women on the dangers of the media, its impact, and the messages it disseminates.

During the Vienna Conference held by the UNESCO in April 1999 under the title of "Media Education and the Digital Age," media literacy was defined as "It deals with all communication media and includes the word and graphics, the sound, the still as well as the moving image, delivered on any kind of technology. It enables people to gain understanding of the communication media, producing them, and choosing the appropriate tools to express their messages."

The conference outlines the following objectives of media literacy:

1- To enable the people to fully understand media communication and how media outlets operate.
2- To acquire skills in using these media to communicate with others.
3- To learn how to analyze, critically reflect upon and create media.
4- To identify the sources of media texts, their political, social, commercial and/or cultural interests, and their contexts.

The definition and objectives of media literacy show that its goal is to enhance critical thinking among the audience and equip the citizens for participatory democracy through helping them raise the problems in their society by using critical thinking and deconstructing media content. Most importantly, they take part in "deconstructing injustice, expressing their opinions, and building a better society."

Media education has been introduced in universities, colleges, and schools as part of the curriculum in many countries around the world. There are numerous references about it in multiple languages. Lebanon is one of the countries that took the initiative early on and dedicated five hours for media education for Grade 6 within Civil Education. Four hours were dedicated for students of Grade 12 on "Media and Public Opinion".

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[8] Jolls, Tessa & Wilson, Caroly. (2014). The Core Concepts: Fundamental to Media Literacy Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow. Journal of Media Literacy Education. 10.23860 .78-68 .6/JMLE-02-06-2016-z6.
[9] https://www.mediamanual.at/en/pdf/educating_media_engl.pdf
[10] كيلنر وشار ٢٠٠٧ ص ١٩
[11] http://saudimediaeducation.org/sme/pdf/media_book.pdf

**Exercise: Media Literacy
and its objectives**
Objective: Develop the skills of the participants in research and investigation
Outcomes: Enhance the importance of media literacy and critical thinking among participants.
Requirements: Papers and pens.
Duration: 30 to 45 minutes.

Directions: The trainees are divided into two competing groups of journalists. Each group chooses a well-known figure, write his / her name and nominates one of the members to represent this character. The other group has to guess the identity of the character by asking yes or no questions. One group should start and must continue asking questions as long as the answer is yes. If the answer is no, the other group starts asking questions. The first group to guess the identity wins the game. Encourage them to think about the yes or no questions and discuss how difficult it is to investigate these questions, while highlight how easy the game would be if open-ended questions were allowed. Ask the two groups to repeat the exercise but use open-ended questions, alternating after each question. The groups are not allowed to ask about the name of the figure. Then, investigate the investigations from both rounds with the wider group.

Exercise: Media Literacy and its objectives
Objective: Reinforce the concept of media literacy and its impact on our lives.
Outcomes: Make the participants aware of the role of the media.
Requirements: Papers, pens, and glue.
Duration: 90 minutes.

The trainer draws a circle around certain ages on the floor (5 years, 10 years, etc) and asks the participants to stand next to each circle and speak about their experience. Mission: Look back at your childhood: What media content had you been exposed to and what content is important to you? What had left a lasting impression on you? Try to remember the negative and positive media experiences you went through. How old were you at the time?

Teamwork
- The trainer divides the participants into three groups to discuss the following questions and suggest answers to them:
Group 1: What is the role of the media?
Group 2: Why do we use the media?
Group 3: What is the influence of the media on individuals?
- Each group submits its work for a group discussion. In the end, the trainer explains the role of the media and provides a definition for the media with the groups.

Divide the participants into groups by using small cards that represent three different media outlets. Each participant picks a media outlet and those with the same name join the same group. Give each group a worksheet to answer the following questions while conducting a research on the media outlet they chose:

▶ What is the target audience?
▶ What are the tools used by this media outlet (videos, articles, etc)?
▶ Who is producing these tools?
▶ Who is controlling it and who is it directed at?
▶ How is it financed?

Each group presents its work and then the trainer explains the relationship between

Exercise : Media Literacy and its objectives
Objective: Realize the concept of media messages and their outcomes.
Outcomes: Enable the participants to deep dive into the content of the messages on social media.
Requirements: Papers, pens, and glue.
Duration: 45 minutes.

the media and the importance of having the basic skills to deal with it. These skills are referred to as media literacy, which is primarily based on the following:

- Accessing information
- Analyzing information
- Developing media content
- Looking into the content
- Taking necessary measures

Exercise: Media Literacy and its objectives
Objective: Media literacy through exchanging personal experiences of the participants who have been exposed to hate speech or bullying.
Outcomes: Learn how to deal with online media users, mainly social media, based on values and societal and media responsibility, as well as verifying the veracity of the content and checking if the comments or shares involve any form of hate speech of bullying against the user who posted the content.
Requirements: Highly engaging posts collected by the participants from Facebook or Twitter.
Duration: 60 minutes.

Directions: After looking up the posts, participants are divided into groups and each group gets a post. Then, the participants are asked to brainstorm together and come up with a brief about the post and investigate whether or not social media users have unethically dealt with the user who published the post. They should also verify the veracity of the content and whether or not it complies with the applicable laws and regulations.

Example: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N6gRsv_38to
Present the post, comment on it, and see if the participants verified the content.
Participants then share personal experiences if they were ever exposed to hate speech or bullying while sharing any content on social media.

Example: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vJnsrAABL9g
This exercise helps raise awareness on the importance of media literacy in our lives.

2) Misinformation: Definition and Types

Misinformation is the manipulation of information, facts and evidence, giving false interpretations and twisting events. When talking about misinformation in general, we tend to think about the media in particular, as it seeks to show a different reality because publishing information on social media is a very easy and quick process.
Misinformation plays a key role in publishing inaccurate information that is often untrue, making it difficult to engage in a rational dialogue that serves the public interest.

