

TEACHER'S GUIDEBOOK ON CYBER SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE



Impressum



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Introduction

Though digital technology has enabled improved access to information and networking, it has also provided a space for replicating the disbalance of gendered power relations and diverse forms of discrimination that underlie violence against women and girls.

The normalization of violence in intimate partner relationships is becoming more and more the norm. Research and data show clearly that the Internet facilitates acts of violence, sexual and other offences both online and off-line and that it perpetuates negative and harmful stereotypes of girls and women, as well as negative notions of masculinity.

Prevention strategies highlighted in research on violence against women and girls include action aimed at making cyber violence more visible and increasing public consciousness so that such violence is not trivialized nor ignored. In addition to this, a wider scope of stakeholders should be brought on board, and teachers are among them.

Understanding that for essential change it is not enough just to have in place legal regulations and protocols of action, this guidebook aims to raise awareness about cyber sexual and gender-based violence in youth intimate partner relationships and provide professionals with insight into effective and efficient protection and support interventions for youth within the education system.

The guidebook, prepared within the regional project titled *I can choose to say no. Empowering youth, especially girls to stand up against cyber sexual and gender-based violence in intimate partner relationships*, encompasses four parts:

- The first is designed to support teachers to improve their knowledge on the phenomenon of cyber sexual and gender-based violence, its forms, causes and consequences, especially focusing on violence in intimate partner relationships of youth (aged 15 to 19).
- The second part provides teachers with teaching materials in the form of workshops they can use with students to raise young peoples' awareness about gender, gender-based violence, cyber violence and online safety. These workshops can be used to support teachers with their specific subjects, as extracurricular activities or to be implemented by peer educators.
- The third part examines the international and national legal framework¹ and obligations (in the four participating countries: Serbia, Croatia, Hungary and Spain), for prevention and protection from cyber sexual and gender-based violence particularly that of education institutions, as well as institutional procedures that ensure efficient and effective response sensitive to the particular needs of young people.
- The fourth part shares 'good practices' in prevention of sexual and gender-based violence among youth that can be replicated or modified to fit specific contexts to which they are transferred. This part aims to provide education professionals with practical support to improve prevention, intervention and building a school climate less tolerant to any form of discrimination and violence.

Finally, this publication wishes to remind us all, that what we are striving for is a society that says no to violence and that we can all, even through the smallest steps, be active participants in making this a reality.

The authors

¹ National legal framework and institutional procedures are listed in a separate document that is an appendix to this guidebook

▶ **About the project „I can choose to say no. Empowering youth, especially girls, to stand up against cyber sexual and gender-based violence in intimate partner relationships“**

The objective of the project, implemented from August 2019 to July 2021, is to contribute to ending cyber sexual and gender-based violence in youth (aged 15-19) intimate partner relationships. Through cooperation with secondary schools, the project wishes to ensure increased awareness of youth and education professionals on cyber sexual and gender-based violence in intimate partner relationships, gender stereotypes and norms that contribute to the tolerance of violence. The project seeks especially to empower girls in standing up to violence and not accepting violence in intimate partner relationships.

1. SEXUAL AND GENDER BASED-VIOLENCE IN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

1.1 Understanding and addressing gender-based violence in intimate relationships

Intimate relationships in adolescence

Adolescence is a time to explore and develop emotional and social competence. Teens are learning to recognize and manage their own emotions and they are engaged in building their capacity to be sensitive and effective in relating to others: family, friends, girlfriends and boyfriends. In adolescence, romantic relationships have the capacity to be confidence-boosting and healthy experiences that teach young people about the give and take of intimacy. When relationships are characterized by mutual respect, intimacy, trust, commitment and good communication, teens are happier with themselves. Teenagers in healthy relationships feel valued and accepted for who they are. They can make their own choices and don't feel pressured to do things that make them feel uncomfortable, feel safe and comfortable with each other, support each other, treat each other equally and fairly, they are only intimate when they both want, they know it's OK to say 'no', communicate openly and sort out conflicts fairly. Young people entering their first romantic relationship usually have difficulties in recognizing what a quality relationship looks like and lack the skills and knowledge needed to establish a quality and fulfilling relationship with a partner.

However, for some young people romantic relationships may be associated with additional discord, and consequences such as intimate partner violence. Toxic and unhealthy behaviour can start from something seemingly "innocent" and result in violence and abuse. Adolescents might even misinterpret this as romantic. For example, something can start as jealousy about spending time with others but can result in people becoming isolated from friends and family as relationships progress.

Adolescents in order to develop positive and healthy relationships need to be able to recognize when a relationship is unhealthy and destructive. They need to understand and recognise how unequal power balances and gender stereotypes might affect their development and the relationships around them. Relationship power refers to one partner engaging in behaviours against the other partner's wishes, having greater control over decision making in the relationship, or having greater control over a partner's behaviour. For example, a woman might feel that she does not have the power/ right to say "no". Relationship abuse is an attempt by abusive partners to gain or maintain power and control, and it comes in many forms.

The role of gender stereotypes and gender norms in sustaining gender-based violence

From birth, society treats girls and boys differently based on their biological sex. We are surrounded by messages, instructions and rules about how we should act, speak, think, groom as a boy/girl/woman/man, what is feminine and what is masculine.

Gender stereotypes are widely accepted judgements and generalisations about a person of a gender or the whole gender that can be about one's personality traits, role in the relationship/family, occupation and physical appearance and they stem in traditional gender roles that have historically created a hierarchy in society between genders. Stereotypes exist in close connection with gender norms, an intricate system of expectations on what someone belonging to a certain sex should be like. Gender norms and stereotypes reinforce the hierarchy between genders because they form the socialisation of children into adults differently. They influence one's communication, behaviour, emotional intelligence and their perspectives on what they can become, what they are valued for.

Different display of behaviour is acceptable for women and men. Traditional gender norms often say that girls and women should be accommodating, timid, sensitive, caring and supporting towards their environment. Whereas boys and men should be unruly, confident, exploring, dominant and aggressive. Girls/women are often displayed as emotional, hypersensitive and irrational, while boys are taught that real men don't cry, they are tough and should be rational.

Occupations and functions in the family are also formed by gender stereotypes: women should be homemakers, mothers and be the caretaker of the kids and the jobs we associate with them are more likely to be in the social sector (teacher, nurse etc.) and lower paying jobs. Men are expected to take leadership positions, or work in sciences, engineering, politics, they should be the money-makers and the head of the family.

Gender norms and relationship

Traditional gender roles can cause the cooperation in couples to be faulty and the individual needs/choices to be repressed or oppressed. Our society reinforces heterosexual relationships as a norm, where the masculine and feminine traits complement each other according to traditional gender roles. The inequality in what society expects boys and girls, men and women to conduct themselves can lead to the boys/men dominating over the girls/women and the girl/women to be submissive and vulnerable, less independent and assertive. Should any deviate from the above mentioned, society is likely to penalise them for being non-normative (e.g. 'she's too masculine and will scare men off', 'he's such a "softy or mama's boy or he is not a real man" for letting her tell him what to do') which is likely to condition them further.

Socialisation around sexuality also shows disparity. Girls from an early age are taught that one of their main qualities is how attractive they are. They see female bodies in advertisements, films and other media through a male perspective, always according to the ruling beauty standards. They learn to observe their bodies from an outside perspective, hence they lose connection with it, which has consequences in their self-esteem, perceived physical boundaries and the way they relate to their own sexuality, which can easily become an object to someone else's needs.

The messages about sexuality towards boys also accelerated by porn are often about conquering, proving their masculinity by using someone's (or anyone's body) - about an undisputable, instinctual need that they have to get fulfilled. Girls however, with their physical boundaries blurred and their needs put in the background by socialisation are often unable to say or are not heard when they say no to sexual advances, based on cultural views focusing on male pleasure.

There is also a definite double standard in how society views girls/women and boys/men in the light of their sexual life and expression. If girls and women take more active roles in their sexual lives they are often stigmatized, while with boys and men it is something they get appreciation for (Kardos and Sudár, 2019)². Gender - based violence is deeply connected with gender norms and stereotypes, because it punishes the non-conforming gender expression on several areas of life. Individuals with rigid views on gender roles are likely to be ignorant to their own and their partner's true physical and psychological needs. Gender norms and stereotypes can lead to imbalance in task sharing and quality in the relationship and the family e.g. in the areas of emotional caretaking, decision making, child care, financial control, professional advancement, housework etc. All the above, point towards an inequality that leaves women with less power to practise their autonomy; to have control over their own bodies, needs and lives.

Healthy, unhealthy or abusive?

Every relationship is different and what works well in one may not work in another relationship works well and what doesn't. However, the standard that can be set in any relationship is the fact that the relationship is based on equality or not. Equality in a relationship could be used as a marker to define if it is healthy, unhealthy or even abusive.

Here is a short list with a few pointers helping to determine whether a relationship is healthy, unhealthy or abusive, taken from an information leaflet of NANE Association³

The relationship is most likely healthy if:

- The partners act with decency, respect and love towards each other. Problems can be discussed, and the discussions will result in change.
- The use of non-violent communication has positive results in the relationship.
- Both partners invest the same amount of energy to solve common problems.
- One can freely express their feelings.
- The partners are happy and supportive about each other's success and personal growth.
- Both partners have the possibility to change and improve.
- The partners encourage each other to improve and feel that their lives are more complete.
- Both feel stronger.
- They would let each other go if they wanted to break up.

The relationship is unhealthy if:

- The partners can't discuss their problems.
- The partners can talk about the problems, but nothing changes.
- The use of non-violent communication in the relationship has no results.

The relationship is abusive if, on top of the above-listed items, any one of the below is true as well:

- The partner responds to the successes of the other with blame, understatement or anger.
- The partner's behaviour is rude or harsh towards the other if they are alone or in public.
- The partner treats the other as if they are invisible, doesn't say a word to them, doesn't reply.
- Only one partner can change, develop and improve, the other can never do that.
- The partner's world gets smaller and smaller (friends and relatives, old hobbies, goals and desires are disappearing).
- One feels more and more weak and powerless.

² Kardos B. and Sudár O. (2019) Turn Me On. Patriarchátust Ellenzők Társasága. Available at: <http://turnmeon.hu/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Kapcsolodj-be-Tordelt-WEB-FINAL-L-1.pdf>

³ Healthy relationship, NANE. Available at: https://nane.hu/en/wp-content/uploads/healthy_relationship_print.pdf

- The partner would not let the other go if they wanted to break up: blackmails the other with their feelings, illness, children, etc. or threatens with murder or suicide in case the other leaves.
- The partner threatened the other with physical violence.
- The partner (sometimes) hits the other or forces them to participate in sexual activities which the other does not like nor want.

What is healthy, unhealthy or abusive in a relationship depends on the set standards. Hence, an unhealthy or not functioning relationship may be acceptable for one or abusive for another.

Gender-based violence

Gender-based violence can be defined as violence directed against a person because of that person's gender (including gender identity/expression) or as violence that affects persons of a particular gender disproportionately.

According to the United Nations, gender-based violence is a phenomenon deeply rooted in gender inequality and continues to be one of the most notable human rights violations within all societies. It can affect boys and men, but it usually occurs when they display non-normative sexuality or gender expression.⁴

Women and girls, of all ages and backgrounds, are most affected by gender-based violence. It can be physical, sexual and/or psychological, and includes

- violence in close relationships
- sexual violence (including rape, sexual assault and harassment or stalking)
- slavery (sexual exploitation, trafficking, keeping women in captivity and exploit them physically)
- harmful cultural practices, such as forced marriages, female genital mutilation (FGM) and so-called 'honour' crimes
- cyber violence and harassment using new technologies

It is a violation of human dignity and, in its worst form, it violates the right to life. It is also an extreme expression of inequality on the ground of sex.

