



Online Hate and Harassment:

The American
Experience 2022

Online harassment remains unacceptably high for Jews,
women, Asian Americans, and other targeted groups

ADL[®]

CENTER FOR
TECHNOLOGY
& SOCIETY

Our Mission

To stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment to all.

ABOUT

CENTER FOR TECHNOLOGY & SOCIETY

Launched in 2017, ADL's Center for Technology and Society (CTS) leads the global fight against online hate and harassment. In a world riddled with antisemitism, bigotry, extremism, and disinformation, CTS acts as a fierce advocate for making digital spaces safe, respectful and equitable for all people.

CTS plays a unique role in civil society by recommending policy and product interventions to elected officials and technology companies to mitigate online hate and harassment; driving advocacy efforts to hold platforms accountable and to educate their staff on current threats and challenges; producing data-driven applied research by analysts and a network of fellows, shedding new light on the nature and impact of hate and harassment on vulnerable and marginalized communities; developing tools and products that provide much needed data measurement and analysis to track identity-based online hate and harassment; and empowering targets of harassment by responding to online incidents and working with platforms to create safer online spaces for all.

ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE

ADL is a leading anti-hate organization that was founded in 1913 in response to an escalating climate of antisemitism and bigotry. Today, ADL is the first call when acts of antisemitism occur and continues to fight all forms of hate. A global leader in exposing extremism, delivering anti-bias education and fighting hate online, ADL's ultimate goal is a world in which no group or individual suffers from bias, discrimination or hate.



ADL (Anti-Defamation League) fights antisemitism and promotes justice for all. Join ADL to give a voice to those without one and to protect our civil rights.

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
OVERVIEW: HATE-BASED HARASSMENT REMAINS HIGH	8
FINDINGS: ADULTS 18+	10
FINDINGS: YOUTH 17-13	42
METHODOLOGY	50
CONCLUSION: LITTLE PROGRESS	51
RECOMMENDATIONS	53
FOR TECH COMPANIES	53
FOR GOVERNMENT	55
SUPPORT	57
TAKE ACTION	58

Executive Summary

Each year, ADL conducts a nationally representative survey of hate and harassment online to find out how many Americans¹ experience incidents of hate and abuse on social media. Our fourth survey finds that harassment remains unacceptably prevalent, despite platforms' efforts to curb it. Marginalized or targeted groups experience online harassment based on their identity at disproportionately high levels.

Harassment targeting marginalized people because of their identity constitutes hate-based harassment, typically for someone's gender, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender-identity, physical

appearance, or disability. Hate-based harassment can drive marginalized groups out of online spaces, further undermining democracy and free speech as these spaces become central to public discourse.

This year, ADL has added a separate survey of youth ages 13-17. This, as far as we know, is the first nationally representative survey in the U.S. of young people's experiences of hate and harassment on social media. Last year, ADL surveyed youth ages 13-17 for its annual survey on users' experiences of hate and harassment while playing online multiplayer games.²

¹ All respondents were based in the United States, and the survey was conducted in English.

² <https://www.adl.org/resources/report/hate-no-game-harassment-and-positive-social-experiences-online-games-2021>



KEY FINDINGS

Hate-based harassment, which targets people because of their membership in a marginalized or minoritized identity group, remains high: Such harassment among marginalized groups held steady at 65%, the same figure as the previous year.³ 58% of marginalized people reported hate-based harassment in the past 12 months, comparable to 58% in 2021.⁴

LGBTQ+ respondents were more likely than any other group surveyed to experience harassment: 66% compared to 38% of non-LGBTQ+ respondents. 53% of LGBTQ+ respondents attributed the harassment to their sexual orientation.

Asian Americans reported a dramatic increase in harassment, from 21% in 2021 to 39% in 2022, paralleling the rise in anti-Asian hate incidents offline. This increase follows a spike the previous year in severe harassment toward Asian Americans (17% in 2021, up from 11% in 2020). In 2022, Asian Americans were more likely than non-Asian Americans to report experiencing sustained harassment (18% compared to 11%). 53% attributed the harassment to their race or ethnicity (compared to 23% of non-Asian Americans).

Women were harassed far more than men:

- Women were more than twice as likely to report ever experiencing sexual harassment online as men were (14% versus 5%).
- 40% of women attributed the harassment to their gender (versus 14% of men). Among non-white women, 81% attributed being harassed to aspects of their identity (versus 61% of white women).

Harassment over time has hardly budged:

Overall, online harassment ever experienced has held steady since 2020, with 40% of respondents reporting some type of harassment in 2022 compared to 41% in 2021 and 44% in 2020. These slight declines are within the yearly margin of plus or minus 2%.

Harassment in the past 12 months declined slightly: 23% experienced some type of online harassment in the past 12 months, down 5 points from 2021 (28%).

Rate of severe harassment has not declined significantly: Defined as physical threats, sustained harassment, stalking, sexual harassment, doxing, and/or swatting, severe harassment of some kind was reported by 27% of respondents, the same as in 2021. In the past 12 months, 12% reported severe harassment compared to 14% the previous year.

Jewish respondents were more likely than non-Jewish respondents to attribute harassment to their religion: 37% compared to 14% of non-Jews. In addition, 64% attributed the harassment to their political views compared to 43% of non-Jews.

Harassment took place primarily on Facebook (68% to date, 57% in the past 12 months), followed by Instagram (26% lifetime, 27% in the past 12 months), then Twitter (23% lifetime, 21% in the past 12 months).

A fifth (20%) of those harassed or worried about harassment reported feeling anxious or having trouble sleeping and concentrating, while 22% were worried about being harassed, threatened, or otherwise targeted online in the future. LGBTQ+ respondents were disproportionately likely (38%) to experience sleeping loss, difficulty concentrating, or anxiety, and to be worried about future harassment (45%).

Nearly half (47%) of youth ages 13-17 reported ever experiencing some type of harassment, and more than a third (36%) in the past 12 months. Youth experienced hate-based harassment at a higher rate than adults: 72% of marginalized youth reported being harassed because of an aspect of their identity, compared to 46% of non-marginalized youth.⁵

³ Unless otherwise specified, harassment refers to lifetime harassment, that is, harassment experienced to date.

⁴ Hate-based harassment is defined as harassment targeting marginalized people for an aspect of their identity including gender, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical appearance, or disability.

⁵ The base size for non-marginalized youth was 48, so interpret these results with caution.



“ I am a published scholar of contemporary Jewish life. It is easy for anyone who wants to harass me to find my contact information, and as a result, I probably average 2-3 death threats a year via email and have to constantly block trolls on social media.

– 43-year-old politically very liberal, straight white Jewish man

ADL's RECOMMENDATIONS

Tech companies must:

01

Institute public-facing community guidelines that address hateful content and harassing behavior, clearly defining consequences for violations. They must also be clear about substantive changes or exceptions to their guidelines.

02

Regularly evaluate and report publicly on how social media platforms fuel discrimination, bias, and hate, and then make product or policy improvements based on these evaluations. Despite what tech companies claim, having millions or even billions of users is not among the primary problems—defective policies, bad products, and subpar enforcement are, along with a business model that rewards optimizing for engagement.

03

Work with communities targeted by harassment to design product features and policies that will reduce the influence and impact of hate in ways most helpful to those directly targeted (e.g., redesigning social media platforms, adjusting algorithms).

04

Expand tools and services for targets of harassment, ensuring that social media platforms are easily accessible and effective for those facing or fearing an online attack. Such tools can include the ability to report batches of violative content and block multiple perpetrators simultaneously, an abuse-report tracking portal, and real-time rapid-response support.

05

Consistently produce comprehensive transparency reports and submit to regularly scheduled independent audits. Third-party experts must evaluate platforms' performance in enforcing policies and reducing hate online.

06

Provide data to academic researchers so that scholars can help society better understand and mitigate online hate.

We hope this survey continues to illuminate the landscape of online hate and harassment, offers effective policy recommendations, and provides much-needed redress to targets.

Overview: Hate-Based Harassment Remains High



I was told black people look like monkeys and belong in the zoo. That was on Facebook.

– 39-year-old politically moderate, straight Black/African-American man

This survey was conducted from January 26 to February 14, 2022, in the aftermath of numerous high-profile incidents of hate and disinformation, online and off, the year before. President Biden was inaugurated in January 2021, after violent insurrectionists sought to overturn the presidential election in the first attack on the U.S. Capitol since 1814. It involved online recruitment, financing, and coordination, as was shown by numerous documents and plea agreements. As the COVID-19 pandemic continued to grip the country, extensive disinformation campaigns circulated online, spreading election misinformation, coronavirus hoaxes, anti-vaccine sentiments, and other conspiracy theories. Public criticism of tech platforms' role in amplifying harmful content reached a new high in the fall of 2021, when whistleblower Frances Haugen disclosed tens of thousands of internal documents from Facebook (now Meta) that buried or downplayed internal research documenting the harms caused by its secretive algorithms, which determine what users see.

The overall level of online harassment has remained steady year over year (41% in 2021 versus 40% in 2022). In terms of harassment experienced in the past 12 months, however, there was a 5-point decline to 23%, down from 28% the previous year.

Even as vaccine availability offered hope of winding down the pandemic, the trends that gained traction have persisted, including COVID misinformation, anti-Asian hate, and antisemitic conspiracies. While most trends remained relatively stable between our 2021 and 2022 findings, it is disturbing that twice as many Asian Americans reported experiencing online harassment in the past 12 months than in the previous year (28% in 2022 vs. 13% in

2021). This finding corresponds to a spike in offline incidents and attacks,⁶ including numerous high-profile, violent, fatal assaults⁷ against Asian Americans, primarily women in urban areas.⁸

In one chilling example from November 2021, 62-year-old Queens resident GuiYing Ma⁹ was sweeping a sidewalk when her assailant struck her head repeatedly with a large rock. Ma fell into a coma before dying from her injuries in February 2022. This spike in violence correlates with racist rhetoric linking Asians to the novel coronavirus, often referred to (on the far right and by some U.S. officials and media figures) as the “Chinese virus.” According to Stop AAPI Hate,¹⁰ 10,905 incidents of hate against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders occurred between March 2020, when the pandemic began in the United States, and December 2021.

Our survey shows that anti-Asian harassment increased online, highlighting how online rhetoric and harassment track closely with offline incidents, though this study cannot determine whether such a link is causal or not.

The previous year was harrowing not only for Asian Americans but also for members of the LGBTQ+ community; 2021 was the deadliest year on record for transgender people.¹¹ At least 50 transgender and gender-nonconforming people were killed, most of them Black or Latino/a. Beyond anti-trans violence, the LGBTQ+ community has been subjected to damaging rhetoric and legislation. More than a dozen states have passed or are currently considering legislation that prohibits

schools from teaching or discussing gender identity or sexual orientation,¹² echoing Florida’s controversial “Don’t Say Gay”¹³ bill, which was signed into law by Governor Ron DeSantis in March 2022. The law bans such instruction from kindergarten through third grade. A state senate bill recently passed in Oklahoma¹⁴ forbidding books that “focus on the study of sex, sexual lifestyles, or sexual activity” in school libraries. Texas Governor Greg Abbott directed state child welfare officials to launch child-abuse investigations into reports of transgender youth receiving gender-affirming medical care.¹⁵ The order has been blocked by a Texas judge.

All these developments represent the ongoing targeting of marginalized groups.

Like online harassment generally, hate-based harassment ever experienced (that is, harassment targeting marginalized groups because of their identity) held steady: 65% of targeted people (women, religious minorities, people of color, LGBTQ+ people, and disabled people) reported being harassed for an aspect of their identity including their gender, race or ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical appearance or disability, compared to 65% in 2021, 58% in the past 12 months (the same as 58% in 2021). In contrast, 38% of those from non-marginalized groups reported being targeted for an aspect of their identity. What’s clear is that social media platforms aren’t doing enough to protect targets of hate-based harassment. Hate-based harassment compounds social inequality and becomes a way to control who participates in public discourse.

⁶ <https://theconversation.com/anti-asian-violence-spiked-in-the-us-during-the-pandemic-especially-in-blue-state-cities-176501>

⁷ <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/08/nyregion/anti-asian-hate-crime-death-harlem.html>

⁸ <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/14/nyregion/suspect-christina-yuna-lee-murder.html>

⁹ <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/mar/01/elderly-asian-woman-dies-rock-attack-new-york-guiying-ma>

¹⁰ <https://stopaapihate.org/national-report-through-december-31-2021/>

¹¹ <https://time.com/6131444/2021-anti-trans-violence/>

¹² <https://www.npr.org/2022/04/10/1091543359/15-states-dont-say-gay-anti-transgender-bills>

¹³ <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2022/03/28/dont-say-gay-bill-florida-desantis-signs-bill-into-law/7194704001/>

¹⁴ <https://www.oklahoman.com/story/news/2022/03/02/oklahoma-education-committee-approves-book-ban-bill-public-schools/6979214001/>

¹⁵ <https://www.politico.com/news/2022/03/11/texas-judge-abbott-transgender-investigation-order-00016802>

In this report, we highlight our key findings, focusing on the intersection of harassment and identity, followed by our proposed solutions, and full answers to the adult survey questions in the Appendix.

Overall, we found that marginalized groups, including women, were most likely to be targeted because of their identity, such as their gender, race or ethnicity, religion, or sexuality. We also looked at where harassment took place and found that it occurred disproportionately on Facebook, followed by Instagram. Finally, we tracked how people responded to experiencing harassment, whether they were asked to engage with extremist or controversial content online, and the effects of being harassed, such as mental and emotional distress or economic impact.

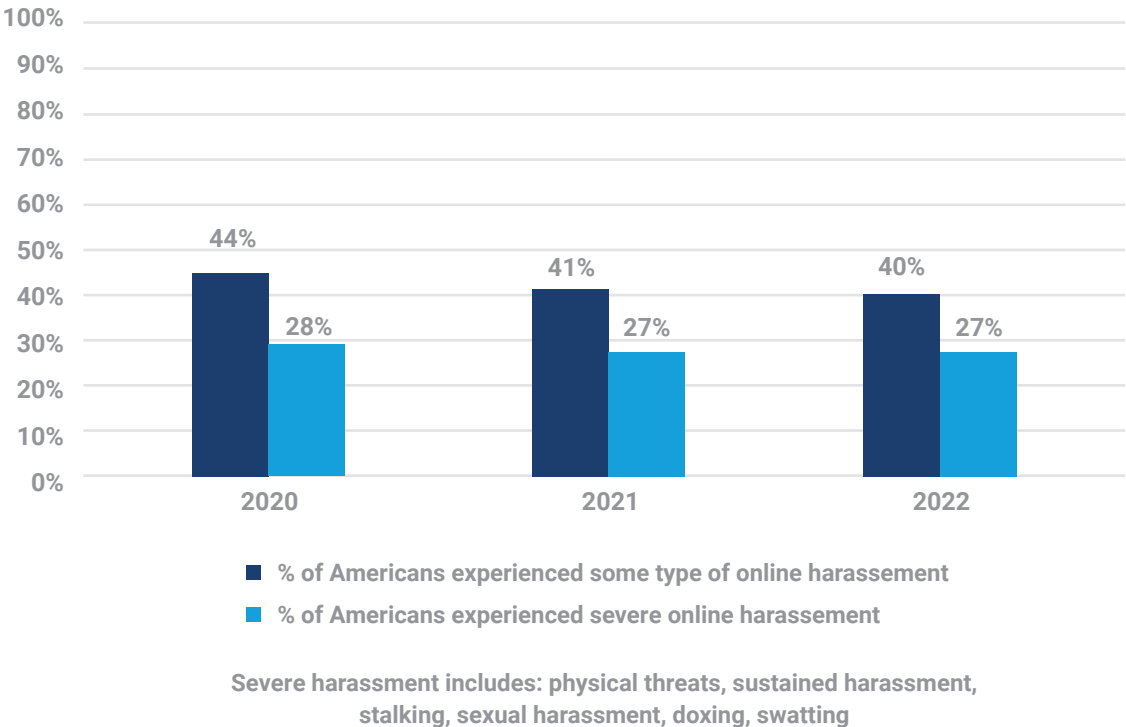
Findings: Adults 18+

ONLINE HARASSMENT HOLDING STEADY

Overall, online harassment ever experienced has remained stable since 2020, despite tech companies’ public commitments to improving safety on their platforms. The incidence of severe harassment has remained consistent from 2020 (28%) to 2022 (27%).

Online Harassment Since 2020

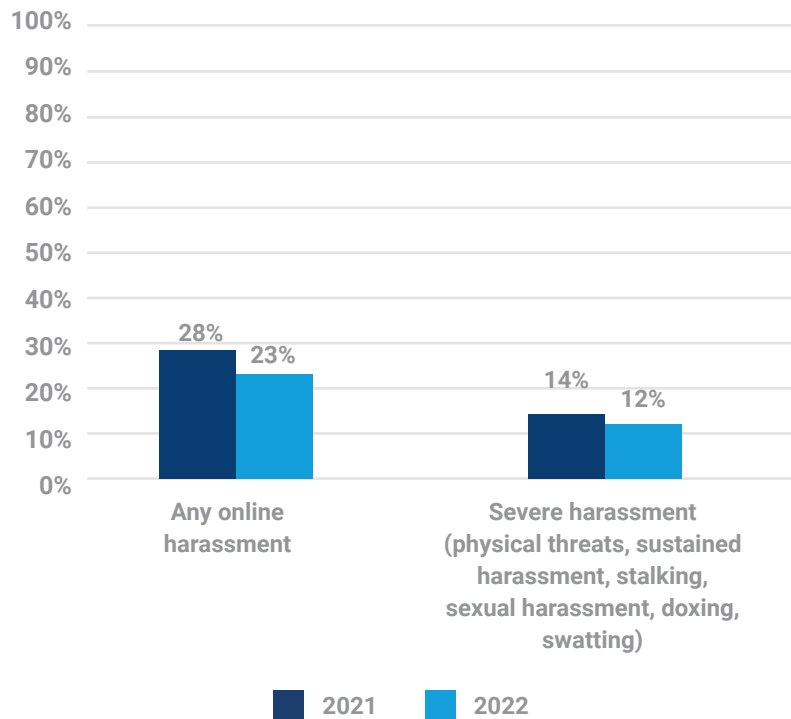
Which, if any, of the following have happened to you, personally, online?



One potential bright spot is that respondents reported fewer experiences of harassment overall in the past 12 months than in 2021: 23%, down from 28%. Last year, 2021, was the first which ADL collected data about harassment over the prior 12 months, allowing for year-over-year comparisons.

Online Harassment in the Past 12 Months: 2021 versus 2022

Which, if any, of the following have happened to you, personally, online in the last 12 months?



I cancelled my Facebook account and I haven't used any type of social media since then, and I don't intend to use social media in the future.

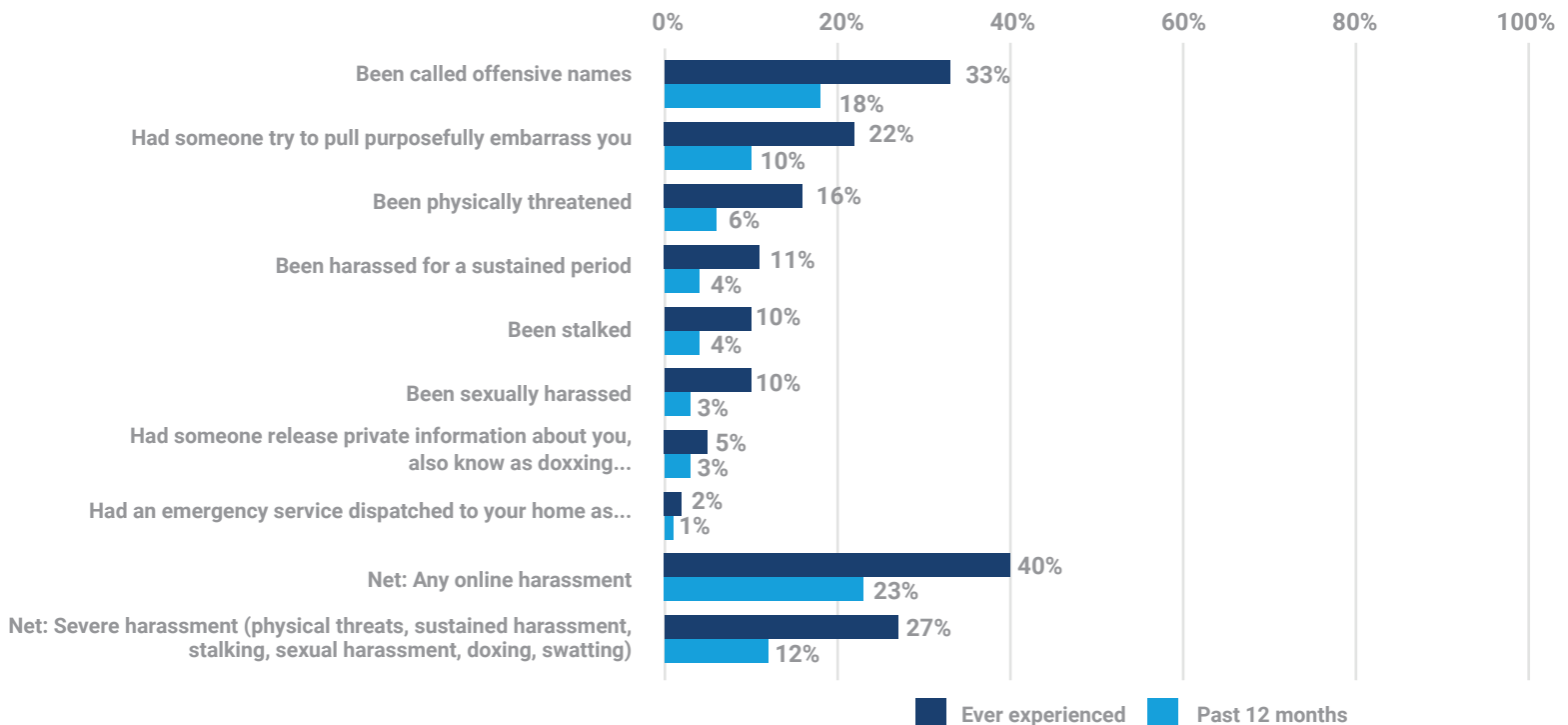
– 66-year-old politically liberal, gay white Protestant man

TYPES OF ONLINE HARASSMENT

A third of respondents who were harassed reported being called offensive names (33%). This was the most frequent complaint, followed by being purposefully embarrassed (22%), being physically threatened (16%), and being harassed for a sustained period (11%)—that is, ongoing or coordinated harassment.

Online Harassment Experienced: Ever versus Past 12 Months

Which, if any, of the following have ever happened to you, personally, online?



When asked about the past 12 months, 23% of those harassed reported experiencing some type of online harassment, including 18% who were called offensive names, 10% who were deliberately embarrassed, and 6% who were physically threatened.



I was being sent repeated lewd images by different phone numbers and one or two of them used my name specifically. I ended up changing my number and filing a police report.