Misinformation is practiced through a number of ways, including:
1) Manipulating information and facts, and overlooking the context and presenting it in a suspicious way.
2) Using certain language to condemn, reject or support.
3) Selectively focusing on false issues and problems to distract the audience from other more important issues.
4) Using specific terminology to promote a concept that serves the agenda of the party that coined that terminology.
5) Presenting misleading statistics, studies, and opinion polls.
6) Presenting misleading images and caricatures.
7) Publishing misleading ideas and reinforcing deviant behaviors.

Therefore, we ask the following question:

- Does this necessitate censorship on the language used on social media?
- Are we violating the freedom of expression when we counter bullying attempts?
- Are we suppressing opinions when we counter misinformation and misleading news?
- Are we violating democratic principles when we draft laws that ensure the right of the citizens to sue whoever offends, defames, or slanders them?

It is easy to answer these questions in practice. Various platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, have allowed anyone to report any bullying or fake news. For example, many tweets by US President Donald Trump were labeled as inaccurate and many posts were removed from Twitter and Facebook after being reported.

¹² فهد الشميمري، ٢٠١٠، التربية الإعلامية، ص ١٠٥-١٠٧

This exercise is designed to stimulate the group and initiate a preliminary discussion on fake news, allowing the facilitator to evaluate the level of the participants before the session begins. Ask the participants to work in pairs and ask each group to write three statements about themselves, two of which are true, and one is false.

Exercise: Misinformation
Objective: Train participants on recognizing misinformation.
Outcomes: Identifying accurate and fake information.
Duration: 15 to 30 minutes.

Ask the participants to exchange their statements. Once they are done, choose some participants to give examples on the information shared by their partners with the wider group.

At the end of the exercise, discuss with the group the issue of fake news and the reliability of media sources.

Here are some questions that can be used during the discussion:
► Were you able to distinguish true from false news?
► Imagine this is the case for news headlines. How would you know if they tell the truth or not?
► Aside from the internet, when is it necessary to know if people are lying or saying the truth?
► Why would anyone write up a fake news story but claim to be true?
► What makes us believe a fake news story?
► Why would some people share fake news?

Exercise: Misinformation
Objective: Train participants on recognizing misinformation and realizing how fake news evolve into hate speech.
Outcomes: Distinguishing true information from false claims and learning how to prevent fake news from turning into hate speech.
Duration: 30 to 45 minutes.

To start the exercise, the trainer can discuss the following questions:
- What is fake news?
- When can we say that fake news may lead to hate speech?
The trainer then presents a number of sensitive examples from our reality and asks the participants to find out how fake news leads to hate speech. For example, with the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic in Lebanon, some people accused the passengers coming from Iran of bringing the virus to Lebanon to achieve suspicious objectives. This fake news unleased hate speech.
Based on the selected topics, participants discuss how these topics evolved and eventually turned into hate speech.

3) Summary of section two in five key points:

1- Media literacy is imperative for democracy and means dealing with all forms of media. It is based on empowering individuals to understand and produce media messages and choose the appropriate platform to express their messages.

2- Media literacy involves acquiring the necessary skills to use the media and communicate with others. It also involves learning how to analyze media content in a critical manner, as well as determining the source and its agenda.

3- Media literacy seems to promote critical and constructive thinking among social media users and empowering users to acquire the necessary skills to analyze media content.

4- Media literacy is based on deconstructing media content to uncover injustice and seek to create a better society.

5- Misinformation means manipulating information, facts, and evidence, providing incorrect interpretations, and twisting the facts.
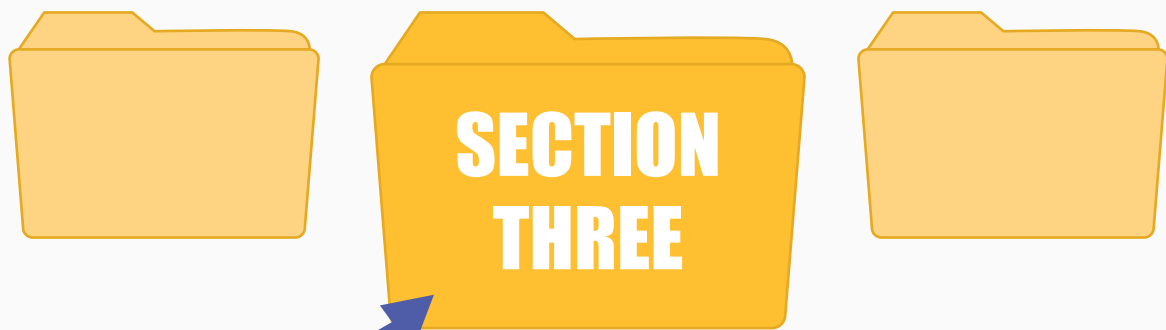
SECTION THREE

An Approach
and Analysis of Cyberviolence
and Conflict Strategies

SECTION THREE

An Approach and Analysis of Cyberviolence and Conflict Strategies

Individuals, groups, and states adopt different approaches to dealing with conflicts. Many factors and considerations determine this approach such as: The scale of resources of each party, the type of relationship with the other party, the size and type of the existing conflict, and the background of the conflict.

Definition of the conflict

Directions: The trainer divides the participants into groups and asks each group to come up with a comprehensive definition of the concept of online conflict, provided that the definition is context sensitive. The trainer then asks the groups to present their work in front of others. Definitions are discussed and assessed in a group work.

Exercise: Unanimous conflict definition
Objective: Urge participants to unanimously agree on a unified definition of conflict through mutual discussions and research.
Outcomes: Trainers should find out the meaning of online conflict themselves.
Requirements: Papers and a board.
Duration: 30 minutes.

Implement the exercise (30 minutes): The trainer displays the conflict ladder on the LCD projector and discusses with the participants the steps through asking the following questions: How does the conflict emerge? What steps does it go through?

Exercise: Conflict ladder
Objective: Allow the participants to find out how a conflict usually starts and how it can be objectively resolved.
Requirements: Computer, LCD projector, a space for working groups, papers and pens.
Duration: 90 minutes.

Working in groups (30 minutes): Each group cites a conflict that took place in the local community and identifies the steps mentioned in the conflict ladder.
General discussion (30 minutes): Each group presents the conflict it chose and analyzes it through the steps of the conflict ladder with the guidance of the trainer.