Examples of gender - based violence include sexual harassment, stalking, sexual exploitation, physical and sexual violence. About forms and examples of gender - based violence you can read in more details later in this chapter.

Forms of intimate partner violence

Intimate partner violence is one type of gender-based violence, usually affecting women and girls as victims. According to the United Nations, gender-based violence affects women more because of the historically established power imbalance between men and women that lead to men dominating over women in society, and prevent women from living up to their full potential.⁵ There are many forms of intimate partner violence; they usually appear together, because they are all stemming from the same: the perpetrator's derogatory attitudes towards women/their partner.

In the following list we have collected the most typical examples:

⁴ General Recommendation No. 35 on gender-based violence against women, updating General Recommendation No. 19. Available at: https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/1_Global/CEDAW_C_GC_35_8267_E.pdf

⁵ United Nations, 1996, article/section 75

Emotional abuse: Underrating and insulting the partner, or the people and things the partner loves/likes, ridiculing her (her looks, religion, ethnic origins, etc.). Threats of harming her, or things and people precious to her, threats of committing suicide. Shutting her out from his thoughts or emotions yet keeping her under control; often by acting utterly jealous; ruining her self-confidence; and questioning or ignoring her independent decisions. Controlling what she wears, who she meets, what does she do in her free time (also using technology). Blaming the partner for everything, including his own emotional outbursts. Questioning the partner's emotions and/or experiences (including the severity of the abuse). Refusing to talk about the issues, or even denying their mere existence. Behaving threateningly: destroying things, damaging items, terrorizing her with weapons, using a threatening tone or look, offensively questioning her or dangerous driving. Stalking of former partners.

Physical abuse: Pushing, hitting, choking the partner, grabbing her by the arms, shoulders, squeezing her fingers, pulling her hair, slamming, kicking, biting, shaking, burning her, threatening or hurting her with weapons. Denying the partner's rights of freedom of movement and independence. Locking the other in, or out, tying her to something, preventing her to sleep, wash herself, eat, drink, or take care of her other physical needs.

Sexual abuse: Forcing or manipulating the other to partake in sexual activities that she doesn't want, ignoring if the other says no, ignoring the signs that the other is not enjoying the activity, begging for things she already said no to, hurting or humiliating her during sex, raping her, injuring her genitals or forcing her to have intercourse with others. Refusing to use condoms, preventing her from taking contraceptives, forcing her to have, or not have, an abortion. Sharing private nude or sexual images/videos online without consent, blackmailing to post private sexual images and demanding sexual favours in return.

Social and economic abuse: Isolating the other from social and financial resources; isolating her from family and friends, often in a manipulative, covert way, preventing her from studying, having a (summer) job, or making money (for example by telling her that being together is more important). Questioning her financial decisions, controlling what she can or can't do, whom she can meet, whom she can talk to, where she can go, what she can wear. Preventing her from making new friends, talking to her family. Looking into the other's phone, reading her emails, searching her pockets and bags, escorting her everywhere, and keeping her under full-time surveillance at work, or at school.

This list is not complete: there are many forms of violence and they usually occur together. The goal is the same: the emotional effect on the victim. The physical or sexual violence always has emotional consequences too, and the goal is usually to have that emotional effect on the victim (so that she feels less, she feels that she deserves it, that is her fault, that there is no point trying to change things, that she has no power at all), not the bruises or physical scars.

Myths vs. facts about gender-based violence

In our societies there are common misconceptions and myths about gender-based violence that carry a lot of potential to further traumatise, silence victims, to give permissions to the mindset of perpetrators and to prevent those who could help in supporting the victims.

Myths, which are present at both the individual and institutional/societal levels, are one way in which gender based-violence has been sustained and justified throughout history. Understanding the myths and realities of sexual and gender-based violence can help us focus on the responsibility of the perpetrator and that is a critical part of any effective effort for protecting victims and working towards more equal and just society.

Here are some examples:

- Myth: Domestic violence is an anger issue. Men can't control their anger.
Reality: Feeling angry does not automatically mean being violent. Violent behaviour is a choice. Men who are violent towards women choose violence as a way of exerting power and control over their partners. This is enabled by norms around masculinity, which permit and even encourage men to be aggressive. They believe that they have the right to control, dominate and hurt their partners. Most of the men who are violent towards their partners can perfectly control their anger towards other people, especially their boss or other figures of authority.
- Myth: Jealousy is a sign of love.
Reality: Jealousy has nothing to do with love; it's rather a sign of possessiveness, lack of trust and insecurity. It is also one of the most common early warning signs of abuse.
- Up to a certain point, jealousy could be considered as a valid and acceptable emotion, but when jealousy is invoked to restrain a partner's social contacts, to control her/his appearance or to exercise emotional blackmail then it is emotional abuse.
- Myth: Abused women must have done something to provoke the perpetrator. („she deserves it“; she was “asking for it“)
Reality: It is never the victim's fault. This kind of victim-blaming statement suggest that, in order for the abuse to stop, the victim should look for the reasons for being abused and that she has to do something to change her behaviour. But, responsibility for violence always belongs with the person who is behaving violently. Women do not deserve to be physically, emotionally or sexually abused in any circumstance. Everyone has basic human rights, like the right to safety, the right to be treated with respect. There can be no justification for violence against women!
- Myth: Sexual violence is more likely to be committed by a stranger.
Reality: Just the opposite. In fact, two thirds of the sexual assaults are committed by someone known to the victim. According to some studies, only 2% of the abusers are complete strangers.
- Myth: Online abuse is driven by passion, not violence.
Reality: Abuser might pretend that they just love a person so much they can't help themselves. But, these excessive actions don't come from a place of love. Abuse is an act of control and violence. Perpetrator create fear through intimidating or threatening messages, isolate victim by limiting their ability to communicate with friends and family or humiliate victim by posting intimate images online.

Cycle of violence

Violent relationships are usually not bad all the time. They have good parts; the victim usually shares some very good memories with the perpetrator.

The cycle of violence is a model developed to explain the complexity and co-existence of abuse with loving behaviours. It helps understand that breaking the cycle of violence is much more complicated than just leaving the perpetrator.

At the start of the relationship the abuser usually acts in a way that **makes the partner feel important:** with lots of attention, promises, bonding, mutual future planning, gifts. It is often perceived like a fairy tale. The abuser usually appears to be very fond of the other, even before he got the chance and the time to really get to know her. Some think it is because he is not really interested in her personality and preferences, he just wants somebody he can start to oppress gradually. The representations of society (literature, films, socialisation etc.) on romantic love provide us with unhealthy images of how relationships should work, how each person in relationship should behave and what it is like to be loved, e.g. jealousy is often thought to be an evidence of loving someone, whereas it is often the sign of the partner wanting to own and control the other; love includes suffering and sacrifice, but despite the hurts and conflicts, love will prevail, and you should do whatever it takes to make this work. These false ideals and beliefs can lead

to: unrealistic expectations of the other person and the relationship, high tolerance towards warning signs of unhealthy relationships, pressure not to leave the relationship etc.

After the romantic start, the **tension starts to build up**, and the relationship becomes full of little fights and conflicts. It is important to note that these conflicts form around cases when the perpetrator tries to control the victim and take away her freedom. By saying for example that she should not go to a party where her ex will be present. Or she should not wear a certain dress or wear make-up. The perpetrator may justify his actions by saying he cares and loves the partner, and these signs may sometimes be misread as care in a relationship, while there are in fact attempts of control.

After this there is usually a **violent outburst** which is from the victim point of view, something serious at that time. It can be verbal, or physical, or sexual, the important thing is that is something shocking or very hurtful for the victim. She usually thinks that if this kind of thing happens in their relationship is it probably better to leave.

The good times can come back when the perpetrator senses that the relationship is in danger and that the victim might want to break up. He usually starts to show his good face again, acts kindly, makes promises that he will never behave like that again, gives a lot of attention and love, in order to keep the other in the relationship. This phase is also known as the **„honeymoon “phase**. The changes are only temporary and the promises he makes won't last long: when he feels the relationship secure again, he stops being nice and tension starts to build up gradually. If he already managed to make the victim dependent on him, then he might not need to put any effort into preventing her from going away, because she could not go away easily.

It is also important to know that the violence and abuse in the relationship usually gets more severe with time.

Early warning signs include:

- Constant or irrational jealousy, or getting angry when the other wants to be with friends or family;
- Wanting to know where the other person is at all times;
- Unpredictable mood swings;
- Threatening to leave if the other doesn't do what they wish;
- Insistence on classic, traditional gender roles;
- Forcing of unwanted or non-consensual sexual acts;
- Trying to make the other feel guilty if they don't act the way they are expected or told;
- Threatening to hurt themselves or the other if their partner wants to leave the relationship;
- History of violence in previous relationship(s).

Later, we will discuss how to recognise the signs in the school as a teacher!

Violence in LGBTQ relationships

Sometimes we think that violence can only happen in heterosexual relationships, because it is the majority. There are many stereotypes surrounding the gender that makes violence in LGBT relationships very difficult to recognise, even for the victims themselves. These misconceptions include:

- sexual violence is not possible between two women
- if there is violence in a lesbian relationship, is certainly not physical (meaning not dangerous)
- men are strong (or have no emotions) so it is not possible to really harm them (emotionally)
- there is no power imbalance in same sex relationships

It is important to know that an LGBT relationship can be just as violent as a heterosexual one, but it is more difficult to ask for help, because of the homophobic attitudes and the lack of special services. So, it is even more important to support these students as teachers.

Special forms of LGBT intimate partner violence include controlling the coming out (threatening with outing the person) biphobic remarks, misgendering on purpose, and so on.⁶

Emotional effects of gender-based violence

The emotional effects of gender-based violence can be serious and long lasting. Sexual violence is one of the most emotionally traumatizing human rights violations.

According to the Fundamental Rights Agency survey⁷ on violence against women, the long-term consequences of experiencing physical or sexual violence are the following:

- loss of self-confidence 36%
- anxiety 35%
- feeling vulnerable 34%
- difficulties in relationships 29%
- difficulties in sleeping 28%
- depression 24%
- panic attack 14%
- concentration difficulties 14%
- other 3%

The recovery can only begin if the abuse stops. It is not possible to get better while being abused.

It is also important to bear in mind, that even though the physical scars and bruises heal with time, emotional recovery takes a lot more time. The social environment, where victim blaming, bagatelizing, relativizing happens hinders the healing process a lot, and a supportive environment where the victim is believed and protected can help the healing process.

⁶

More information available at Bleeding Love: <https://www.bleedinglove.eu/project/>.

⁷

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights – FRA (2014): Violence against women: an EU - wide survey. Main results. Available at: https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2014-vaw-survey-main-results-apr14_en.pdf

More information on the website: <https://fra.europa.eu/en/data-and-maps/violence-against-women-survey/survey-information>

Violence in teen relationships

According to a study⁸ carried out in the US, violence in teen relationships is different from violence between adults. The differences include:

- Violence is more mutual. According to observation of physically violent couples, the violence is mutual in 58% of the cases.
- The power imbalance between the couples is not as big, being financially dependent on the other is rare.
- Lack of experience and skills of managing relationships.
- The relationship happens more in front of others (in school) and not in private, which means that peers and peer pressure have a lot more influence on how the couple behaves with each other.

