** Young people’s experiences of online sexual harassment

PROJECT deSHAME
#stepupsspeakup

Stå Frem, Sig Fra!
Sætte en stopper for digitale sexuæiske skrænkelses

Step Up, Speak Up!
Put an end to online sexual harassment

Ne Hagyd Szó Nélkül!
Lépjünk Fel Együtt!
Állítsuk meg az online szexuális záklátást!
About Project deSHAME

Project deSHAME is a European Commission funded project which aims to increase reporting of online sexual harassment among minors and improve multi-sector cooperation in preventing and responding to this behaviour.
Defining online sexual harassment

Unwanted sexual conduct on any online platform

Between young people

Form of gendered sexual violence

Images, videos, posts, messages on public and private platforms

Overlaps with offline behaviours

It can make a person feel threatened, exploited, coerced, humiliated, upset, sexualised or discriminated against.
What behaviours do we think are happening amongst young people in regards to online sexual harassment?
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<th>Non consensual sharing of intimate images and videos</th>
<th>Exploitation, coercion and threats</th>
<th>Sexualised bullying</th>
<th>Unwanted sexualisation</th>
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<td>• Sexual images/videos taken without consent ('upskirting/downblousing/creep shots')</td>
<td>• Harassing or pressuring someone online to share sexual images of themselves or engage in sexual behaviour online (or offline)</td>
<td>• Gossip, rumours or lies about sexual behaviour posted online either naming someone directly or indirectly alluding to someone</td>
<td>• Sexualised comments (e.g. on photos)</td>
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<td>• Sexual images/videos taken consensually but shared without consent ('revenge porn')</td>
<td>• Using the threat of publishing sexual content (images, videos, rumours) to threaten, coerce or blackmail someone ('sextortion')</td>
<td>• Offensive or discriminatory sexual language and name-calling online</td>
<td>• Sexualised viral campaigns that pressurise people to participate</td>
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<td>• Non-consensual sexual acts (e.g. rape) recorded digitally (and potentially shared)</td>
<td>• Online threats of a sexual nature (e.g. rape threats)</td>
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<td>• Inciting others online to commit sexual violence</td>
<td>• Personal information shared non-consensually online to encourage sexual harassment ('doxing')</td>
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<td>• Inciting someone to participate in sexual behaviour and then sharing evidence of it</td>
<td>• Being bullied online because of an actual or perceived gender and/or sexual orientation</td>
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<td>• ‘Outing’ someone where the individual’s sexuality or gender identity is publicly announced online without their consent</td>
<td>• Altering images of a person to make them sexual</td>
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Four categories of online sexual harassment

Non-consensual sharing of intimate images and videos:

51% “I’ve seen people sharing nude/nearly nude images of someone I know.”

23% “I’ve seen people secretly taking sexual images of someone and sharing them online”

Exploitation, coercion and threats:

10% “I was sent sexual threats online (eg rape threats)”

7% “Someone used sexual images of me to threaten or blackmail me.”

Sexualised bullying:

66% “I’ve seen people sharing things about someone else’s sexual behaviour”

80% “I’ve seen people using terms like ‘sket or ‘slut’ to describe girls online in a mean way”

Unwanted sexualisation:

23% “I’ve received unwanted sexual images and images”

47% “I’ve seen people editing photos of someone to make them sexual”
Who is online sexual harassment happening to?
Online Sexual Harassment

is unwanted sexual behaviour on any online app, game or service.

Gender

68% say people will think badly about a girl if her nude image is posted online, in comparison to 40% for boys.
(source: deshame.eu)

31% of girls have received unwanted sexual messages and images, in comparison to 11% of boys.
(source: deshame.eu)

Disabilities

38% of young people with disabilities said they had been targeted with online hate, compared with 21% of those with no disability.
(source: NSC Safer Internet Day report 2016)

Race and ethnicity

Black women are 84% more likely to receive abusive tweets than white women
(source: amnesty.org)

Asian women are 70% more likely to be mentioned in tweets with ethnic, racial and religious slurs than white women
(source: amnesty.org)

Religion

In 2018, 51% of religious hate crimes were targeted against Muslims, 12% were targeted at Jewish people and 5% against Christian people.
(source: Home Office Hate Crime report 2017/18)

Sexual orientation

68% of 13-17s have witnessed people using homophobic or transphobic language online (mean words about being gay, lesbian or transgender/sexual), with 30% of LGBT young people being bullied with comments, messages, videos or pictures that were mean, untrue, secret or embarrassing.

