Understanding, Preventing & Responding

Dr Jo Bryce, School of Psychology, UCLan
Overview

• Project deSHAME
• Background & aims
• Structure & results/outputs
  • Phase 1: Understanding
  • Phase 2: Development of resources
  • Phase 3: Pilot & evaluation
Aims

• Improve understanding of online sexual harassment among young people

• Develop, implement & evaluate effective awareness raising activities co-created with young people
  • Encourage victims & witnesses to report online sexual harassment

• Develop practical tools to enable effective multi-sector collaboration between professionals

• Promote cross-border cooperation & mutual learning to share project’s resources with other Member States
Defining Online Sexual Harassment

Unwanted sexual conduct on any online platform

Between young people
Form of gendered sexual violence
Intersects with other forms of discrimination

Images, videos, posts, messages on public & private platforms
Overlaps with offline behaviours (e.g., sexual abuse, stalking)
School/community based, but active online audience

It can make a person feel threatened, exploited, coerced, humiliated, upset, sexualised or discriminated against
Phase 1

• Examine prevalence & dynamics of peer related online sexual harassment in young people aged 13-17

• Data collection in partner countries
  • Online questionnaire: 3,257 young people
  • Focus Groups: 107 young people
  • Focus Groups: 48 teachers, police, practitioners

• Evidence base for development of educational resources

• Role of Youth & Expert Advisory Boards
Prevalence of Online Sexual Harassment

Non-consensual sharing of intimate images & videos:

6% had nude/nearly nude images of them shared without consent

10% pressured to share nude/nearly nude images by partner

Exploitation, coercion & threats:

10% received sexual threats online (e.g., rape threats)

7% threatened or blackmailed because of their sexual images

Sexualised bullying:

26% kept screenshot of a nude/nearly nude image or sexual conversation to share later

26% used derogatory sexual terms online (like ‘sket’ or ‘slut’) to describe girls

11% bullied online using homophobic or transphobic language

Unwanted sexualisation:

24% received unwanted sexual images

25% had gossip or lies about sexual behaviour shared online
Key Results

• Difficulties recognising when behaviour ‘unwanted’

• Lack of awareness
  • Behavioural boundaries
  • Impacts & consequences

• Gender dynamics, roles, stereotypes & reputation
  • 76% agreed girls judged more harshly for sexual rumours about them online than boys
  • Boys pressure girls to send nude/nearly nude images
  • Girls who do judged more severely & report more negative impacts

• Challenges of understanding/communicating consent & respect online
  • Developing positive social norms
  • Trust, respect & consensual online relationships

• Many young people navigating challenges without support or guidance of adults
Reporting Barriers

- Young people developing own strategies to respond
- Variety of reporting barriers
- Identified concerns to seeking help from school
  - Over-reaction
  - Where & how to report
  - Action that can be taken
- Only 15% of sample would tell a teacher
Phase 2: ‘Step Up, Speak Up’ Campaign Toolkit

- Developed from research results & consultation
- Teacher identified challenges
  - Content
  - Delivery
  - Safeguarding
- Easy to use
- Practical
- Inclusive
- Based on real-life situations

Film 1: What is online sexual harassment?
‘Step Up, Speak Up’ Teaching Toolkit

Online sexual harassment
Teaching guide

Post-lesson evaluation

Aim:
- Was the aim of the lesson met?
- If yes, what helped students to do this; 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 or the issues?
- Were there any issues I would have like to be more knowledgeable on? What were they and how can I learn more?

Online sexual harassment
Understand, prevent and respond

Practical tips
Below is a list of suggested action points to ensure reporting is an easy process:
- Ensure all staff know how to treat all disclosures of harm with respect and seriousness and maintain a non-judgmental approach. Take pro-active measures to ensure students are aware this is the approach taken by the school.

4.5 Preventing online sexual harassment: checklist

- Does the school ensure the whole school community is involved in prevention work, including the creation of related policies?
- Do all members of staff understand how to report any incident of online abuse they become aware of?
- Are students made aware of the different reporting routes available to them? Are students aware of what happens after they make a report and how they would be supported?
“Everyone gets comments about being ‘hot’ and what would be classed as sexual comments, but no one really knows where the limit is; no one is aware of what classes as harassment when everything – comments, photos – revolves around sexualising bodies. Then once we can identify it, we can then be taught how to deal with it.”

Girl, 17 years
Phase 3: Pilot Evaluation

• Piloted in 4-6 schools per partner country
• Evaluate content & impact of resources
• Research & consultation with young people, professionals & experts
• Methodology
  • Pre-pilot questionnaire: 629 young people
  • Post-pilot questionnaire: 535 young people
  • Post-pilot focus groups: 64 young people
Lesson Evaluation

**Lesson 1: Recognising**
- 86% confident they would recognise online sexual harassment

**Lesson 2: Responding**
- 87% learnt that boys & girls often judged differently for their online behaviour
- 81% learnt that victims should not be blamed for their behaviour

**Lesson 3: Reporting**
- 92% recognised importance of reporting
- 74% knew how to make a report at school
Pilot/Project Conclusions

• Interactive & practical format of resources
• Evidence of ability to effectively raise awareness
• Increase understanding of how & where to report
• Importance of safe space for discussing complexities
• Long term & whole school approach needed
• Ensure other stakeholders understand relevant action to take when report is made