According to another survey⁹ both boys and girls are trying to control their partner, but boys are more "successful". *"Girls with violent experiences deal with strong feelings of fear, worthlessness, shame and guilt, while boys frequently dismiss their victim experiences as insignificant. [...] The use of violence by a girlfriend affects male adolescents less or is perceived as being more of a bothersome and annoying nuisance, which is usually ignored, but to which they sometimes respond with a much stronger act of violence."*

⁸ Mulford C.Ph.D., Giordano P. C. Ph.D. (2018) Teen Dating Violence: A Closer Look at Adolescent Romantic Relationships. National Institute of Justice Journal, 216. Available at: <https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/teen-dating-violence-closer-look-adolescent-romantic-relationships>

⁹ Köberlein, I. et al. (2010) Heartbeat. Relationship without violence. PARITÄTISCHE Baden-Württemberg. Available at: http://nane.hu/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Manual_heartbeat_relationships_without_violence.pdf

1.2 Cyber sexual and gender-based violence

The Council of Europe's Cybercrime Convention Committee created a working definition by integrating into the cyber context the definition on violence against women from the Istanbul Convention:

*"Cyber violence is the use of computer systems to cause, facilitate, or threaten violence against individuals that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering and may include the exploitation of the individual's circumstances, characteristics or vulnerabilities."*¹⁰

The reason we must talk about cyber violence as a separate category lies in the fact that cyberspace has many characteristics that can enhance, perpetuate and diversify violent acts against women and girls and vulnerable groups. The nature and the causes of violence are not different from offline gender - based violence, but the tools can be different, the visibility of violence can be different (the evidence more hidden or quickly spread on the internet) so as the laws regulating the online spaces. One statement must be clear, cyber violence committed through digital surfaces and in connection with personal data is equally harmful and with grave impact on the victim's life.

What are the characteristics of online spaces influencing the nature and impact of violence?

Anonymity can amplify violence. The lack of means of identification can encourage the perpetrator with the perception that they are not accountable, or they do not have to adhere to rules.

Widespread use of the internet and social media makes information sharing go faster and broader. Offensive, violent or exposing pictures, comments and data posted online can spread untraceably fast and far, leaving the victims vulnerable and with no control over their personal privacy.

Victim-blaming, re-victimisation & traumatising. These responses from peers and outsiders can be also experienced with offline sexual and gender-based violence stemming from the toxic norms and myths in society. The bigger publicity, the 'norms' of the online spaces can lead to lengthy comment threads and forming of public opinion that further traumatises the victims.

Cybersecurity is fragile. Passwords, access codes and full login information can be obtained with certain hacking software accessible on the internet. Sites and applications saving login information can also make personal accounts more accessible and their owners more vulnerable.

Moderation and reporting policies are still catching up. Much to the public uproar there have been more apparent functions on social media for reporting violent posts or harassment online, but it still does not seem that policies of social media can protect victims of violent acts online or put an end to a process once it happens.

The internet doesn't forget. Uploaded pictures, data, search results remain accessible in various ways. Even when the individuals to whom the information or pictures belong don't want them visible anymore.¹¹

This can contribute to the violent act to be more permanent and haunting their victims.

Technology giving news tools of intimate partner violence. Many online and technological features can be used in an abusive relationship to exert further control over the partner, like tracking, hacking software, online platforms, saved login information etc. Online harassment is many times the extension of real-life abuse.

¹⁰ Council of Europe (2017) Mapping study on cyber violence. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/t-cy-2017-10-cbg-study-provisional/16808c4914>

¹¹ GenPol (2019). When technology meets misogyny. Available at: <https://gen-pol.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/When-technology-meets-misogyny-1.pdf>

As the report published by GenPol (2019) concludes, the consequences of being a victim to cyber violence can be as severe as offline violence, but due to these factors above, cyber violence has the potential to have major consequences in social and professional life and the victim can withdraw from online spaces or abandon their public posts or desired career.

The COE Cybercrime Convention Committee (2018) recently published a report that further emphasises some of the distinguishing characteristics: “cyber violence may comprise new forms of violence that do not have an equivalent in the physical world (...) There may be no physical-world crime that repeats or persists after its commission without any action by the criminal, yet this is the case with many forms of cyber violence”¹²

Forms of cyber sexual and gender-based violence

The following categories are not the only classification of forms of online violence, categories can also overlap with each other, just like the forms of offline gender-based violence do. The listed forms are from the extensive resource pack about cyber violence titled #HerNetHerRights published by the European Women’s Lobby.¹³

Sexist hate speech is defined by the Council of Europe as “expressions which spread, incite, promote or justify hatred based on sex”. Typically, these are the rape, death and torture threats women and girls can receive because they are (self-)identified as women and bear the stereotypes enforced by rape culture and patriarchy.

Cyberbullying consists of repeated behaviour such as sending mean text messages, starting rumours, or posting images with the objective of frightening and undermining someone’s self-esteem or reputation, which sometimes pushes vulnerable individuals to depression and suicide.

Cyber harassment is the use of digital means to communicate or interact with a non-consenting person. Cyberbullying occurs the most between minors. Online sexual harassment can take the form of conditions of humiliation and sexualisation, because they are women. Offensive, sexist and insulting words such as “slut”, “whore”, “cunt”, “bitch” can be used, as well as commentaries on women’s physical appearances.

Doxing refers to the online researching and publishing of private information on the internet to publicly expose and shame the person targeted.

Creepshots are also called digital voyeurism. Creepshots consist of perpetrators surreptitiously taking photos or videos of women’s private areas for sexual gratification. In some cases, the act of taking the image without the victim’s knowledge, and the subsequent violation of their privacy and agency, is what provides the sexual ‘gratification’.

Revenge porn, or “**image-based sexual abuse**” is the fact of using private pictures and videos of sexual character, given or exchanged, and posting them online to shame and humiliate the victim. It can be the extension of intimate partner violence to online spaces. Images can also be obtained by hacking into the victim’s computer, social media accounts or phone, and can aim to inflict real damage on the target’s ‘real-world’ life (such as getting them fired from their job).

Hacking, the act of intercepting private communications and data, can target women and girls, especially in the form of web-cam hacking.

¹² Council of Europe Cybercrime Convention Committee (2018). Mapping study on cyber violence. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/t-cy-2017-10-cbg-study-provisional/16808c4914>

¹³ European Women’s Lobby (EWL) (2017). #HerNetHerRights: Resource Pack on ending online violence against women & girls in Europe. Available at: https://www.womenlobby.org/IMG/pdf/hernetherrights_resource_pack_2017_web_version.pdf

Online impersonation is the fact of using the name or identity of someone else with the intent to harm, defraud, intimidate, or threaten any person, online impersonation may be used to discredit targeted women with their social and professional peers or for criminal purposes similar to offline identity theft.

Malicious distribution is the use of tech tools to distribute defamatory material related to the victim and/ or organizations; e.g. by using new technologies as a propaganda tool to promote violence against women, call for violence against abortion providers, etc.

Mob attacks and cyber mobs: hostile mobs include hundreds, sometimes thousands of people, systematically harassing a target.

Abusive sexting: Sexting is the consensual electronic sharing of naked or sexual photographs. This is different, however, from the non-consensual sharing of the same images. While teenage boys and girls sext at the same rates, boys are between two and three times more likely to share images that they are sent.

Digitally facilitated trafficking: Trafficking of women using technological means such as recruitment, luring women into prostitution helped by the broad reach and the anonymity of the internet and often with the use of fake profiles. It's important to be aware of how the digital tools make it easier for sex traffickers to extend their reach to vulnerable women/girls.

Being a relatively fresh and quickly changing research area, more information is still being obtained on the impact of cyber gender-based violence. However, findings confirm that the listed forms of cyber violence affect the victims' sense of safety, their physical and psychological health, their dignity and rights. Online gender-based violence is more often targeted at women and girls and to individuals who display non-conforming gender or sexual expression; and similarly, to offline spaces other disadvantages such as ethnicity or disability make one more at risk of being a victim of online violence.

As we can observe many of the violent acts above have a sexual aspect, which contributed to current discussions that certain forms of cyber violence should be classified as forms of sexual violence.¹⁴ One final distinction between offline and online gender - based violence is that because of the above-mentioned characteristics of cyberspace more can be affected indirectly by the acts of violence.

Facts about cyber sexual and gender-based violence in intimate relationships

Cyber violence as a form of violence against women is the dark side of technological advancement. While technology plays a big part in the empowerment of girls and women, the previously listed features of online spaces result in the lack of safety as well for vulnerable groups.

Based on a 2013 World Health Organization report¹⁵ **1 in 3 women will have been a victim of physical or sexual abuse** in her lifetime. Looking at the internet and cyber violence, the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) in 2014¹⁶ found that **20% of young women aged 18-29 in the EU have experienced online sexual harassment**, and that at least 1 in 10, which means approximately **9 million European girls have been a victim of a form of digital gender-based violence by the time they were 15 years old.**

¹⁴ European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (2017). Cyber violence against women and girls. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3f0u8af>

¹⁵ World Health Organization (2013). Global and regional estimates of violence against women. Available at: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241564625>

¹⁶ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights – FRA (2014). Violence against women: an EU - wide survey. Main results. Available at: https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2014-vaw-survey-main-results-apr14_en.pdf

According to a United Nations report from 2015¹⁷, **globally 73% of women and girls had encountered some form of online violence.**

A 2009 study in the UK¹⁸ gives an important picture on the prevalence of relationship violence in teenage relationships, but it also stresses the differences between boys and girls in the perception of violence and the impact perceived by the victims. The results were also published in the teacher's manual called Heartbeat on how to talk about and prevent relationship violence between teens. The survey included 1353 young people aged 13-17 and the findings were the following:

- almost **75% of girls and 50% of boys reported having experiences of emotional abuse. 33% of girls but only 6% of boys thought that this would have negative effects on their well-being.** The most frequently named forms of emotional violence were "being made fun of" and being "constantly controlled and checked.
- about **33 % of girls and 16 % of boys reported of some sort of sexual violence. 70% of the girls and 13% of the boys stated that it had negatively impacted on their welfare.**
- approximately **25% of girls and 18% of boys reported physical violence from their partner.** 11% of girls and 4% of boys reported severe violence. Here too, considerably **more girls (75%) than boys (14%) suffered a negative impact on their well-being.**

These findings reverberate in representative studies of the impact of cyber violence. The PEW Research Center's 2017 study¹⁹ focused specifically on online harassment in the American population found out the following:

- In the study 41% said that they experienced online harassment (offensive name-calling, purposeful harassment, physical threats, stalking, sexual harassment, or harassment) over a sustained period.
- The emotional impact of online harassment however is felt more severely by women. For example, **35% of women** who have experienced any form of online harassment **say they found their most recent incident to be "extremely" or "very" upsetting**, more than twice the share among men who have been targeted online (16%).
- The gender differences also show in views of online harassment as a public issue. **70% of women say they see online harassment as a major problem**, compared with 54% of men. Younger women (aged 18-29) are especially likely to say this: 83% say it is a major problem, compared with 55% of men in the same age group.

As mentioned earlier, cyber violence does not stand alone as a new form of violence, but it is **connected to intimate partner violence.** The Women's Aid survey from 2017²⁰ states that:

- 45% of domestic violence victims reported experiencing some form of abuse online during their relationship;
- 48% reported experiencing harassment or abuse online from their ex-partner once they'd left the relationship;
- 38% reported online stalking once they'd left the relationship;
- 75% reported concerns that the police did not know how best to respond to online abuse or harassment. This includes 12% who had reported abuse to the police and had not been helped.