– 24-year-old politically very liberal, straight white Jewish woman

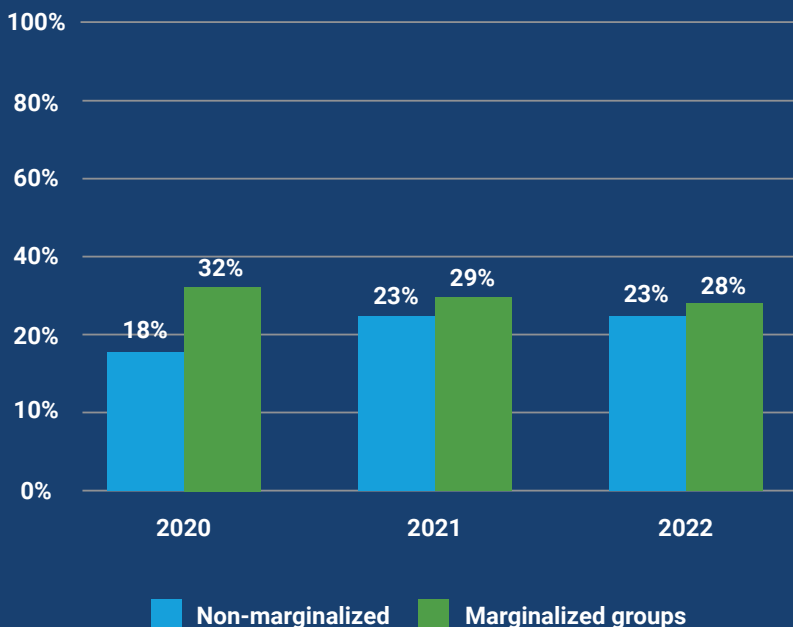


SEVERE ONLINE HARASSMENT

Although many people experience some type of harassment online, more severe types of harassment are typically the most harmful, especially when perpetrators target marginalized groups like women, people of color, religious minorities, or LGBTQ+ people.

In ADL's current survey, 27% of respondents reported experiencing severe harassment, defined as physical threats, sustained harassment, stalking, sexual harassment, doxing (having personal information exposed, often for the purpose of further harassment), and swatting (a rare but dangerous tactic in which a harasser anonymously calls in a false report with the goal of sending an emergency response team to a target's dwelling).

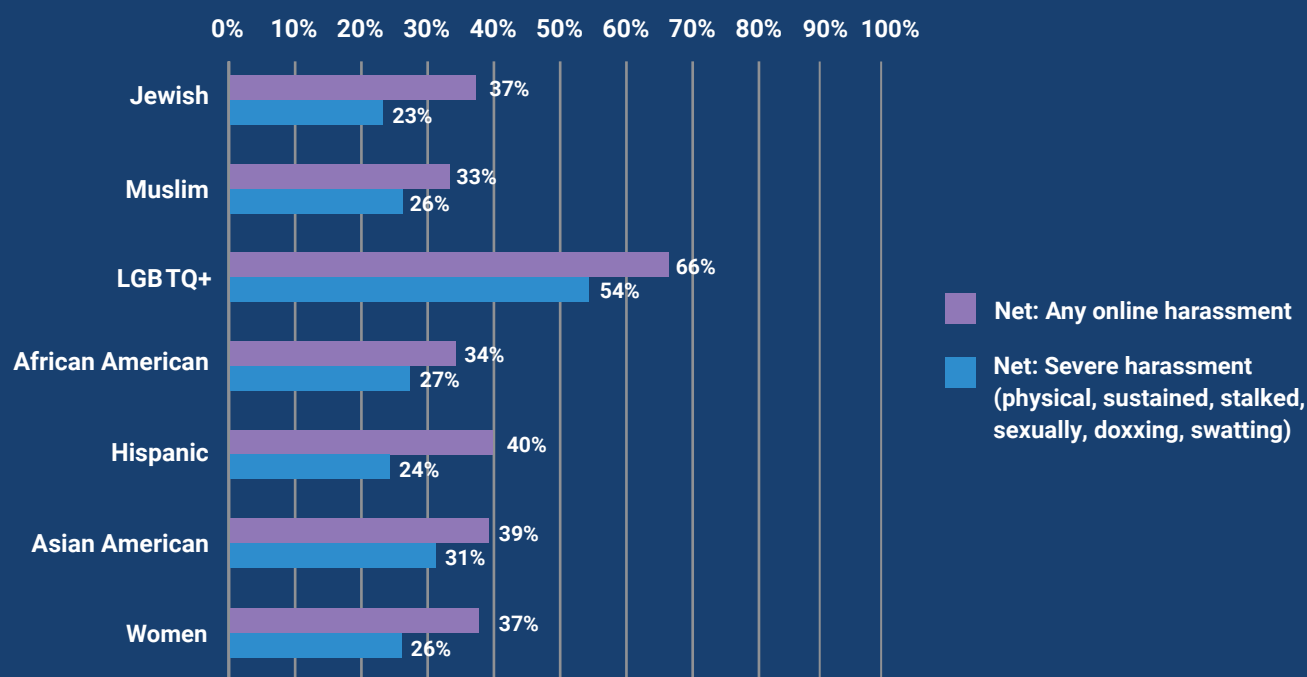
Severe Harassment Ever Experienced, 2020-2022: Marginalized Groups versus Non-marginalized
Which, if any, of the following have ever happened to you, personally, online?



Marginalized includes respondents who are female, Jewish, Muslim, LGBTQ+, Non-white (Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino/a, Asian American, Native American, Middle Eastern), or disabled

Online Harassment versus Severe Harassment Ever Experienced: Marginalized Groups

Which, if any, of the following have happened to you, personally, online?



HATE-BASED HARASSMENT ONLINE

Hate-based harassment refers to targeted attacks or abuse of marginalized people because of their race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexuality, physical appearance, gender identity, or disability. Hate-based harassment among marginalized groups held steady at 65%, no significant change from 65% in 2021 (as a percent of those harassed).¹⁷ 58% of marginalized respondents who were harassed reported hate-based harassment in the past 12 months, no change from 58% in 2021.



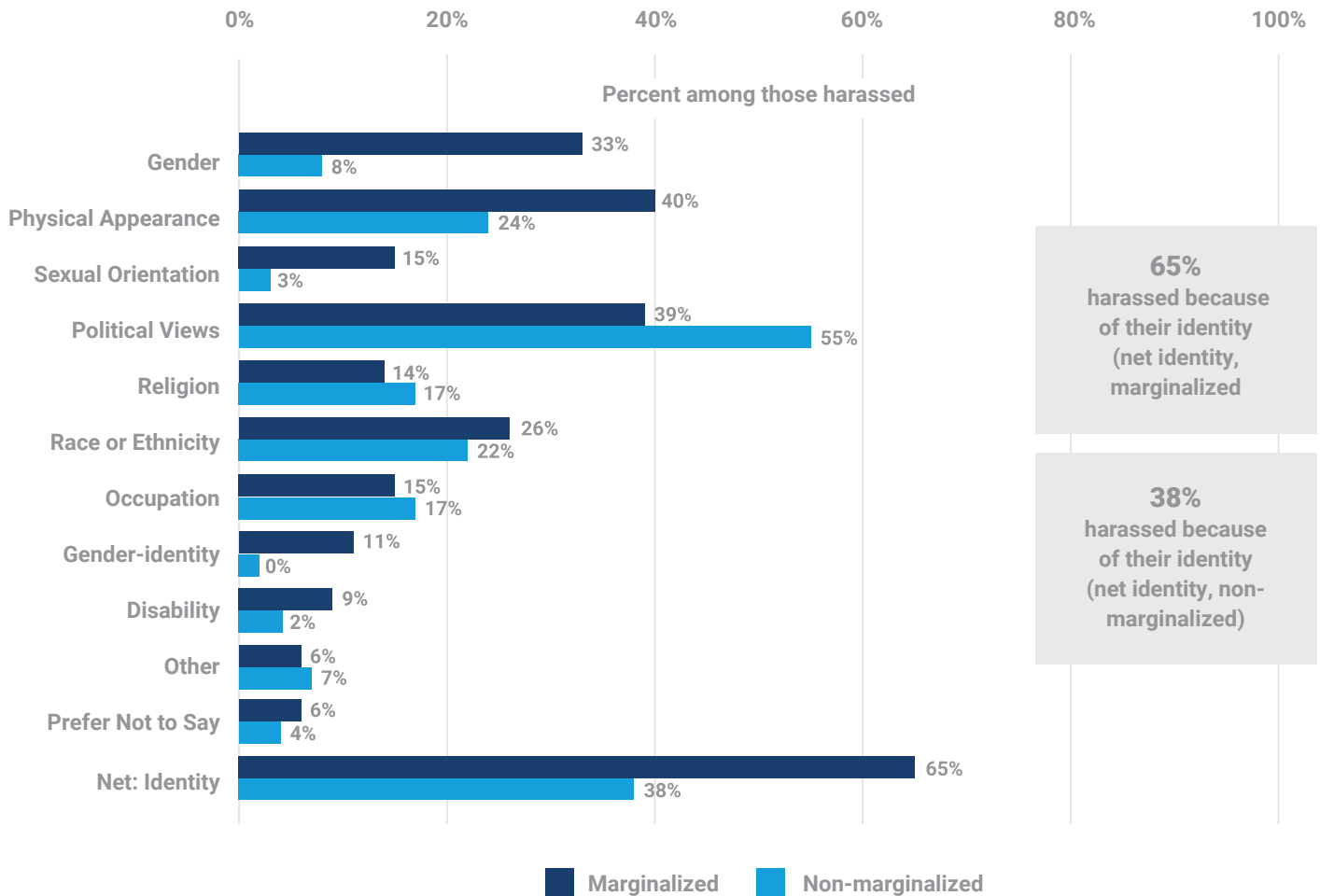
We are a native American Indian and Mexican family. We experience racial harassment all the time.

– 37-year-old politically moderate, straight Protestant woman

¹⁷Among all respondents, not just those harassed as reported above, 31% reported being harassed for any of the nine reasons possible, not including "Other" or "Prefer not to say," no significant change from 33% in 2021. The reasons were political views, physical appearance, gender, race or ethnicity, occupation, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, and disability.

Reasons for Harassment: Identity

Do you think any of these experiences were a result of your... physical appearance, gender, sexual orientation, religion, race or ethnicity, gender identity, or disability?



Net identity includes physical appearance, gender, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or disability. Marginalized includes respondents who are female, Jewish, Muslim, LGBTQ+, Non-white (Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino/a, Asian American, Native American, Middle Eastern), or disabled

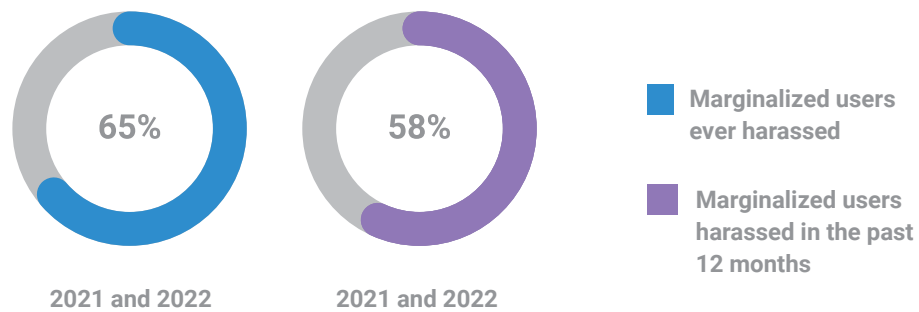


I see antisemitism everywhere and it's often I am a Jew who works in finance, so the harassment has been intense at times.

– 37-year-old, very conservative, straight white Jewish man

Hate-based Harassment, 2021-2022

Do you think any of these experiences were a result of your... physical appearance, gender, sexual orientation, religion, race or ethnicity, gender identity, or disability?

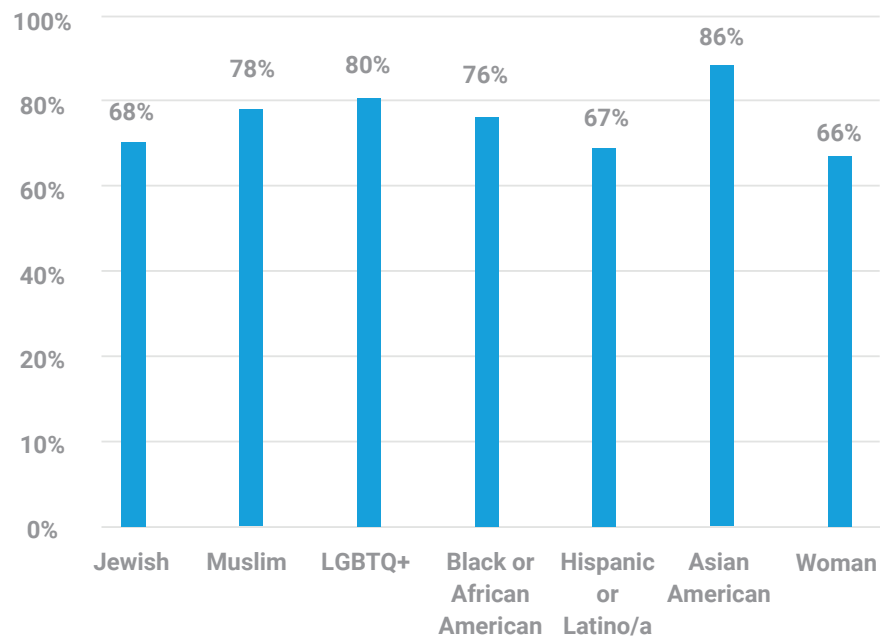


Percent among those harassed. Marginalized includes respondents who are female, Jewish, Muslim, LGBTQ+, Non-white (Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino/a, Asian American, Native American, Middle Eastern), or disabled

Marginalized groups, including women, were more than 1.5 times more likely than non-marginalized groups to be harassed because of their physical appearance, gender, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability: 65% versus 38%.

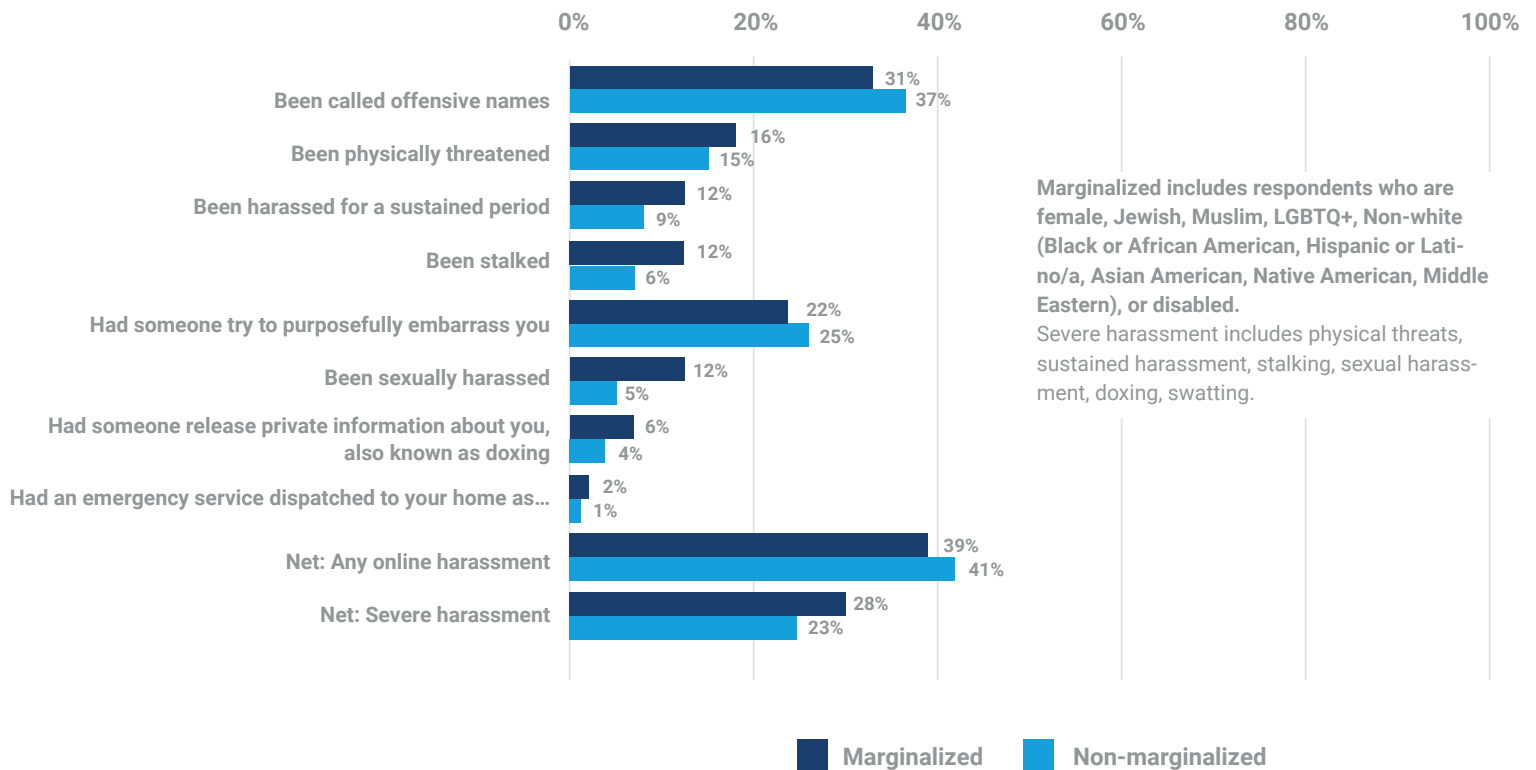
Hate-based Harassment by Group

Do you think any of these experiences were a result of your... physical appearance, gender, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability?



Online Harassment Ever Experienced: Marginalized versus Non-marginalized Groups

Which, if any, of the following have ever happened to you, personally, online?



Marginalized groups also disproportionately experienced certain forms of harassment regardless of reason. Although marginalized users, for example, were about as likely as non-marginalized ones to experience any online harassment (39% versus 41%), marginalized users were more likely to experience two types of severe harassment: being stalked (12% vs. 6%) and being sexually harassed (12% vs. 5%).

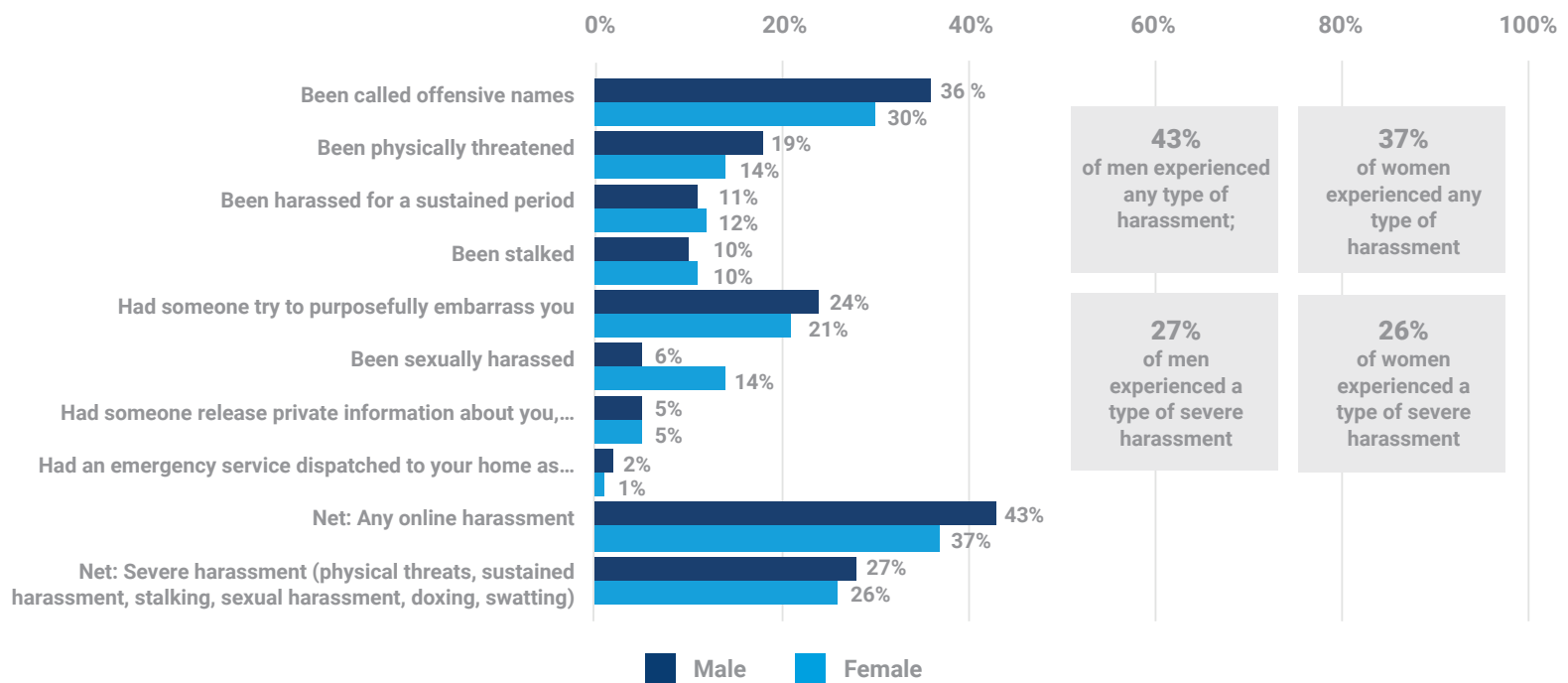


ONLINE HARASSMENT BY GENDER

More than a third (37%) of women reported being harassed at some point compared to 43% of men, a 6-point difference, and 19% of women reported being harassed within the past 12 months compared to 27% of men, an 8-point difference. While men were more likely to report harassment overall, the gap shrinks to 2% when looking at severe harassment: 26% of women reported severe harassment compared to 28% of men. Women were also more than twice as likely as men to report being sexually harassed to date (14% versus 6%).

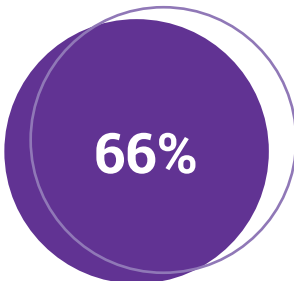
Online Harassment Ever Experienced by Gender

Which if any of the following have ever happened to you, personally, online?

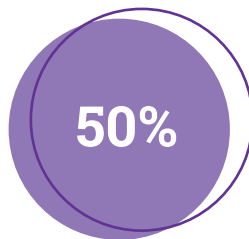


Women were more likely than men to attribute their harassment to aspects of their identity: 66% of women versus 50% of men. Specifically, 40% of women attributed being harassed to their gender (versus 14% of men), 43% to their physical appearance (versus 29% of men), and 10% to their gender identity (versus 6% of men).

