**Harassment and Abuse**

**3. How can we help and support people who are suffering sexual harassment online?**

**Pre-class preparation**

Photocopy (or have available to show on a screen) the comic strip so that each student can read it clearly.

**Starter activity (c. 5 minutes)**

• Remind students that last lesson we focused on how we should avoid (intentionally or otherwise) harassing people.

• In this lesson we will focus on how to react if you feel you are being harassed.

**Starter Video (3 minutes)**

The following video about ‘healthy relationships for teens’ might be worth watching at this stage: <https://vimeo.com/562744495>

**Describe the following scenario.**

• You’ve made yourself a hot drink. You put the mug down on the table in front of you. The person sat opposite you reaches across and accidentally knocks the mug off the table. It spills all over your clothes and burns your hands. You turn to your friend who saw it happen, who comments: “That was a stupid place to put your mug”.

**Discuss**

What is concerning about your friend’s reaction? (it is blaming the victim).

**Second scenario – comic strip (c. 15-20 minutes)**

**Now share with the group the comic strip**

Ask the students if they can see any similarities between the two scenarios. Explain that both these scenarios show examples of victim-blaming. Victim-blaming can sometimes occur after incidences of online sexual harassment, in which the victim gets blamed for the harassment they experienced. This can make the victim re-experience the harassment and cause further harm and distress.

**Discussion questions**

After students have read through the comic strip, lead a discussion around the different stages of the story. Students could discuss each question with a partner or small group before reporting back to the class.

*(note: alternative and additional questions are provided on the reverse of the comic strip if you prefer to use these).*

1. Who posted the photo on the ‘hot or not’ page? Who is getting the blame for it? Why?
2. How do you think the victim feels?
3. Why are the people who re-posted the selfie not being blamed?
4. The victim gets comments that blame her. Do you think people would say these things to her face-to-face? Why?
5. What is the difference between being ‘to blame’, and being ‘responsible?’ If something happens online can you be responsible without being to blame, or vice versa?
6. What do you think the victim wishes those comments said instead? What pressures do you think girls face online that are different to boys, and vice versa?
7. Where do those pressures come from?
8. Do girls judge girls or boys more harshly?
9. Who do boys judge more harshly? Why?
10. Why do you think people feel the need to post unkind comments online?
11. Why do people feel that victim-blaming is acceptable behaviour in this situation?
12. Blame versus responsibility. What is the difference? How does the victim’s experience highlight this difference?

**Extension Task (5m)**

Ask students to offer suggestions for how the scenario could be resolved.

**Agree or disagree? (c. 15-20 minutes)**

• This activity should be run with the students able to move around the room.

Students move to the relevant space in the room to represent how much they agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

• You could choose to have one wall as the “agree” wall and the opposite wall for those who “disagree”, for example, with space in-between to represent a continuum line.

• With this approach you can have the whole class discussion at the same time by asking the students to explain their choices and opinions.

**The statements**

1. People should always ask before taking a photo of me
2. It’s easier to talk about relationships and sex online than it is offline
3. If you are tagged or nominated online to do something, there is no pressure to actually do it
4. People should expect to get bullied if their nude photo gets shared around
5. Sharing rumours online about someone’s sexual behaviour can be just a joke
6. Posting a nude image of someone can be just a joke
7. Boys get a reputation as being popular if they share nude photos of girls
8. Reporting unacceptable behaviour doesn’t make a difference

**Plenary: How can you support victims of harassment and abuse? (15m)**

Show the following statements, and ask students to silently reflect on how they would respond, either online or offline:

1. If I saw someone getting targeted online by sexual rumours or gossip, I would ...
2. If someone I knew had an intimate photo shared online without their permission, I would make them feel better by saying...
3. If my friend was being harassed with unwanted sexual messages and images, I would support them by...
4. If my friend was getting bullied online because people thought they were LGBTQ, I would help them by...
5. If someone I knew had a fake profile set up about them to share sexual images or messages, I would support them by saying...

In pairs or small groups, ask the group to share their positive statements with each other. How does hearing the supportive comments and advice make them feel?

**Extension Task**: Complete this online quiz about online harassment as a class and see how many they get right! <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7T3RSCS>

**Credits / Further Links**

<https://www.childnet.com>

<https://www.pshe-association.org.uk>