¹⁷ UN Broadband Commission for Digital Development (2015) Cyber violence against women and girls: A world-wide wake-up call. Available at: https://www.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2015/cyber_violence_gender%20report.pdf?v=1&d=20150924T154259

¹⁸ Barter C., McCarry M., Berridge D., Evans K. (2009). Partner exploitation and violence in teenage intimate relationships. Available at: http://www.womenssupportproject.co.uk/userfiles/file/partner_exploitation_and_violence_report_wdf70129.pdf

¹⁹ Pew Center Research (2017) Online Harassment. Available at: <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2017/07/11/online-harassment-2017/>

²⁰ Women's Aid Federation of England (2014) Virtual World, Real Fear. Available at: https://www.womensaid.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Women_s_Aid_Virtual_World_Real_Fear_Feb_2014-3.pdf

Regarding the platform on which online harassment specifically occurs, the 2014 Pew Research Center report²¹ on the American population gave us information:

- 66% of internet users said their most recent incident occurred on a social networking site or app,
- 22% in the comments section of a website, 16% through online gaming,
- 16% in a personal email account,
- 10% on discussion sites (such as Reddit),
- 6% on an online dating website or app.
- Women were more likely than other to be harassed on social media sites, while men, especially younger were more likely to be harassed on online gaming sites according to the research

Regarding the **perpetrators identity** the PEW research found that 38% of the respondents were harassed online by a stranger and 29% could not determine the identity of their harasser.

There is growing research in the field of what causes the online space to be such risk for girls and women. Experts say that with the access of the internet it is very important to educate children in media literacy. Being present in online spaces without understanding the risks that come with it makes vulnerable groups even more exposed to violence.

Legislations are still catching up with this vast and fast-growing area and critics emphasise that policy change in the tech sector is necessarily. The IT sector being led and dominated by man creates policies and tools which are not considered from an aspect of risks to the safety of girls, women and other vulnerable groups.²²

²¹ Pew Center Research (2014) Online Harassment. Available at: <http://www.pewinternet.org/2014/10/22/online-harassment/>
²² UN Broadband Commission for Digital Development (2015) Cyber violence against women and girls: A world-wide wake-up call. Available at: https://www.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2015/cyber_violence_gender%20report.pdf?v=1&d=20150924T154259

1.3 Overview of the research results on awareness and attitudes of teachers and students on cyber sexual and gender-based violence in youth partner relationships²³

During this project we carried out a study among teachers and students about the prevalence and the attitudes and knowledge of gender based online sexual violence.

The goal of the survey research was to collect data on awareness of teachers as well as secondary school girls and boys and their attitudes/strategies to address cyber sexual and gender-based violence in youth intimate partner relationships. An additional goal of this survey was to inform future actions aimed at the prevention of digital intimate partner violence, both within the current project, as well as for other stakeholders dealing with this problem in the future.

Introduction of the research

In this quantitative research, we used a short questionnaire to collect information on young people (between the age of 14 and 19) and secondary school teacher's awareness, attitudes and strategies about cyber SGBV in youth partner relationships.

The **teacher's questionnaire** covered the following topics: recognition and awareness of gender stereotypes in school setting, recognition and attitudes to cyber sexual and gender-based violence, awareness of the scope of problem, addressing violence in youth partner relationships and teachers' perception of their role in addressing (cyber) violence in youth partner relationships.

In the **student's questionnaire** partner organisations used two types of questions: one addressing awareness on gender stereotypes, digital violence and gender-based violence, the other addressing specific situations and their reactions to digital violence.

According to the project document, the envisaged sample was 200 young people and 200 teachers in each partner country. Nevertheless, the interest for this questionnaire was higher in most countries, so the total number of youth who completed the questionnaire was 1139 and the total number of teachers who participated in the study was 1028.

Demographic characteristics of the sample

Both in the teacher's and in the student's sample, most of the participants were female (78.7 % among teachers and 64% among students.) Most of the student respondents are living in the city - 69%, while in a smaller town/village lives 31% of youth. The majority of the participating students were 16 and 17 years old. When it comes to age, the majority of responding teachers were in the age group 41-50 years (34%). Most participating teachers have considerable teaching experience in schools: 34.5% have over 20 years of experience.

²³ The research was implemented within the project "I can choose to say no."

Main findings of the research „Awareness and attitudes of secondary school students towards youth intimate partner violence“

We measured the **attitudes** of the students by presenting them with homophobic and sexist statement and behaviours. Most youth in all four countries see all these as unacceptable, girls having slightly stronger attitudes concerning specific violent behaviours, thinking that they are unacceptable.

The level of complete awareness of violent behaviours is the highest among youth in Spain, and the students have the least homophobic attitudes there.

The greatest differences in answers between boys and girls are regarding the question of boys entering girls' changing rooms in schools and taking photos of them as a way of having fun (98-100% of the girls see this unacceptable, while 1-17% of boys think that it is okay).

When it comes to **actual behaviours** (online harassment, threats, hurtful comments, pressuring someone into something sexual they don't want), in all countries a high number (70-91%) of young people never experienced these examples of digital violence. Also, there is a clear difference between forms of violence that girls are more exposed to compared to boys: there is a high number of girls receiving sexualized comments online (57-72% experienced it). When it comes to boys, they seem to be at higher risk of being threatened by physical violence (33-55% experienced it).

35-53% of youth experienced sexual harassment in a form of receiving an unsolicited photo of someone's intimate body parts. 12-20% of young people sent those pictures themselves.

In all countries girls were exposed to a greater extent to sexualized comments online, to blackmail that their private information/photos/video will be published if they do not do something sexual in return, as well as non-consensual publishing of photos/videos they sent privately to someone (except in Croatia where is the opposite situation for this last form of digital violence).

The questionnaire was used to investigate reactions and strategies youth think they could use if found in some situation of violence. Regarding *sexspreading*, and *sexual harassment*, the most common response of youth in all countries was that they would end the relationship (girls especially).

When it comes to *control in intimate partner relationships*, the students are less aware, especially when it comes to pressuring the other to answer by sending multiple messages. (24-46% thought it was violent, 22-39 was unsure, 30-40 thought it was not violent) The exchange of the passwords is problematic according to most young people.

It's also important to emphasize that in all countries, the level of trust in teachers is very low. The highest is in Spain where 14% of youth would turn to a teacher they have trust in, but in the remaining three countries these percentages are lower: 9% of youth in Croatia, 6% in Hungary and 5% in Serbia. These numbers are indicating a deep gap between youth and teachers and the feeling of distrust expressed by youth.

When measuring **bystander behaviour and attitudes** the two most common attitudes among youth in all countries is rejecting the violent behaviour (24% in Hungary, 60% in Spain, 59% in Serbia and 36% in Croatia) and some form of tolerance (e.g. attitude „just boys being boys“) (39% in Hungary, 38% in Serbia and 37% in Croatia).

Something similar applies to "revenge porn": 32-62% would stand up against this behaviour; while 9-35% has a victim blaming attitude ("the girl should have known better").

When giving advice to a friend, most of the youth see sexual blackmailing, or control in the relationship as something problematic and dangerous.

Answers to this question show that the increase of the severity of the violence is proportionate with the increase of the need of youth to respond.

Main findings of the research „Secondary school teachers’ awareness of cyber sexual and gender-based violence in youth partner relationships “

Teachers’ reported **gender stereotypical expectations**, roles and behaviours are very similar across countries and include:

- Expectations of girls to be quieter in the classroom, to perform cleaning tasks and to be better in languages;
- Expectations of boys to execute tasks that require physical strength, to help with the computers and be better in maths.

When it comes to **gender-based violence**, teachers are aware that their students experience different forms of gender-based violence. Across countries, teachers mostly don’t hold victim blaming attitudes and display some awareness of the dynamic of abusive relationships, but they have some misconceptions too, like it is easy to leave a violent relationship (32% of Serbian respondents) or girls are just as violent as boys (approximately 60% of Hungarian and Croatian respondents). It also proved difficult for teachers to assess whether students have enough trust in them to seek help in cases of teen-dating violence (27-51% choose undecided).

Awareness of the problem

In all the countries, most of the teachers (or at least half of them) think that gender - based violence is not a serious issue among students (only 16-26% thinks that it is serious), or they are unable to assess if it is or not. Teachers do encounter cases of teen-dating violence in their work. Teen-dating violence is more present as a topic of informal than professional conversations among teachers. It is also a topic of conversations with students, but very rarely a topic of conversations with parents. Across countries, teachers were more often informed about female students being victims of violence in their intimate relationships compared to male students. Interestingly when it comes to specific forms of cyber gender - based violence, the teachers seemed to be more aware that their students are affected. Although cyber gender-based violence negatively affected those exposed to it, teachers’ perception is that it was more serious and disturbing for girls. In Croatia and Serbia, they reported that the boys affected by cyber gender-based violence did not take it very seriously and sometimes perceived it as funny.

Helping the students

The majority of teachers (two thirds) think that their role includes working with pupils and respond to the problem of cyber violence in youth partner relationships. Some mention that they would need the support of the school staff to be able to do that. Teachers generally think they don't have enough knowledge: over half of the respondents assessed their own knowledge as average, a quarter assesses their knowledge on the topic as fairly good, and a significant number of respondents said their knowledge on the topic is poor. The share of teachers actively involved in activities concerning prevention of violence in youth partner relationships, varies across countries. Most of them don't participate in violence prevention programs, but they expressed their readiness to help, so there is a great need for additional knowledge and skills regarding the issue of (cyber) teen-dating violence. A significant number of teachers (two thirds or more) didn't experience that students would turn to them for help, regarding any form of violence that occurred in their partner relationships, especially digital violence. But when students do turn to teachers for help, more teachers reported being asked for help by a female student than by a male student. Parents also very rarely contact teachers in connection to their child experiencing violence. The majority of those who were contacted for help (two thirds of them) knew how to provide it.

Teachers need additional support to effectively address the problem of violence in youth partner relationships. Most teachers expressed the need for additional knowledge, skills, professional training and useful education materials, as well as the need for contact points/services where they can refer students.

Recommendations

Having in mind all the results from this survey, it is visible that there are common things that should be done in all four countries when it comes to the issue of cyber sexual and gender-based violence in youth intimate relationships.

- Education and awareness raising of youth - educational prevention programs should be put in place through informal and formal education; gender and age-sensitive mechanisms of protection and support to youth and awareness raising campaigns.
- Education of teachers - Ensure a programme of formal and nonformal education for the teachers and school staff.
- Awareness raising among parents and teachers - systemic approach to educational programs for teachers and different possibilities for parents to get involved and learn.
- Work on establishing and implementation of procedures, protocols, clear guidelines in schools how to deal with cases of teen-dating violence.

2. EDUCATION AND PREVENTION ACTIVITIES IN THE SCHOOL CONTEXT

Introduction

This part of the Guidebook provides teachers with useful background information as well as a set of age-appropriate activities and ready-to-use worksheets and handouts for the implementation of workshops. The activities included in this chapter are based on the review of the materials and they were modified or developed by members of our team.

The workshops in this Guidebook aim to contribute to primary prevention of cyber sexual and gender-based violence in intimate partner relationships through a school-based intervention.

The workshop topics concern the reality of young people's lives, offering the youth space as well as opportunity to explore and discuss – in a safe environment – their own gender-related attitudes and stereotypes, and how they could relate to (cyber) dating abuse, while also learning about what makes healthy relationships. Moreover, the workshops are designed with the following aims: to enable young people to understand social and gender norms and how they shape individual identities and behaviour patterns; to raise awareness about the myths and beliefs concerning romantic love; to make the youth more aware of the different types of (cyber) sexual and gender-based violence, how such violence can directly affect them and their peers, and what the psychological and legal consequences of it are; to inform them on the protection and support available, by providing strategies for dealing with these issues as well as empowering them to become agents of change; to make them see that they hold a lot of power (on an individual and collective level) to prevent violence and abuse from affecting their lives.