Women were more likely to experience harassment based on their identity



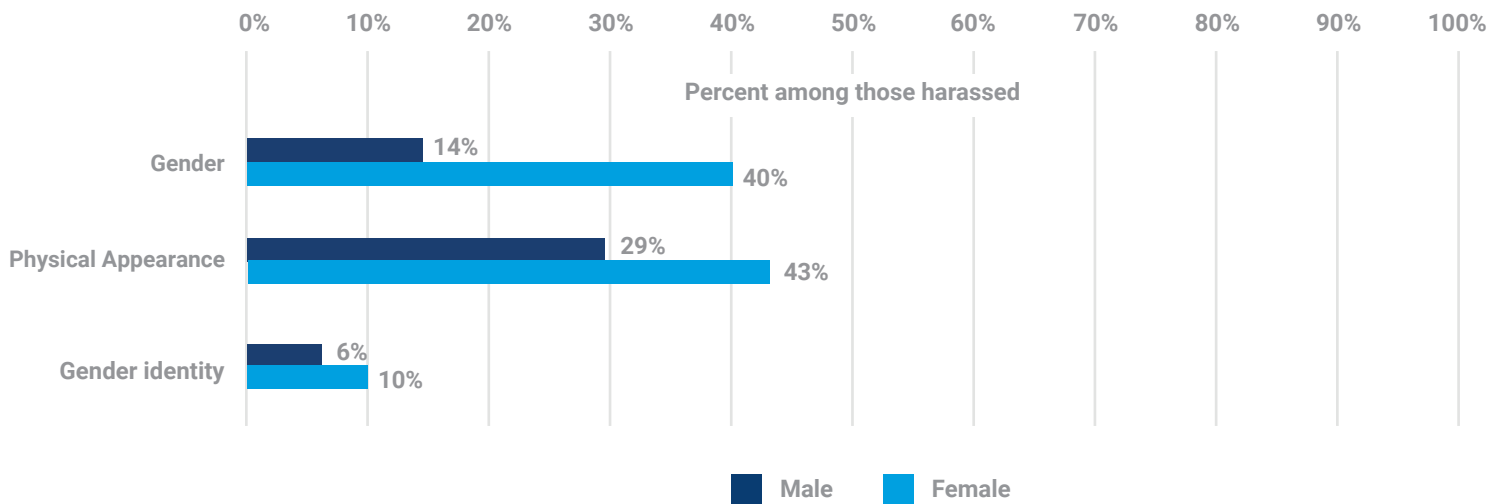
Women



Men

Reasons for Harassment By Gender

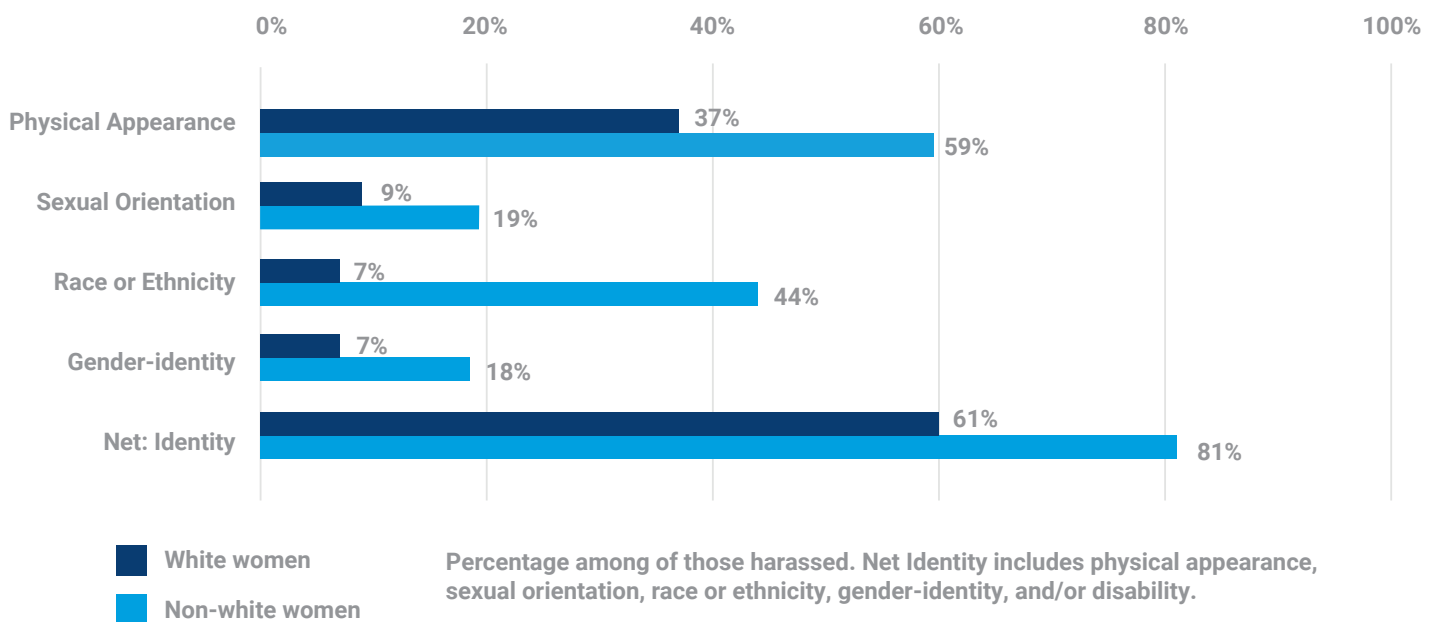
Do you think any of these experiences were a result of your...?



Non-white women who were harassed were even more likely to attribute the harassment to their identity: 81% of non-white women compared to 61% of white women. We found that 59% of non-white women attributed being harassed to their physical appearance compared to 37% of white women; 19% to their sexual orientation compared to 9% of white women; 44% to race or ethnicity compared to 7% of white women; and 18% to gender identity compared to 7% of white women.

Reasons for Harassment: Non-white Women

Do you think any of these experiences were a result of your...?



Women were much more likely than men to worry about future harassment because of their gender:

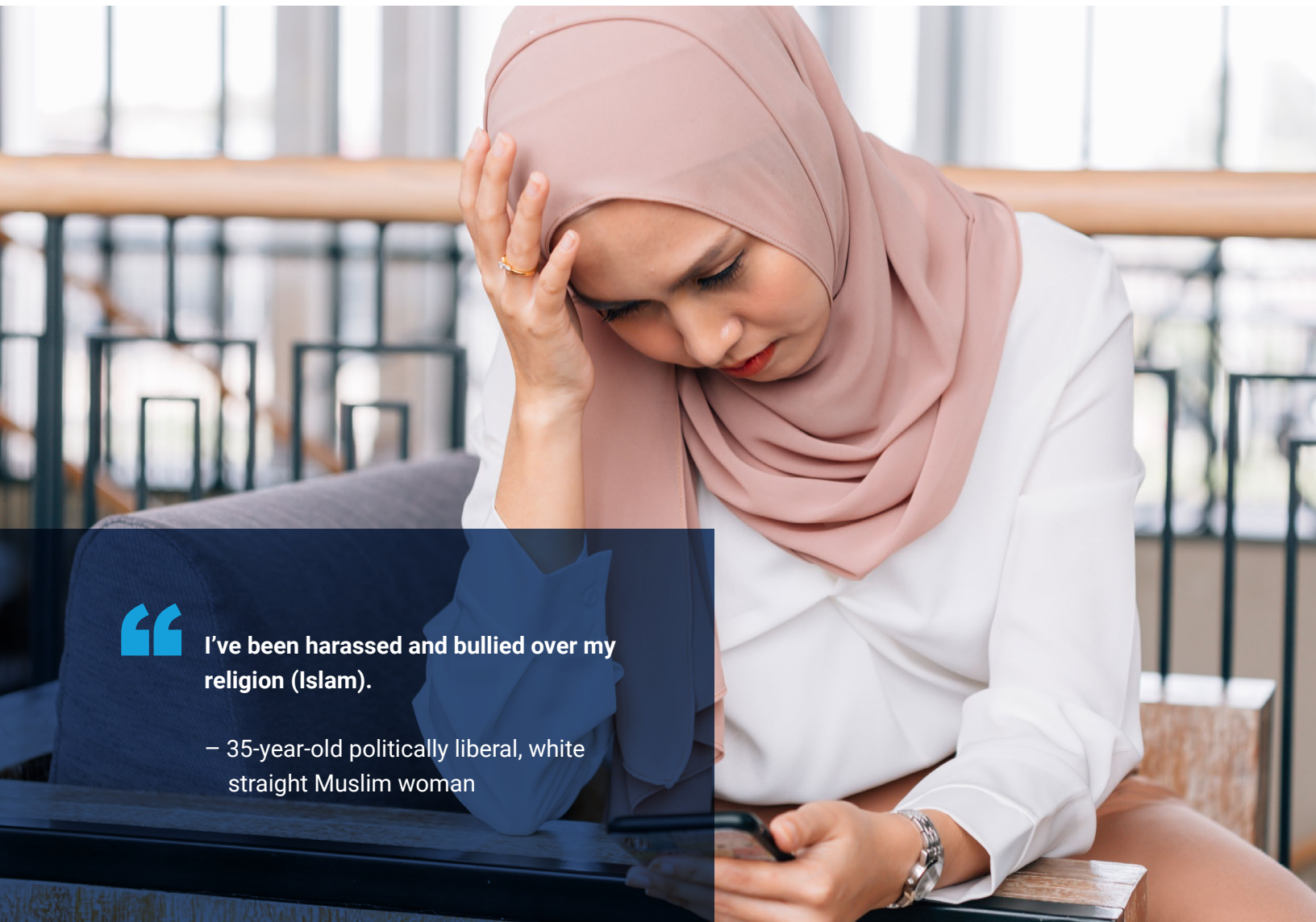


The outcomes of harassment differed for men and women as well. Men who were harassed or worried about future harassment were more likely than women to contact police (10% versus 5%) and report being harmed economically (11% versus 7%). Women who were harassed, however, were more likely to report sleeping loss, trouble concentrating, or anxiety (24% versus 16% of men) and depressive or suicidal thoughts (16% versus 10%).



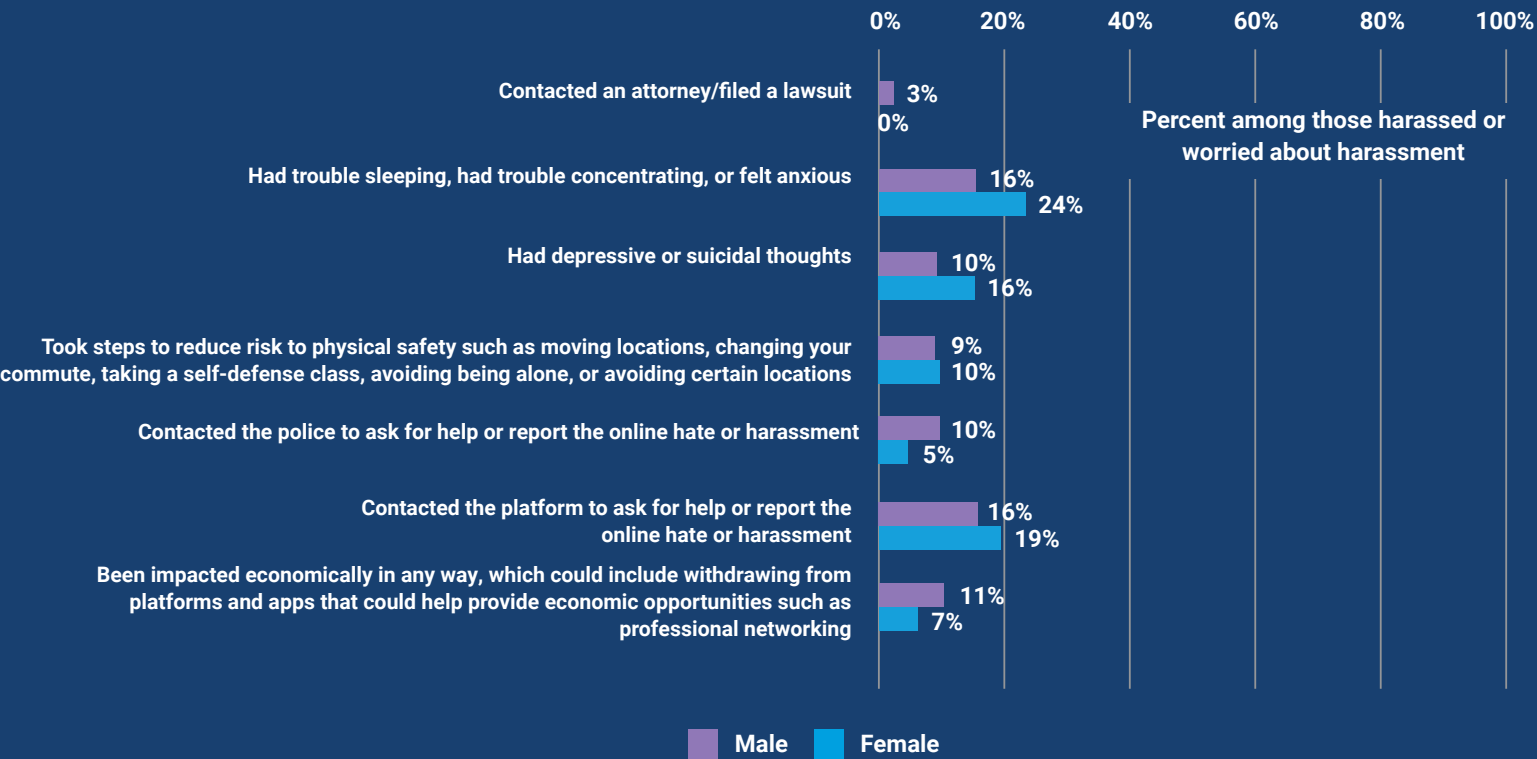
I've been harassed and bullied over my religion (Islam).

– 35-year-old politically liberal, white straight Muslim woman



Outcomes of Online Harassment by Gender

As a result of your experience with online hate and harassment, have you ...

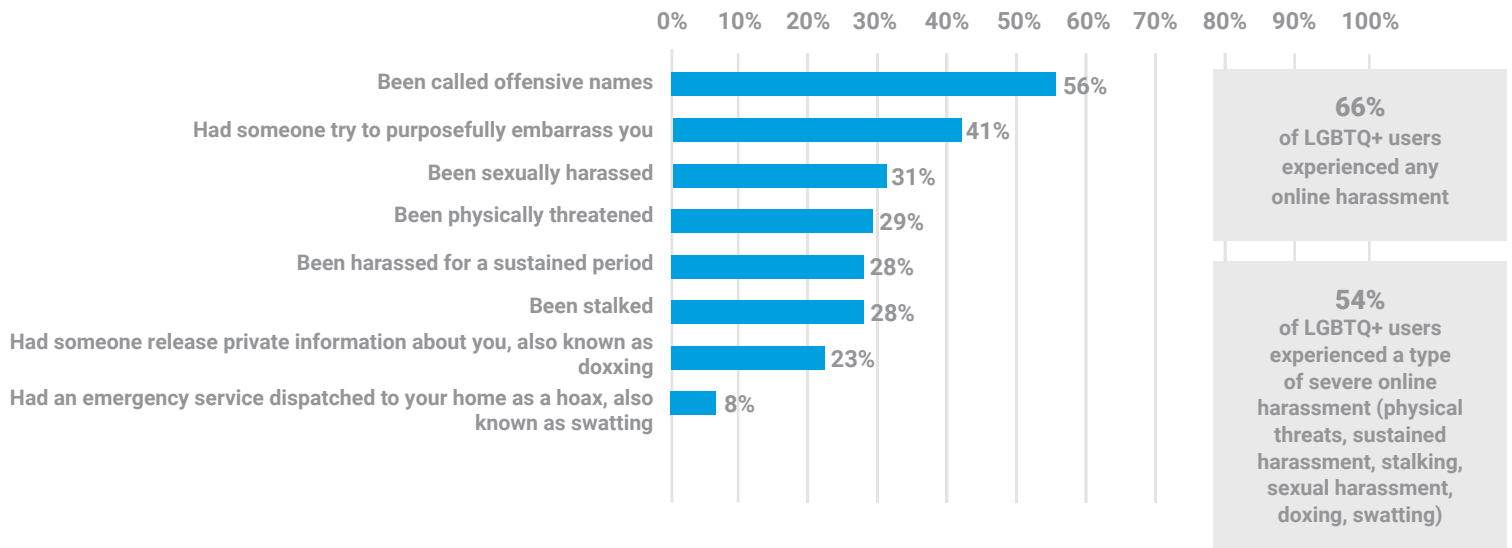


LGBTQ+ RESPONDENTS

As in previous years, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer respondents were among the most likely of any group to report being harassed (66% compared to 38% of non-LGBTQ+ respondents).

Online Harassment Ever Experienced: LGBTQ+

Which, if any, of the following have happened to you, personally, online?



We found that 43% of LGBTQ+ respondents reported being harassed in the past 12 months, compared to 24% of non-LGBTQ+ respondents.

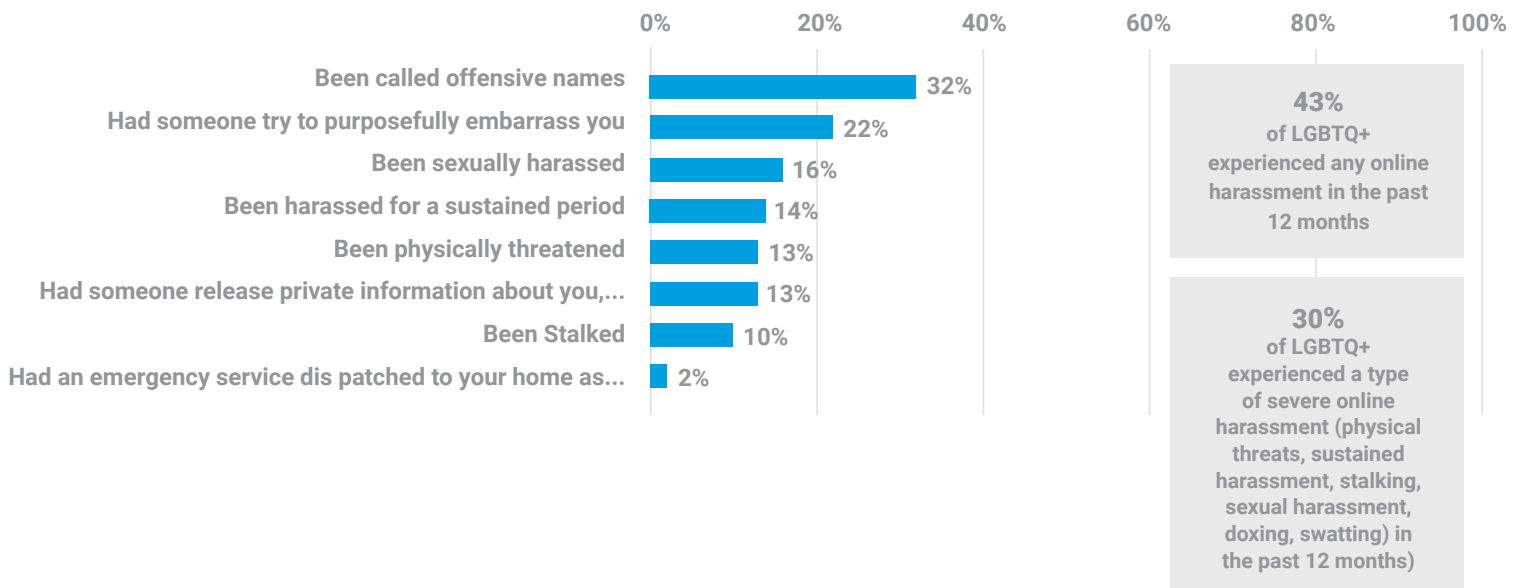


I was researching some hate groups and all of a sudden I started getting hate/conspiracy ideas popping up on FB and other sites.

– 63-year-old politically moderate, lesbian white Jewish woman

Online Harassment to Date, Past 12 Months: LGBTQ+

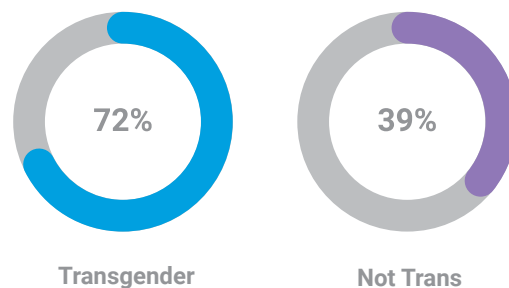
Which, if any, of the following have happened to you, personally, online in the last 12 months?



Transgender respondents reported even higher numbers of harassment: 72% have ever experienced harassment versus 39% of non-transgender people.

Online Harassment Ever Experienced by Transgender Identity

Which, if any, of the following have happened to you, personally, online? Net: Any online harassment



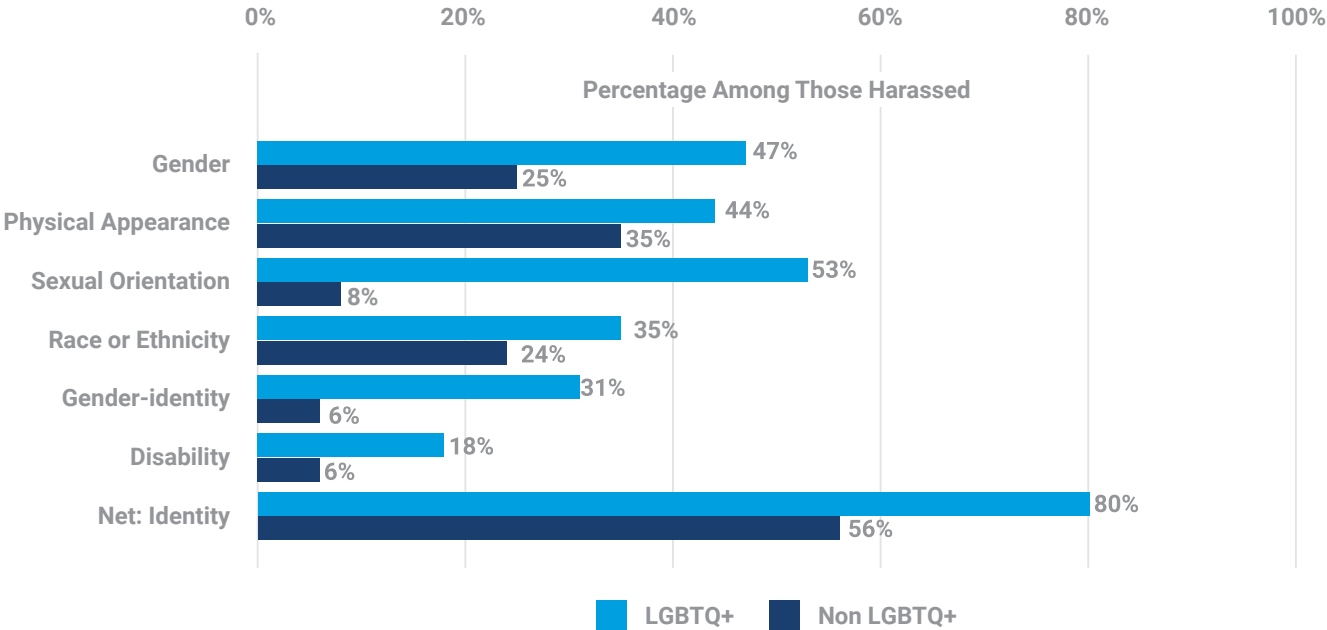
I've been harassed for being a young looking, short, trans man. Before I transitioned, I was harassed and stalked just for being a woman online.

– 34-year-old politically very liberal, bisexual white man

LGBTQ+ respondents were highly likely (80%) to attribute their harassment to an aspect of their identity; 53% attributed the harassment specifically to their sexual orientation and 47% to their gender.

