



V-START

YOU CAN FIGHT BACK AGAINST HATE CRIME

A short guide for anyone who has been a victim of, or witness to, a racist, homophobic or disability-based assault.



Introduction

Being the victim of an assault or the target of a racist, homophobic, or disability-based insult is certainly a terrible experience and can sometimes be very shocking. Apart from the physical, psychological, economic and social consequences, it is quite normal for anyone who has had this kind of experience to feel anxiety and worry and to be uncertain about what to do.

If you have been a victim of physical or verbal aggression because of your religion, nationality, skin colour, sexual orientation or disability, or if you know someone who has been a victim of, or has witnessed such act, this guide can offer help and assistance. In this guide, you will find information on your rights, the first steps to take, and the most useful services to turn to.

We hope this guide will be of help to you.

What is a hate crime and how do you recognise it?

Hate crimes are the ordinary crimes but with an aggravating circumstance: they are motivated by hostility towards the social group to which the victim belongs.

Almost every crime can become a hate crime. What makes an act of aggression or persecution a hate crime is the fact that the victim is "chosen" on the basis of her/his membership (or presumed membership) of a certain "group". Membership of a particular group is inferred from wearing a religious symbol such as a chador, yarmulke, turban etc., having a skin colour or other features that are different from those of the majority of people around you or showing affection for someone of the same sex.

Often the attacker does not even know the victim. The act of violence or aggression is not in reaction to something the victim has done or said but due to her or his physical appearance, dress or custom, which identify her / him as belonging to a certain group.

Hate crimes include all physical or verbal attacks, damage to property or symbols, such as places of worship, in which the motivation for the attack or persecution is religion, skin colour, nationality, belonging to a minority group, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability of the victim.



Some examples

Physical violence: being physically attacked, pushed, punched, kicked, slapped, or having things thrown at you, or your religious symbol torn off (e.g. headscarf).

Verbal abuse: being insulted, threatened with physical violence, humiliated, mocked, or verbally abused without reason.

Psychological abuse: being criticised, humiliated, threatened with dismissal by your employer, or being addressed using offensive language at work, school, in a public office, etc.

Violence against property or symbols (places of worship, cemeteries, etc.): having your car or house damaged, finding insulting statements written on the wall of your house or in your mail, finding dangerous or potentially harmful materials in your mailbox or on your doorstep.

Persecution: receiving insulting or obscene phone calls or messages, including on social media, repeated threats, or suffering continuous damages (even minor) to your house, car, etc.

How widespread is hate crime?

The data on the extent of this type of crime is limited but it is more frequent than one may think. An increase in complaints by victims or witnesses would help to understand the phenomenon better and to act against it more effectively. According to data from international organisations, in Italy in 2017, there were 1,048 cases of violence or assault reported to police, of which 828 were racially motivated, 157 were against people with disabilities and 63 were against LGBTI persons. These figures, however, are only the tip of the iceberg. Some European studies have shown that 33% of people of North African origin living in Italy, say they have suffered harassment based on their ethnic origin or migrant background. The same applies to 30% of people from Sub-Saharan Africa and 29% of people of Asian descent. ISTAT (National Institute of Statistics) data show that the risk of being the victim of violence, insults or threats is very high for LGBTI people: 23.3% say they have been threatened, abused or physically attacked and 35.5% have been humiliated and offended.

Remember, the limited number of crimes reported has a negative impact on the perception of the seriousness of the problem and the fight against it.



Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender or Transsexual, Intersexual people can be represented by a single term - LGBTI. This word is now widely accepted and came into being as a response from the gay movement to homophobia, that is, the obsessive aversion towards homosexuality and homosexuals.

I have been a victim of a hate crime ... what should I do?

If you have suffered violence, or have been the victim of persecution such as described earlier, or you have witnessed an incident of physical or verbal abuse, it is very important to report it to the appropriate authorities. If you do, it is more likely that the person who committed it will be investigated and punished and will not have the opportunity to hurt you, or someone else, again.