LGBT: lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender/sexual
(source: deshame.eu and Stonewall Schools Report 2017)

Step Up. Speak Up!
Put an end to online sexual harassment.
Key factors

- Societal
- Peer Group
- Relationship
- Developmental

Digital technology

Online sexual harassment
Top 5 perceived motivations why others might engage in online sexual harassment

1. "As a joke" (54%)
2. "To hurt someone" (52%)
3. "To retaliate because someone else started it first" (50%)
4. "To get their own back on an ex" (47%)
5. "To get respect from their friends" (45%)
Young people’s perspectives

‘Types of behaviour that would be online sexual harassment’

85% learned about it in school
41% of those found this helpful

‘Responsibility to not share someone’s nude/nearly nude images without their permission’

87% learned about it in school
51% of those found this helpful

‘How to report online sexual harassment’

83% learned about it in school
43% of those found this helpful

‘Law about online sexual harassment’

79% learned about it in school
40% of those found this helpful

‘Digital behaviours that are okay or not okay in relationships’

82% learned about it in school
44% of those found this helpful
What stops young people from reporting online sexual harassment?

Barriers to Reporting
Responding to online sexual harassment

- “Block the people involved”: 82%
- “Speak to friends”: 67%
- “Tell the people involved to stop”: 65%
- “Speak to parents/carers”: 48%

Top #5 barriers to seeking help:

1. “Too embarrassed” (52%)
2. “Worried about what would happen next” (42%)
3. “Worried about being targeted by those involved” (42%)
4. “Worried that they are to blame” (39%)
5. “Would rather sort it out themselves” (39%)
Top 5 barriers to reporting to teachers

#1 “Worried school would overreact” (50%)

#2 “Worried it would make it worse” (43%)

#3 “Wouldn’t know which teacher to speak to” (32%)

#4 “Don’t think I would be taken seriously” (23%)

#5 “Teachers are too busy to speak to” (20%)
Top 5 barriers to reporting to police

1. “I wouldn’t want them to involve my family” (53%)
2. “I wouldn’t want to get into trouble” (46%)
3. “I would think it wasn’t serious enough” (39%)
4. “I think it would be too difficult” (37%)
5. “I wouldn’t know how to” (36%)
Top 5 barriers to reporting to social media

1. “I don’t think it would help” (43%)
2. “I don’t think they would do anything” (40%)
3. “Would be worried that the people involved will get notified” (33%)
4. “It’s too much effort” (18%)
5. “I don’t know how to” (18%)
55% of respondents said that they felt that if someone’s nude or nearly nude image is shared online they are partly to blame.

68% said that they felt girls are judged more harshly for sexual rumours about them online than boys.

“It’s their choice sending the picture in the first place and it’s their choice who they send it to. So they have to know can I trust actually this person enough and if they say yes in their head and they send it and it does go around, then they have to go ‘oh ok, that’s my fault.’”

Boy, 17 years
Step Up, Speak Up! Campaign Toolkit
• Easy to use
• Practical
• Inclusive
• Based on real-life situations
Fun and flirting

Banter and harassment

Lesson Plan 2 – Step up, Speak Up!
Teaching Guide

5.6 Consider how to engage your students

9. Further Information for students – Debriefing Sheet

5.3 Be mindful of any ongoing or previous incidences of online sexual harassment among your students

Post-lesson evaluation

Aim:
- Was the aim of the lesson met?
- If yes, what helped students to do this? If no, what could be changed in future to help learners to do this?

Learning outcomes
- What did students take away from this lesson?
- What can students now do as a result of this lesson?
- Are there any areas that students had further questions or misconceptions about? How can I address these in the next lesson?

Educator knowledge
- Did I feel I had adequate knowledge on the issues?
- Were there any issues I would have liked to be more knowledgeable on? What were they and how can I learn more?
Lesson #1
Ground Rules

Lesson #2
Recognising

Lesson #3
Responding

Lesson #4
Reporting

Quick Activities

Jordan’s classmates have a running joke that he is attracted to their teacher, Mr. Morgan. They make an Instagram account dedicated to pictures they make of Mr Morgan and Jordan together, and add emojis that suggest they’re doing sexual things together.

Of course she got all that judged more harshly than boys.

A few minutes later...

I’m the hottest girl in school. Want nudes? DM me!

She loves herself!

Slag

Lol send me a nude

Did you post this?

Show off

WHAT??? THAT WASN’T ME!!!
Supporting young people who display harmful sexual behaviour online

Sexualised bullying

“A young person has used sexual content to upset, humiliate or harass a peer online.”

What’s the issue?

This is a behaviour that can take many different forms. They typically involve sexual dehumanising against someone because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or physical appearance, or against their actual or perceived sexual activity e.g. “dub-shaming.” Peer group dynamics often play a central role, with themes of “drama,” “break-ups” and “betrayal” being key issues.

• Some behaviours can take place without the knowledge of the victim in private digital spaces (such as closed “group chats”) and can be intentionally kept from the victim.

• Some behaviours can take place in public digital spaces (such as social media profiles or video platforms). At first the victim may or may not be aware they are being targeted, but the public nature of the behaviour means it is easy for peers to actively fuel the harassment and spread it on, even with the victim themselves.