Reasons for Harassment: LGBTQ+

Do you think any of these experiences were a result of your...



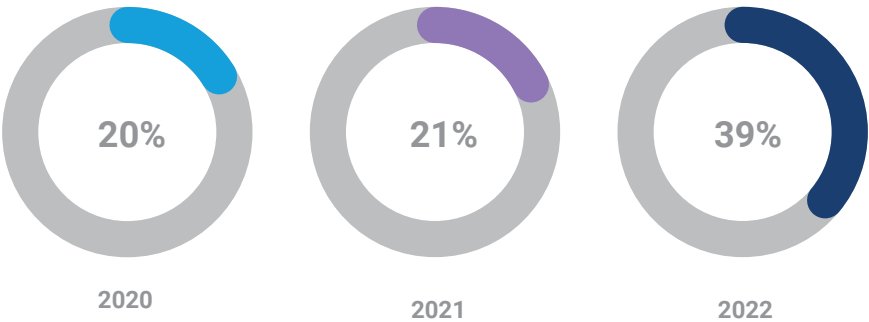
Net Identity includes physical appearance, gender, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or disability

ASIAN AMERICANS

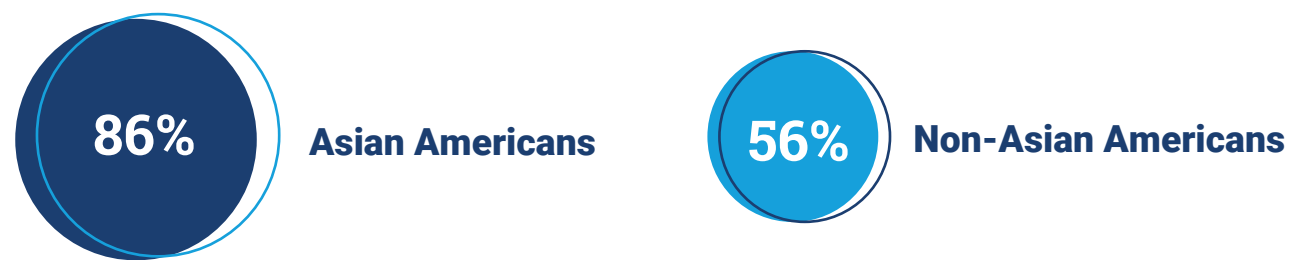
Asian Americans reported the largest spike in online harassment ever experienced, from 21% in 2021 to 39% in 2022. Online harassment has remained stable overall since 2020, but that trend has not held for Asian Americans, mirroring elevated in-person incidents of hate and violence.

Online Harassment 2020-2022: Asian Americans

Which, if any, of the following have happened to you, personally, online? Any online harassment.

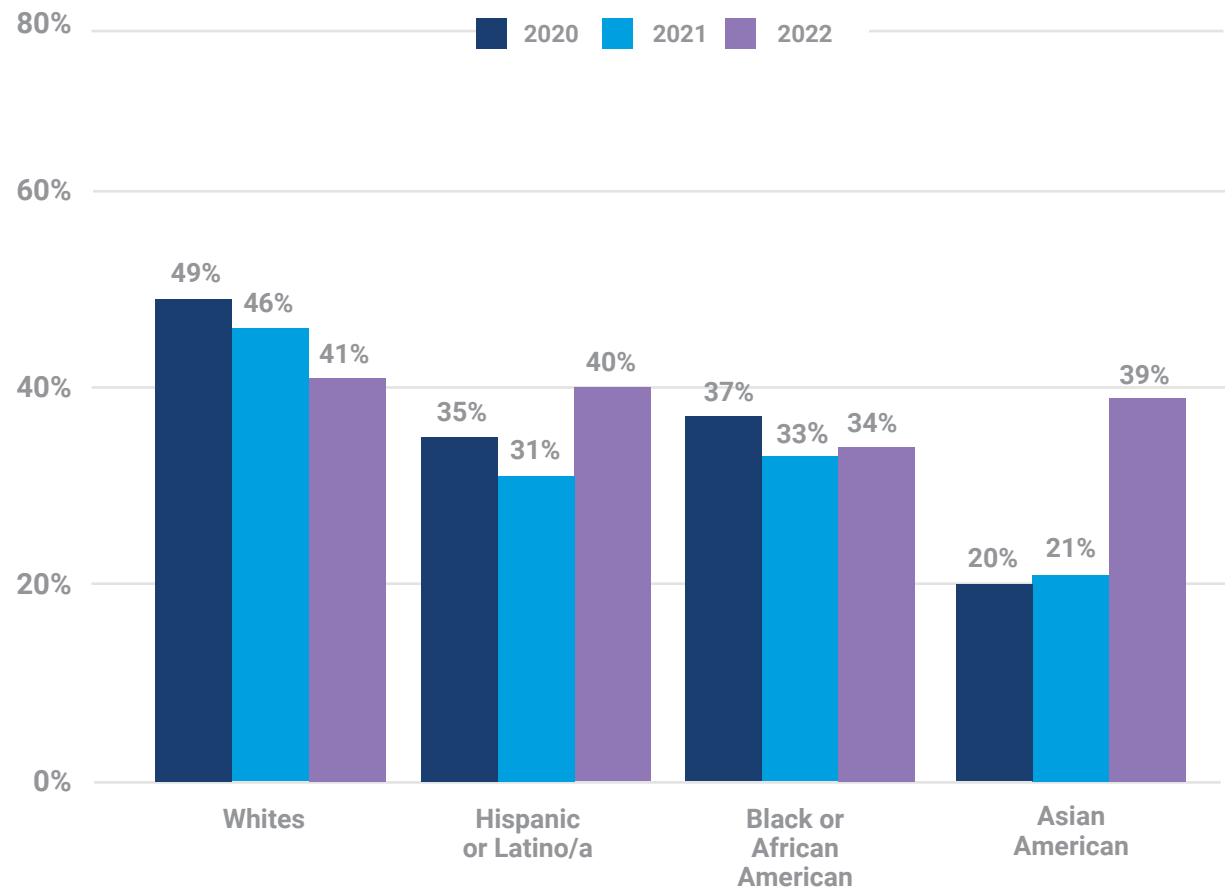


Asian Americans were also more likely to report sustained harassment (18%) than non-Asians (11%), while 86% of Asian Americans attributed being harassed to aspects of their identity, also more than non-Asian Americans (56%).



Any Online Harassment by Race or Ethnicity: 2020-2022

Which, if any, of the following have happened to you, personally, online? Any online harassment.



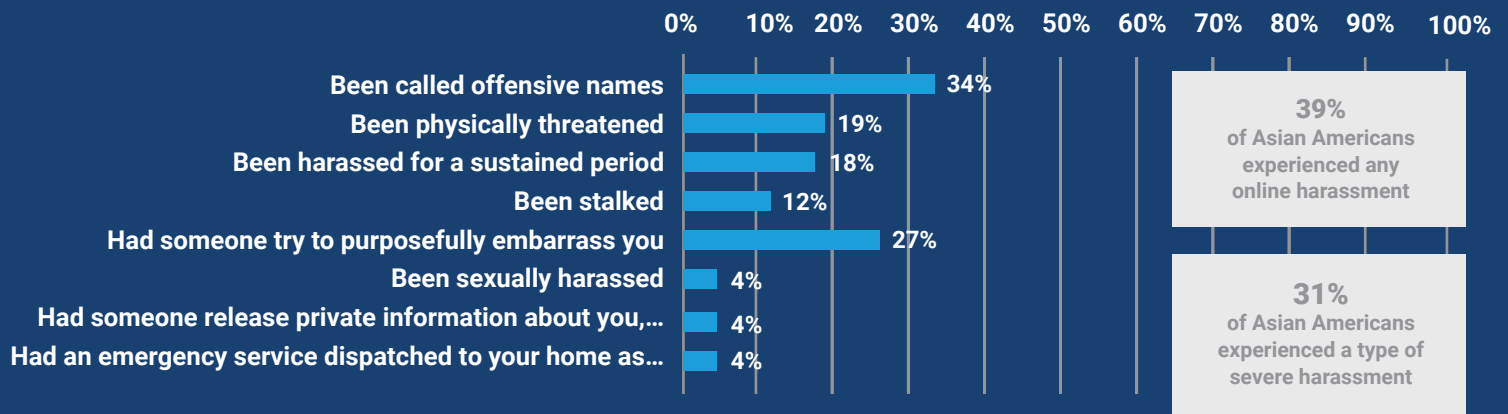
I’m a fiscal conservative, social moderate – but I was both accused of being a member of (& invited to become a member of) several extremist groups.

– 54-year-old politically moderate Asian American Protestant woman

Online Harassment Ever Experienced: Asian Americans

Which, if any, of the following have happened to you, personally, online?

Net: any online harassment



Severe harassment includes: physical threats, sustained harassment, stalking, sexual harassment, doxing, swatting)

Asian Americans were more likely than non-Asian Americans to attribute being harassed to physical appearance (62% vs. 34% of non-Asians), and more likely than non-Asian Americans to attribute harassment to their race or ethnicity (53% versus 23%).

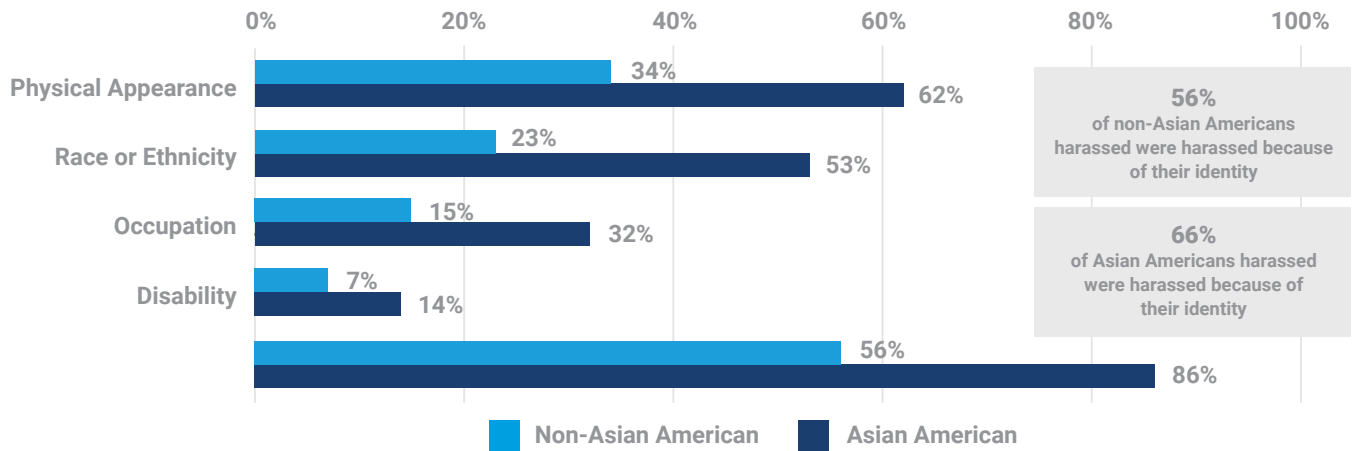


I do have my picture in my profile picture and people tend to make fun of the way I look and my ethnicity. They would call me ugly.

– 38-year-old politically conservative Asian American Buddhist man

Reasons for Harassment: Asian Americans

Do you think any of these experiences were a result of your...

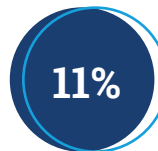


Percentage among those harassed. Net identity includes physical appearance, gender, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability

In the past 12 months, 28% of Asian Americans reported experiencing online harassment, including 11% who were physically threatened.



Any online harassment

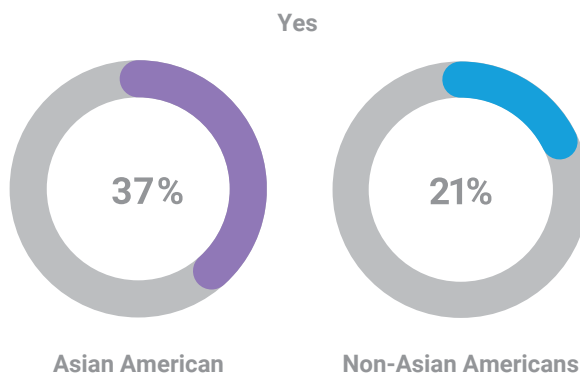


Physically threatened

Asian Americans were also much more worried about future harassment, 37% versus 21% of non-Asian Americans.

Worried About Future Harassment: Asian Americans

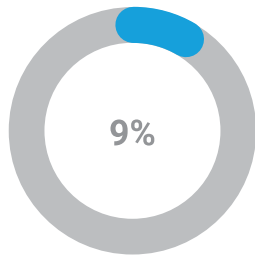
Are you worried about being harassed, threatened or otherwise targeted online in the future?



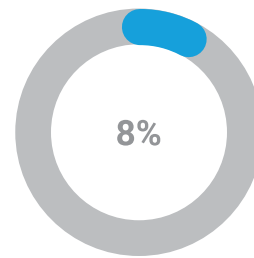
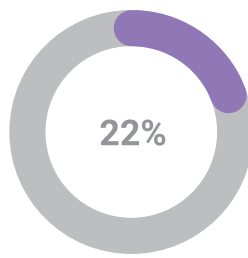
Among those harassed or worried about future harassment, Asian Americans were more likely to take steps to reduce risks to their physical safety (22% versus 9% of non-Asian Americans). They experienced disproportionate harm as well, with 21% being economically harmed by harassment (2.6 times more than non-Asian Americans, 8%).

Outcomes of Online Harassment: Asian Americans

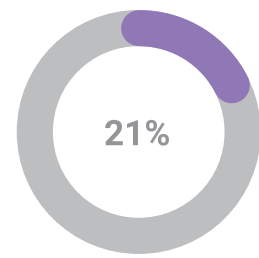
As a result of your experience with online hate and harassment, have you...



Took steps to reduce risk to physical safety such as moving locations, changing your commute, taking a self-defense class, avoiding being alone, or avoiding certain locations.



Been impacted economically in any way, which could include withdrawing from platforms and apps that could help provide economic opportunities such as professional networking.



■ Non-Asian American ■ Asian American

Percentage among those who experienced harassment or were worried about future harassment



I keep getting Facebook ads about really offensive issues or topics including racist, antisemitic, and homophobic things.

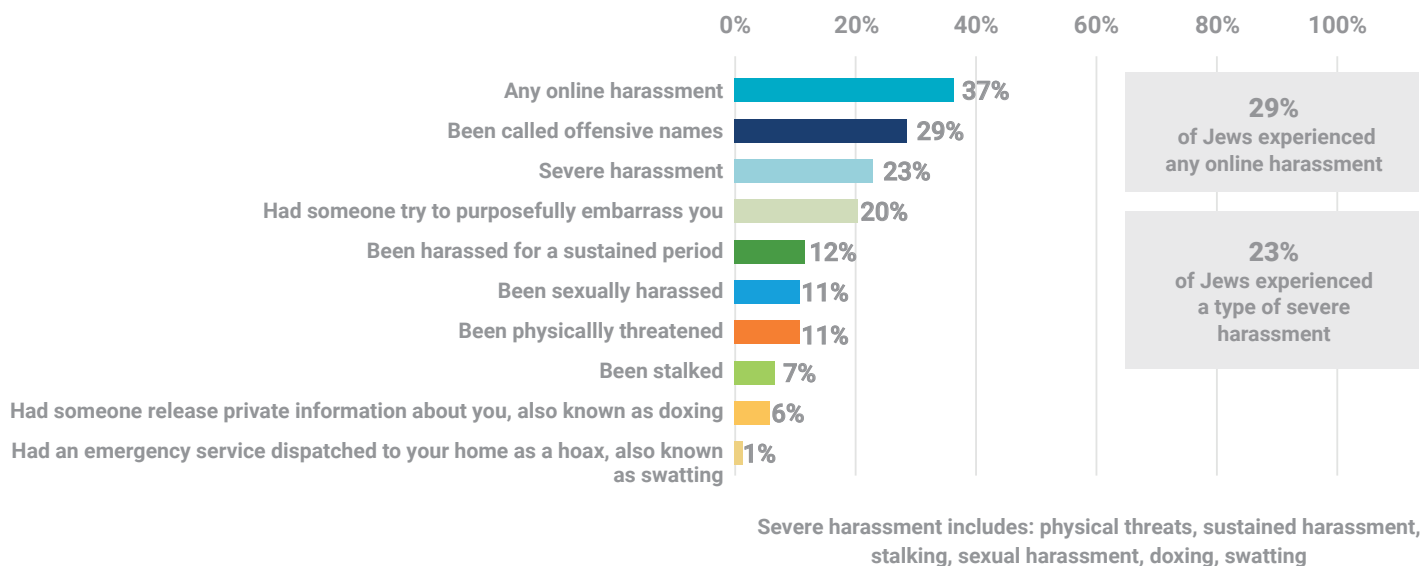
– 45-year-old politically very liberal, bisexual Asian American woman

JEWS

Jewish respondents experienced online harassment at similar rates as non-Jews: 37% reported any harassment, lifetime; 23% reported severe harassment, lifetime; and 21% reported harassment in the past 12 months.

Online Harassment Ever Experienced: Jewish

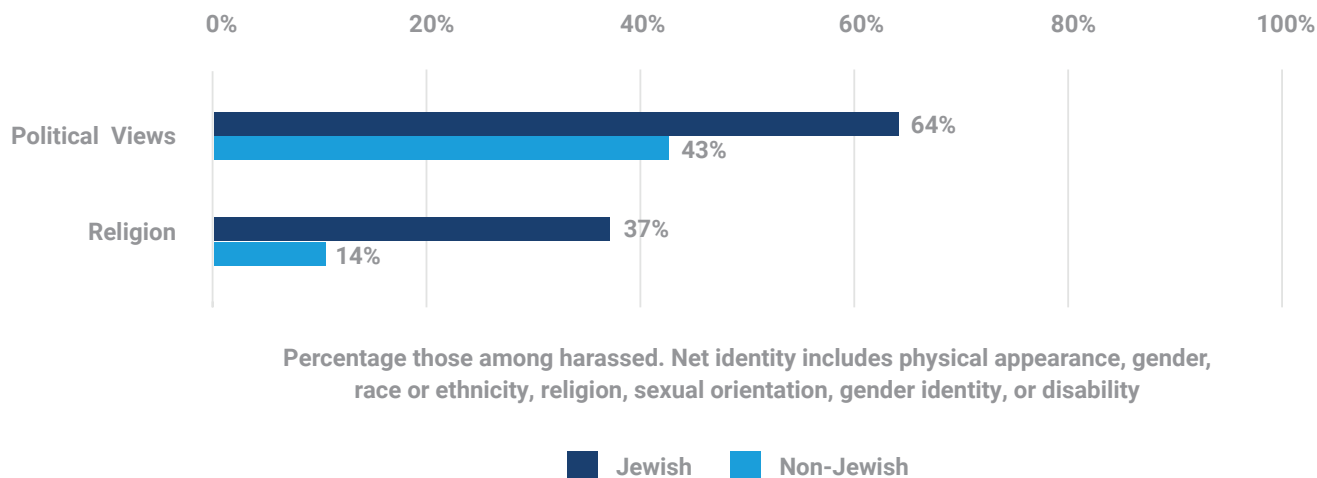
Which, if any, of the following have happened to you, personally, online?



Jews were much more likely to attribute harassment they experienced to their religion than non-Jews: 37% compared to 14% of non-Jews. They were also more likely to be worried about future harassment because of their religion (83% versus 44% of non-Jews).

Reasons for Harassment | Jewish vs Non-Jewish

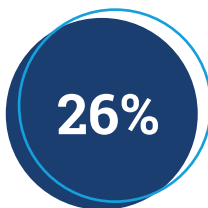
Do you think any of these experiences were a result of your...



Like other groups, Jews who were harassed online (or worried about future harassment) reported serious outcomes, including difficulty sleeping and concentrating and feelings of anxiety (26%); a quarter contacted the platform to ask for help or report the hate or harassment (25%).



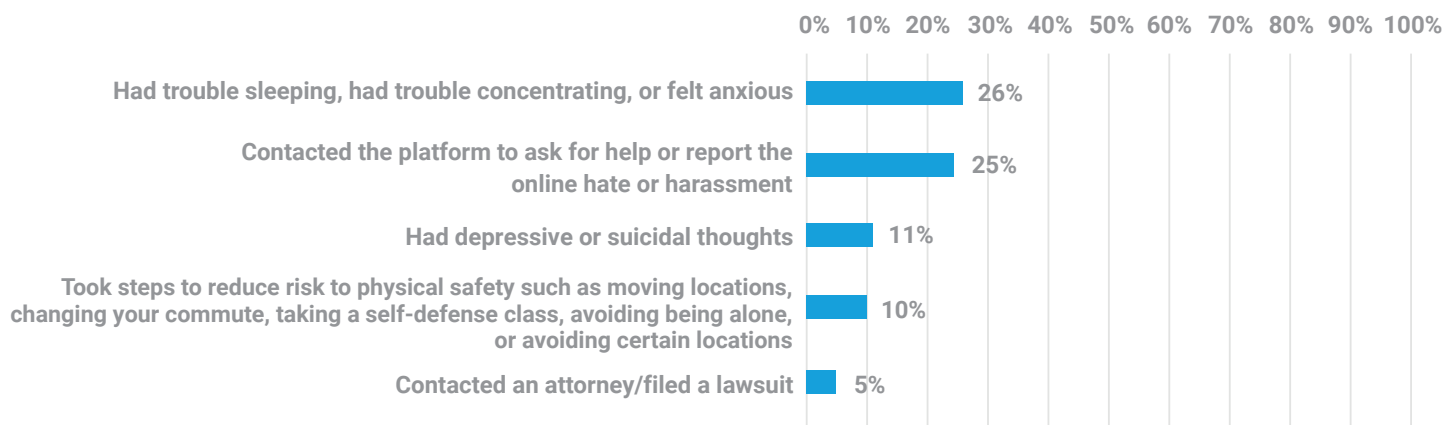
**Asked for help
or reported the
hate/harassment**



**Trouble sleeping,
concentrating or
feeling anxious**

Outcomes of Online Harassment: Jewish

As a result of your experience with online hate and harassment, have you...



Percent among those who experienced harassment or were worried about future harassment



I see antisemitism everywhere and it's often directed at me.