Be aware that the police are obliged to record every crime case reported to them and must carry out an investigation. If you have any doubts about whether to report a hate crime or not, you can talk to professionals who work in victim support centres before making a decision. They can give you information and advice to help you make up your mind. Some people hesitate when it comes to reporting a crime. They think:

"It's not important" Do not underestimate what happened to you: even an incident that may seem a minor one can have negative consequences. Violence and aggressiveness must not be allowed to become the norm.



"I'm ashamed" You should not feel uncomfortable or ashamed of what happened. It is not your fault. Remember that you have the right to be treated in a sensitive and non-judgmental manner by the police and by all the support services you turn to for help. The people who work in these services are trained to treat people who are victims of an attack in a respectful and supportive manner.

"It won't do any good" Law enforcement agencies have to deal with many cases, so it may happen that the investigation is slow but it will certainly be carried out. It is also possible that the offender may not be identified but the search for him/her will take place. In any case, it is important to record cases of aggression in any given area, even if the perpetrator cannot be identified. It can serve to

increase the vigilance of the law enforcement agencies, as well as help to solve other cases in the future.

"I did not sustain much damages" If the attack did not cause you any injury or damage (physical or psychological) or economic loss, then it is fine but remember that failure to report it means the perpetrator may never be identified or prosecuted and, as a result, similar attacks could be committed against other people.

"I'm afraid of what will happen" It is normal to be afraid of denouncing a crime and of possibly having to go to court. Don't forget, however, that there are people and services out there to help you, both during the complaint phase and later on, during the investigation and trial, if there is one. Whatever decision you make, you always have the right to receive support. Even if you decide not to report the incident to the Police, you can still contact one of the specialised victim support centres that provide psychological and legal support services, or go to an association you know already and trust.



I am a victim of a hate crime ... is it normal to feel the way I do?

Being a victim of violence of any kind can have both psychological and physical consequences and you may experience emotions that you find difficult to deal with. These are absolutely normal reactions that can be scary at first but, as is often the case, they grow weaker over time and you gradually regain control over your life. There is no one way of feeling or dealing with this kind of event. Being a victim of a crime can affect us in many different ways. Being subject to aggression or violence can bring us face to face with a situation in which we react in a way that we are not familiar with and the strategies we normally use to deal with life's problems may no longer be adequate. We may experience shock or feel our personal integrity violated. We may have difficulty sleeping, or get depressed, feel anxious and a sense of guilt, even if there is really no reason for us to feel guilty. A completely normal reaction to an abnormal situation can make us feel like we have lost all control besides believing that the world is a very dangerous place. But be aware that the stress and tension caused by any aggression or persecution you may have suffered will diminish over time and, in many cases, people who have been victims of crime will completely recover and get back to leading a normal life. However, if you think you need professional help to get you through this stressful period, do not hesitate to contact a psychologist or another professional through the support services for victims of crime or other public services in your area.



If you find yourself in a dangerous situation

If you find yourself in a dangerous situation and need immediate help, call the Police or the Carabinieri. **The emergency numbers are 112 and 113 and they operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.** Remember to give your name and phone number and tell them where you are. Explain briefly what is happening, so that the person who answers your call can accurately assess the situation and decide what to do. Once the call has been made, the Police or the Carabinieri are obliged to intervene immediately, assess the risk or danger, and take all necessary measures to remove you from the situation and protect you from violence. If you need medical assistance following a physical attack, go to the Emergency room of a hospital or clinic or, if you are unable to do so, call 118. Tell the health care professionals that your wounds are the result of a violent aggression and remember that the medical report is very important as evidence of what happened and for any future claim for compensation.

112 Emergency number

113 Police

114 Children's rights

118 Ambulance

1522 Gender based violence

800 901010 Anti-discrimination
number



If you decide to file a formal complaint

If you are a victim of a crime, you may decide to file a complaint. Remember that in the support centres, you can have someone explain to you how to make a complaint and what the consequences are if you decide to do so. If a crime has been committed, the Police and the Carabinieri cannot refuse to record the complaint. At this stage, it is not necessary that you know who the perpetrator is in order to file a complaint because a complaint can be filed against an unknown person. Besides, a complaint can also be filed later, after consulting a support centre or after going to the hospital Emergency room.