Polarisation

Open hostility

Images of hostility

Dialogue is abandoned

The problem grows

Personification

Disagreement

The interface of coflict

CONFLICT ESCALATION

Polarization
"Let's get away from here"

Open Hostility
"The end justifies the means"

Enemy images
"They're just no good"

Dialogue is abandoned
"What's the use"

The problem expands
"This is not the first time, do you remember when..."

Personification
"It's your fault"

Disagreement
"We see things differently"

The Danish Centre for Conflict Resolution

2) Online conflict drivers and characteristics

Electronic devices are one of the most important things today, representing a means for dialogue. The rapid technological advancement, such as televisions, recorders, laptops, mobile phones and others, has affected how people live and interact. These new technologies have become essential for entertainment, mainly for children and teenagers. One of the advantages of electronic devices is the ability to talk to people from all over the world and connect with them easily and regularly. Some young men and women say they are more confident connecting to people online than offline because it is easier for others to accept them without the need to reveal their real identity.
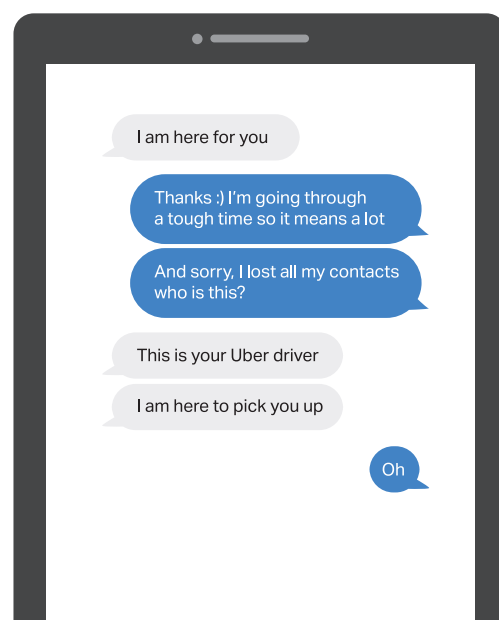
Teenagers are now able to access the internet in an increasing and rapid way through computers and mobile phones, which expanded their knowledge about many topics. But this has posed many risks, particularly when it comes to this age group. The use of technology has given rise to the so-called "online conflicts", a form of violence committed on social media such as harassment, teasing, slander, bullying, ridicule, abusive or offensive comments, threats, and rumors.

Modern technology has allowed users to hide their identity online and send anonymous messages under pseudonym so victims of cyberviolence may not know the identity of the person communicating with them.

We cannot explain the reasons behind the heightened online conflict without understanding its drivers, namely:

- Absence of visual and auditory cues: When we talk to someone in person, we see their facial expressions, their body language, and hear their tone of voice. Someone can say the exact same thing in a number of different ways, and that usually effects how we respond. How we feel, interpret, and respond to someone›s message often depends on how they speak to us, even when it›s a difficult message to hear. In online communications, we have no visual or auditory cues to help us to decipher the intent, meaning, and tone of the messenger. All we have are the words on a computer screen, and how we hear those words in our head.

I am here for you

Thanks :) I'm going through a tough time so it means a lot

And sorry, I lost all my contacts who is this?

This is your Uber driver

I am here to pick you up

Oh

- **Motives and expectations:** All our online communications are based on expectations. We perceive the world through our expectations, needs, desires, fantasies, and feelings, and we project those onto other people. We build expectations and assumptions from our life experiences: How do others treat us? How are the people who matter in our lives acting? How do we feel? We project our feelings and perception of the important people in our lives onto others. To take a look at your own projections or transference with people online, think back to the last time you felt angry at someone online. How did you react? Was your reaction influenced by someone or something from your past?

- **Personal reasons:** We are different human beings with unique personalities and this what makes the online community very interesting. But our different personalities and communication styles might lead to a clash and this depends on the values and opinions shared by the users.

- **Environmental reasons:** The societal environment could create some difficulties sometimes. For example, the lack of physical contact in a certain environment could negatively impact the mood and tone of the user. There may be challenges preventing individuals to say things in person, so they find it easier to express them on social media.

- **Emotional reasons:** Historical and personal conflicts among individuals might be reflected on the internet, leading to religious, sectarian, national or political prejudice.

Cyberviolence: Definition and types

Cyberbullying: It refers to any form of bullying which takes place online and it takes shape in more ways than one. It includes sending insulting or intimidating messages, publishing or republishing rumors, revealing personal information or embarrassing photos, or excluding others.

Cyberdating or Cyberstalking: Data on online dating and cyberstalking reveals that women are at a greater risk than men to attract online sexual bullies and predators.

Bullying: The phenomenon of bullying involves a lot of hatred and in some cases, it has fatal consequences. You can read a lot of news related to the suicide of a teenager here or a young woman there as a result of different bullying campaigns orchestrated by false or real accounts. These campaigns focus on destroying the person who is different and the difference here could only be a matter of a different opinion.

The term "cyberbullying" has emerged with the advent of digital media, particularly social media. There are many definitions of bullying and they all agree that it is a type of hostile behavior towards an individual or group by an authoritarian group that wants to control others and unlawfully impose its opinions through various social media sites. A remarkable fraction of social media users is engaged in this hostile behavior.

Cyberbullying is "a form of online harassment or dominance through instant messages, e-mails, chat rooms, or social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter. It aims at harassing, threatening, or intimidating someone." For example, it has been reported that the young generation is bullying those infected with Covid-19 on social media, or whoever is suspected of being infected. They ridiculed them and hurled accusations, using special terminologies and expressions when talking about those who contracted the virus or are in quarantine.

Types of cyberbullying:
1. **Voice calls:** Through phones, other means of communication, and chat rooms, to insult or threaten users.
2. **Text or audio messages:** To threaten, divulge secrets, or blackmail.
3. **Posting photos and videos:** By taking photos and videos and sharing them online.
4. **Hacking online accounts:** The aim is to seize information.
5. **Harassment**

[13] العزيـز بـن عبـد الكريـم المصطفـى، دوافـع التّنمّـر الإلكترونـي لـدى أطفـال المنطقـة الشـرقية بالمملكـة العربيـة السـعودية، مجلـة العلـوم التربويـة والنفسـية، مركـز النشـر العلمـى، جامعـة البحريـن، ع ٣ ،(مـج ١٨) ٢٠١٧، ص٢٤٧) .