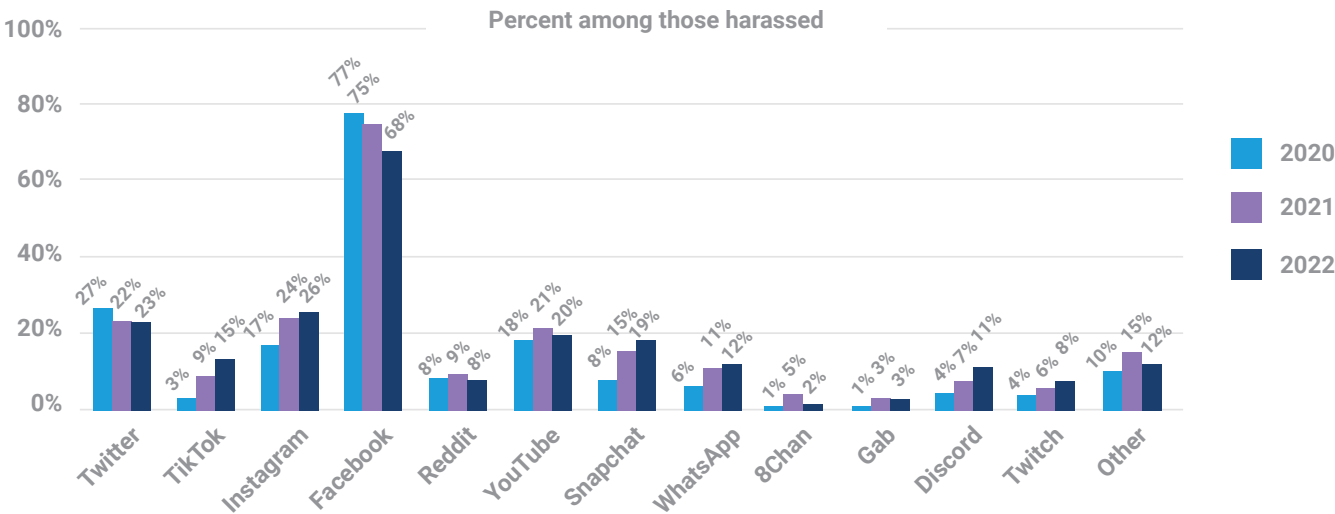
– 74-year-old politically liberal straight Jewish woman

WHERE HARASSMENT TAKES PLACE

To find out where online harassment takes place, we asked respondents where they experienced harassment and where they spent time online. 68% percent of respondents reported any harassment to date taking place on Facebook (down from 75% in 2021), followed by 26% on Instagram (about the same as 2021, 24%), 23% on Twitter (24% in 2021), and 20% on YouTube (21% in 2021).

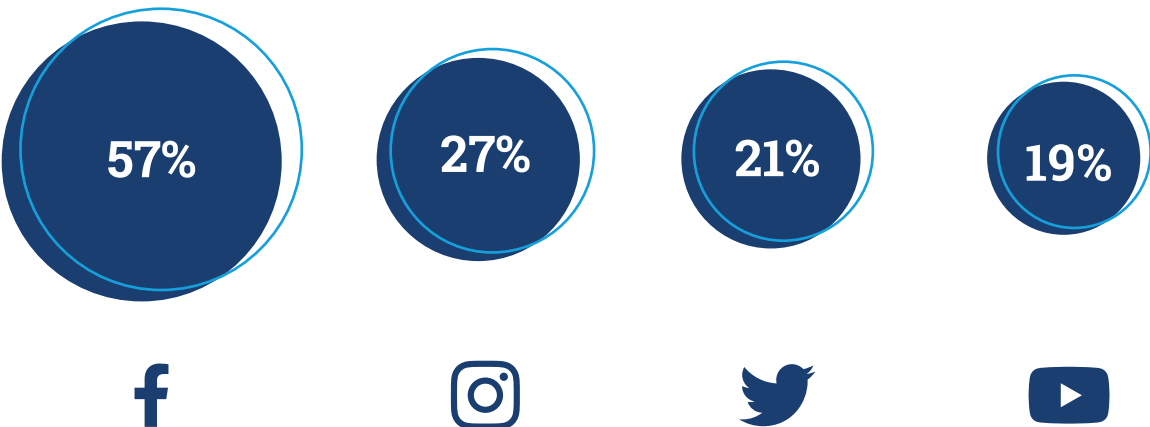
Platforms Where Harassment Took Place: 2020-2022

Did any of these experiences occur on...



In the past 12 months, the trends were similar:

57% of respondents reported harassment taking place on Facebook, 27% on Instagram, 21% on Twitter, and 19% on YouTube.



Comparing where people experienced harassment to where they spent time online, we found that more people reported harassment on Facebook (68% of those harassed) compared to 84% who reported using Facebook. (We defined users as those who said they used a platform daily, weekly, every few weeks, or less often but not never.) We calculated a harassment index that compares the proportion of platform users to the proportion of those who reported harassment there. At 81%, Facebook has the highest ratio by far, suggesting that people who are harassed are more likely to be harassed on Facebook. For Twitter, 53% used the platform at least occasionally, while 23% of those harassed reported the harassment happening there (a ratio of 44%).

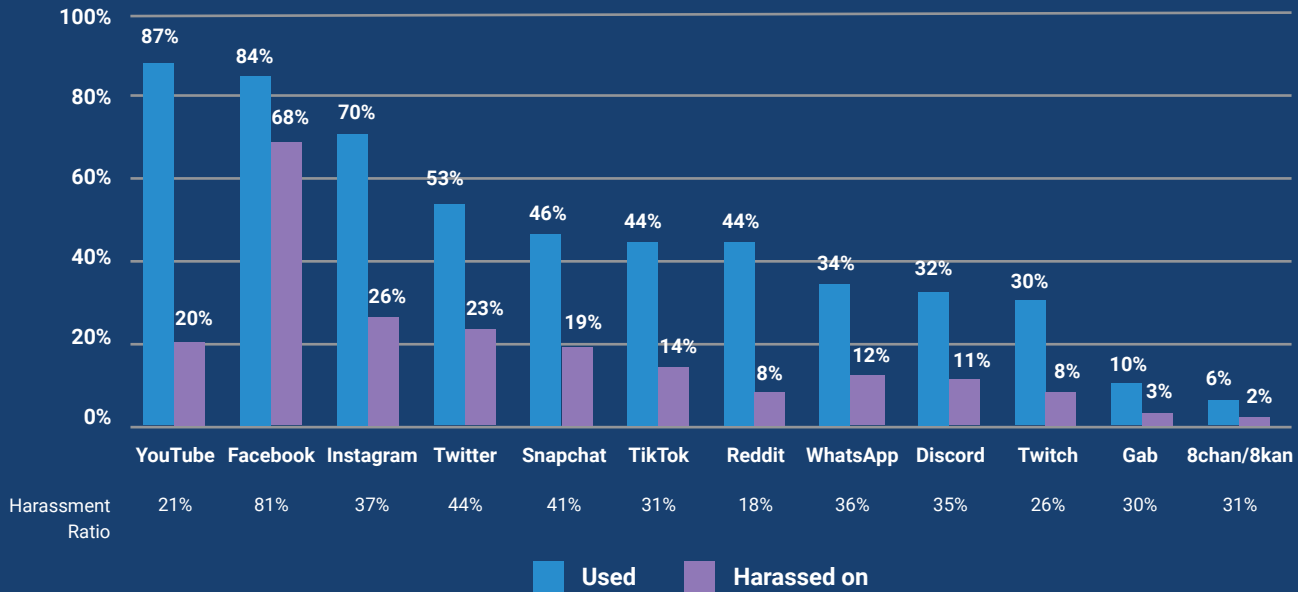
This suggests that harassment was less common on Twitter than on Facebook, more common than on YouTube or Reddit, and comparable to the likelihood of being harassed on Instagram. Far fewer of those harassed reported harassment on Youtube—87% said they use the platform, but only 20% of those harassed reported harassment there, for a lower ratio of 23%. At 18%, Reddit had the lowest ratio of regular users to harassment: 44% said they used Reddit, but only 8% of those harassed were harassed on Reddit.



I'm an overweight white female and I'm disabled. People like to make hateful remarks and body shaming remarks regarding this... I just quit going on [Facebook].

—46-year-old politically liberal, straight white Protestant woman

Platforms Where Harassment Took Place Compared to Use: Among those ever harassed

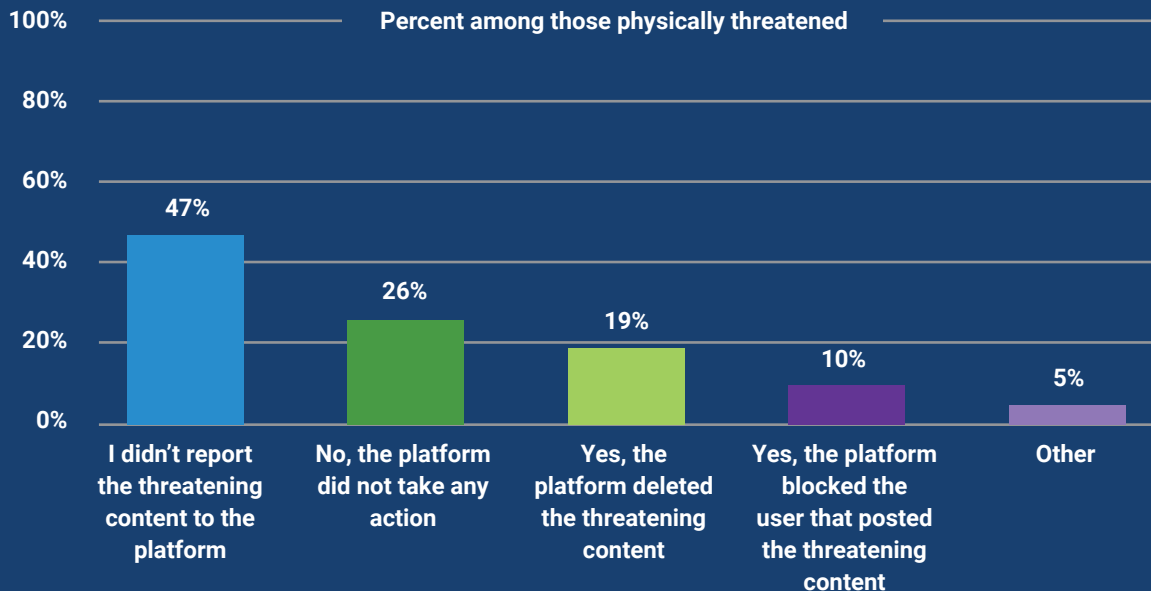


RESPONSES TO HARASSMENT: WHAT ACTIONS WERE TAKEN?

We asked respondents who faced physical threats what action, if any, the platform took in response. Of these, 47% didn't report the threatening content at all, 26% said the platform took no action, 19% said the platform deleted the threatening content, and 10% said the platform blocked the perpetrator. In total, 53% said they reported the content; only half of those reports led to any action by the platform.

Action Taken By Platform

Did the platform take any action to address the physical threat in any way?



In response to being harassed, almost a third of users (29%) stopped or reduced their use of platforms altogether, especially Facebook (19% reduced their use, and 10% stopped altogether).



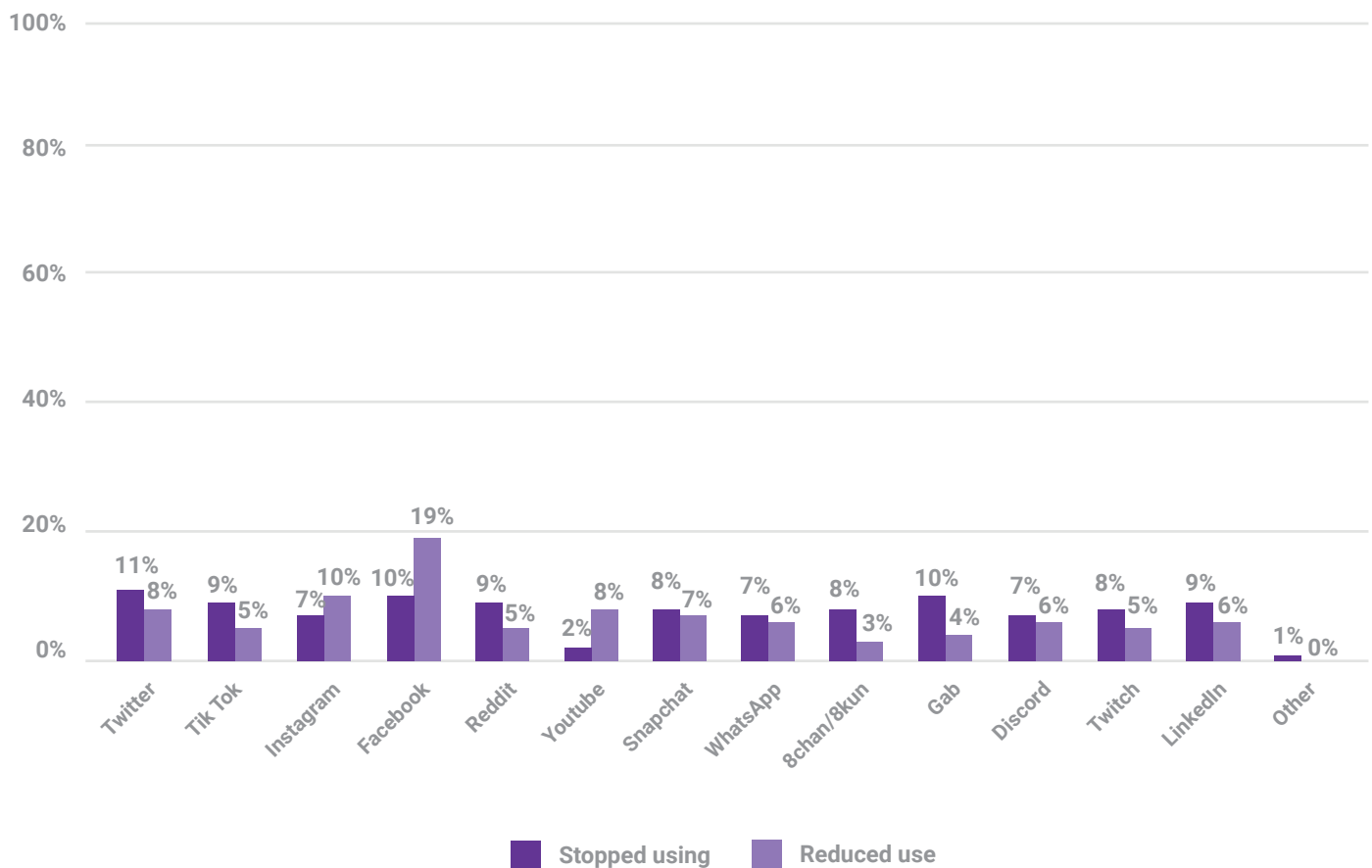
**Reduced their
use on Facebook**



**Stopped using
Facebook altogether**

Platform Usage Change

Have you stopped or reduced usage of any of the following platforms as a result of your experience with online hate and harassment?



My reaction was to not only block the fake account but make everything I post for friends only and to stop putting personal content or content that is very meaningful on sites at all.

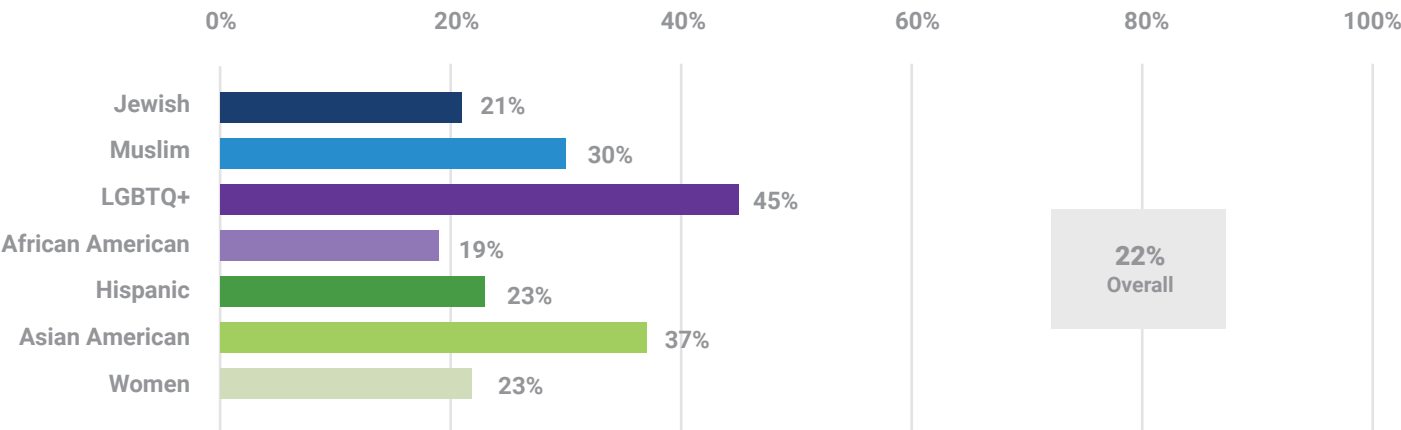
– 58-year-old politically liberal, straight Hispanic/Latina woman

WORRY ABOUT FUTURE HARASSMENT

Of all respondents, over a fifth (22%) were worried about future harassment, including 45% of LGBTQ+ respondents, 37% of Asian Americans, and 21% of Jewish respondents.

Worry About Future Harassment: Marginalized Groups

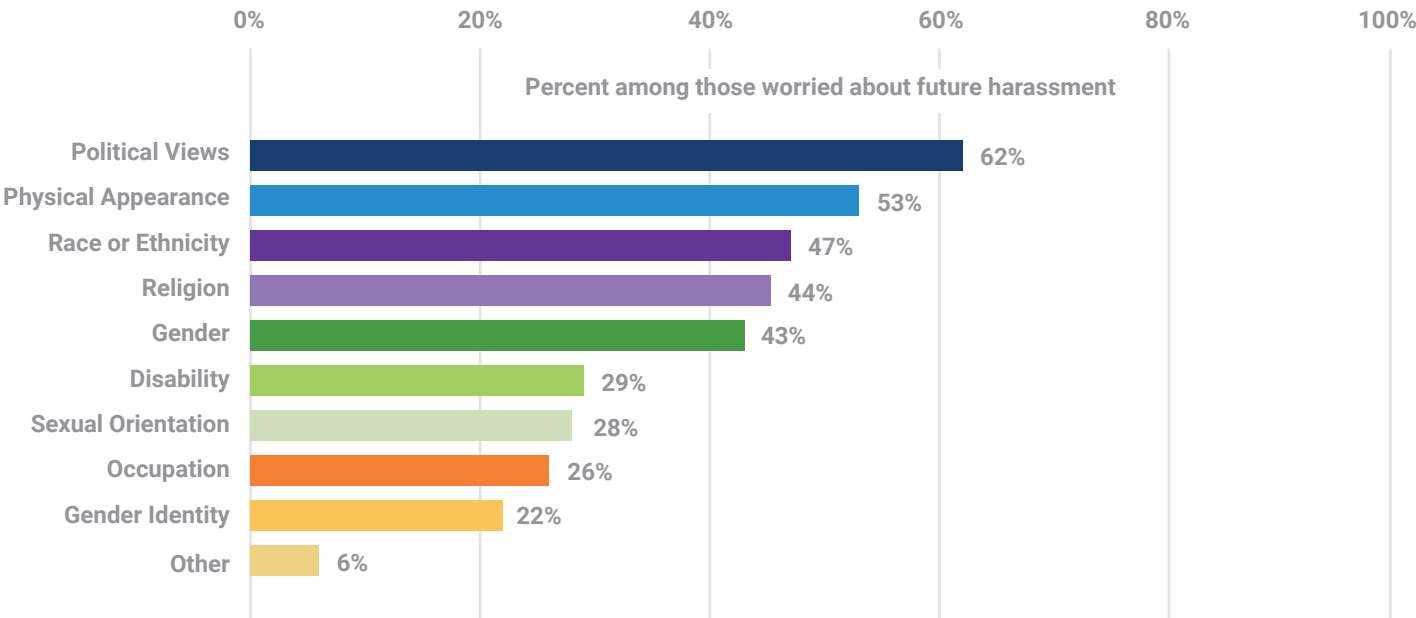
Are you worried about being harassed, threatened or otherwise targeted online in the future?



Of those worried about future harassment, 62% were worried about being harassed for their political views, 53% for their physical appearance, 47% for their race or ethnicity, 44% for their religion, and 43% for their gender.

Reason For Worry: Very/Somewhat Worried (Combined)

Are you worried about being targeted because of...

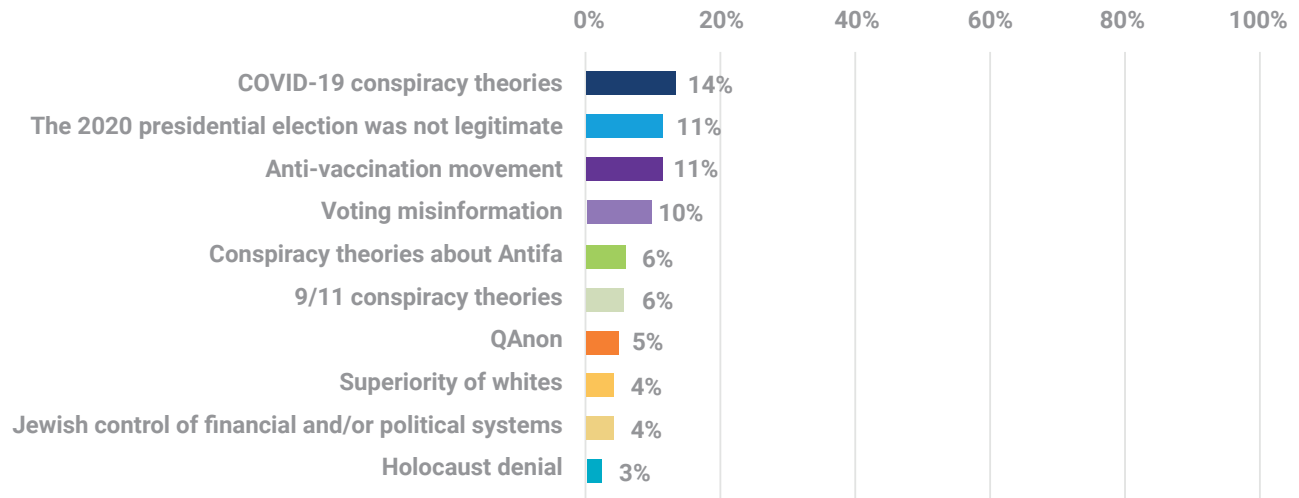


EXPOSURE TO CONTROVERSIAL CONTENT

Along with asking about experiences of hate and harassment, we asked respondents whether they were asked to support or engage with controversial or extremist content such as conspiracy theories or misinformation campaigns, especially those rooted in hate. Holocaust denial, for example, is a conspiracy theory rooted in antisemitism, while many COVID-19 conspiracy theories contain anti-Asian hate. Other topics listed here have been focal points of coordinated online harassment campaigns, such as those related to delegitimizing the 2020 presidential election.¹⁶ We found that 14% were asked to support or engage with COVID-19 conspiracy theories and another 11% with anti-vaccination content, for a total of 16% who were exposed to health disinformation or misinformation (13% in the past 12 months).

Controversial Topics: Ever

Have you been asked to support or engage with any of the following controversial topics on social media?



¹⁶ <https://19thnews.org/2020/12/elected-officials-faced-relentless-harassment-and-threats-of-violence-this-year-women-got-some-of-the-worst-of-it/>



I was retweeted on Twitter by someone who wanted their followers to harass me further.

– 43-year-old politically liberal, Hispanic/Latina woman

Another 11% of respondents were asked to support or engage with content claiming that the 2020 presidential election wasn't legitimate, and 10% were asked to support or engage with content containing voting misinformation, for a total of 15% exposed to election misinformation (11% in the past 12 months).