> What happens when I make a complaint?

The police will begin investigations to gather evidence to support your report, which may take a long time. In any case, we advise you to contact a support centre or consult a lawyer, if you prefer. They will be able to help you in this situation, informing you about how long it would take and the related procedures.

> If I make a complaint, am I obliged to participate in the trial?

No. If you decide to make a complaint, there will be a trial to decide whether a crime has actually been committed and if so, what sanction the perpetrator should receive. You are not obliged to participate in the trial unless you are invited to give witness in which case you have to appear before the Court.

> What if I don't have the money to pay for a lawyer?

If you have an income below a certain level, you the Court can appoint a lawyer to defend you free of charge (free legal aid). In order to obtain free legal assistance, you have to be an Italian / EU citizen or a citizen of a third country with a valid residence permit.



> What are my rights in the trial?

- > You have the right to submit documents or other evidence to prove that you have been the victim of a crime.
- > You have the right to request a translation of all the documents that will be presented during the trial and to be assisted by an interpreter. Translation of the evidence is free only for those documents that are considered essential to enable you to understand what your rights are and what you need to do to defend them during the trial. In other cases, you are free to engage an interpreter or have documents translated but this will be at your own expense.
- > You can ask for compensation for both material and moral damages that you suffered as a result of the violence. You can also ask for the reimbursement of any expenses you have incurred during the trial and the return of any assets that were taken from you in the course of the crime. If your assets have been lost or destroyed, you can ask for a monetary equivalent of their value.
- > You have the right, at any time, to withdraw your participation in the trial.

- > It is very important to bear in mind that all the rights of a victim of a crime can be exercised, in the case of the death of the victim, by the closest relatives or by the husband, wife or partner.

> What happens if they call me as a witness in the trial?

Be aware that, even if you decide not to participate in the trial, you can be called as a witness, in which case you must attend. In this case, if you want, you will be offered the services of an interpreter. If you do not live in the same city where the trial is taking place, you will be entitled to a reimbursement of your travel expenses.

Mediation: this is a genuine alternative method of resolving disputes without having to go through a trial. Through mediation you will have, with the help of a third and impartial party, a direct dialogue with the offender, to reach an agreement on the matter. It is a less expensive and faster procedure than a trial, which requires careful assessment with the help of a lawyer and a psychologist.

Other useful suggestions

TALK TO YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS

If possible, talk to your family and friends about what happened to you. At times, it can be difficult and stressful to talk about what happened. Discussing it with someone close to you whom you trust can be of help.

TALK ABOUT HOW YOU FEEL

It is often helpful to explain to professionals what happened and what impact it has had on you. Contacting a doctor, a psychologist or a lawyer will help you understand how best to react to the situation in which you find yourself and help you recover from it more easily. You can reach these professionals through a victim support service.

CONTACT A SUPPORT SERVICE

Contact the nearest victim support service to request professional help and for advice on what to do next. You will find a list of contact details at the end of this guide and at www.vstart.eu.



Support services for victims of crime

Support services for victims of crime are free services that will offer you reception and support. At the end of this guide, there is a list of services available in various Italian regions. Consult this list to find the one closest to you. You can safely turn to these services where, under conditions of maximum confidentiality, you will find a qualified and professional support that will help you deal with your situation as well as help you identify other services you may need in your area. In particular, they can provide:

- > Information about your rights
- > A guide to local services in your area
- > Support for any legal proceedings that may come up
- > Psychological support
- > Legal advice
- > Medical and psychiatric consultations
- > Victim-Offender Mediation Services



WHY IT IS IMPORTANT TO TAKE ACTION

If you are a victim of a hate crime

- > Failure to report it results in an increase in the number and gravity of such crimes. The perpetrators feel free from any risk of being punished and to be somewhat above the law, which can encourage them to repeat similar crimes.
- > Reacting to it by asking for help from a support service or reporting it directly to the police is a way of affirming your legitimate right to live in peace, rather than in fear.
- > To choose not to talk about the attack you experienced favours the aggressor, who draws strength from the fact that his violent act has gone unchallenged.
- > By discussing such violence with relatives, friends and acquaintances, etc., who may also suffer similar attacks for same reasons, you will help them learn to deal with similar situations, should they occur.
- > To underestimate being insulted with words or expressions that you consider offensive is dangerous because perpetrators of hate crimes often move from insults to threats, to actual violence.

