

END STREET HARASSMENT

A New York City Resource Guide

2023



NYC Street
Harassment
Prevention
Advisory Board

NYC
Mayor's Office to
End Domestic and
Gender-Based Violence

NYC
COMMISSION ON
GENDER EQUITY

nyc.gov/endgbv
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Table of Contents

What is street harassment and how can it affect me?	2
What can I do in the moment if street harassment happens to me?	3
What can I do in the moment if I see someone being harassed in public?	5
Where can I find support after experiencing street harassment?	6
How can I help prevent street harassment?	9
How can I report harassment or discrimination?	13

What is street harassment and how can it affect me?

Street harassment is a form of violence that is common all over the world with roots in different and intersecting forms of oppression.

In New York City, we define street harassment as unwanted or unwelcome disrespectful, offensive, or threatening statements, gestures or other behavior directed at a person in public based on the person's actual or perceived age, race, national origin, gender identity, gender expression, disability, sexual orientation, or any other trait, status or condition.

Street harassment hurts people by causing fear, anxiety, and distrust and by limiting their mobility. It can also affect entire communities: when people don't feel safe in public spaces, they are less likely to spend time outside or take part in group activities.

Because street harassment often targets members of historically oppressed groups, it harms those groups more severely, including women and girls, transgender, gender non-conforming, non-binary, and/or intersex (TGNCNBI) individuals, lesbian, gay, bisexual, or queer (LGBQ) individuals, Black, Latino, and Asian individuals, Muslim individuals, and individuals with disabilities.

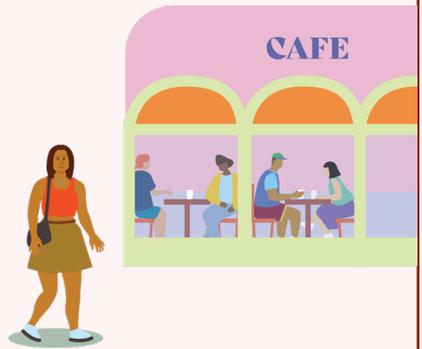
In New York City, street harassment is widespread, and we all have a role to play in preventing and responding to it. This resource guide was developed to support New Yorkers to learn more about how to safely respond to street harassment and support themselves and others around them following an incident of street harassment.

What can I do in the moment if street harassment happens to me?

If you are harassed in public, remember that it's not your fault and however you respond is ok, including not responding at all. Although you don't have to take any action, if you feel safe and able, you can consider any of the following strategies:

Move Somewhere Safe

If you can, go into a local business, store, coffee shop, building lobby, or other public place where you can get help. If you and the harasser are the only ones on a bus or train, sit near the driver or move cars to be closer to other people.¹



Reclaim Your Space

Set a boundary by telling the harasser to stop what they're doing and move away. Make direct eye contact, speak firmly, and tell them what you want them to do and why, e.g.: "Don't talk to me like this, it's harassment. Move away," or "You're harassing me, this is not okay."²



1 [https://www.rainn.org/articles/street-harassment#:~:text=HOPE%20\(4673\)%20or%20chat%20online,5910%20or%20through%20online%20chat](https://www.rainn.org/articles/street-harassment#:~:text=HOPE%20(4673)%20or%20chat%20online,5910%20or%20through%20online%20chat).

2 <https://righttobe.org/guides/how-to-respond-to-public-harassment/>

Ask Bystanders for Help

Ask for help by loudly announcing what the person harassing you said or did, for example: “That man in the blue shirt is following me. I need help!” Then tell people what you want them to do, e.g.: “Can you wait here with me? Can you walk me to the corner?”³



Record the Interaction

Use your phone or ask someone nearby to record the person harassing you, and any identifying information. If you want, you can use the material to report an incident or share your story on social media or with support networks.⁴



Request Emergency Assistance

Call 911 if you or others are in immediate danger. Note this will cause a police response.



³ <https://msmagazine.com/2014/12/09/how-do-you-respond-to-street-harassment-here-are-some-suggestions/>

⁴ <https://plan-international.org/girls-get-equal/how-to-handle-catcallers/>

What can I do in the moment if I see someone being harassed in public?