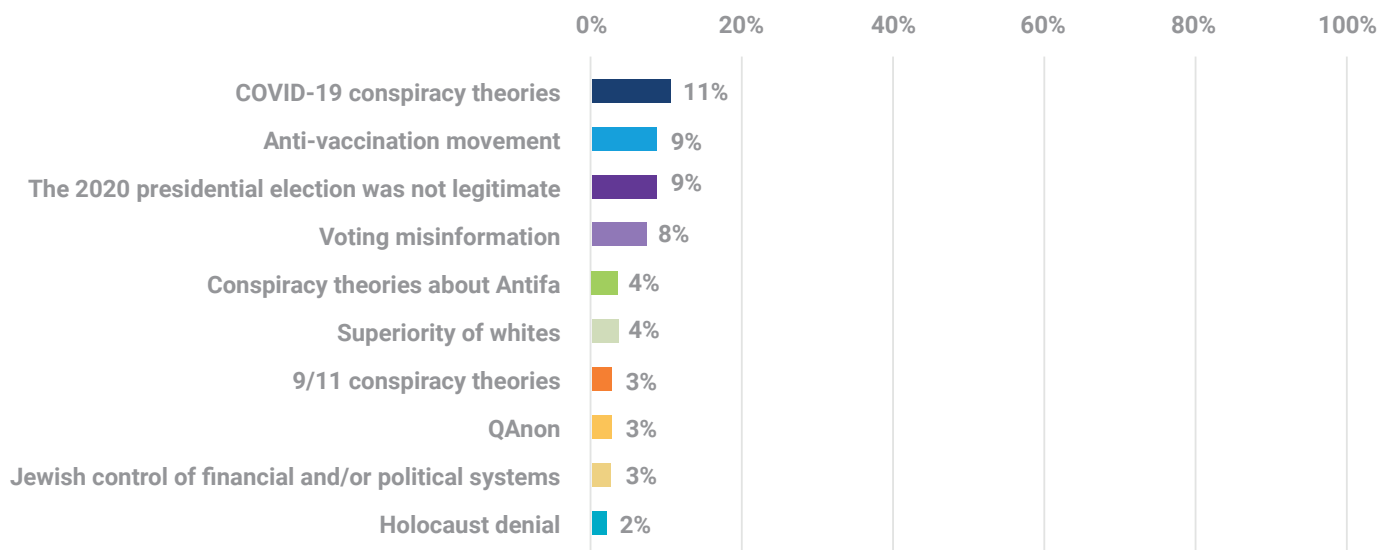
Asked to support or engage with health disinformation or misinformation



Asked to support or engage with election or voting misinformation

Controversial Topics: Past 12 Months

Have you been asked to support or engage with any of the following controversial topics on social media in the past twelve months?



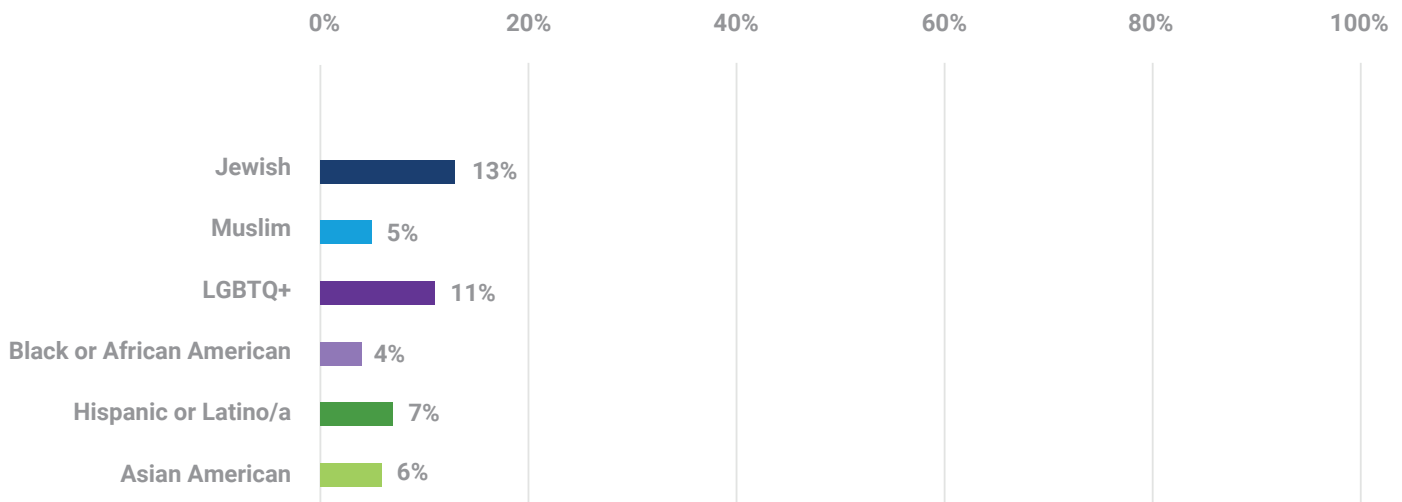
On Facebook recently I received a photo of Adolph [sic] Hitler with Nancy Pelosi's face pasted in.

– 71-year-old politically very liberal, white straight Jewish man

A smaller number of respondents reported seeing antisemitic content, including Holocaust denial (3%) and claims about Jewish control of the media or financial institutions (4%), for a combined total of 5% (3% in the past 12 months). Jews and LGBTQ+ respondents were more likely to report being exposed to this antisemitic content.

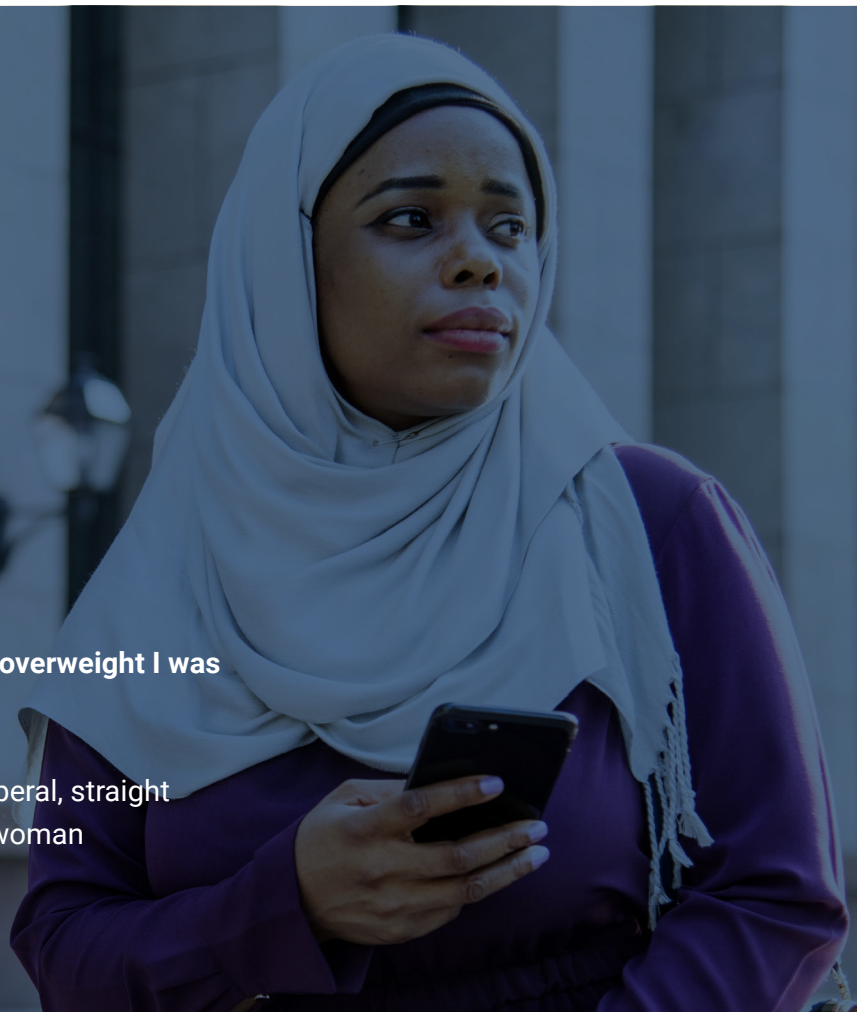
Antisemitic Conspiracy Theories Combined: Marginalized Groups

*Have you been asked to support or engage with any of the following controversial topics on social media...
Holocaust denial and/or Jewish control of financial and/or political systems.*



Since I am a muslim and overweight I was call[ed] a fat terrorist f*g.

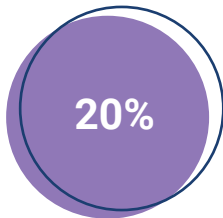
– 32-year-old politically liberal, straight Muslim Asian-American woman



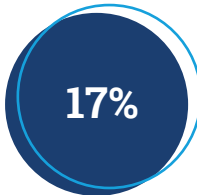
OUTCOMES OF HARASSMENT

Online harassment causes mental and emotional distress for targets, undermines their feelings of safety and security, and can lead to professional and economic harms. Hate-based harassment in particular has been shown to drive targeted people out of online spaces and often causes them disproportionate harm. Of those who either experienced harassment or were worried about being harassed, 20% reported feeling anxious or having trouble sleeping and concentrating.

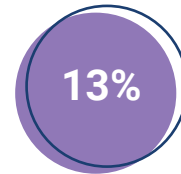
Another 17% contacted the platform where they experienced harassment, and 13% struggled with more severe mental health outcomes such as depressive or suicidal thoughts. Some took steps to reduce risks to their physical safety (10%), and 9% reported some kind of economic impact (e.g., withdrawing from online spaces and potentially losing professional opportunities). 8% said they went to the police.



Had trouble sleeping, had trouble concentrating, or felt anxious



Contacted the platform to ask for help or report the online hate or harassment

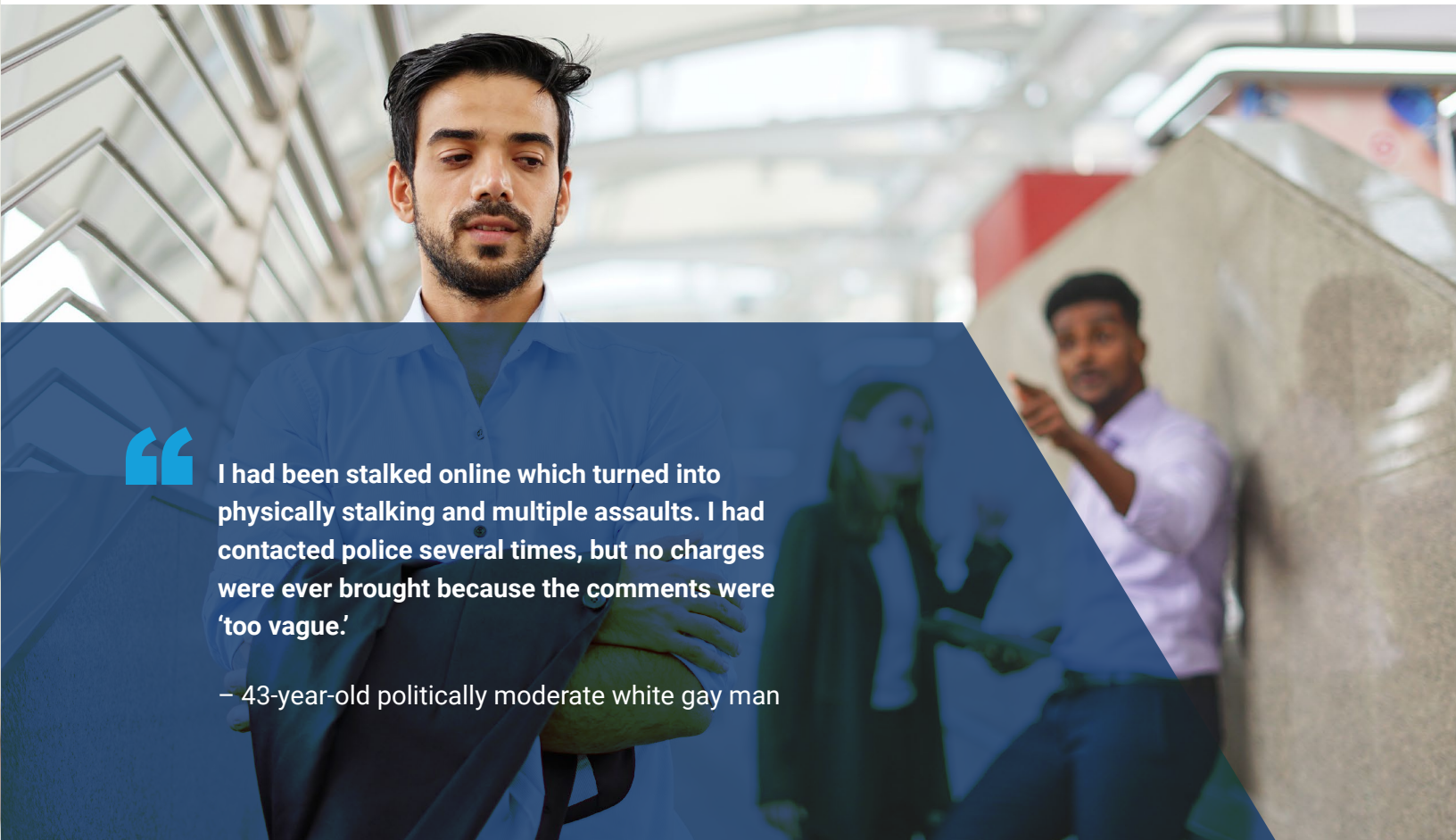


Had depressive or suicidal thoughts



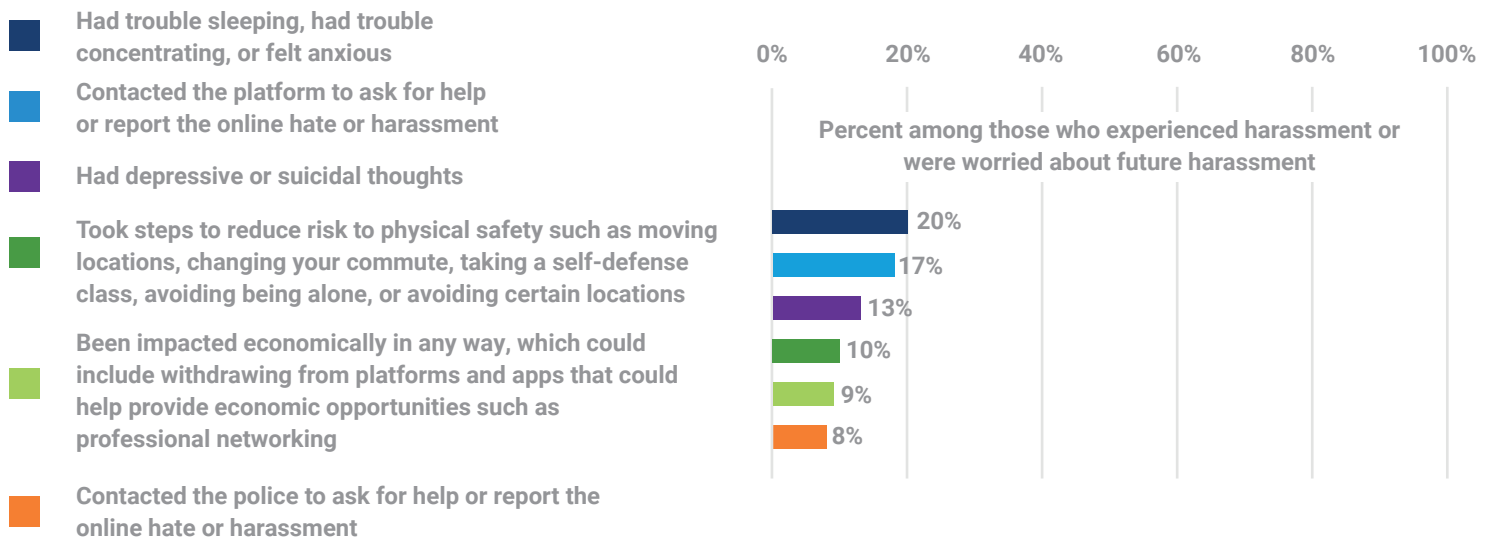
I had been stalked online which turned into physically stalking and multiple assaults. I had contacted police several times, but no charges were ever brought because the comments were 'too vague.'

– 43-year-old politically moderate white gay man



Outcomes of Online Harassment

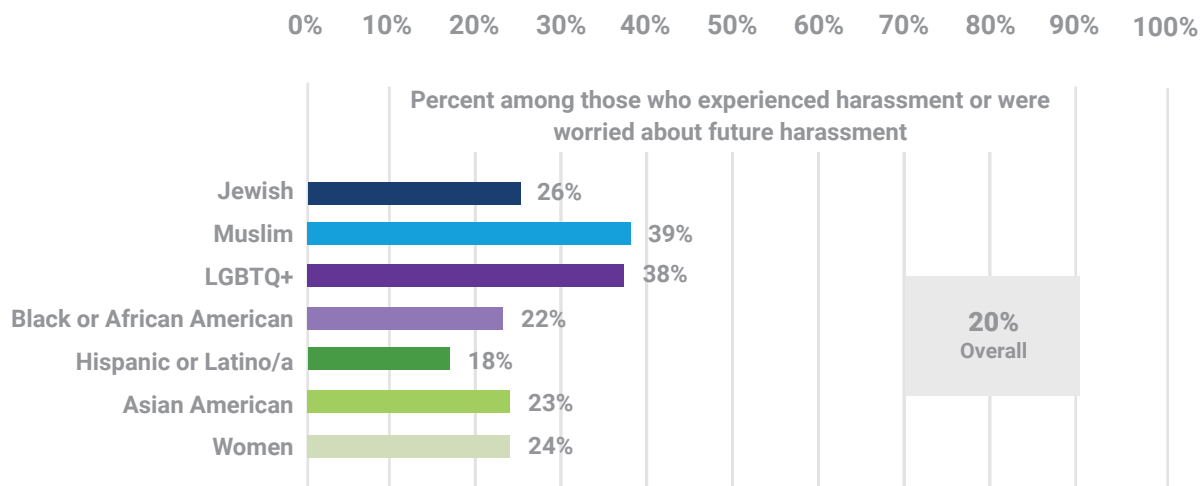
As a result of your experience with online hate and harassment, have you...



Muslim and LGBTQ+ respondents who were harassed or worried about harassment were the most likely to report trouble sleeping and concentrating or feelings of anxiety (39% and 38%, respectively) as well as depressive or suicidal thoughts (23% and 24%, respectively). Asian Americans and Muslims were most likely to take steps to protect their physical safety (22% each).

Outcomes of Online Harassment: Marginalized Groups

As a result of your experience with online hate and harassment, have you... had trouble sleeping, had trouble concentrating, or felt anxious?

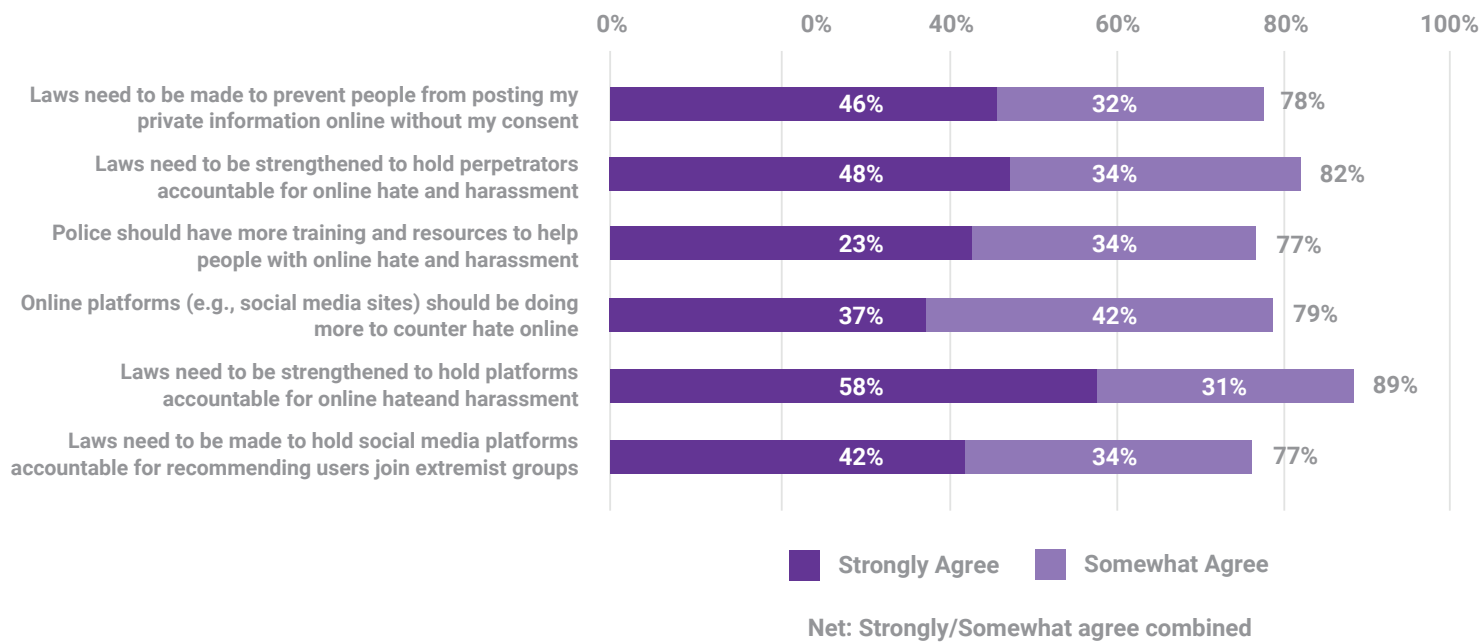


PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

Most respondents agreed with ADL’s proposed solutions and would like to see stronger laws to hold perpetrators of online harassment accountable for their harmful actions. The most popular solution proposed was to enact laws preventing the disclosure of private information without consent, called doxing (89% agreed), followed by strengthening laws to hold perpetrators accountable for online harassment (82%). Similar numbers of respondents said online platforms should do more to counter hate online (78%) and endorsed holding platforms accountable (77%).

Solutions

Based on your understanding and experience, do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Strongly Agree/Somewhat Agree combined)



My reaction was to not only block the fake account but make everything I post for friends only and to stop putting personal content or content that is very meaningful on sites at all.

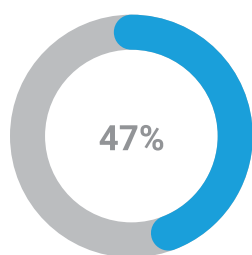
– 58-year-old politically liberal, straight Hispanic/Latina woman

Findings: Youth 13-17

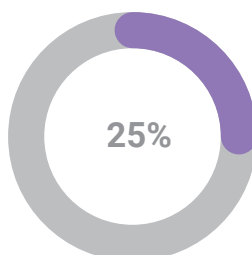
ADL conducted a separate survey of youth ages 13-17 on their experiences related to online hate and harassment. We believe this is the first such nationally representative survey in the U.S. quantifying young people's overall experiences of hate and harassment online. Previous studies show that youth are more likely than adults to experience cyberbullying—that is, social and psychological abuse intended to harm and belittle a target. Cyberbullying is typically ongoing and predominantly targets girls.¹⁷¹⁸¹⁹ ADL has found an alarmingly high rate of online harassment among youth: Nearly half of respondents (47%) reported ever being harassed, and more than a third (36%) reported being harassed within the past 12 months. Another 25% experienced severe harassment, including 15% within the past 12 months. Youth also experienced hate-based harassment at a higher rate than adults: Nearly 3 out of 4 marginalized youth (72%) reported being harassed because of their identity. Among all youth, more than 2 out of 3 (67%) reported being harassed because of their identity.