Lastly, it is important to report such an incident because it is a direct attack on mutual respect, your dignity and physical integrity, your psychological well-being and the cohesion of the community as a whole.

If you are witness to a hate crime

- > It is important to intervene directly to support the victim (be careful, as this may involve the risk of being attacked in turn) or to support him or her indirectly after the incident, by comforting him/her, calling an ambulance and/or the police. It is also important to remember details of the situation, as this will be useful in reconstructing what happened later and in identifying the attacker.
 - Clearly explain that you are there to support the victim and reassure him or her that you will stay with him or her until the police arrive. Your support in such a situation helps the victim to overcome the feeling of being isolated, which can aggravate the physical and psychological effects of the aggression.
 - Being a witness to what has happened is as important and as useful as defending the victim during the actual attack. You can also encourage other people present to do something to stop the aggression or protect the victim, because a little encouragement is usually enough to persuade people to intervene and overcome their fear of being in the minority.
 - Try to remember what the attacker said during the aggression because this will help the police (and possibly the judge also) to determine what happened more accurately.

Available services at national level

NATIONAL SERVICES			
NAME	ADDRESS	CONTACTS	WEB SITE
O.S.C.A.D. Osservatorio per la Sicurezza Contro gli Atti Discriminatori	Roma	oscad@dcpc.interno.it	www.interno.gov.it/it/ministero/ osservatori/osservatorio-sicurezza -contro-atti-discriminatori-oscad
U.N.A.R. Ufficio Nazionale Anti-discriminazioni Razziali	Largo Chigi, 19, 00187 Roma	T. 800 901010 unar@unar.it	www.unar.it
Rete Lenford Avvocatura per i Diritti LGBTI	Via Zambonate, 33 24122 Bergamo	T. 035 19904497 sos@retelenford.it	www.retelenford.it
ASGI – Servizio antidiscriminazione	Via Gerdil, 7 Torino	T. 351 5542008 antidiscriminazione@asgi.it	www.asgi.it/servizio -antidiscrimi- nazione
C.I.M.F.M. – Centro Italiano di Mediazione e di Formazione alla Mediazione	Via Santo Stefano, 119 40125 Bologna	T. 051 6231247 F 051 6231247 info@cimfm.it	www.cimfm.it
Società Italiana di Vittimologia	Via S. Isaia 8 40123 Bologna	T. 333 4993703 filodiretto@vittimologia.it	www.vittimologia.it
Socialmente AIPC Associazione Italiana Psicologia e Criminologia - Centro Ascolto Vittime	Roma	T. 06 44246573 / 327 4660907 aipcitalia@gmail.com info@socialmente.net	www.socialmente.net
Rainbow Line Circolo di cultura omosessuale Mario Mieli	Via Efeso 2A Roma	T. 800.110611 info@mariomieli.org	www.mariomieli.net
Gay Center – Gay Helpline	Via Nicola Zabaglia 14 00153 Roma	T. 800 713713 info@gayhelpline.it	www.gayhelpline.it

NAME	ADDRESS	CONTACTS	WEB SITE
Associazione Italiana Vittime di Reato	Piazzale Clodio, 22 Roma	T. 371 3357857 info@associazioneitalianavittime-direato.it	www.associazioneitalianavittimedireato.it
C.S.IN. ONLUS Associazione Centro Servizi Interdisciplinare	Via Arno, 62, Roma	T. 800 146563	www.csinonlus.org
I-CARE Associazione Italiana di Supporto Vittimologico	Viale Valganna, 84 Varese	T. 800 960533	www.associazionevittimologica.it