Exercise: An imprint in my life

Objective: Break the barrier of fear, build trust with the trainer, and express feelings through opening up about personal experiences. Reinforce the strengths of the trainee, which boosts self-confidence and promotes a positive behavior.

Outcomes:
- Boost self-confidence
- Be able to express and face one's fears
- Acquire the ability to engage in a positive dialogue and face incidents of cyberbullying
- Be able to protect oneself from messages sent by others

Requirements: Two-color sticky notes, pens, and a large board.

Duration: 60 minutes.

Procedure:

First round: The trainer starts the exercise by asking the participants to write about themselves by completing the following sentences:

- I am a brave person because I have acted………………………………………..
- I am a good friend because…………………………………………………………………
- I am able to make decisions because I………………………………………………..
- People love me and care about me because……………………………………
- I am able to be happy because…………………………………………………………..

Second round: It is based on sharing experiences, where each participant writes down a positive message they received online and left a lasting imprint (every participant chooses one positive message with the most impact)

Participants are divided into groups, expressing their feelings after reading the messages through answering the following questions:

- How did you feel when you read the message?
- How did you react?
- How would you have preferred to act?
- How would you act today?
- How did your life change after receiving this message?

Third round: Each group presents to the wider group the three most important messages with the most positive impact and then the trainer opens the floor for analysis, discussions, and conclusions.

Hate Speech Drivers and Their Role in the Heightened Conflict

- **Echo Chambers:** The term is a metaphor and refers to situations in which ideas, opinions, and beliefs are amplified and reinforced by communication and repetition inside a closed system and insulated from rebuttal. In echo chambers, opposing opinions are not discussed but rather rejected and rebutted. A lot of people are involved in echo chambers, engaging in discussions happening on news websites and smaller discussions among peers on social media. Echo chambers are comfortable because it is easier to discuss ideas with people we agree with than those we don't. But echo chambers could be often harmful and deepen the social divide and political polarization through reducing interaction with those we disagree with or have different backgrounds. They could also limit our understanding of the others' opinions and prevents us from sympathizing with them.

- **Filter bubbles:** Filter bubbles refer to the results of the algorithms that dictate what we encounter online. While they might help direct users to the content they are looking for, they separate users from information that disagrees with their viewpoints, effectively isolating them in their own cultural or ideological bubbles they hide any information that does not fit the users' points of view.

- **Stereotypes:** It is an over-generalized belief about a particular category of people, often relying on predetermined stereotypes assuming that the characteristics of one person may apply to those of others who might have commonalities with that person such as race, religion, gender, social class, or sexual orientation. When we use stereotypes, we limit individualism and adopt a list of characteristics that are easy to fit into one particularly category, leading to bias which is often manipulated by the media, politicians, extremists, or even friends for political or social agendas. Stereotypes negatively affect the cohesion of the society and push individuals towards polarization and the use of the "we" pronoun both online and in real life. The purpose is to mobilize people, leading individuals to have double standards towards the creator of the content. The "we" versus "they" division exists in social, sports, and other aspects of life, but when it moves to social media, it affects the cohesion of the society and foments hatred within our communities.

- **Racism:** Discrimination against an individual or group on the basis of religion, race, gender, and sexual orientations among others. It is one of the leading reasons for prejudice and intolerance and generates hate within the same community.

3) Online Conflict Analysis: Why is it Important and How Do We Conduct It?

To deal with an online conflict in an effective manner, the interlocutor needs to conduct a deep analysis of the reasons that sparked the conflict. Analysis is integral to understand the situation. If information is available, analysis is better conducted before or during the dialogue. Conflict analysis aims at reaching a deeper understanding of the nature of the conflict. It is an inevitable exercise in the mediation process. The process of conflict analysis is not restricted to collecting data and evidence on the conflict, but also includes analyzing and evaluating the information and evidence.

What do we mean by the conflict analysis process?
The process of conflict analysis is an applied process to understand the reality of the conflict and examine it from different perspectives. This understanding is imperative for the interlocutor to start analyzing the conflict.

Conflict analysis tools
Conflict analysis tools help understand the causes of the conflict, identify the parties, primary and secondary groups involved, understand perspectives, and identify the trends and factors driving the conflict.

Content analysis helps:

- Understand the causes and history of the conflict and stay on top of the current events.
- Understand the perspectives of the conflicting parties and the dynamics of their relations.
- Identify the trends and dynamics driving the conflict.
- Learn from past failures, as well as successes.
- Create an intervention strategy that is appropriate to the type and context of the conflict.

4) Resolving the Online Conflict and Creating Content to Mitigate It

What can be done to prevent unnecessary conflict in cyberspace? The following are tips for handling conflict online with respect, sensitivity, and care:

- **Do not respond right away:** When you feel hurt or angry about an email or post, it is best not to respond right away. You may want to write a response immediately, to get it off your chest, but don›t hit send! Wait 24 hours before responding - sleep on it and then reread and rewrite your response the next day.

- Read the post again later: Sometimes, your first reaction to a post is a lot about how you are feeling at the time. Reading it later, and sometimes a few times, can bring a new perspective. You might even experiment by reading it with different tones to see if it could have been written with a different tone in mind than the one you initially heard.

- Discuss the situation with someone you know: Ask them what they think about the post and the response you plan to send. Having input from others who are hopefully more objective can help you to step back from the situation and look at it differently.

- Choose whether or not you want to respond: You do have a choice, and you do not have to respond. You may be too upset to respond in the way that you would like, or it may not be worthy of a response. If the post is accusatory or inflammatory and the person's style tends to be aggressive or bullying, the best strategy is to ignore them. some people pick fights no matter how kind and patient you are with them. They distort what you say, quote you out of context, and make all sorts of accusations all to vilify and antagonize you. Do not take the "bait" by engaging in a struggle with them - they will never stop. Sometimes, the best strategy is to have nothing more to do with someone.