Online Harassment: Any Harassment and Severe Harassment Ever Experienced

Which, if any, of the following have ever happened to you, personally, online?



Net: Any harassment



Net: Severe harassment
(physical threats, sustained harassment, stalking, sexual harassment, doxing, swatting)

¹⁷ Foody, Mairéad, Muthanna Samaraa, and Per Carlbring. 2015. "A review of cyberbullying and suggestions for online psychological therapy." *Internet Interventions* 2(3): 235-242. .

¹⁸ Pew Research Center, July, 2017, "Online Harassment 2017."

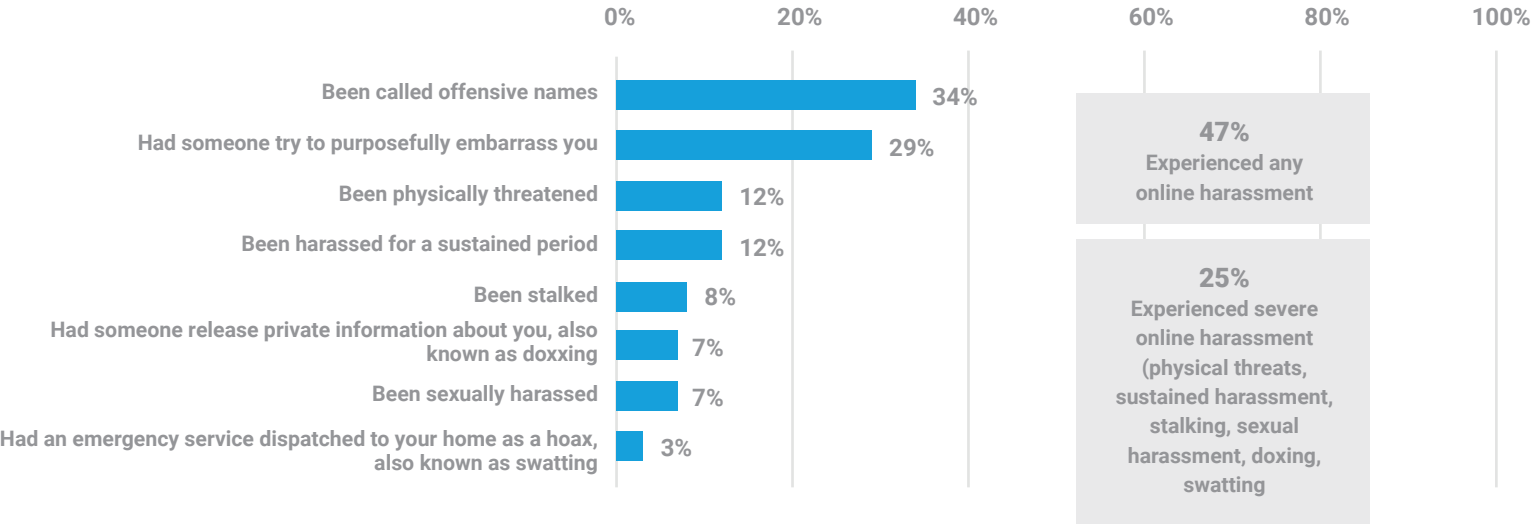
¹⁹ Amanda Lenhart et al. 2016. "Online Harassment, Digital Abuse and Cyberstalking in America," Data & Society Research Institute, November 21.



Of those harassed, 34% were called offensive names, 29% said someone tried to embarrass them intentionally, and 25% experienced some form of severe harassment (including physical threats, sustained or ongoing harassment, stalking, sexual harassment, doxing, and swatting).

Types of Online Harassment Ever Experienced

Which, if any, of the following have ever happened to you, personally, online.

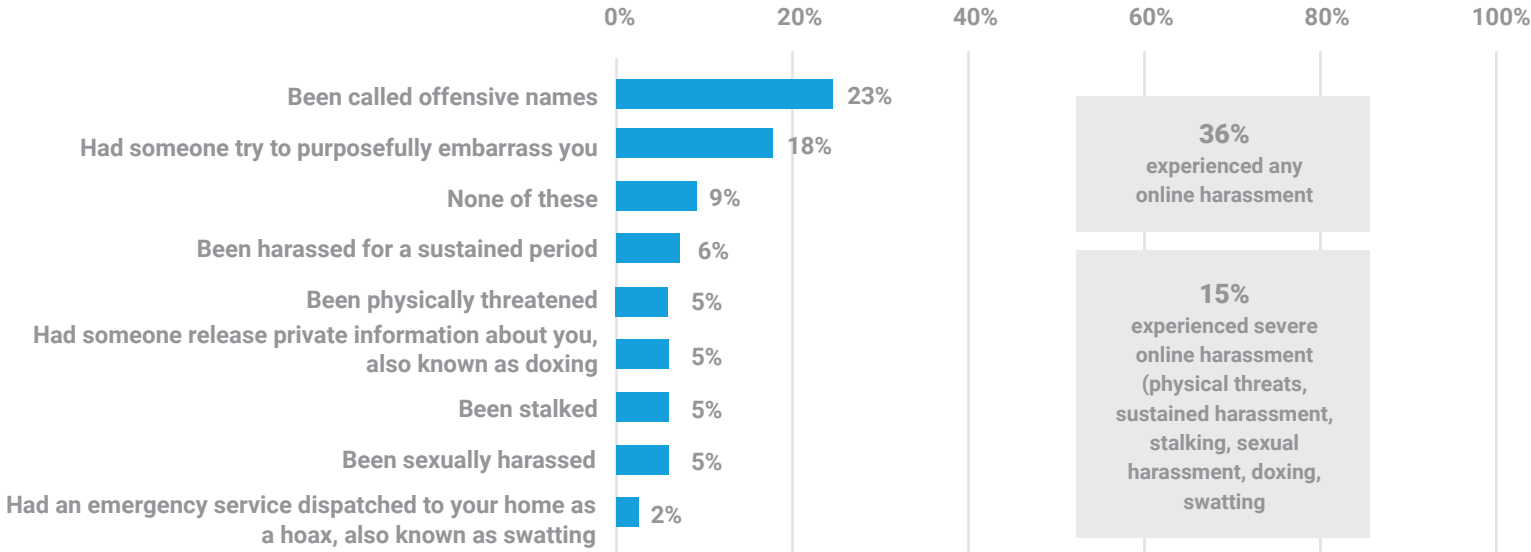


HARASSMENT IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS

2022 More than 1 out of 3 youth reported being harassed online in the past 12 months, including 15% who experienced severe harassment.

Types of Online Harassment in the Past 12 Months

Which, if any, of the following have happened to you, personally, online in the last 12 months?

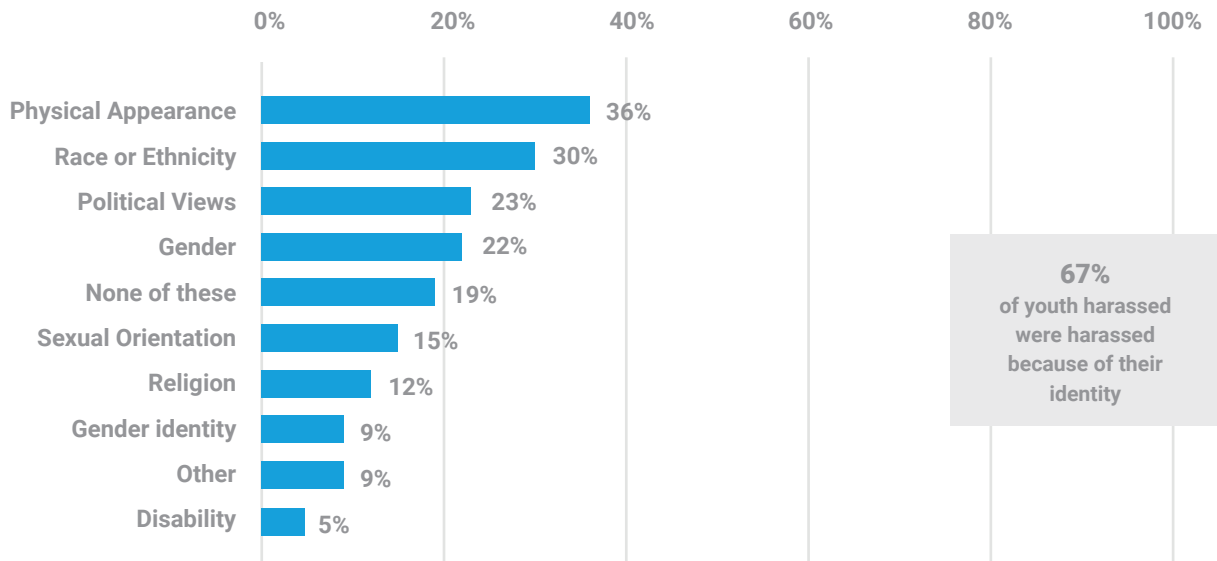


HATE-BASED HARASSMENT

As with adults, a large proportion (67%) of youth were harassed due to an aspect of their identity (physical appearance, race or ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, gender identity, or disability).

Reasons for Harassment

Do you think any of these experiences were a result of your...

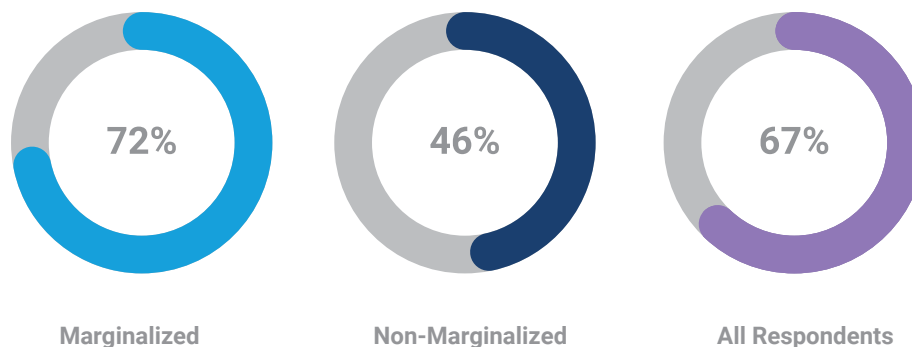


Net identity includes: physical appearance, gender, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability

Marginalized youth (including girls, youth of color, LGBTQ+ youth, and others from marginalized groups) were more than 1.5 times as likely as non-marginalized youth²⁰ to be harassed for their identity (72% versus 46%).

Reasons for Harassment: Identity, Marginalized versus Non-marginalized

Do you think any of these experiences were a result of your... gender, physical appearance, sexual orientation, religion, race or ethnicity, gender identity, disability.



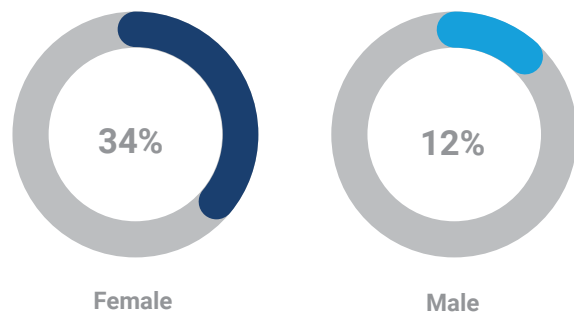
Percent among those harassed. Marginalized includes respondents who are female, Jewish, Muslim, LGBTQ+, Non-white (Black/African, Hispanic or Latino/a, Asian American, Native American, Middle Eastern) or disabled

²⁰ The base size for non-marginalized youth was 48, so caution should be used when interpreting this data.

Girls were about three times as likely as boys to report being harassed due to their gender (34% of female-identified respondents versus 12% of male-identified ones).

Reasons for Harassment: Gender

Do you think any of these experiences were a result of your... gender?



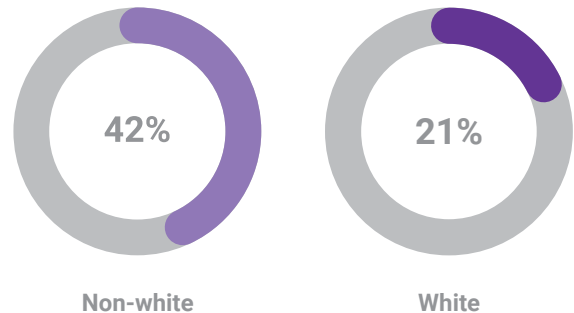
Percent among those who experienced harassment
Note: There were not enough non-binary respondents (n=3) to include.

Non-white youth were about twice as likely as white youth to report being harassed due to their race or ethnicity (42% versus 21%).

Reasons for Harassment:

Race or Ethnicity

Do you think any of these experiences were a result of your... race/ethnicity?



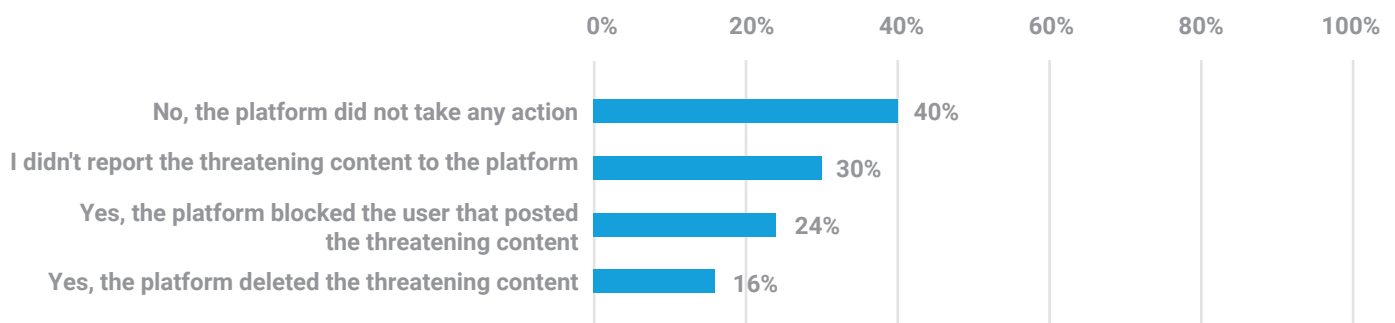
Percent among those harassed

PLATFORM RESPONSE

Similar to adults, few youth said that the platform where they experienced harassment took action against reported physical threats: only 16% said the platform deleted the content, while 24% said the platform blocked the user in question, and 40% said the platform took no action (30% did not report the threatening content to the platform).

Action Taken by Platform

Did the social media platform take any action to address the physical threat in any way?



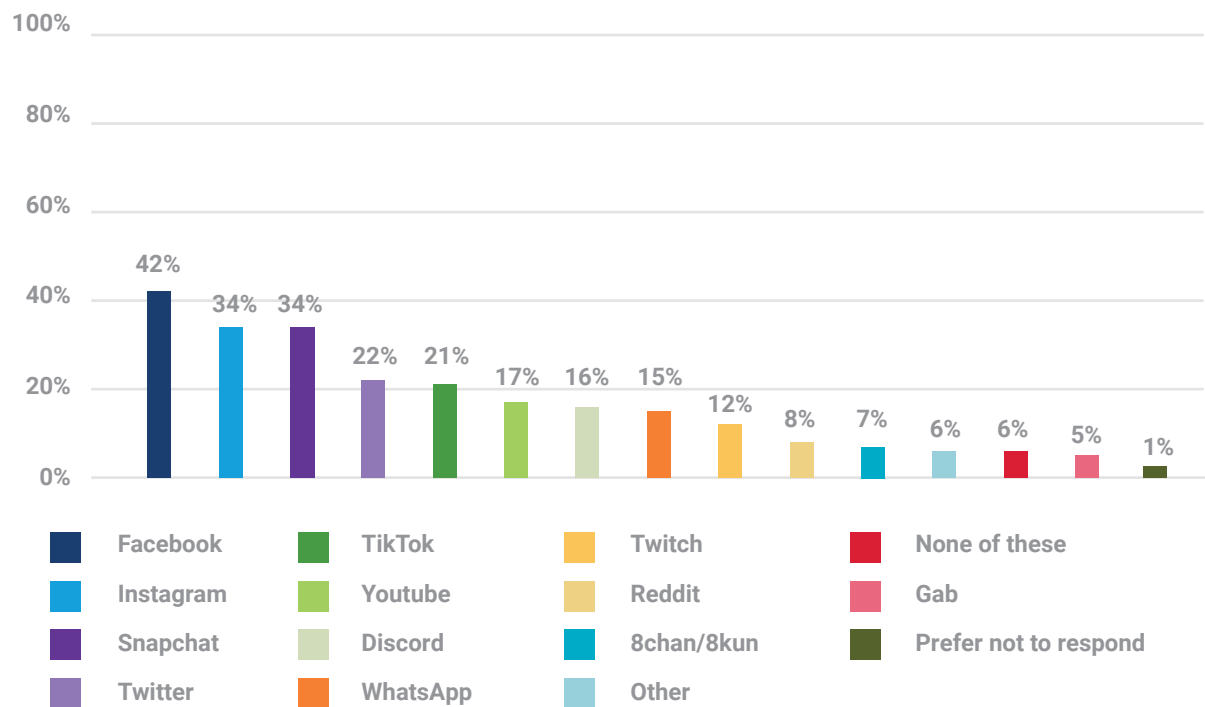
Percent among those who were physically threatened

WHERE HARASSMENT TAKES PLACE

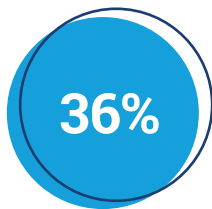
A plurality of young people (42%) reported that harassment in the past 12 months happened on Facebook, like adults though in smaller numbers (57% of adults reported any harassment on Facebook in the past 12 months). This difference likely reflects that Facebook is less popular with younger users. In contrast, youth were more likely to report harassment on Instagram (34%) and Snapchat (34%) than adults were (27% and 15%, respectively).

Platforms Where Harassment Took Place, Past 12 Months

In the last 12 months, did any of these experiences occur on...



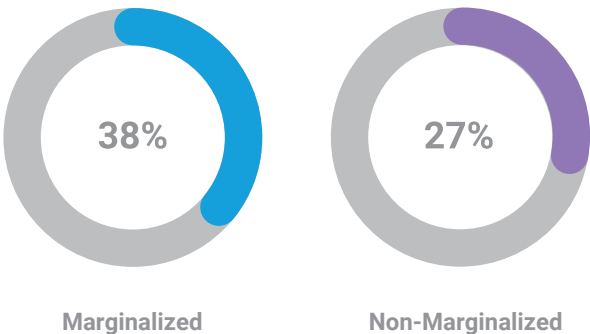
WORRY ABOUT FUTURE HARASSMENT



More than one-third of youth reported being **worried about future harassment**

Worry About Future Harassment

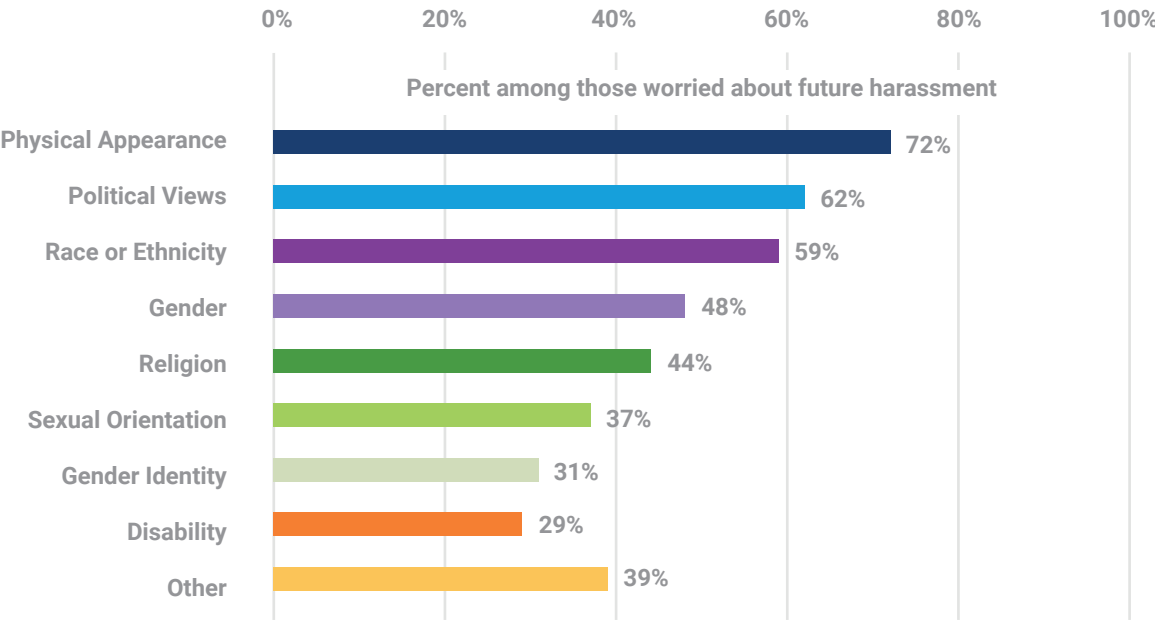
Are you worried about being harassed, threatened or otherwise targeted online in the future? Yes



Perhaps unsurprisingly, youth worry more about being harassed for their physical appearance than adults do (72% versus 53%).

Degree of Worry by Reason: Very/somewhat worried (combined)

Are you worried about being targeted because of...

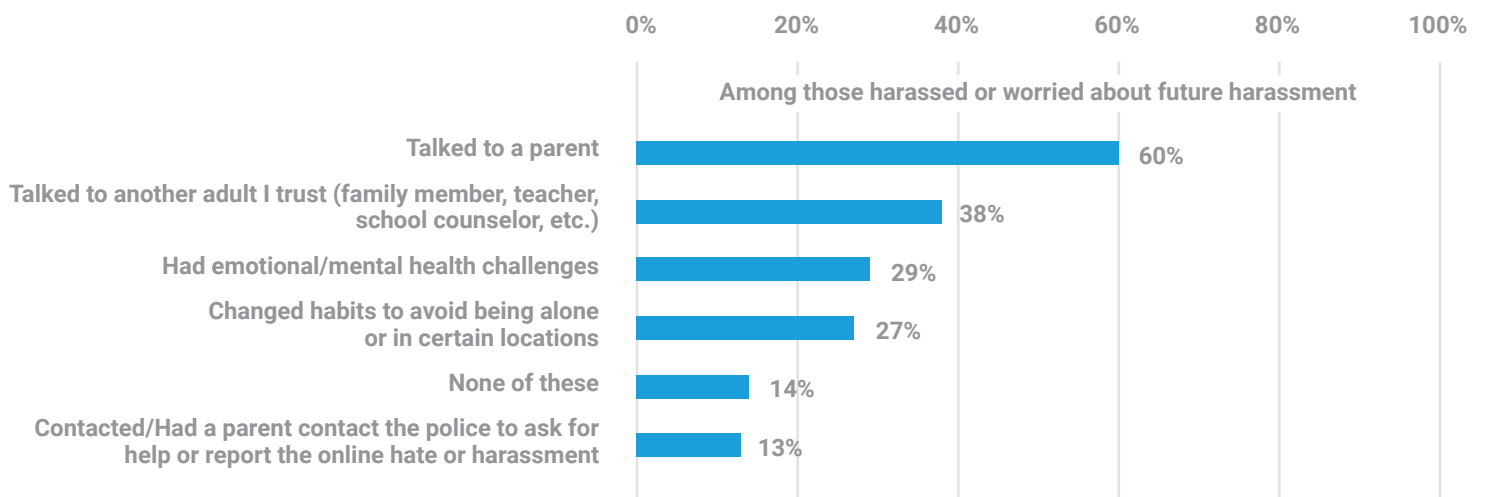


OUTCOMES OF HARASSMENT

Nearly two-thirds of young people who were harassed or worried about harassment reported talking to a parent (60%) or another trusted adult (38%) as a result. Almost a third (29%) experienced emotional or mental health challenges, and another 27% changed habits to avoid being alone or in certain locations. More than 1 in 10 reached out to police or reported the incident to law enforcement (13%).