LOCAL SERVICES BY REGIONS

CAMPANIA	Napoli Divercity – Sportello di ascolto e consulenza LGBT	c/o Centro Sinapsi via Porta di Massa 1, Scala C, Piano Ammezzato, Napoli	T. 081 2532178 F 081 2532002 sportello@napolidiversity.it	www.sinapsi.unina.it/ napolidiversity_sportello _lgbt
	Associazione Diesis Sportello Auris	Galleria Umberto I, 83 Napoli	T. 366 2412177 aps.diesis@gmail.com	facebook.com/aps.diesis
EMILIA ROMAGNA	Fondazione emiliano romagnola per le vittime dei reati	Viale Aldo Moro, 64 40127 Bologna	T. 051 5273240 fondazionevittime@regione.emilia-romagna.it	www.regione.emilia-romagna.it/ fondazione-per-le-vittime -dei-reati
	Il Cassero – Telefono Amico LGBT	Via Don Minzoni 18 40121 Bologna	T. 051 555661 telefonoamicogay@cassero.it	www.cassero.it
	ASV – Associazione Vittime del Salvemini	c/o Casa della Solidarietà A. Dubcek Via del Fanciullo, 6, 40033 Casalecchio di Reno (BO)	T. 051 6132162 centrovittime@casalecchio.net	www.comune.casalecchio.bo.it

	NAME	ADDRESS	CONTACTS	WEB SITE
LAZIO	Sportello ascolto e accoglienza vittime del Tribunale di Tivoli	c/o Tribunale di Tivoli via N. Arnaldi, 19,Tivoli (RM)	T. 077 4451803 infovittime.tivoli@giustizia.it	www.procura.tivoli.giustizia.it spazio_accoglienza_vittime_contatti.aspx
	SPONDÈ Onlus Servizio Ascolto e Consulenza Vittime	Via Vetulonia, 43 Roma	T. 347 635590 segreteria@associazionesponde.it	associazionesponde.it/wphome/segreteria@associazionesponde.it
LOMBARDIA	Libra Onlus	Via Sandro Pertini, 6 loc. Colle Aperto, Mantova	T. 338 3127352 / 0376 1591511 F 0376 1591512 info@associazinelibra.com	www.associazinelibra.com/it/home
	Cooperativa Dike	Corso Vercelli, 42 20145 Milano	info@cooperativadike.org	cooperativadike.org
	ARCIGAY Milano Progetto I.O. (Immigrazione – Omosessualità)	Via Bezzecca, 3 20135 Milano	T. 02 54122225 / 02 54122227 progettoio@arcigaymilano.org	www.arcigaymilano.org/Web/io
PIEMONTE	Rete Dafne Torino	Torino	T. 011 5683686 F 011 501208 info@retedafne.it	www.retedafne.it/torino
	Gruppo Abele Sportello Off	Corso Trapani, 95, Torino	T. 011 3841024 off@gruppoabele.org	www.gruppoabele.org
	Me.Dia.Re. Mediazione Dialogo Relazione	Via Buniva 9/bis D, Torino	T. 011 8390942 / 345 7350229 info@me-dia-re.it	http://me-dia-re.it/
	Centro Regionale contro le Discriminazioni Regione Piemonte	Via Magenta, 12, Torino	T. 011/4325505 antidiscriminazione@regione.piemonte.it	www.piemontecontrole discriminazioni.it