- Explain what you mean: We all misinterpret what we hear and read, particularly when we feel hurt or upset. It is a good idea to check out that you understood them correctly. For example, you could ask, «When you said…did you mean…or, what did you mean by…» Or, «when you said…I heard…is that what you meant?» Often times, what we think someone said is not even close to what they meant to say. Give them the benefit of the doubt and the chance to be clear about what they meant.

- Think about what you want to achieve from your communication: Why are you trying to connect with this person? What is the message you hope to convey? Consider how you can convey that. Here are some examples:
• "I want to understand what you are saying".
• "I feel hurt because of what you said".
• "I want to speak about it to get it off my chest".
• "I want to find a way to resolve this. I understand we do not agree on everything but that is okay. I want to speak about how I felt when I read your post".

Accept ✔   Decline ✖
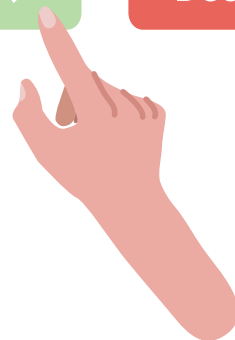
- **Use "I" statement":** When sharing your feelings or thoughts, use the first-person singular pronoun. For example: "You made me feel." Use strong feeling statements to express your feeling of pain, sadness, fear, anger, happiness, guilt, or regret. In everyday conversations, we describe our feelings differently than this. For example, we say that we felt attacked, threatened, unsafe, or punched in the stomach. When the person we are upset with is not present, or able to read our words, this is an understandable way to express the full depth of our feelings and experience.

- **Choose your words carefully and thoughtfully,** especially when you are upset. Do your best to keep in mind that the other person will read your post alone. You are not physically or virtually present with them to explain what you mean. They must rely entirely on your words to interpret your meaning, intent, and tone. This is why it is important to choose your words carefully and thoughtfully. You can still be real and honest while being selective.

- **Place yourself in the other person's shoes:** How might they read your message? To avoid unnecessary conflict or a lot of hurt feelings, it helps to take into account who you›re writing to. One person might be able to hear you say it exactly how you think it, and another person would be threatened by that style of communication. Think about the other person when writing your email or post. Do your best to communicate in a way that is respectful, sensitive, and clear to them.

- **Do not make things personal:** Do not use "you said, you did" when speaking with others. Talk about the incident itself and avoid accusing the other person.

- **Use emoticons to express your tone:** In online communication, visual and auditory cues are replaced by emoticons, for example, smiles, winks, and laughter.

- **Start and end your engagement with positive, assertive, and validating statements:** Say what you agree with, what you understand about how they feel, and any other positive statements at the beginning of your email. This helps set a positive tone. End on a positive note as well. If you come across any content that promotes hate speech, try to reduce the number of times you watch it and focus on positive alternatives.
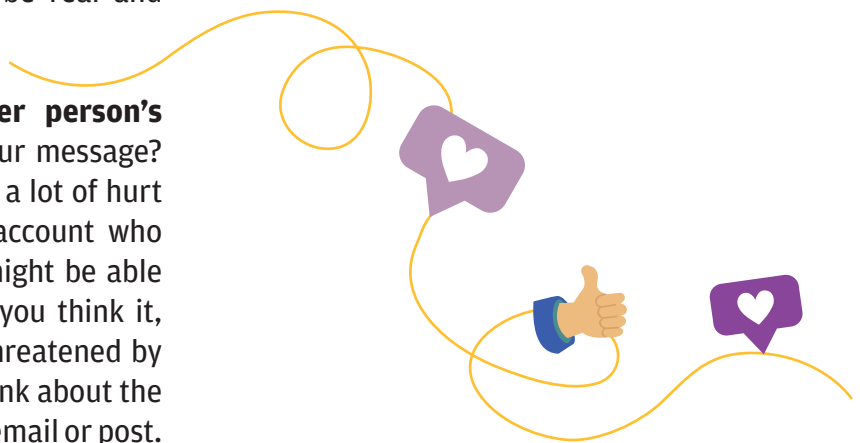
Negotiations and Other Approaches to Conflict Resolution

1. Negotiation: It is the effort undertaken by both parties of the conflict to reach an agreement that achieves their interests. It is considered a good first step in many types of conflicts.

Negotiation has four main pillars:
• Focusing on the interests of both sides: Focusing on one position and emphasizing it, while ignoring the interests of the feuding parties, leads to a dead end or a solution that does not satisfy all the parties. A conflict will be reignited because the parties in question are not happy about the solution.
• Presenting many options and perspectives before reaching an agreement.
• Separating the people from the problem: The feuding parties must be reminded to cooperate to face the problem instead of attacking one another.
• Identifying a fair measure to approach the solution agreed upon by the feuding sides. This measure must be based on a specific law or the opinion of an experienced person.

Qualities of a good negotiator:
• Starts the negotiations with an open mind that is able to contain all the parties of the conflict.
• Is a good listener, manifests a good approach towards the conflict, and abstains from attacking the feuding parties.
• Organizes the points of negotiations according to their importance.
• Maintains objectivity in approaching all issues.
• Comes up with innovative solutions and does not hold onto his / her positions if there are other acceptable alternatives.
• Realizes that the negotiation process is based on many strategies and skills that no one can dictate. He / she owns the process and is solely in charge of choosing the appropriate strategies and means to lead the negotiations to success.

Exercise: Resolving a conflict through negotiations: X and Y
Objective: Training participants on the art of negotiation
Outcomes: Discovering the importance and effectiveness of successful negotiation and negative impact of unsuccessful negotiation.
Requirements: Papers and a large board to calculate points.
Duration: 60 to 90 minutes.