Outcomes of Online Harassment

As a result of your experience with online hate and harassment, have you...

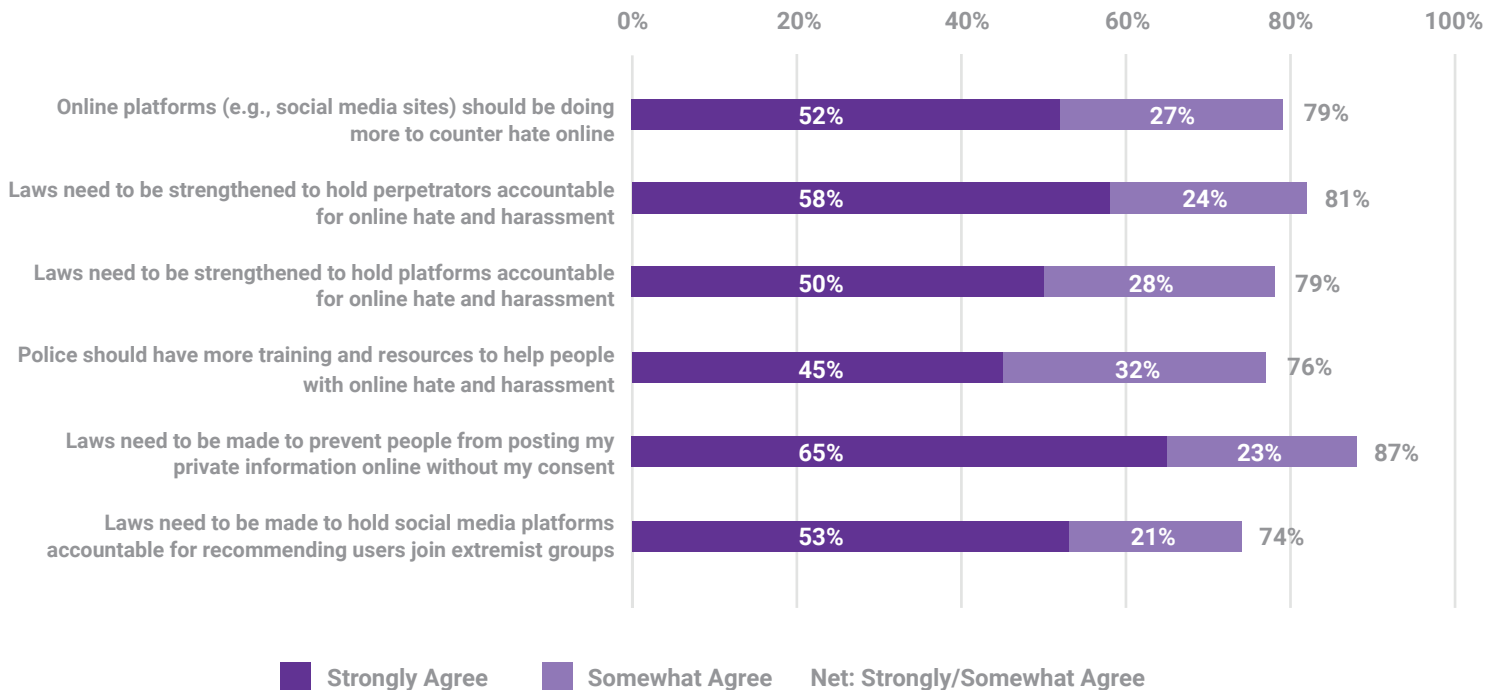


PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

As with adults, we polled youth about what solutions they'd like to see to address online hate and harassment. The most popular choice was to pass laws to prevent people from posting people's private information online without their consent (87%), followed by strengthening laws holding perpetrators accountable (81%).

Agreement with Potential Solutions

Based on your understanding and experience, do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

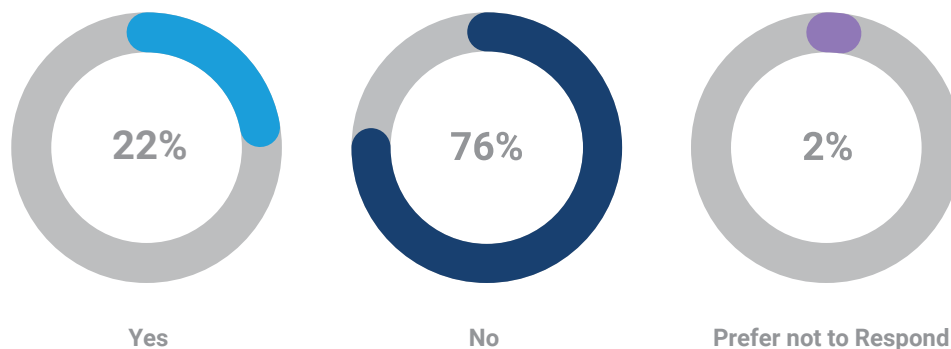


OFFLINE HARASSMENT

Online harassment can also lead to or correspond with offline harassment. More than one-fifth (22%) of youth said they had been harassed offline based on information available about them online.

Offline harassment

Have you ever been harassed offline (such as being stalked or called an offensive name) based on information available about you online?



Methodology

The annual online hate and harassment survey of 2,330 American adults is conducted on behalf of ADL by YouGov, a public opinion and data analytics firm. The survey examines American adults' experiences with and views of online hate and harassment. A total of 2,330 completed surveys were collected to form a nationally representative base of Americans age 18 and older, including oversamples from those who self-identified as Jewish, Muslim, Black or African-American, Asian American, Hispanic or Latino/a, or LGBTQ+. We oversampled the Jewish population until at least 500 Jewish Americans responded. For other oversampled target groups, responses were collected until at least 200 Americans were represented from each. Data was weighted on the basis of age, gender identity, race, census region, and education to adjust for national representation. All respondents were based in the United States, and the survey was conducted in English. YouGov surveys are taken independently online by a prescreened set of panelists representing many demographic categories. Panelists are weighted for statistical relevance to national demographics. Participants are rewarded for

general participation in YouGov surveys, but they were not directly rewarded by ADL for their participation in this survey. Surveys were conducted from January 26 to February 14, 2022. Data for ADL's previous annual online harassment surveys was collected in December 2018, January 2020, and January 2021.

The surveys asked about lifetime experiences online as well as experiences in the past 12 months. The margin of sampling error for the full sample of respondents is plus or minus 2 percentage points. Unless otherwise noted, year-over-year differences are statistically significant at the 90% confidence level or higher.

The youth survey of 500 13-17 year olds was also conducted on behalf of ADL by YouGov. The survey examines American teens' experiences with and views of online hate and harassment. Data was weighted on the basis of age, gender identity, and race to adjust for national representation. The margin of sampling error for the full sample of youth is plus or minus 4.4 percentage points.



I was called everything from an 'uncle tom' to a shill for democrats, a commie, and other hateful names I won't type here.

– 55-year-old straight, politically very liberal Black/
African American man

Conclusion: Little Progress



As our fourth annual survey shows, hate and harassment continue to plague online spaces, despite the many commitments platforms have made to reduce harmful content and improve tools for those targeted. Hate-based harassment remains steady: 65% of marginalized people over 17 who were harassed said it was because of their identity. Among youth, nearly 3 out of 4 marginalized youth said they were targeted because of their identity (72%). And reports of harassment spiked for Asian Americans, paralleling the rise in anti-Asian rhetoric and violent incidents offline, while harassment remains disturbingly high for other marginalized groups, such as 66% of LGBTQ+ adults.

Harassment online erodes people's ability to engage in public discourse and can chill speech for targeted groups—disproportionately women, people of color, and people who are LGBTQ+. Major tech companies like Facebook and Twitter have repeatedly committed to prohibiting hate and harassment on their platforms. Our annual survey shows that the rate of online harassment remains steady since 2020, despite the stated efforts of tech companies to stem the spreading and mainstreaming of extremism and conspiracy theories online.

When platforms do not enforce their policies against hate and harassment, online spaces become unsafe for targets, especially marginalized people. From Twitch raids on trans streamers²¹ to harassment campaigns on Twitter against Black women who are politicians or journalists,²² abusers weaponize harassment to make online spaces hostile to targets. Online and offline hate incidents against Asian Americans have increased dramatically since 2020, corresponding with racist rhetoric (including from former President Trump)²³ framing the coronavirus as caused by Chinese people. These harassment campaigns frequently invoke antisemitism, racist tropes, and conspiracy theories, often overlapping

²¹ <https://techcrunch.com/2021/09/13/twitch-hate-raids-lawsuits/>

²² <https://www.technologyreview.com/2018/12/18/138551/female-black-journalists-and-politicians-get-sent-an-abusive-tweet-every-30-seconds/>

²³ <https://www.adl.org/blog/at-the-extremes-the-2020-election-and-american-extremism-part-3>

with campaigns spreading health or election misinformation. Our annual survey shows once again that hate, harassment, and misinformation remain widespread problems across the social media ecosystem, and that platforms' efforts—in both policy and product design—are inadequate to meet the scale of the problem.

Children are not immune to the impact of online hate and harassment. Our survey findings show that online harassment is a pressing concern for youth, affecting nearly half of all young people in the U.S. (47%). Nearly 2 out of 3 youth reported being harassed because of their identity (67%), such as their gender, race, or religion, disproportionately marginalized youth, including girls. For many, being harassed caused serious, lasting harm, affecting their mental or emotional health and their everyday behaviors. Online harassment spills over offline—more than one-fifth (22%) reported being harassed in person based on information about them online.

For young people, social media platforms are vital social spaces; as social media scholar danah boyd²⁴ has long argued, young people in the U.S. turned to online spaces when physical public spaces became less available to them.²⁵ Similar to our findings among adults, platforms do not do nearly enough to prevent hate-based harassment targeting girls, young people of color, and LGBTQ+ youth.

This survey also highlights many ways in which our understanding of online hate and harassment is incomplete. Future avenues of research should include more granular investigations into hate and harassment, both quantitative and qualitative, such as what harassment looks like on different platforms, whether some forms of harassment have more severe outcomes or impacts, whether people with intersectional identities experience harassment in distinct ways, why some people who are harassed take no action, or how harassment incidents affect bystanders.

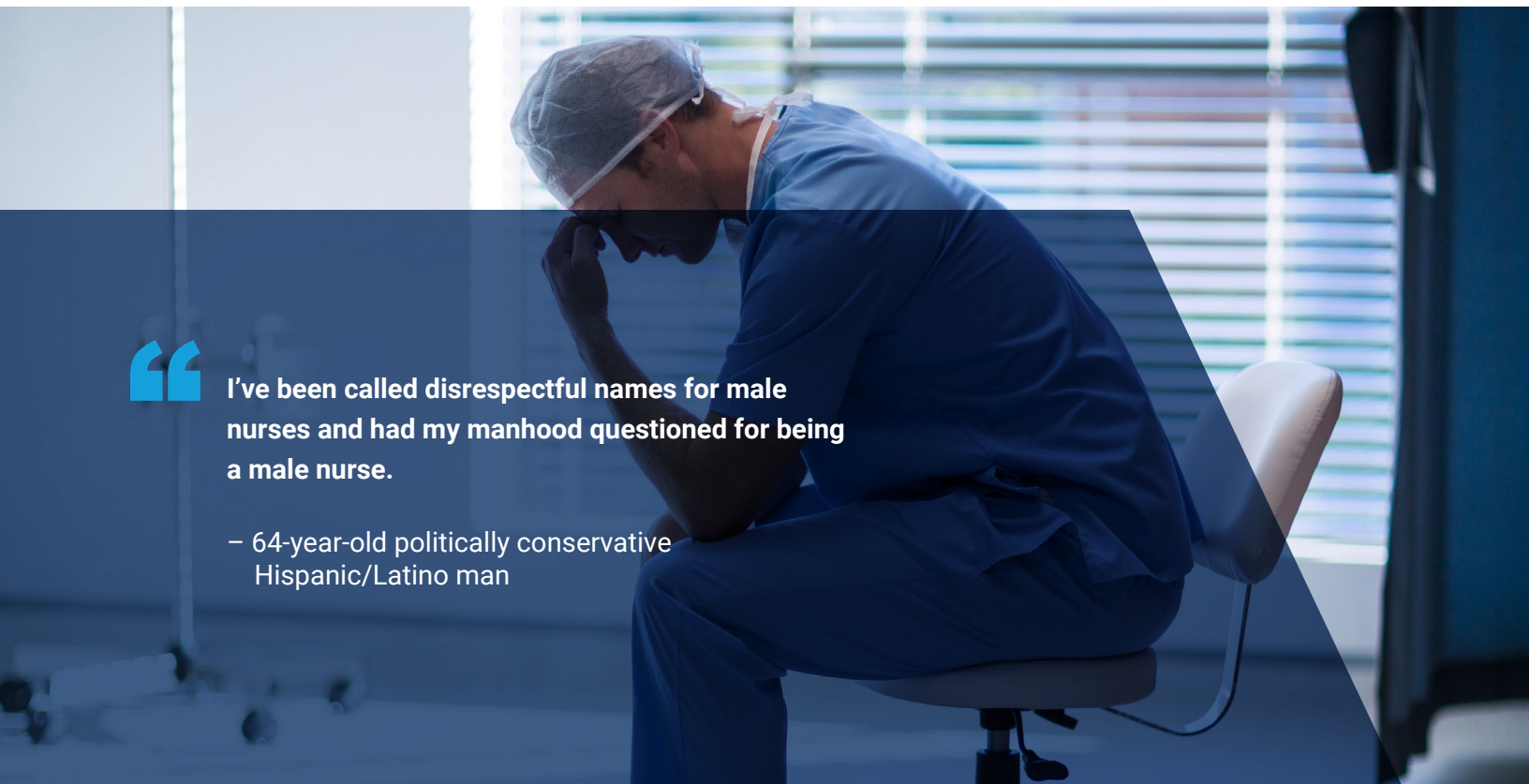
²⁴ Dr. boyd does not capitalize her name.

²⁵ boyd, danah. 2014. *It's Complicated: The Social Lives of Networked Teens*. New Haven: Yale University Press.



I've been called disrespectful names for male nurses and had my manhood questioned for being a male nurse.

– 64-year-old politically conservative Hispanic/Latino man



Recommendations

Despite the persistence of hate online, there are many steps platforms and policymakers can take, including implementing product features that are anti-hate by design, engaging in meaningful transparency reporting, and ensuring data access for researchers.

FOR TECH COMPANIES

01



Ensure strong policies against hate

Companies must have public-facing community guidelines or standards that address hateful content and harassing behavior, and they must clearly define consequences for violations. While some platforms have robust policies at present, not all do. Platforms lacking such policies show indifference to addressing the harms suffered by marginalized communities.

02



Enforce policies equitably and at scale

Platform policies on their own are insufficient; they require enforcement that is consistent and equitable across the full scale of every digital social platform. ADL recommends that tech companies hire more content moderators, train them well, and develop automated technologies that recognize cultural and linguistic contexts and commit as few mistakes as possible when enforcing policies around violative content.

03



Design platforms and products centered on the experiences of communities targeted by hate

In the development and improvement of their social platforms, tech companies must address the needs of the people most targeted by hate. The Online Hate Index, ADL's antisemitism machine-learning classifier,²⁶ models this approach. If a nonprofit can create an effective tool to detect online antisemitism that incorporates the perspective and experience of Jewish volunteers, then technology companies with vast resources have no excuse not to do the same.

²⁶ <https://www.adl.org/online-hate-index-0>

04



Expand tools and services for targets of harassment

Individuals facing or fearing an online attack need more services and tools that are easily accessed and effective. For example, users should be able to:

- Flag multiple pieces of content within one report instead of creating a new report for each piece of content (batch reporting).
- Block multiple perpetrators of online harassment at once instead of undergoing the laborious process of blocking them individually.
- Track abuse reports through an online portal or ticketing system and have access to real-time support for urgent incidents. More specific suggestions on anti-hate by design principles can be found in ADL's Social Pattern Library.²⁷

05



Improve transparency reporting

Technology companies must consistently produce transparency reports that include far more than a small amount of data about online hate. Reports should show data from user-generated, identity-based reporting. For example, if users report they were targeted because they were Jewish, that can be aggregated to become a subjective measure of the scale and nature of antisemitic content on a platform, a useful metric to researchers.

06



Submit to external audits

Technology companies provide unverified information on the content moderation actions they have taken on their platforms. Companies must submit to regularly scheduled external, independent audits so the public knows the extent of hate and harassment on their platforms. They should provide privacy-protected data on user content and reporting actions that were taken so that a trusted third party can evaluate the efficacy of content moderation.

²⁷ <https://socialpatterns.adl.org/>

For Government

Government has an important role in reducing online hate and harassment. An overwhelming share of Americans (79%) agree that there should be more police training and resources to help targets of online abuse. And a significant majority of respondents (82%) agree that laws should be strengthened to hold perpetrators of online hate accountable for their conduct. Furthermore, officials at all levels of government can use their bully pulpits to call for better enforcement of technology companies' policies.

Government can address online hate and harassment through legislation, training, and research.

01



Prioritize regulations and reform

Platforms distribute hateful content. They also facilitate violence, political polarization, and conspiracies. Unlike traditional publishers, technology companies are largely shielded from legal liability by Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act (CDA 230). There is a lack of other legislative or regulatory requirements—even when companies' products, actions, or omissions may aid and abet civil rights abuses and criminal activity. The claims technology companies make in their transparency reports and related communications are not independently verified.

Governments must carefully reform, not eliminate, CDA 230 to hold social media platforms accountable for their role in fomenting hate. Reform must prioritize both civil rights and civil liberties.

02



Designate appropriations to increase understanding and mitigate online hate

All levels of government should consider designating funding to ensure that law enforcement personnel are trained to investigate criminal online incidents. The federal government has not thoroughly examined the connection between online hate speech and hate crimes. Congress should task relevant federal agencies, including the Departments of Homeland Security and Justice, with funding civil society organizations to conduct research and share data about cases where online harassment leads to hate crimes. The federal government can support nonprofits, academic researchers, and other experts to develop methods of measuring online hate, mitigating harassment, and altering product design to reduce harassment.

03



Strengthen laws against perpetrators of online hate

Severe online misconduct is inadequately covered by cybercrime, harassment, stalking, and hate crime laws. Lawmakers can increase protections for targets and penalize perpetrators of online abuse by pushing for laws that cover cybercrimes such as doxing, swatting, cyberstalking, nonconsensual distribution of intimate imagery, and deceptive synthetic media (sometimes called “deepfakes”). One promising avenue is passing the Online Safety Modernization Act at the federal level. Appropriations are also necessary, as legislatures and executive branches must resource to the threat.

04



Improve training of law enforcement

Law enforcement is a crucial responder to online hate and harassment, especially when users feel they are in imminent danger. Increasing training and resources for law enforcement personnel can better help targets and support more effective investigations and prosecutions. Finally, the training and resources should include ways law enforcement can refer people to support if online harassment cannot be addressed through legal remedies.

05



Investigate the impact of product design

Government agencies do not understand the role of product design. Congress can:

- Commission research that evaluates the tools platforms provide to users to protect themselves.
- Support research into how product design amplifies hate, harassment, and extremism.
- Order third-party audits of systems related to product design to hold technology companies accountable for how they address online abuse.

Support

This work is made possible in part by the generous support of:

We are grateful to the Anti-Defamation League, Russell Sage Foundation, Carnegie Corporation of New York, and the National Science Foundation for financial support and to Samantha Luks at YouGov for outstanding survey administration assistance. We also would like to thank Virgílio A. F. Almeida, Christopher Charles, Mark Ledwich, Becca Lewis, Wagner Meira, Raphael Ottoni, Manoel Horta Ribeiro, Aaron Sankin, Robert West, and Anna Zaitsev for sharing their data with us or making it publicly available. All conclusions and errors are our own.

Anonymous (2)

The Robert Belfer Family

Dr. Georgette Bennett and Dr. Leonard Polonsky

Bumble

Crown Family Philanthropies

Electronic Arts

Grove Foundation

Walter & Elise Haas Fund

Craig Newmark Philanthropies

Quadrivium Foundation

Righteous Persons Foundation

The David Tepper Charitable Foundation, Inc.

The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation

ADL Leadership

Ben Sax

Chair, Board of Directors

Jonathan Greenblatt

CEO and National Director

Mike Sheetz

President, Anti-Defamation League Foundation

Adam Neufeld

Senior Vice President and Chief Impact Officer

Center for Technology and Society

Daniel Kelley

Director, Strategy and Operations

Jordan Kraemer

Director, Research and Policy

Caroline Bermudez

Editorial Director

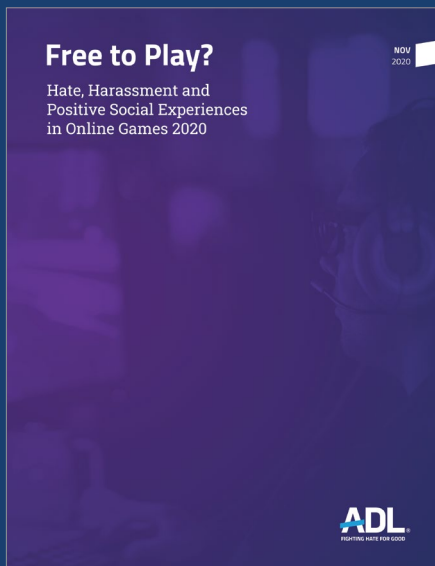
Take Action

Partner with ADL to fight hate in your community and beyond.

- Sign up at adl.org for our email newsletters to stay informed about events in our world and ADL's response.
- Report hate crimes and bias-related incidents in your area to your regional ADL office.
- Engage in respectful dialogue to build understanding among people with different views.
- Get involved with ADL in your region.

Featured Resources

From the ADL Center For Technology and Society



Free to Play?
Hate, Harassment and Positive Social Experiences in Online Games 2020

www.adl.org/online-hate-2020



Online Hate and Harassment
The American Experience 2020

www.adl.org/online-hate-2020



The Trolls are Organized and Everyone's a Target
The Effects of Online Hate and Harassment

www.adl.org/trollsharassment



adl.org



Anti-Defamation League



@ADL



@adl_national



CENTER FOR
TECHNOLOGY
& SOCIETY