Young people can experience many different forms of (cyber) sexual and gender-based violence while growing up, and facilitators might not always be able to tell whether the young people they are working with have had any personal experiences of abuse. There are no specific 'signs' which make it easy to identify if young people are experiencing gender-based violence, but it is crucial to keep in mind that all forms of gender-based violence can have devastating effects on a young person's wellbeing. Nurturing a culture of openness regarding these issues might make young people more likely to feel safe and confident to talk about their concerns and experiences. Any such disclosure should, therefore, be taken seriously.

The experiential and interactive methodologies will enable participants to learn through 'doing' and, at the same time, give them an opportunity to cooperate with each other and take control of the learning process. Facilitators have to be able to support this process by being flexible and adjusting any pertinent activities to focus on the specific issues that young people wish to address in more depth.

Each workshop mainly consists of interactive activities that are suggested for achieving a more experience-based learning instead of relying on traditional methods of teaching. All activities encourage active participation and, if possible, the students sit on chairs in a circle, with no tables in front of them.

The activities included in all workshops are structured as follows: Short introduction, Objectives, Learning outcomes, Duration, Materials and preparation, Step-by-step process, Key points for Facilitators. Appendix 1 contains the worksheets and handouts for the implementation of workshops.

The teacher is free to adapt the selected activities to his/her own personal style, as well as to the dynamics of each group of students. The authors hope that the examples and resources provided in this Guidebook will inspire teachers to develop further activities and share them with their colleagues and other schools.

WORKSHOP TOPICS:

2.1 Gender norms and social conditioning: “Unmasking Masculinity and Femininity”

Workshop 1: The Gender Box - The codes of Masculinity and Femininity

2.2 Teen Dating Violence (TDV) - Gendered power relations, sexuality, romantic love and healthy relationships

Workshop 2: Romantic Love – a recipe for abuse and control?

2.3 Cyber Sexual Violence

Workshop 3: Online control and violence in a partner relationship

2.4 Bystander/Upstander

Workshop 4: Taking a Stand – a Toolbox of Intervention Strategies

2.1 Gender norms and social conditioning: “Unmasking Masculinity and Femininity”

We are born into a ‘gender box’ and the social conditioning and unwritten rules and regulations full of ideals and beliefs that are set-up to educate us to fit into a system that has very clear sets of masculine and feminine codes, roles and behaviours.

We learn from a very young age what it means to be a man or a woman and how to behave masculine or feminine. We learn our identity from a set of rules that dictate our appearance, values and behaviour. This is a life-long process that starts the day we are born and never ends.

“Socialization fosters direct and indirect forms of oppression. Through socialization, each individual acquires character traits and learns skills, values and attitudes deemed appropriate for the role(s) they are expected to assume. The process of socialization involves many aspects of living: family, school, community, religion, politics.

Our everyday knowledge is determined by a sense of values, norms, roles and ways of behaviour oriented to the social settings (incl. TV and other media, social media, norms and social conditioning, etc.) in which we interact²⁴. Generally, we do not pause to think about our normalized behaviour or even consider that we can behave and be in different ways. We do and live how we have shown to be and live.

Socialisation is a massive force that has its grip on the individual, which means that it is a collective force that gives people little space to understand the world from a different perspective.

However, **there is a common understanding that people have the power to reflect on, shape and construct their own gender identities**. Young people, in their use of style, popular culture and their own networks have, in many contexts, increased autonomy when it comes to how they represent themselves and live in their bodies.

Therefore, we have to look at the insidiousness of socialization and how it is tainting us constantly by the predetermined social gendered conditioning and that imposes us with the mostly invisible rules and regulations of how to be a ‘real’ man or a ‘real’ woman, and at the capacity of the individual to make different choices.

The focus is then not so much on how limiting and oppressing the socialization process is, but on **activating the power in people to choose differently**.

²⁴ <http://www.eycb.coe.int/gendermatters/>

Workshop 1: The Gender Box



Objectives:

To explore socialized gender roles and how we are tainted by images, ideals and beliefs.



Learning outcomes:

Reflecting about how we learn to live in a 'Gender Box' invites us to take a critical look at our daily ways of seeing and interacting. It offers us to pause and think about how we have acquired such a vast, common sense and seemingly natural knowledge about our values and ourselves and who we seem to be as a man or a woman in all our diversity.



Timing: 45 min



Material/Worksheets needed:

Worksheet 1.1: Collage of images of men
Worksheet 1.2: Collage of images of women
Worksheet 1.3: Gender Box Questions
Worksheet 1.4: Female Gender Box
Worksheet 1.5: Male Gender Box
Worksheet 1.6: But it was just a joke

Flipchart or white board



Preparation:

You can use the Worksheets 1.1 & 1.2 with the collage we have prepared, or you can go through images from advertising, social media, etc. and collect pictures that are striking in conveying messages about how men and women are 'supposed' to look and behave and make your own collage.



References:

Activity adapted from the following resources:

<http://www.makeitworkcampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Gender-Box.pdf>

Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault. (2011). Sexual assault advocacy and crisis line training guide. Denver, CO: Author

The Gender Box: Suggested step-by-step process

STEP ONE:

Introduction to the activity

1. Introduce the activity by explaining to them that from the day we are born we are flooded with messages, images, ideals and beliefs of what it means "to be a real man" or "to be a real woman."

2. Explain to them that you come to this world and you are not 'free' to be who you are, but that you are constantly informed who you have to be. This is what we call the 'Gender Box'.
3. The 'Gender Box' covers every aspect of human life. How you should look, how you should think, speak, move and act so that you are accepted by societal standards.
4. Ask them to take a moment to think about the different messages that, over the course of their life, have shaped their idea about what is a "real man" or "real woman." The messages we receive in life come from a variety of different sources: parents, siblings, other family members, friends, teachers, religious leaders, social media and general media (movies, magazines, TV shows, video games, websites, music, etc.), and many more.
5. Point out that it is important to recognize that we are influenced by everything that surrounds us – even when we don't realize it. This is the concept of socialization. Socialization refers to how every one of us learns about others and ourselves in the context of our society. We gain an understanding of ourselves by our perception of everyone else.
6. Socialization happens all around us every day, but being aware of its effects is one way we can change to what degree we are all influenced by it.
7. Explain that this is an interactive exercise that requires participants to be honest about the ways in which society defines us.

STEP TWO:

Interactive Group work on "How to act like a man"

1. You can work with the group as a whole or split the group into smaller, preferably mixed groups of boys/men and girls/women.
2. If you have a projector you can show the collage of Worksheet 1.1 of the advertising and social media images of men on the screen. We advise to have always printed copies prepared, just in case the electronic devices are not working. In that case you distribute the copies to the groups.
3. Start with looking at what it means to 'act like a man'. Prepare on Flipchart or Whiteboard a 'boy/man box'. **Just draw a square and call it 'man box'.**

The 'Male Gender Box'



4. Ask them to look at the collage and identify based on the Worksheet 1.3 'Gender Box Questions' how men are portrayed, their physical appearance, behaviour, etc. Ask them also to share the messages they receive from their family, friends and other people around them.
5. Explain that his exercise seeks to look at stereotypes, not at individual behaviour. How are men 'supposed' to act, what makes them popular and bein 'a real man'?
6. If it's a whole class discussion, then guide the discussion and collect the answers on the flipchart or white board in the 'boy/man box'. If you work with smaller groups give them around 10 minutes to discuss. Once the groups have had time to discuss the activity, ask them to feed back their answers. Write the attributes discussed in the 'boy/man box' on flipchart/whiteboard.

STEP THREE:

Interactive Group work on "How to act like a woman"

1. Now do the same exercise with the 'Female Gender Box' and look at what it means to 'act like a woman'. Prepare on Flipchart or Whiteboard a 'girl/woman box'. **Just draw a square and call it 'woman box'.**
2. If you have a projector you can show the collage of Worksheet 1.2 of the advertising and social media images of women on the screen. We advise to have always printed copies prepared, just in case the electronic devises are not working. In that case you distribute the copies to the groups.

The 'Female Gender Box'



3. Ask them to look at the collage and identify based on the Worksheet 1.3 'Gender Box Questions' how women are portrayed, their physical appearance, behaviour, etc. Ask them also to share the messages they receive from their family, friends and other people around them.
4. Remind them that this is about the expectations of society on women, the stereotypes and not about individual behaviour.
5. If it's a whole class discussion, then guide the discussion and collect the answers on the flipchart or white board in the 'girl/woman box'. If you work with smaller groups give them around 10 minutes to discuss. Once the groups have had time to discuss the activity, ask them to feed back their answers. **Write the attributes discussed in the 'girl/woman box' on flipchart/whiteboard.**

Key Points for Facilitators:

This box is a metaphor for what it is like to be a man/woman. There are social “walls” and “boundaries” around us that impact how we behave. These walls make sure that men/women act according to the gender roles society has prescribed for them.

Inside the box represents what society says is okay for men/women to be like or how to behave. We then embody these attributes and qualities that make a ‘real man’ or a ‘real woman’ and live them, as they were our own.

Our body is a walking ‘gender box’.

Possible male attributes are:

How are men supposed to be different from women?

- Stronger, tougher, in control, etc.

What feelings is a “real man” supposed to have?

- Anger, superiority, confidence, etc.

How do “real men” express their feelings?

- Yelling, fighting, silence, etc.

How are “real men” supposed to act sexually?

- Aggressive, dominant with women, in control, etc.

Possible female attributes are:

How are women supposed to be different from men?

- Nicer, weaker, more gossip, softer, etc.

What feelings is a “real woman” supposed to have?

- Fear, emotional, low self-esteem, insecure, etc.

How do “real women” express their feelings?

- Crying, screaming, hysteria, etc.

How are “real women” supposed to act sexually?

- Follow the man, don’t sleep around, be passive, modest or reserved, be provocative and sexy, attract men, etc.

It is very important to point out that the messages women receive regarding their sexuality are very controversial and transmitting a double standard, for example that they have to be “saint” and “loose or slutty” at the same time. Whatever they choose they are criticised.

Reflections & Debrief



Show them the Boy & Girl video here.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CP-CXCsSTmU>

Reflect with the whole class about what it means to “act like a man” and to “act like a woman”

You can ask the class the following questions to guide them in their reflections:

- In your experience, how are girls supposed to look and behave? What makes a girl attractive / popular?
- Where do we learn these gender norms?
- When do we begin learning them?
- Who teaches us these norms?
- Do we see these attitudes in our parents?
- What differences do you observe in the way that women and men are expected to behave?
- What if a girl or boy acts in a way that is outside the gender box? What happens to them?
- How are they treated by their families, peers and the community if they look or behave differently than what is ‘expected of them’?
- Alternatively, what happens to people who conform and seem to fit in? What keeps us in the box?

Write all on a Flipchart or Whiteboard.

Show them the Worksheet 1.4 ‘Female Gender Box’ & 1.5 ‘Male Gender Box’ and support them to understand how we are held by **punishments** and **rewards** inside the box and how we believe that we are that, because we have embodied it.