The trainer begins by explaining the objectives of the exercise and mentions that they will adopt a strategy that will help the team earn the highest number of points. Then, they divide the participants (15 to 20 on average) into four groups. The following must be explained:

- Each group will decide to choose X or Y in each of the nine rounds.
- Each group will assign a negotiator and negotiations will kick off during the following rounds (9 ,8 ,7 ,5 ,3), provided that each round lasts for up to five minutes.
- After the delegates assigned by each group start negotiating, each group should decide (with the negotiator) if it will choose X or Y. Negotiations within the groups must be confidential and in isolation of other groups.
- At the end of every round, the trainer writes the chosen letter on the board allowing the groups to calculate the score.
- The following table is used according to the letters chosen by the competing groups. For example: If all the groups chose letter X, each group gets five points, and so on.
- The trainer should keep the environment competitive and exciting.

Round	Team A	Team B	Team C	Team D
1				
2				
3 (negotiations *2)				
4				
5 (negotiations)				
6				
(negotiations) 7				
(negotiations) 8				
(negotiations 10) 9				

At the end of the exercise, the trainer discusses with the participants their observations from this exercise. Examples of important questions to ask: What have we learned from this exercise? Is the process of negotiation easy or complicated and why? Why did the negotiators fail to do the job? What are the criteria for successful negotiation?

XXXX X = +5
XXXY X = -10; Y = +30
XXYY X = -20; Y = +20
XYYY X = -30; Y = +10
YYYY Y = -50 points

Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding Principles

Cooperating: An attempt to find a solution that benefits both parties. Cooperation should be done at the level of information sharing so both parties could find some middle ground and potential solutions that satisfy them both. Under cooperation comes negotiation, mediation, arbitration, and dialogue.

Avoiding: An attempt to simplify the conflict or reject all possible solutions. For example, in a workplace conflict, people would try to arrange their workspace or duties in a way that limits interaction with their colleagues.

Competing: An attempt to win at the expense of the other party based on "win at everything".

Accommodating: This principle means caring about the interests of the other party and making concessions limitedly or unlimitedly.

Compromising: An attempt to reach common ground with the other party through midway solutions where each party concedes some aspects of their desires.

Experts in conflict management developed a simplified model that shows the wins and losses for each conflict management style, according to two variables. The first variable is how much the parties care about themselves and the second is how much they care about others. Peacebuilding activists believe that a win-win scenario is achieved through a conflict management style that attaches importance to oneself and others. This could be achieved through mediation and dialogue as well as some cooperative negotiation styles.
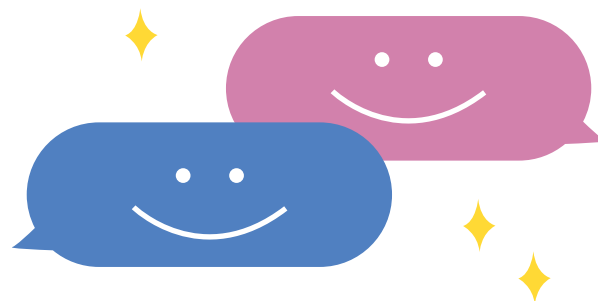
Exercise: Online conflict management styles

Objective: Train participants on discovering the strengths and weaknesses of the styles above.

Outcomes: Accepting differences in characters when dealing with conflicts.

Requirements: A copy of "discover your style" questionnaire.

Duration: 60 minutes.

You enter a clothing store to buy a trouser and a shirt. The vendor asks for $20 and you have several options. Try to think about these options to discover the style of each option according to the below table:

	Option	Cooperating I win / you win	Competing I win / you lose	Compromising I win / you win I lose/ you lose	Avoiding I lose / you lose	Accommodating I lose / you win
1	You agree without negotiating because the store manager is your friend					
2	You manage to bring down the price to 17$ after negotiating					
3	You leave the store without any negotiation although you know you can get a better price					
4	You buy the clothes for 7$ because you have some important information about the store owner					
5	You buy the clothes for 14$ because he wants you to become a loyal customer and keep coming back					

5) Strategies for Conflict Transformation and Dealing with Hate Speech on Social Media

Jean Paul Lederach provides the following definition for conflict transformation:

Conflict transformation is to envision and respond to the ebb and flow of social conflict as life-giving opportunities for creating constructive change processes that reduce violence, increase justice in direct interaction and social structures, and respond to real-life problems in human relationships.

A transformational perspective is built upon two foundations:
      1. A capacity to envision conflict positively
      2. A willingness to respond in ways that maximize this potential for positive change.
As we all know too well, many times a conflict results in long-standing cycles of hurt and destruction. But the key to transformation is a proactive bias toward seeing conflict as a potential catalyst for growth. Interaction is pivotal for sustainable relationships which can be normal and calm at times and strained and unstable at other times. Therefore, a conflict transformation vision is based on a broad and comprehensive probe into various situations and their impact on human relations rather than examining each case separately.

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Exercise 1#: Hate speech
Objective: To identify the consequences of hate speech.
Outcomes: Help participants understand the risks associated with hate speech.
Requirements: Ensure all participants have internet access.
Duration: 60 to 90 minutes.

In addition to the hate triangle:
- Hate speech may raise fears of intolerance.
- Laws may be enacted to limit hate speech to safeguard
  the rights of individuals and protect them against libel,
   slander, and defamation.
- Discrimination or violence
- Incitement to genocide and other acts of violence.