If you see street harassment, and feel safe enough to intervene, you can use one of Right To Be's 5Ds of Bystander Intervention:⁵

- DISTRACT** Engage directly with the person who is being harassed and talk to them about something completely unrelated to the harassment. Ignore the harasser.
- DELEGATE** Ask someone nearby, who could have authority in the space, to help you intervene. Tell them clearly what you'd like them to do.
- DOCUMENT** Record or take notes, but only if someone is already helping the person being harassed. Always ask the person what they want to do with your documentation.
- DELAY** Even after harassment, you can help someone by checking in on them, asking if they're ok, or if there's anything you can do to support them.
- DIRECT** After assessing your safety and ensuring you are not going to escalate the incident, respond directly by naming the inappropriate behavior and confronting the person doing harm.

STREET HARASSMENT RESPONSE AND PREVENTION OUTSIDE OF NYC

How is Buenos Aires, Argentina responding to street harassment?

Someone who has committed street harassment must do court-mandated community service. The local government also led an awareness campaign in 2018.

SOURCE: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-38252462>

⁵ <https://righttobe.org/guides/bystander-intervention-training/>

Where can I find support after experiencing street harassment?

The impacts of street harassment can be both short- and long-term, and can include anxiety and depression, feeling less trust and connection in community, and avoiding certain public spaces or going out alone, among many others. If you or someone you know has experienced street harassment, help is available.

Get support, including counseling and advocacy services

[Anti-Violence Project \(AVP\)](#) (avp.org)

AVP empowers lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ) and HIV-affected communities and allies to end all forms of violence through organizing and education and supports survivors through counseling and advocacy.

o [Get Support](#) (avp.org/gethelp/getsupport)

AVP provides direct client services to LGBTQ and HIV-affected survivors of all forms of violence in New York City, including via its hotline, counseling, advocacy, support groups, and legal services.

o **AVP Hotline: Call or Text 212-714-1141.** Free, English/Spanish, 24/7 crisis intervention hotline staffed by trained volunteers and professional counselor/advocates to offer support to LGBTQ & HIV-affected victims and survivors of any type of violence.

[National Street Harassment Hotline](#) (hotline.rainn.org/ssh-en)

o A free, confidential service that provides live help including emotional support, advice for how to deal with harassers, and information about your legal rights via phone or online messaging. The hotline is available to anyone who has experienced gender-based harassment in public or is concerned about someone who has experienced or is experiencing it.

o [Access the hotline online](#) at (hotline.rainn.org/ssh-en)

o Access the hotline over the phone by calling **855-897-5910**

 **NYC Well** nyc.gov/nycwell

- NYC Well connects New Yorkers to free, confidential mental health support 24/7. You can speak to a counselor via phone, text, or chat and get access to mental health services in more than 200 languages. Call **1-888-NYC-WELL**, text 'well' to **65173**, or [chat with a counselor online now](#).

nycwell.cityofnewyork.us/en/get-help-now/chat-with-a-counselor-now

 **Safe Horizon** safehorizon.org

As the largest non-profit victim services agency in the US, Safe Horizon offers compassionate and expert support for survivors and their families. Safe Horizon offers counseling, community-based programming, shelter, safety planning, legal advocacy, and more, and can assist in any language.

- [Visit safehorizon.org](#) or call:
 - Domestic violence hotline: **1-800-621-HOPE (4673)**
 - Rape or sexual assault help: **1-212-227-3000**
 - All crimes hotline: **1-866-689-HELP (4357)**

 **lin6** lin6.org

lin6's mission is to help men who have had unwanted or abusive sexual experiences live healthier, happier lives.

- **lin6 Support Groups** supportgroup.lin6.org
Free, confidential, anonymous, and counselor-facilitated chat-based support groups for people who identify as men. Groups take place daily Monday through Friday.

Share your story

Sharing your story with a trusted person or organization can be helpful in healing from an experience of harassment, or connecting you with others who have been through similar experiences.