- Is there a system of ‘rewards’ and ‘punishments’ in place? How does this system affect the choices we make?
- What do you fear when you go out of the house?
- How many women and men here in this class are inside this box all of the time?
- If a woman stays inside the box does she stay safe? Are women inside the box ever raped or abused by their partners? (Yes) What does that say about the suggestion that women stay inside the box? Does it really bring them safety or power?
- What happens to men, do they avoid being called names or being harassed when they stay inside the box?
- How do these boxes contribute to the existence of domestic and sexual violence?
- Does one box has more power or a stronger position in our society?

Key Points for Facilitators:

Support students to reflect about the images, ideals and beliefs we are imposed by on a daily basis. Discuss the expectations and myths within each gender box and also the contradictions, like women expected to be 'modest' but also provocative and sexually experienced, men's 'natural' sex drive, etc. Discuss that we apply **punishments** and **rewards** if someone is not conforming to the gender box.

REWARDS: Respect, notoriety, popularity, influence, more opportunities, freedom from abuse etc.

PUNISHMENTS & BELITTLING: Bullying, isolation, mocking, rumours, discrimination, name calling, physical violence, harassed, abused, ignored, raped, bad reputation, killed, etc.

Punishments are used when men/women step outside the box and act differently than society's behaviour code allows. Those things happen physically and emotionally to people who act in ways that aren't in line with those characteristics listed inside the gender box. They are used to pressure men/women, to keep them "boxed" in.

Explain them that name-calling for example is a socializing tactic used to send the message to others that what they are doing or how they are acting is wrong. That way we influence each other about who and how we "should" behave.

Reflect with them about what those rewards mean and what they actually communicate to us. What does it mean to be popular if being popular means to submit you to certain behaviours, which can even be self-abusive, etc.?

Possible topics the facilitator can raise in the discussion:

- Men that stay inside the box are generally (though not always) safe from the harassment that occurs outside the box.
- Women who stay inside the box are not "safe" as promised but are raped or abused as often as women outside the box. The only benefit being that they may be believed by society more often than women outside the box.
- Men who leave the box are accused of being "women" or "gay"
- Women who leave the box are constantly questioned and pushed to go back in. Why don't you have children? You are such a good-looking woman, why don't you have a partner? There must be something wrong with you if you cannot find a partner, etc.
- Men who are outside the box could retaliate in an aggressive fashion and then put themselves back into the box.

The difference between sex and gender:

If needed or asked for you can explain the difference between sex and gender to the class. Sex is the classification of individuals based upon a biological status usually inferred from such traits as chromosomes, hormone levels, genitalia, and other physical characteristics. Gender roles are a set of behaviours normally associated with males and females, respectively, in a given social group or system.

These are behaviour codes with which society expects males and females to behave in accordance. They tell us what it means to be a woman or a man and they are reducing and oppressing everybody into roles and behaviours we more or less adhere to during lifetime, but they are by no means what it truly means to be a man or a woman. Those gender codes are very harming and lead to abusive and violent normalized patterns in our day-to-day interaction. They also create particular confusion, discrimination and exclusion for people who have non-heterosexual identity.

Workshop Wrap-Up

As a final reflection you can distribute the Work-Sheet 1.6 "It was just a joke" and explain that any kind of disrespectful, dismissive or objectifying behaviour is contributing to abuse and violence. We are all part of a whole and this Oneness has to be respected.

2.2 Teen Dating Violence - Gendered power relations, sexuality, romantic love and healthy relationships

Young people are socialized into a culture that normalizes and often encourages male power and aggression, specifically within the context of heterosexual relationships. **Heterosexual violence** is viewed as customary as well as women's endurance to it. **Women's sexuality** is often not considered their own and men can at any point intrude into it. Aggression is part of being a man.

Today, more and more, our **sexual identity is what has become a dominant factor in defining our whole identity**. Male sexuality equally to female sexuality is biased and bound to images and stereotypes that for example do not allow heterosexual men to feel sensitive. When entering puberty, many young men, experience that they have to shut down their sensitivity and adjust to an image of male sexuality that does not allow them being sensitive as sensitivity is sexualised and related to homosexuality.

Social sexual scripts are acquired and practiced during adolescence and mediate individuals' relationships and sexual interactions, through dominant discourses that include core cultural beliefs about gender and sex. Such as 'men are unable to control sexual desire', the link of 'romance and aggression' as for example represented in most Hollywood movies and romantic series, 'touching and grabbing' are commonplace behaviours, harassment being a 'normal adolescent rite of passage', leading to sexually harassing and abusive behaviour being considered as 'normal' or 'weird' or as 'flirting' and 'teasing'. These tendencies initiate a discourse that positions women in responding to harassment with a barrage of manoeuvres like avoidance and diverting attention in order to keep themselves safe of this normalized male behaviour²⁵.

The **dominant sexual scripts culturally available to girls and young women exclude sexual agency, a sense of self-worth**, trusting in their own feelings and bodily integrity and present girls as passive receivers of male sexuality in the need of unwanted male desire²⁶.

A sexualised society fosters a disconnection from the body and from each other (through various forms of objectification) and this provides a platform for abusive and loveless social scripts to take over and determine behaviours. It opens the door to accepting a reduced version of love that promotes a certain type of sexuality which is based on abuse, humiliation, violence, degradation of the body generally and the female body particularly²⁷.

From this understanding, the workshop is supporting young people to build a relationship with their bodies and themselves and learn that intimate relationships are not mostly about sexualized bodily function, security and protection, but about decency, respect and love and that sex and sexuality is part of this loving interaction in a healthy relationship.

²⁵ Heather R. Hlavka (2014)

²⁶ idem

²⁷ INDERA (2016) Sexual Health, Healthy Body, Healthy Relationships Education

Workshop 2: Romantic Love – a recipe for abuse and control?



Objectives:

- To speak about the warning signs of an abusive relationship:
- To raise awareness about how romantic myths that we learn through socialization are normalizing abusive relationships and possible warning signs for abusive relationships.



Learning outcomes:

Reflecting on what society treats as romantic love often involves controlling behaviours and fits with the warning signs of an abusive relationship. To think about what we call love and romance and to give the possibility to think about these concepts in new perspectives.



Timing: 45 min



Material/Worksheets needed:

Worksheet 2.1: 'The prince on a white horse'

Worksheet 2.2: Warning signs of an abusive relationship

Flipchart or white board



Preparation:

Print out 'The prince on a white horse' text for every participant and the warning signs of an abusive relationship for the number of groups with which you aim to work based on the number of the participants of the workshop (one group should involve 4-5 person)

Romantic Love – a recipe for abuse and control?

STEP ONE:

Introduction to the Activity

Ask the participants to brainstorm about what is coming in their mind if they hear the word romance, what we call and what society treats as romantic acts.

- collect their ideas on a flipchart.
- while you're collecting the examples, ask them why they think these kinds of acts and behaviours are romantic.

STEP TWO:

The Prince on a White horse

After the brainstorm has finished, hand out the text of 'The prince on a white horse' to every participant. Ask one participant to read out loud the dialogue of Tom and another, to read out loud the feelings of Luisa.

Ask the participants to form smaller groups and discuss the following questions together:

- What do they think about how this story ends?
- What do they think about Tom's behaviour?
- What do they think about Luisa's feelings?
- What would they feel if they would be in Luisa's place?
- Was it a romantic story?

- Do they think it is acceptable to have that kind of expectation from one another in a romantic relationship?

Ask every group to share their discussed answers for the questions.

▶ Key Points for Facilitators:

The story of “The prince on a white horse” shows the manipulative tactics of abusers built up on the romantic ideas of society and aims to gain power over another and to isolate another from their other relationships, which also contributes to gaining exclusive power over another.

Society has ideas from romance as “love at first sight” or if somebody wants to spend every spare moment with you it is very romantic, and you should be grateful for it. Even though at the beginning of a relationship it can be normal if someone wants to be constantly with the other, it is always important to give space to the other and to be happy that there are several people who want to spend time with her/him and there are other people who like her/him. As well as it can happen that someone likes someone very much at first sight, you can’t truly like or love someone until you truly know her/him. It is important to know someone before we make a commitment.

During the exercise it is important to reflect on what could be Tom’s aims with his behaviour and why Luisa has these feelings as reactions to it, as well as to highlight the fact that everyone has their previous histories and it happens sometimes, for example, that we are jealous. What is important is how we are dealing with these kinds of feelings and to determine if we use these to control another or are trying to deal with it in a constructive way, by not hurting other people’s boundaries or fundamental rights.

STEP THREE:

Romantic myths and warning signs of an abusive relationship

After every group shared their answers, hand out to them the warning signs of an abusive relationship and ask them:

- to collect which of them have appeared in the previous story and how they can be related to romantic expectations of society?
- to collect examples for some of the warning signs and put it in a romantic frame

When the groups are ready, ask them to read out loud the examples which they have collected.

▶ Key Points for Facilitators:

You can help the groups with some example as:

Mood swings – Love is always stormy, if you are really in love, you make unpredictable things in a relationship.

Isolation - If someone really is in love, it is normal if he/she can't stand if the other doesn't want to spend every spare time with him/her

Reflection and Debrief

When they are done with sharing the examples which they collected, speak about the exercise with the participant through the following questions:

- What do you think, why do we think these behaviours are romantic?
- Do we expect the same behaviours from boys and girls in a romantic relationship?
- Are there any behaviours from which they thought were romantic, that they now feel are not in this category?
- Brainstorm about behaviours and acts in intimate relationships which can be really nice and romantic but not attached to controlling behaviours

▶ Key Points for Facilitators:

It is important to highlight that what is framed as romance in society is really attached to “gender boxes” that society has assigned to males and females. For example:

- boys have to be the initiator and girls have to wait until a boy asks them out
- boys have to be vindictory in a relationship and girls has to be meek

You can bring examples from Disney cartoons (Beauty and the Beast, Sleeping beauty) on what pictures they infer about romance and romantic relationships and about gender roles.

It is also important to find together acts and behaviours in intimate relationships which can be really nice and romantic but not attached to controlling and abusive behaviours. It can give tools to youngsters about how they are able to be romantic without being oppressive.

2.3 Cyber Sexual Violence

Research on cyber sexual and gender-based violence is yet in its early stages and there is very little data available. Data that does exist indicates that, **in Europe, 9 million girls have experienced cyber violence, by the time they are 15 years old.**

Reports on cyber violence²⁸ also emphasize that cyber stalking by a (ex) partner follows the same patterns as offline stalking and is therefore intimate partner violence, facilitated by technology. The normalization of violence in intimate partner relationships is becoming more and more the norm.

Research shows clearly that the Internet facilitates acts of violence and that it perpetuates negative and harmful stereotypes of girls and women, as well as negative notions of masculinity²⁹. Research has indicated that some teenagers have worryingly high levels of acceptance of abuse within relationships and often justify the abuse with the actions of the victim³⁰, occurring also in adult intimate partner violence.

Prevention of gender-based violence in partner relationships is important as it can have long-term adverse effects, as youth relationships are often not perceived as important by adults and youth might feel under pressure to behave in a particular way in a relationship³¹. In addition to this, dating and romance are themes that dominate youth engagement on social network sites³².

Data collected in a *report of the European Women Lobby* (EWL, 2017: 5–7) show that **women across the world are 27 times more likely to be harassed online**. Besides a clear disproportion between women and men (aged 18 to 24) concerning the risk of online violence, women are a majority among victims of the most severe forms of violence, such as stalking and sexual harassment. **Consequences of online violence** are no different from those of harassment, bullying and stalking in real life and can include stress disorders, trauma, anxiety, sleep disturbances, depression and physical pain (EWL, 2017: 17–18).

The workshop is designed to raise awareness about the topic of cyber sexual violence and to support young people with measurements of security to prevent them from possible harm.

