**Harassment and Abuse**

**1. How should you deal with a case of harassment or abuse?**

**Starter Discussion: Present students with the following brief scenario:**

“Casey has been having a really difficult time recently and needs help”.

Ask students to respond to the questions below:

1. Why might Casey need help?
2. Who could Casey perhaps speak to for help?

Then move directly on to these questions:

1. What sorts of problems are easy or difficult to ask for help with?
2. What makes some problems difficult to talk about?
3. What can others do to make it easy to ask them for help?
4. How does asking for help make you feel?
5. How does it feel to be asked for help?
6. How do you feel after you have received some help?
7. What might Casey say?

• Explain that the focus of this lesson is to encourage more young people to ask for help and to report instances of harassment and abuse.

• Highlight how important making a report is, and how reporting an incident of harassment as early as possible can make a huge difference to those involved.

• A 2017 survey for Project deSHAME, for example, found that if young people experienced online sexual harassment: 81% would block those involved 39% would speak to a parent/carer 15% would speak to a teacher.

**Discussion points**

1. Why do you think the figure for reporting to a teacher is so low?
2. Can you think of one good thing about the way our school supports students who want to make a report?
3. What would make you feel more confident and comfortable to make a report in school?
4. How would you complete this sentence? “If I think I need to report an incident of harassment or abuse, I will….”

**Lockdown Scenarios**

Organise students into small groups and assign each group one of the three scenarios from the list that follows. Ask the groups to read through their scenario together and discuss the following questions:

1. What sort of abuse has the character experienced?

2. What signs might there be that something is wrong when they return to school?

3. Who might notice they need help?

4. Who might the character (or others who are concerned for them) speak to about getting help?

**Scenario 1**

Jayleigh loves her family but found lockdown really difficult as they became really strict about what she could and couldn’t do. Over the summer, this continued and it felt like all they did was argue. Sometimes, these arguments got so bad that she and her parents were screaming at each other late into the night. During one argument, her father threw a vase at her and it smashed on the wall behind her head. She spends most time at home now locked in her room, she feels on edge all of the time and can’t see any hope of things changing. She wonders whether it would be best if she moved out, but doesn’t know where she would go.

**Scenario 2**

Brian met a new friend online during lockdown. He had been feeling really lonely, so it was great to have someone who listened to him and seemed to get how he was feeling. A month into lockdown, his new friend said they should start sharing sexual images with each other. Brian was really embarrassed about the idea and didn’t want to, but his friend shared images first and was really complimentary about Brian’s looks, which made him feel good. Eventually, he sent some photos, but now he feels really weird about it and wishes he hadn’t. His friend stopped contacting him soon after he sent the pictures, so Brian doesn’t know what happened to them or what he did wrong.

**Scenario 3**

Amy’s mum had a really difficult time during lockdown. She got a job in a supermarket doing night shifts, and then spent all day feeling really low and sleeping a lot. As a result, Amy’s experience of family life felt really disrupted. Amy had to take on responsibility for all the household chores, including cooking for all her siblings, cleaning the house, and looking after her baby brother, even when he cried during the night. She barely got any sleep herself and missed most of her online lessons. She has returned to school exhausted, worried about her mum and totally behind on schoolwork. Her teachers are cross with her but she is afraid to tell anyone why it was so hard for her.

**Extension Task: Triangle 9 Diagram**

• Present students with this list of nine strategies and ask them to prioritise the strategies for starting a difficult conversation, according to which they think would be most helpful.

• The top card should be the strategy they would find most helpful, gradually working down to the least helpful at the bottom of the [triangle 9 diagram](https://www.classtools.net/blog/use-the-triangle-9-template-for-prioritising-factors/).

• If they wish, they could replace some of these strategies with ideas of their own.

1. Rehearse what to say in the mirror
2. Look up advice online from other people who’ve been through something similar
3. Organise a time and date in advance with the person
4. Practice what to say with an online counselling service
5. Plan out what to say and make notes
6. Write it out in a letter and send it to the person
7. Choose a quiet place without distractions and time to talk before telling someone
8. Take slow, deep breaths and count to 10 before starting the conversation
9. Try expressing feelings creatively first, for example painting, drawing, poetry

Credits: materials adapted from pshe-association.org.uk