 **Catcalls of NYC** catcallsofnyc.com

Organization using public chalk art to raise awareness about gender-based street harassment by soliciting stories of harassment and locations, then writing out the comments in chalk with the [#stopstreetharassment](#), and posting the images on [the Catcalls of NYC social media account](#) instagram.com/catcallsofnyc.

- **Get Creative with Your Story**

catcallsofnyc.com/share-your-story

Catcalls of NYC welcomes creative submissions about an experience of catcalling and street harassment, including personal essays, poems, short stories, artwork, among others.

 **Right To Be**

- **Share Your Story** stories.righttobe.org

Sign up to share your story via Right To Be's portal, joining a community where you can both tell your own story and support others who have shared theirs.

- **Resilience Training** righttobe.org/resilience-training

Free, one-hour, experiential learning-based and interactive training focused on how to author your own resilience using Right To Be's resilience methodology: sit with what is, create your story, and be in choice.

 **Safecity** safecity.in

Safecity is an online application that collects and analyzes crowdsourced, anonymous reports of harassment and sexual violence, identifying patterns and key insights.

- Download the app via [the app store](#)⁶ or [Google play](#)⁷, or [use the Safecity web app](#)⁸ to report an incident of harassment in NYC.

STREET HARASSMENT RESPONSE AND PREVENTION OUTSIDE OF NYC

How is *Washington, DC* responding to street harassment?

Created a community-based Advisory Committee on Street Harassment and led a public outreach campaign in 2019.

SOURCE: <https://ohr.dc.gov/nostreetharassmentdc>

6 <https://apps.apple.com/in/app/safecity-app/id1281880382>

7 https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.safecity.android&hl=en_US&gl=US&pli=1

8 <https://webapp.safecity.in/>

How can I help prevent street harassment?

Educating yourself about street harassment and its impacts is the first step in preventing it and building safer spaces in your community. Street harassment can take many forms. Understanding where and how it occurs and who is impacted by it can help you spread awareness and center impacted communities in prevention efforts. Below are steps you can take to learn about and prevent street harassment:

Take a training or join a program

-  **Center for Anti-Violence Education** (caeny.org)
 - **Upstander Trainings** (caeny.org/upstander)
Free training that teaches interpersonal tools to prevent, disrupt and help heal from violence in communities.
-  **Girls for Gender Equity** (ggenyc.org)
 - **Youth Centered Programs** (ggenyc.org/programs)
GGE runs four holistic youth-centered programs rooted in social justice, activism and advocacy for self and community.
-  **Malikah** (malikah.org)
 - **Self Defense and Bystander Intervention Training** (malikah.org/trainings)
These trainings teach movement and self-defense as a healing process in which participants have full control over their safety and space.
-  **NYC Commission on Human Rights** (nyc.gov/cchr)
 - **Bystander Intervention Training** (nyc.gov/site/cchr/community/bystander-intervention.page)
CCHR and community partners regularly co-host bystander intervention trainings.

 **Right To Be** righttobe.org

○ **Bystander Intervention Training**

righttobe.org/bystander-intervention-training

This free training will teach you how to help stop harassment with a set of simple and safe tactics—the 5Ds.

 **The RISE Project** innovatingjustice.org/programs/rise-project

○ **Bystander Intervention Training**

Free workshops and trainings for communities and young people to respond to and prevent violence.

Read about street harassment and understand its scope and impacts

 **INCITE! 2018 Pamphlet on Street Harassment** incite-national.org

- This pamphlet⁹ from INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence provides examples of street harassment and recommendations for safely responding.

 **NYC Office for the Prevention of Hate Crimes: About Hate Crimes**

nyc.gov/ophc

- The Office for the Prevention of Hate Crimes website¹⁰ lists the definition of a hate crime, and links to resources to help you learn more.

 **Plan International 2018 Report: Street Harassment – It’s Not OK**

plan-uk.org

- Plan International UK released this report¹¹ following interviews with girls across the UK, detailing how girls reported experiencing street harassment and the range of impacts.