Teamwork:
The trainer divides the participants into two groups and provides them with tweets / posts and links to videos that feature hate speech and highlight how this speech stirred up a conflict. You may choose religious, racist, or other forms of hate speech.
The trainer asks the participants to extract the words or phrases that fall under the following:
- Feelings / needs / wants / opinions
The trainer asks the participants to refer to the accounts of the users who spread hate speech.
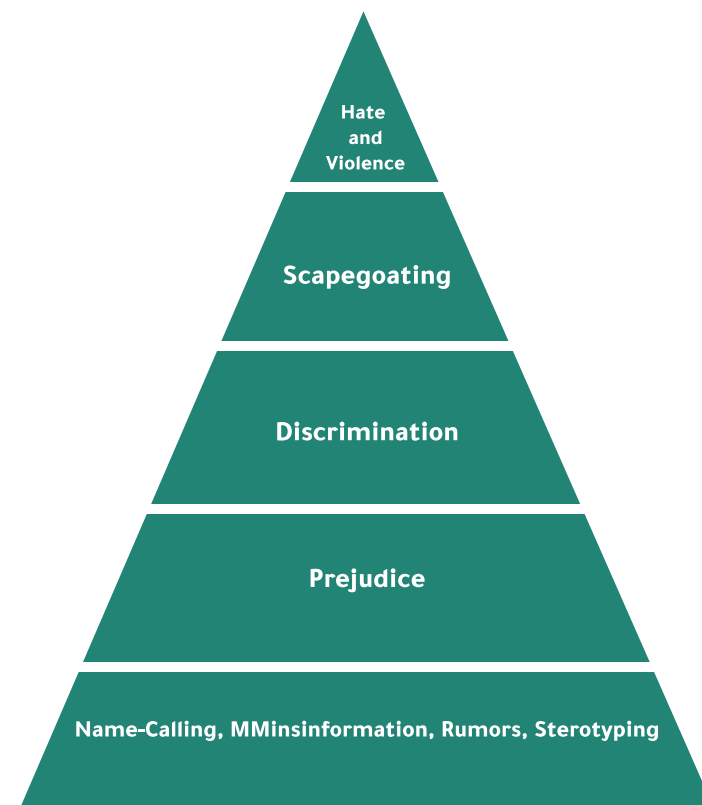
Discussion:
Hate speech may take many forms. The following must be considered to determine hate speech:
- Who is spreading hate speech?
- What are the topics in question?
- What is the purpose of the rhetoric (manipulation, political agenda, extremism, gender-based violence, discrimination...)?

"Pyramide of hate" 2000 by the Anti- Defamation League

6) Summary of Section Three in Five Key Points

1- An effective approach to conflict management and cyberviolence should be based on a deep analysis of the conflict, which leads to a deep understanding of the nature of the conflict itself.

2- Cyberviolence is driven by many reasons and has overlapping dynamics, including the existential dynamic of the user, their expectations, the emotional state, and the environment.

3- Social media communication is characterized by anonymity. The user's identity is concealed, and interaction might stop at any time. Users might also believe the interaction is just a fantasy.

4- To reduce the impact of hate speech on social media, users must read the post very well, exercise prudence, ask questions, and discuss before responding if necessary.

5- Negotiation and mediation are crucial to resolve an online conflict and counter hate speech. However, no approach can replace focus, self-awareness, high sense of responsibility, and self-empowerment to separate the people from the problem.

Exercise: Wrap-up exercise
Using LARP (live action role-playing game) in online dialogue

Objective: Highlight the risks of bullying and misinformation
Outcomes: Allow participants to feel the pain and challenges which those who face bullying and misinformation go through.
Requirements: Role-playing printouts and traditional customs if available.
Duration: 90 to 12 minutes.

LARP definition

LARP is an acronym that stands for "Live Action Role Playing" which means "improvised role-play". The game allows the participants to impersonate any character and live in the same conditions. It has many applications that we will delve into at a later stage.
LARP first appeared in the 1970s and gained a lot of popularity in the 1980s, especially in the Scandinavian countries. It emerged in some Arab countries after 2007.

LARP applications

LARP is an effective method to promote dialogue and enhance education, as it creates an appropriate environment allowing participants to develop their ability to communicate, engage in discussions, and make decisions. It is also used in extracurricular activities and social activities that help individuals break the routine.

What is the difference between LARP and theatre?

There is neither a script nor an audience in LARP. Any person can be involved in LARP without previous experience. It is up to the player to choose the character and make the appropriate decisions based on the rules of the game. The LARP game can last from a few hours to a few days.

Attributes of the game

- Promoting understanding: It allows participants to build on the ideas of others and live their experiences other from their perspective no matter how different they are.
- Objective-driven: Every participant has a specific goal to achieve, making it a game-based learning exercise.
- Interactive: It allows all participants to work in groups to interact with the characters they choose to impersonate.
- Testing theories: LARP games are used as a research tool to test social or legal theories as they are performed in an artificial and controlled environment.

Game Elements

- The people who run the game (facilitators) but do not participate in the role-play: They could be a group of people or one person. They supervise the course of the game, distribute the characters, and direct the game towards the desired goal be it entertaining or educational. The number of facilitators is determined by the game, scenario, and goal.

- Players: The group of people who play the roles and each of them has some general guidelines that determine the character. The number of players is determined by the details of the game and they follow the directions of the facilitators.

- Setting: Some narratives require special settings, such as a garden, empty square, hall, or home.

- Game duration: It usually ranges from 30 minutes to a few days (the facilitator determines the duration of the game).

- Age group of participants: The ages of participants must be determined. Some narratives require adults.

- The story: Defining the game and objectives.

- Instructions of the facilitator: This is a set of instructions used by the facilitator to explain how to assign characters and kick start the game in addition to the duration and directions such as: Keep the voice down and avoid insults and any type of harassment, among others. The instructions of the facilitator must also explain the assignment of characters and any other important details.

- Instructions for players: A set of plots and scenarios related to the main story. They explain the qualifications and role of every player and their relationship with the other characters. They also explain the directions that should be followed during the game. Each player must follow the instructions mentioned in the manual distributed before the game. The facilitator determines if these instructions are confidential or if the participants can disclose them to each other.

- Game scenarios: They refer to the scenarios applied in the game. They are read by the facilitator to the participants before the start of the game. The facilitator may tend to divide the game into many scenarios and read them before the game starts. He may also choose to finish one scenario at a time and move on to the next scenario and so on.

- Refresher exercises: Before starting any game, especially if the participants are playing for the first time, the facilitator creates a set of warm-up activities to create a positive atmosphere.

- Debriefing: When the game comes to an end, start a debrief activity. Ask participants questions such as: How did you feel while playing the roles in the game? What do you think of the methods used in the game?

- Rituals: The atmosphere of the game. Some games need background music while others need a night or day ambiance.

- Customs: Some games require traditional customs, and some characters need a special dress code that is appropriate to the game.