	NAME	ADDRESS	CONTACTS	WEB SITE
PUGLIA	Cooperativa C.R.I.S.I. Centro Ricerche Interventi Stress Interpersonale	Via Amendola, 120 70126 Bari	T. 080 5534833 / 080 5976500 F 080 5534833 info@mediazione crisi.it	www.mediazione crisi.it
	Rete Dafne Sardegna	Cagliari e Sassari	T. 800 013000 sardegna@retedafne.it	www.retedafne.it
	CRESM , Centro di Ricerche Economiche e Sociali per il Meridione – Centro Kore	Via Empedocle, 5A Gibellina (TP)	T. 0924 69000 / 091 7404107/ 091 7404103	www.cresm.net/it/centro-kore/
	Comune di Palermo Sportello di ascolto per le vittime di reato	Via Don Orione, 18 Palermo	T. 800 961931 / 0922 22922 F 0922 25457	https://www.comune.palermo.it/noticext.php?cat=1&id=9909
SICILIA E SARDEGNA	Centro Antiviolenza Telefono Aiuto	Salita Francesco Sala, 15 Agrigento	info@vivereilsociale.it	www.vivereilsociale.it/ vis/2011/09/04/telefono -aiuto/
	Rete VIS Sportello VIS	Piazza del Municipio, 4 Livorno	T. 0586 257229 sportellovis@provincia.livorno.it	www.provincia.livorno.it/fileadmin/ Pari_Opportunita/provincia _ depliant.pdf
	Rete Dafne Firenze Associazione Aletea	Viale A. Volta, 86, Firenze	T. 055 2616422 / 327 6327018 firenze@retedafne.it	www.retedafne.it/firenze
	365 Giorni al Femminile Sportello Po.St.It	Via G. Marconi, 51 Montecatini Terme (PT)	Pistoia: T. 366 6050354 info@postalking.org Pisa: T. 366 2753616 sportellostalking@gmail.com Firenze: T. 388 2252893 postitfirenze@gmail.com	www.365giornalfemminile.org /2013 /03/29/po-st-it/
TOSCANA				

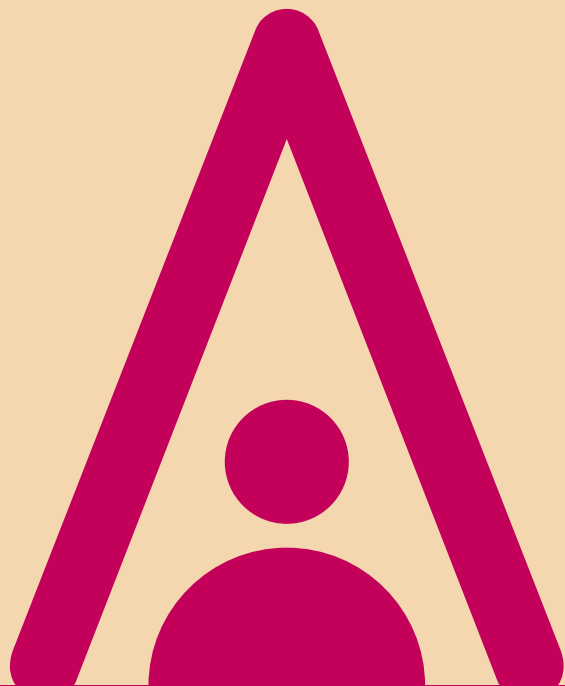
	NAME	ADDRESS	CONTACTS	WEB SITE
TOSCANA	CODICE ROSA Azienda Usl 9 Grosseto	Via Cimabue, 109 58100 Grosseto	codicerosa@usl9.toscana.it	www.usl9.grosseto.it/default.asp?i- dlingua =1&idContenuto=3228
	L'Altro Diritto	Via delle Pandette, 35 Firenze	T. 055/4374314 adirmigranti@altrodiritto.unifi.it adirmediazione@altrodiritto.unifi.it	www.altrodiritto.unifi.it
VENETO	ASAV – Associazione Scaligera Assistenza Vittime di Reato	Via A. Provolo, 28 37123 Verona	T. 377 4776561 F 045 8004960 info@assisten zavittimedireato.vr.it	www.assisten zavittimedireato.vr.it

Some of the information in this guide have been deliberately simplified in order to make it more comprehensible for all readers. This simplification has not affected the accuracy of the contents. However, taking into account that laws change over time and the specific details of each individual case, please be aware that the contents of this guide do not constitute, nor can they be taken as a legal opinion.

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