²⁸ Including EIGE report “Cyber violence against women and girls” 2017, available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/rdc/eige-publications/cyber-violence-against-women-and-girls> and the European Women’s Lobby Report Her Net Her Rights, available at: https://www.womenlobby.org/IMG/pdf/hernetherrights_report_2017_for_web.pdf

²⁹ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, Violence against women: an EU-wide survey, 2014, available at: https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2014-vaw-survey-main-results-apr14_en.pdf, EIGE report “Cyber violence against women and girls”, 2017, available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/rdc/eige-publications/cyber-violence-against-women-and-girls> and the European Women’s Lobby Report Her Net Her Rights, available at: https://www.womenlobby.org/IMG/pdf/hernetherrights_report_2017_for_web.pdf

³⁰ Against Violence and Abuse: A teacher’s guide to violence and abuse, available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/506524/teen-abuse-teachers-guide.pdf

³¹ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/506524/teen-abuse-teachers-guide.pdf

³² Lenhart, A., Madden, M. (2007), Social Networking Websites and Teens: An Overview, Pew Internet „American Life Project, available at: <http://www.pewinternet.org/2007/01/07/social-networking-websites-and-teens/>

Workshop 3: Online control and violence in a partner relationship



Objectives:

To raise awareness about online forms of control and violence in a youth partner relationship and encourage youth to show support to survivors.



Learning outcomes:

- Knowledge of possible online manifestations of control and violence in a youth partner relationship and sources of support in such cases.
- Development of critical attitude towards such behaviour.
- Development of understanding of survivors' needs encouraging standing up to control/violence in a partner relationship.



Timing: 90 min (or 2x45 minutes)



Material/Worksheets needed:

Worksheet 3.1: Situation 1

Worksheet 3.2: Situation 2

Worksheet 3.3: Situation 3

Worksheet 3.4: Types of online violence – term and definition matching

Worksheet 3.5: Blank message bubbles

Flipchart or white board, markers, sticky tape, blank paper sheets, post-it notes, scissors.



Preparation:

- Print 1 copy of worksheets 5.1-3 each, print copies of worksheet 5.4 (cut out and mix) and print enough copies of worksheet 5.5 so that each group member has at least one message bubble. Copies have to be made depending on the number of participants.



References:

Activity adapted from the following resources:

Mogu da neću – Ljubav nije nasilje Program radionica za mlade (Engl. Program for workshops with youth) Autonomous Women's Center

Love is respect (loveisrespect.org) Healthy Relationship – High School Educators Toolkit <https://www.loveisrespect.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/highschool-educators-toolkit.pdf>

Online control and violence in a relationship: Suggested step-by-step process

STEP ONE:

Introduction to the activity

1. Introduce the activity by stating that the workshop is about how we communicate online, especially with a person we're in a relationship with, that it can have good and bad sides and discuss the following questions with participants (introduce questions one by one, either orally or written on a flipchart) and take about 10 minutes to discuss the following questions with them:
 - Do you consider the majority of people on your social networks true friends or people that you know well?
 - Have you ever posted an image of other people online without their consent?
 - Have you ever received a message or image that you have found upsetting?
 - Would you tell someone if you received an unwanted message or image?

STEP TWO:

Interactive Group work on "Situations of online control and violence"

1. Split the group into 3 smaller mixed groups of boys and girls.
2. Distribute one copy of worksheet 3.1 to group one, one copy of worksheet 3.2 to group two and one copy of worksheet 3.3 to the group three. Ask participants to read the description of the different situations and answer the accompanying questions. Give them 10 minutes to do this.
3. Ask a representative of each group to present their group's situation and main points of their discussions, especially what they mostly agreed on as a group or where there were most differences in opinions (each should have about 5 minutes to do this). After each group member has presented their situation and conclusions of their group, ask the rest of the participants to share their comments or ask questions.
4. After all groups have presented, continue the discussion (for about 10 minutes) with all participants together by asking the following questions:
 - Is it okay if someone who you're dating shares photos of you without you knowing? Why/Why not?
 - What do you think about the person threatening to share photos unless the girl has sex with him? Why do you think they're doing this?
 - Is it okay for someone's partner to say what they should or shouldn't do on their social networks?
 - Is it the victim's fault if they experience such behaviour?
 - Do you think someone should send nude photos of themselves, just because everyone else is doing it?

Conclude by explaining that all three situations represent negative and harmful behaviour in online space. Explain that anyone can become a victim of such behaviour and that these are all signs of control and abuse in a relationship. Highlight that no one should be made to do anything in online space that they don't feel comfortable with. Highlight that even though it is occurring in online space it leaves real consequences for persons involved. Explain that in such situations it is good not to stay silent, because this helps the harmful behaviour to go on, and it is also useful to talk to an adult or school representative.

Short break if participants need it

Take five minutes to be used as a bathroom break, but also to do some stretching or a quick breathing exercise.

STEP THREE:

Interactive Group work: Definition matching

1. Explain that the previously discussed situations depict different forms of online control and violence in a relationship and that there are other forms of online violence. Explain that participants will learn different types of online violence by matching specific terms with their definition.
2. Ask students to go back to their smaller groups and hand out Worksheet 3.4 with the terms and definitions to each group. Give them 5-10 minutes to complete the task. Ask members of different groups to read out the terms and definitions as the facilitator writes the terms on the board or flipchart. Ask them to state what types of negative online behaviour occurred in the previously discussed 3 situations.
3. Continue the discussion:
 - Ask participants whether they think online violence is dangerous or not and why.
 - Ask what could be the possible consequences of different types of online violence?
 - Ask if they think such violence affects girls and boys differently and why.
 - Ask who they would turn to if they were exposed to online violence.

STEP FOUR:

Individual work on “Message to survivor of online violence”

1. Ask workshop participants what they would say to someone being violent or controlling online. Ask participants what they would say to someone being exposed to violence or control.
2. Ask workshop participants to think of a message they would send to the person exposed to online control and violent behaviour. Ask them to imagine what they would say, for example, to a friend experiencing this. Hand out the Worksheet 3.5 with the blank speech bubbles and give participants 5 minutes to complete their messages.
3. Once participants have finished, they can stick their messages up on the board or flipchart paper.
4. The facilitator reads some of the messages, particularly highlighting that it is not the victims fault and that expressing support is helping to show the person is not alone and can encourage them to seek further support, also it shows that we as bystanders are showing that this behaviour is not acceptable.

Key Points for Facilitators:

To fit implementation with class length (45 minutes), you can do steps one and two during one class, and steps three and four during another class.

During the implementation of the activity it is important to highlight the following and return to these, especially in cases of stereotypical gender role views, victim blaming, etc.:

- It is not the victim fault if they suffer violence;
- The perpetrator is responsible for the violence (always has a choice not to be violent);
- Both girls and boys are exposed to online violence, but experience more severe forms (e.g. sexual harassment);
- Effects can be severe, and can affect people mentally and physically, due to the social context they can be more severe for girls (e.g. implications of nude photos being; shared for boys and girls);
- Keeping offline or keeping silent about the problem is not a solution, it helps to talk to an adult and there are specialized organizations dealing with this issue, as well;

Additional information that can be shared/discussed with participants:

General information about online control and violence in a partner relationship (source: www.loveisrespect.org)

Digital dating abuse is the use of technologies such as texting and social networking to bully, harass, stalk or intimidate a partner. Often this behaviour is a form of verbal or emotional abuse perpetrated online.

Sexting: Even if you trust that your partner will be the only one to ever see the pictures, you can never guarantee that they won't end up on someone else's phone or online. Seriously consider playing it safe and making a policy of not sending and instantly deleting inappropriate photos. The same goes for webcams and instant messaging, too. Remember you never have to do anything you aren't comfortable with, no matter how much your partner pressures you. Sexting can also have legal consequences. Any nude photos or video of someone under 18 could be considered child pornography, which is always illegal. Even if whomever sent the image did so willingly, the recipient can still get in a lot of trouble.

You may be experiencing digital abuse if your partner:

- Tells you who you can or can't be friends with on Facebook and other sites.
- Sends you negative, insulting or even threatening emails, Facebook messages, tweets, DMs or other messages online.
- Uses sites like Facebook, Twitter, Foursquare and others to keep constant tabs on you.
- Puts you down in their status updates.
- Sends you unwanted, explicit pictures and/or demands you send some in return.
- Pressures you to send explicit video or sexts.
- Steals or insists on being given your passwords.
- Constantly texts you and makes you feel like you can't be separated from your phone for fear that you will be punished.
- Looks through your phone frequently, checks up on your pictures, texts and outgoing calls.
- Tags you unkindly in pictures on Instagram, Tumblr, etc.
- Uses any kind of technology (such as spyware or GPS in a car or on a phone) to monitor you

Warning signs of dating abuse

- Checking your cell phone or email without permission
- Constantly putting you down
- Extreme jealousy
- Explosive temper
- Isolating you from family or friends
- Blames you for everything
- Mood swings
- Physically hurting you in any way
- Possessiveness
- Telling you what to do
- Pressuring or forcing you to have sex

Setting boundaries in online communication in a relationship:

- It is okay to turn off your phone. You have the right to be alone and spend time with friends and family without your partner getting angry.
- You do not have to text any pictures or statements that you are uncomfortable sending, especially nude or partially nude photos.
- You lose control of any electronic message once your partner receives it. They may forward it, so don't send anything you fear could be seen by others.
- You do not have to share your passwords with anyone.
- Know your privacy settings. Social networks such as Facebook allow the user to control how their information is shared and who has access to it. These are often customizable and are found in the privacy section of the site. Remember, registering for some applications (apps) requires you to change your privacy settings.
- Be mindful when using check-ins like Facebook Places and Foursquare. Letting an abusive partner know where you are could be dangerous. Also, always ask your friends if it's okay for you to check them in. You never know if they are trying to keep their location secret.

How to help a friend:

- Don't be afraid to reach out to a friend who you think needs help. Tell them you're concerned for their safety and want to help.
- Be supportive and listen patiently. Acknowledge their feelings and be respectful of their decisions.
- Help your friend recognize that the abuse is not "normal" and is NOT their fault.
- Everyone deserves a healthy, nonviolent relationship.
- Focus on your friend, not the abusive partner. Even if your friend stays with their partner, it's important they still feel comfortable talking to you about it.
- Connect your friend to resources in their community that can give them information and guidance.
- If they break up with the abusive partner, continue to be supportive after the relationship is over.
- Don't contact their abuser or publicly post negative things about them online. It'll only worsen the situation for your friend.
- Even when you feel like there's nothing you can do, don't forget that by being supportive and caring, you're already doing a lot.

Workshop Wrap-Up

As a final step you can invite workshop participants to visit the project webpage and use the youth magazine to learn more about standing up to online control and violence in partner relationships.

2.4 Bystander

We are all bystanders, all the time. We witness events unfolding around us constantly. Sometimes we recognize events as being problematic. When this happens, we decide to do or say something or to simply ignore it and let it go.

A bystander is a person who is aware or suspects that someone is being abused but is not directly involved in the event itself. Witnessing acts of violence can be either in person or in digital form, like on social media, websites, text messages, gaming, and apps.

Bystanders can play different **roles**:

- **Outsiders** witness the violence but stay out of it and do not get involved.
- **Defenders** help by intervening when violence occurs or extend support to the victim.
- **Reinforcers** support the perpetrators or violent behaviour and may laugh, encourage, or cheer during or after the incident.
- **Assistants** help the perpetrators and join in.