⁹ https://incite-national.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/6378_street_harass_pamphlet.pdf

¹⁰ <https://www.nyc.gov/site/stophate/resources/about-hate-crimes.page>

¹¹ <https://plan-uk.org/file/plan-uk-street-harassment-reportpdf/download?token=CyKwYGSJ>

 **STOP Street Harassment** (stopstreetharassment.org)

- STOP Street Harassment is a nonprofit organization that works to end street harassment via research, a national hotline, and awareness campaigns.
- In 2019 they released the report **STOP Street Harassment: Measuring #Me Too: A National Study on Sexual Harassment and Assault**¹²

Work with your community to build safe public spaces

 **Open Streets** (nyc.gov/openstreets)

NYC's Open Streets Program transforms public streets into community spaces where New Yorkers can build programming and ties to their neighborhood. All activities are free and open to all, and **Open Streets Applications** are accepted on an ongoing basis.

 **Public Space Programming** (nyc.gov/publicspaceprogramming)

NYC organizations can use DOT's catalog to find a wide range of accessible public programming for their streets and public spaces.

 **Stop Telling Women to Smile** (stoptellingwomentosmile.com)

An art series created by **Artist Tatyana Fazlalizadeh** (tlynfz.com) that addresses gender-based street harassment by placing drawn portraits with captions that speak directly to offenders in public spaces. **Posters are free and available to post** (stoptellingwomentosmile.com/participate) in your community, school, or building.

 **Street Seats** (nyc.gov/streetseats)

Street Seats offer a way for any NYC community organization, business or institution to create a place for New Yorkers to sit together in public.

¹² <https://stopstreetharassment.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/2019-MeToo-National-Sexual-Harassment-and-Assault-Report.pdf>

Have conversations with your friends and family about street harassment, and share resources on how they can become allies



BetterBrave

betterbrave.org/allies

- A guide to support allyship, containing tips for taking action, and ideas for everyday activism. While targeted at workplace harassment, this resource is relevant to allyship beyond the workplace.



It's Not a Compliment

itsnotacompliment.org/10-ways-tackle-street-harassment

- 10 ways to tackle street harassment, including having conversations that challenge the normalization of street harassment with your family and friends.

STREET HARASSMENT RESPONSE AND PREVENTION OUTSIDE OF NYC

How is Brussels, Belgium responding to street harassment?

A person who has committed street harassment must take three informative training sessions on sexual harassment, and the public prosecutor is informed when they have attended.

SOURCE: <https://www.brusselstimes.com/179944/tackling-sexual-harassment-in-belgium-is-joint-responsibility-police-says>

How can I report harassment or discrimination?

NYC has specific human rights laws that prevent discrimination based on gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, or other protected characteristics,¹³ as well as laws and programming related to preventing hate crimes.

If someone is harassed based on their gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, among other protected characteristics, it can be reported to the relevant office listed below.

If you do choose to report, it is important to keep in mind that the person you speak to may not be able to help you immediately, or at all. While reporting can be helpful in contributing to data and understanding of the scope of an issue, it may not be the right choice for you. If that's the case, you can explore other resources listed in this document.

NYC Commission on Human Rights (CCHR)

o **File a discrimination report**

nyc.gov/site/cchr/about/report-discrimination.page

Use this online form to make a report of discrimination, whether you wish to be involved in an official complaint or not.

New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) new.mta.info

o **What To Do If You See a Hate Crime in the NY Transit System**

new.mta.info/respect

Guidance on how to respond to or report hate crimes or bias motivated threats, or harassment you observe on the subway, bus, Long Island Rail Road, and Metro-North.

NYC Office for the Prevention of Hate Crimes (OPHC)

o **Hate Crime Victims Guide to Help**

nyc.gov/assets/stophate/downloads/pdf/hate-crimes-victims-guide-to-help.pdf

Covers various pathways for reporting a hate crime in NYC, including information on receiving victim assistance, and supportive community-based organizations.

¹³ https://www.nyc.gov/assets/cchr/downloads/pdf/materials/ProtectedClasses_Factsheet.pdf

Pursuant to Local Law 46 of 2022, this resource guide was created by the New York City Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence and the New York City Commission on Gender Equity in collaboration with the New York City Street Harassment Prevention Advisory Board.

Last updated June 2023. Please email general@endgbv.nyc.gov with questions or feedback on this guide.