• The content being shared can either “name and shame” a person, or be an “indirect” comment that may indicate who they are targeted at without naming them directly.

• In some instances young people may not know who the perpetrators are, particularly when fake or anonymous profiles are involved.

Understanding what has happened

In focus groups, many young people expressed how the terms “bullying” and “bashing” can vary between different people, different friendships and relationships. It can also differ from day to day based on how someone might be feeling at that time. One explanation for the behaviour may be that the young person has misread a situation. Be alert to the possibility that you’re young person may use the excuse of the behaviour being meant as a joke to cover up their intention to hurt someone. The online behaviour may indicate that further sexualised bullying is happening offline. It’s important to establish whether the behaviour was a one-off mistake or whether the young person is contributing to a systemic targeting of a particular young person, and why. For example, if the bullying is a homophobic nature, does the young person engage in these questions about their own sexuality? Is it a method to deflect any attention away from themselves? Also bear in mind young people are exposed to the same cultural attitudes as adults are – the wider social context of sexualised media may have an impact on the way young people’s peer dynamics play out.

Safeguarding the young person

If the behaviour has a particular homophobia, biphobia, transphobia or misogynistic tone, consider where the young person has learned this behaviour. For example:

• Do they understand the meaning of the language or behaviour they are displaying, or repeating it with little to no comprehension of its abusive nature?

• Are they hearing these views at home, through their family or guardians, or through their peer group?

• Have they been exposed to online content that encourages these views?

Practitioners where the young person has learned any derogatory language or behaviour may indicate a need for further action to safeguard them. This applies to this type of contextual questioning will allow you to adjust your response to meet the unique needs of the young people.

Explicitly sexual language or references is also something to take into account. Young people will often test the boundaries of what is seen to be funny, risque or rude. In most instances this is a natural part of development. However, if that behaviour displays unexpected levels of sexual content, is outside of their developmental stage or is particularly violent or graphic, it is important to determine how the young person has learned this behaviour. Are they exposed to these ideas by people at home, at school or online?

Online pornography can be one place that young people learn about sex and sexual behaviour. Viewing online pornography can lead to young people being exposed to unhealthy, violent or extreme portrayals of sex, and desensitisation or distorted ideas towards sex and relationships. In a 2010 survey, the NSPCC found 48% of 11–16 year olds accessed adult or even pornographic online. This may be an opportunity to have a supportive, non-judgmental conversation with the young person about questions or worries they have about content they may have come across or been exposed to online. Assess their experience in terms of child protection – how and why did they access this type of content? If another person showed it to them, who and at what age?

Be aware that the young person may not feel comfortable having this discussion. In which case, help them to seek support from an adult they feel comfortable with, or other places to access help such as counsellors or helplines e.g. Childline, or THaMi.

Why do young people display harmful sexual behaviour online?

Non-consensual sharing of intimate images and videos

“A young person has behaved inappropriately by sharing a peer’s sexual image online with friends and peers without consent”

Involving parents and carers

Supporting young people with harmful sexual behaviour online

A guide for educators to employ a contextual and multi-agency approach
Moving forward plan

Starting questions

Who is involved in this moving forward plan?

What do you use the internet for? (Favourite apps, games, websites)

Why are we creating this moving forward plan? (e.g., what happened before that we are worried about?)

What steps will we take to help you use the internet in a safe and respectful way?

Who is responsible for this? (e.g., parents/caregivers, teachers, if they feel angry or worried)

How long will this plan last for? (e.g., 1-2 months)

How often will we review our plan? (e.g., every week)

Date:

Young person

I will know if I’m about to repeat my behaviour if I...

To help me manage it, I will...

Other people will know if I’m having difficulty to manage my online behaviour if I...

To help me, I would like (name) to (action)

Are there any other ways you would like to be helped? (e.g., given the numbers of helplines, asking a friend to help you)
Impact of the resources on young people

Percentage of respondents who now know the different ways they can report online sexual harassment

Total 77%

75% 86%

Total 79%

72% 80% 86%

“Because now I know more about what it is, I feel that I have the capacity to say ‘I felt this was online sexual harassment.’ I’ve learned about it, so I know what I’m talking about.”
Young person 13-17, Denmark

“Now that I participated in this class, I already know what am I to do in these cases.”
Girl 14, Hungary

Percentage of respondents aged 13-17 said they were confident they would recognise online sexual harassment if they saw it

Percentage of respondents who now know the different ways they can report online sexual harassment
What we learnt

• Ensuring young people are consulted every step of the way
• Interactive & practical format of resources
• Increase understanding of how & where to report
• National variations reflect differences in education systems, different levels of prior attention to issue
• Importance of safe space for discussing complexities of issue (e.g., gender dynamics, victim blame, consent)
• Long term & whole school approach needed
Project deSHAME II – next steps

- Now looking at online sexual harassment happening amongst 9-12s
- Engaging parents and carers
- Developing a toolkit for EU member states