- Ice-breaker exercises: In some games, participants do not know each other. It is therefore necessary to initiate some ice-breaker exercises before the game. (The game must start after concluding the training on online dialogue so ice-breaking exercises might not be necessary).

Game techniques

The facilitator can use different techniques to fulfill the objective of the game. Examples of some techniques:

1) Interruption and guidance: The facilitator can interrupt a scene during the game to direct attention and motivate the players. He / she can say (CUT). Participants must stop when they hear this phrase and pay attention to what the facilitator is saying. The purpose is to shed light on an important idea or scene in the game. Then, the facilitator can say "please proceed".

2) Shadowing: The facilitator can direct the game without interruption by intervening in some discussions or scenes to whisper or use sign language. The facilitator can wear a special dress code provided it is distinguished from the colors of the participants' customs.

The game...

«"All means are permitted to get Abir back"»

Number of players: At least six players in addition to the facilitator. In addition, more than six people can be involved in the discussions.

Duration: One hour.

Requirements: Pens, presentation papers, and glue.

Game manual

- At the beginning of the game, the facilitator explains the meaning of the LARP game as summarized above.
- Each participant writes his / her own post on the presentation sheets and pastes them on the wall under the main post of the facilitator. No one is allowed to talk during the game and participants can only express themselves by writing on the sheets. Participants are free to express themselves in their posts in line with the plot for every character.
- The facilitator shades profanity in the posts of the characters to discuss them after the game comes to an end.
- The facilitator distributes the characters and plots to the participants and the participants are not allowed to see each other's plots.
The game starts when the facilitator writes a post on a board that includes pictures of Abir Al-Jabali singing at the university.
"The sweet and beautiful Abir Al-Jabali, whose voice impressed the people at the university and who appeared in the Miss Universe show. Congratulate Abir and encourage her
to continue performing".
Only the facilitator has access to the "inbox" and whenever any character wants to send a message to another character, he / she must hand over the written message to the facilitator. The latter passes on the message to the other character. Each message must include the sender and recipient names.

Read the story to all participants in the game

Abir is a rural girl who comes from a conservative traditional family. She is an overachiever graduating with a high GPA from high school. She wanted to get into medical school, but her parents tried to stop her. But then a few influential figures from her village interfered to convince her parents otherwise. Because there are no female gynecologists in her village, her parents finally allowed her to study medicine.

Though Abir chose to put away her traditional clothing while she was at the university, she still wore it whenever she visited her parents in the village.
Abir has a soft and sweet voice so she participated in the university's signing contest and but hid it from her parents. She won the contest and came first, so a Facebook page of a local TV channel posted photos and videos of Abir singing at the university.

Characters

-The characters of the story should not be read out to the participants. Rather, each participant gets the character assigned to them, so they do not know each other's characters.

1. Abir Al-Jabali: She is the main character of the story. She appears in the dialogue as if she does not want the participants to speak about her or mention any information about her village. She is afraid of her parents' reaction when they see her photos on Facebook. Abir fell in love with her colleague, Ibrahim. But she broke up with him because he mistreated her. Abir files a complaint against "Malik Al-Ihsas" because he publishes posts that offends her.

2. Ibrahim Al-Wadi: He has two Facebook accounts, one under a pseudonym "Malik Al-Ihsas" and another under his real name. Ibrahim fell in love with Abir who broke up with him because he mistreated her, so he tries to take revenge through publishing posts under his Malik Al-Ihsas account. He publishes religious quotes such as "a woman must stay at home" and "a woman's voice is awrah" [awrah is a term used within Islam which denotes the intimate parts of the body, which must not be exposed. Exposing the awrah is unlawful in Islam and is regarded as sin]. He misleads the participants in the discussion by providing false information about Abir and criticizing her clothing. He also tries to publish posts that grab the attention of the administrators of other Facebook pages affiliated with the village that Abir comes from so they could republish and share. He wants to harm her relationship with her parents. Malik Al-Ihsas sends private messages to Ruba who commented on the posts, telling her that Abir is from that village and her parents are against her appearance on the theatre and TV. For Malik Al-Ihsas, "the ends justify the means" and "everything is permissible to get Abir back".

Malik Al-Ihsas also sends a message to Rabih Al-Sahl saying: "The girl from your village is getting undressed and exposing herself on the university's theatre". Ibrahim tries to send private messages to Abir from his real account saying that her parents have seen these posts and that she should come back to him because he will protect her if her parents or the people of her village threaten her. (These private messages are sent to the facilitator of the game secretly so the latter hands them over to the characters).

3. Ruba Al-Afandi: A girl who studies at the same university. She is not friends with Abir but she is very jealous of her. Ruba publishes posts on the Facebook page affiliated the local TV channel, criticizing Abir's voice and mocking her dress code. Ruba is from the city and is very jealous of successful rural women. She is influenced by the messages sent by Malik Al-Ihsas and uses them in her Facebook posts that are mostly defamatory.

4. Taysir Al-Hakim: A democratic-oriented young man who encourages women to perform on theatre. His posts promote reason and dialogue and tries to convince Rabih Al-Sahl that Abir is a source of pride and honor for her entire village which will one day become a famous destination for visitors because Abir's voice will reach out to the entire world. He also tries to explain that singing does not in any way undermine a woman's honor.

5. Rabih Al-Sahl: He comes from the same village Abir comes from. He was surprised with photos posted by Malik Al-Ihsas showing Abir singing at the university. He commented saying this is a disgrace for the village and brings so much shame. Rabih interacts with the posts of Malik Al-Ihsas and endorses him in his own posts.

6. Naji Greis: A policeman who works in combating cybercrimes. He receives Abir's complaint against Malik Al-Ihsas and starts an investigation to reveal the real identity of Malik Al-Ihsas.

The end of the game

When Naji Greis concludes the investigation, he announces that Malik Al-Ihsas is actually Ibrahim Al-Wadi, Abir's ex-boyfriend.
After that, the facilitator discusses the scenario and draws the attention of the participants to the terminology used in the dialogue.

Source: (The Palestinian Larp Organization).

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