

Dehumanization & Derogatory Language Checklist

Purpose: To identify, document, and respond to conduct that lowers, labels, or strips dignity.

Section 1: Identification of Dehumanizing Conduct

Check any that apply:

A. Direct Derogatory Naming

- Called insulting or degrading names
- Referred to using slurs (racial, gender based, religious, etc.)
- Mocked based on identity, profession, or appearance
- Compared to animals, objects, or stereotypes

B. Subtle Dehumanizing Qualifiers

- Labeled as “crazy,” “unstable,” “dramatic,” or similar
- Described in ways that diminish intelligence or credibility
- Referred to as a “problem,” “burden,” or “liability”
- Tone used to infantilize or patronize

C. Group Based Reduction

- Lumped into a category rather than treated as an individual
- Judged based on group identity rather than personal conduct
- Statements suggesting “people like you always...”

D. Public or Social Harm

- Humiliated in front of others
- Targeted in group settings (workplace, online, community)
- Subject of gossip, rumors, or coordinated narrative attacks
- Labeled in a way that encourages others to mistreat you

E. Institutional or Professional Context

- Mischaracterized in reports, records, or documentation
 - Described using biased or loaded language in official settings
 - Denied fair treatment after being labeled or diminished
 - Credentials, role, or authority undermined through language
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Section 2: Impact Assessment

- Emotional distress (anxiety, anger, humiliation)
 - Damage to reputation or credibility
 - Professional harm (lost opportunities, bias, retaliation)
 - Social isolation or exclusion
 - Fear for safety or escalation
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Section 3: Evidence Collection

- Screenshots (texts, emails, social media)
 - Audio or video recordings (if lawful in your state)
 - Witness names and contact information
 - Dates, times, and locations documented
 - Copies of reports, complaints, or official records
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Next Steps for Victims of Dehumanization

1. Stabilize and Center

- Pause before reacting impulsively
- Recognize that dehumanization is a tactic of control, not truth
- Avoid internalizing labels

2. Document Immediately

- Write a factual account (who, what, when, where, how)
- Preserve original evidence (do not edit screenshots)
- Maintain a running log of incidents

3. Set Clear Boundaries (When Safe to Do So)

- Use neutral, firm language:
 - “That language is inappropriate. I expect to be addressed respectfully.”
 - “I do not accept being described in that way.”

4. Escalate Through Proper Channels

Depending on context:

- Workplace → HR or compliance department
- Legal → Attorney consultation
- Educational institution → Title IX or administration
- Online → Platform reporting tools

5. Protect Your Record

- Submit written complaints, not just verbal ones
- Request copies of all reports and responses
- Correct false statements in writing

6. Seek Legal Awareness

Dehumanization may intersect with:

- Harassment
- Defamation
- Hostile work environment
- Discrimination

Consulting an attorney helps determine thresholds and remedies.

7. Build Witness Support

- Identify neutral observers
- Request written statements when possible
- Preserve third party communications

8. Limit Exposure

- Reduce interaction with offending individuals when possible
- Adjust privacy settings online
- Avoid engaging in public escalation that could be used against you

9. Reclaim Narrative

- Clarify facts calmly and professionally when necessary
- Avoid emotional overexposure in hostile environments
- Maintain consistency in your account

10. Maintain Personal Integrity

- Do not mirror dehumanizing behavior
 - Stay grounded in factual communication
 - Preserve your credibility at all times
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Optional Addendum Sheet (For Each Incident)

Incident Title:

Date / Time:

Location / Platform:

Person(s) Involved:

Exact Language Used:

Witnesses:

Evidence Collected:

Immediate Response Taken:

Follow Up Actions:

Reported To (Name / Contact):

Outcome / Status:

Case Summary

The Union of Saints recognizes that social media platforms have permitted patterns of dehumanization to proliferate. Despite the presence of reporting mechanisms, many individuals experience a lack of meaningful intervention, resulting in continued exposure to harmful language, reputational harm, and social injury.

The Union of Saints affirms that the legitimacy of activism is grounded in a consistent and principled defense of human dignity. Advocacy that selectively applies compassion, ignores human rights violations, or refuses self accountability ceases to serve the public. When rhetoric shifts toward dehumanization, hostility, or broad condemnation of others, including individuals of any race or those serving in public roles such as law enforcement, immigration services, or the military, it reflects a departure from moral leadership. In such instances, the message presented forfeits its ethical standing and warrants critical scrutiny rather than acceptance.

The Union of Saints' position is consistent with longstanding legal principles recognizing that while free expression is protected, it is not absolute. Courts have repeatedly affirmed limits where speech becomes harmful, defamatory, or incites harm, and have emphasized accountability in public discourse. Advocacy that abandons human dignity and engages in dehumanization departs not only from moral legitimacy but from the principles underlying protected and responsible speech.

Cases for Reference

- Brandenburg v. Ohio

Established that speech advocating harm may lose protection when it is directed to inciting imminent lawless action and is likely to produce such action

- Chaplinsky v. New Hampshire

Recognized the fighting words doctrine, allowing limits on speech that inflicts injury or provokes an immediate breach of peace

- Beauharnais v. Illinois

Upheld the concept of group defamation, acknowledging harm caused by targeting entire groups with damaging statements

- New York Times Co. v. Sullivan

Established the actual malice standard, reinforcing accountability when making claims about public officials

- Wisconsin v. Mitchell

Affirmed that bias motivated conduct can carry enhanced legal consequences due to its broader societal harm

- First Amendment

Protects free speech while allowing for recognized limitations in cases involving harm, incitement, or defamation

- Section 230

Provides platforms with discretion to moderate content while limiting liability for user generated speech

Union of Saints Position on Free Speech and Harm

The Union of Saints affirms the foundational importance of free expression under the First Amendment. However, it further recognizes that constitutional protections are not static and have been shaped over time through judicial interpretation.

The Union of Saints supports the measured modification and refinement of free speech doctrine where demonstrable harms are perpetuated, particularly in cases involving dehumanization, targeted hostility, and sustained patterns of abuse.

While precedents such as Cohen v. California and Brandenburg v. Ohio protect offensive and even deeply disturbing expression, they were developed in a markedly different social and technological context. The Union of Saints recognizes that modern communication environments, especially digital platforms, can amplify dehumanizing conduct in ways that were not previously contemplated.

Accordingly, the Union of Saints advocates for:

- A reassessment of how harm is evaluated, including psychological, reputational, and community level injury
- Greater recognition of pattern based conduct, rather than isolated speech acts
- Doctrinal refinement where speech functions as a tool of sustained dehumanization or targeting, rather than mere expression
- The preservation of free speech protections while addressing systemic gaps that allow harm to persist without remedy

The Union of Saints does not seek to eliminate free expression, but to ensure that its application remains aligned with the core principle of human dignity. Where speech is used not to communicate ideas but to erode the humanity of others through repeated and targeted conduct, it warrants closer legal scrutiny and potential limitation.

Enforcement Framework

Insults, while potentially protected as free speech, can lead to injury where civil rights protections may apply.

Steps:

Verbal boundary → Written notice → Evidence gathering → Reporting to police or attorney → Cease and desist letter → Legal remedies → Police report and documentation → Injunction → Civil claims → Enforcement

Closing Statement

“I may not be ‘Karen,’ but I do care, and therefore I will not hesitate to assert my rights as a civil claimant.”

~Cordrey