We probably all believe that it's important to stop gender-based violence and abuse. However, people rarely intervene, particularly online. While hundreds of bystanders can read an aggressive or sexist post or a request for help, few people actually respond. **The bystander effect** tells us that this is because we each assume that someone else will step in. Because we don't know who else is watching, we also don't know whether others have already responded. Sometimes adolescents who witness violence are not sure what their role is and or what they can do to address the situation. However, bystanders have the potential to make a positive difference in a situation, particularly for the young person who is being abused.

Workshops focus on helping students to develop awareness and skills necessary to become proactive helpful *upstanders* instead of bystanders when they see sexual and gender-based violence. While some forms of bystander action are intended to intervene in actual violent incidents, most bystander interventions focus on changing individual and peer attitudes and behaviours. It is important for students to understand how gender-based violence harms themselves and others, to learn the role that bystanders play and equip them with the attitudes and skills necessary to be responsible upstanders in both offline and cyber sexual and gender-based violence.

Workshop 4: Be an Upstander

– a Toolbox of Intervention Strategies



Objectives:

To raise awareness on students' responsibility as bystanders and encourage them to become upstanders when witnessing violence in intimate partner relationships.



Learning outcomes:

Increased understanding of the role of the bystander in instances of sexual and gender-based violence, including cyber violence. Development of critical attitude towards sexist cultural norms that often lead to gender-based violence. Increased knowledge and skills for safe and effective intervention as well as willingness to intervene safely.



Timing: 45 min



Material/Worksheets needed:

Worksheet 4.1: Situation 1

Worksheet 4.2: Situation 2

Worksheet 4.3: Situation 3

Worksheet 4.4: Situation 4

Handout 4.1 Helping a friend who is being abused

Handout 4.2 How to be helpful to a friend who's abusing

Flipchart or white board, markers, sticky tape, blank paper sheets, pens.



References:

Activities adapted from the following resources:

Quabbin Mediation and Ervin Staub: Training Active Bystanders: A Curriculum for Schools and Community http://people.umass.edu/estaub/TAB_curriculum.pdf

Tsirigoti, A., Petroulaki, K. & Ntinapogias, A. (2015). Master Package "GEAR against IPV". Booklet III: Teacher's Manual. (Rev. ed.) and Booklet IV: Students' Activities Book (Rev. ed.). Athens: European Anti-Violence Network.

STEP ONE:

Introduction to the activity

1. Introduce the activity by stating that the workshop is to help students to think about how to intervene when witnessing abuse.
2. One of the best ways to overcome the concerns and fears that keep us silent is to have a toolbox of strategies on hand for intervening when the situation arises. That way, you don't have to think so much about what to do, whether to do it, when to do it, and so on.
3. What we will do now is an exercise which will help you begin to come up with some effective intervention strategies.

STEP TWO:

Interactive Group work

1. Split the group into 4 smaller mixed groups of boys and girls.
2. If you choose to use less than 4 scenarios, divide the group of students into small groups equal to the number of the scenarios that you will use.
3. Distribute one copy of worksheet 4.1 to group 1, one copy of worksheet 4.2 to group 2, one copy of worksheet 4.3 to group 3 and one copy of worksheet 4.4 to group 4.
4. Ask participants to read the description of the different situations and try to imagine themselves in these situations. Ask them then to discuss the situation within the groups and write down what they would do. Tell them to imagine that they know the people in the scenarios but neither of them are close friends. Give them 10 minutes to answer the accompanying questions.
5. As the groups are discussing the scenarios, you can walk around the room, observe, and facilitate as needed. When the time ends, bring everyone back together and ask students from each group (or one person from each group) to report on their discussions. The focus of this activity should be on generating a list of concrete intervention strategies that everyone could use, not only for incidents similar to the one discussed, but also for a variety of situations.
6. When discussing the strategies that each group comes up with, write them down on the flipchart. Participants will probably describe many of the strategies described in the 'List of strategies' which are included in the 'expected outcome' You can use the 'List of Strategies' as a guide to help you categorize student's suggestions and add to the list any new suggestions that may be offered by the students. At the end you may prompt students to discuss any strategy that wasn't mentioned by them, describe it and initiate a discussion on the reasons participants didn't think to include this strategy in their list; if they accept it, add it to the list.
7. After 10 minutes invite them to reconvene as a large group to discuss the strategies that they all came up with. Ask a representative of each group to present their group situation and main points of their discussions, especially what they mostly agreed on as a group or where there were most differences in opinions. After each group member has presented their situation and conclusions of their group, ask the rest of the participants to share their comments or ask questions.
8. Stress that:
 - Violence is NEVER the proper way to react to violence; discuss any violent methods of reaction
 - It is a really difficult situation and it's tough to confront a guy who is abusing a woman or a young girl.
 - Can you imagine how you would feel if you were the victim in these scenarios and no one did anything? Further discussion:
 - If you were in an abusive dating relationship, where would you go and/or who would you seek for help?
 - If a friend was in an abusive dating relationship, what would you do? What would you say to that friend?
 - If your friend was abusive to his/her partner, what would you do? What would you say to him/her?
 - At the end of the activity ask students: how can we change this situation?
9. Conclude the activity with something similar to the following: "You all have generated a great list of strategies for challenging others on their violence- supporting language, attitudes, and actions. Hopefully, now you feel more prepared to speak up when the situation calls for it. Remember, your comfort will increase the more you practice speaking up. One word of advice before we wrap up: don't expect miracles from yourself or miraculous results from your interventions. There is no perfect intervention, and there are no instant conversions. As far as we're concerned, every intervention is a success, because every time we speak up, we make the world more safe, eliminating violence. Even though it's not easy to intervene, it's something that we must do."

It isn't easy to challenge someone for using violence against someone or for degrading someone as it could be dangerous, embarrassing (if you're laughed at or not taken seriously) or could cause fear of losing the person's friendship. Safety should always be considered first when confronting a violent person; it is important to avoid violence with that person. It is also important to avoid giving the victim the impression that s/he is defenceless and in need of a 'protector', while on the other hand, silence gives the impression that the abuser's behaviour is condoned or even acceptable. The most important thing to consider when deciding whether to intervene is one's safety. If the situation does not seem safe, or if provoking further violence from the perpetrator seems likely, then it may be better to let a comment or action go unchallenged and try to find a way to address it later. At the same time, being concerned about another person's reaction is not an excuse for doing nothing. Being aware of your fears does not make it okay to give in to them. On the contrary, it allows you to try to have control over your fears so that they won't paralyze you when you need to speak out."

▶ Key Points for Facilitators:

The intervention strategies activity will help young people begin to develop ways of speaking up that are thoughtful strategic. When addressing speaking out in these situations, it is critically important to let people know that you are serious about safety concerns. Having said that, do not dwell too much on the fears and risks of intervening. Doing so runs the risk of scarring potential allies into silence. Make sure that you always return to the positive message that we can overcome our fears and find a way to act and that you are not encouraging the participants in any way to engage in risky behaviours.

As this activity specifically asks students to imagine intervening in circumstances where they are used to remaining silent, there may be some resistance to developing strategies. Sometimes, students will resist developing strategies by explaining that if they found themselves in such a situation, they wouldn't intervene. Respond by asking them to think hypothetically. What could they say that might make a difference?

One of the most difficult things for boys is to learn to challenge other boys. To challenge sexist language. To challenge boys who talk lightly of violence against women and to challenge people who engage in violence. It isn't easy to challenge someone for using violence against someone or for degrading someone as it could be dangerous, embarrassing (if you're laughed at or not taken seriously) or could cause fear of losing the person's friendship. At the same time, being concerned about another person's reaction is not an excuse for doing nothing.

In addition, pay attention to when young people suggest aggressive or violent interventions (e.g., "I'd kick his ass"). The desire to ride in on a white horse with guns blazing and to fix things is one of the central components of traditional masculinity, and it can often lead to more harm than good. Instead, we encourage students to resist fighting violence with violence, to think before acting, and to seek nonviolent methods of resisting violence that minimize the risk of anyone getting physically hurt.

Another argument that could be used to convince young people to avoid fighting violence with violence is if we explain the similarities between this behaviour and the abuser's behaviour. The message that aggressive behaviour against the abuser conveys to both the victims and to society is that the stronger person always wins and that the victim has no control over her/his fate either when s/he is abused or when s/he is rescued by a violent person and via a violent incident.

Emphasize the fact that a non-violent society or a society with zero-tolerance towards violence cannot be achieved through violent acts.

LIST OF STRATEGIES

STRATEGY: "Ask for clarifications..."

- Question the perpetrator or/and the bystander "Why are you doing that?" "Why are you saying that?" "Why do you find that funny?" "I'm not clear about what you mean by that. Maybe you could explain?". By questioning we make others reflect on their behaviour. Always question in a non-aggressive way.

People who express attitudes connected to a violent culture expect people to go along with them, to laugh, to agree, to join in. They do not expect to be questioned.

STRATEGY: "Give... a face to the victim..."

- Make it more personal by reminding the perpetrator or bystander that this could be their sister, brother, friend or girlfriend, boyfriend and how they would feel if this would be happening to someone they care about.

STRATEGY: "Do not accuse... State your position clearly"

- **Don't accuse the perpetrator or bystander...** Instead of saying: "YOU are sexist, and this is the stupidest thing I've ever heard", which puts the other in a defensive position, you could say: "I don't agree with what you are saying; I believe that nobody deserves to be treated like this"

Ask participants how they feel when someone points the finger at them, when someone says in an accusatory voice, "YOU..." Talk about how 'I Statements' are easier for people to hear since they are about the person making the statement, about which people are less likely to become defensive.

STRATEGY: 'Use your humour...'

This can be tricky, if people think they've been made fun of. However, if you use humour effectively, it can reduce the tension of the situation. Be careful, though, not to be too funny that you undermine the point you're trying to make.

STRATEGY: "Seek others who are like you"

- You could just ask the group, "Am I the only one uncomfortable with this?"

Studies indicate that 90% of boys/men are at times uncomfortable with how their male peers talk about or treat girls/women, but almost all remain silent because they believe they are the only ones who feel uncomfortable. This strategy is designed to let others know that they are not alone in their discomfort. This strategy can also be useful when you know someone who has a pattern of expressing violence-supporting attitudes.

STRATEGY: "Ask for or offer help"

If you witness a violent incident it may be necessary to call the police and also ask for help from people around you. Do not intervene if you are alone and you feel that it could be dangerous. You could also offer your help to the victim by talking to them, which could make them feel safe and supported. If you feel the situation is too dangerous to intervene, get help and talk to them after the incident is over.

STRATEGY: “Make yourself visible”

Let the perpetrator know that you are around and that you’re witnessing what’s going on.

STRATEGY: Use the “Report Abuse” Button

When you notice abusive online behaviour (hate speech, abusive comments, films or photos that are miss-used or sexist) don’t hesitate to report it. Most social networks have a place to report abuse. You can also take a stand by posting your own comments and by pointing out such behaviour as abusive.

Workshop Wrap-Up

As a final step you can invite workshop participants to visit the project webpage and use the youth magazine to learn more about upstander roles and techniques for challenging peers’ attitudes and behaviours that support sexual and gender-based violence.

3. ENCOURAGING DISCLOSURES AND RESPONDING TO SEXUAL AND GENDER – BASED VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS

3.1 Providing counselling and support

3.1.1. Building trust between teachers and students

Why is it important to have trust between teachers and students?

It is often pointed out that the **relationship** between teachers and students is key and that it defines all other relations in the school. It is said that teachers not only lead students through the process of learning, but they are **role-models** of behaviour and acts as **support** in the development of students' personalities. Therefore, the appropriate support to teachers, and other school staff, can have significant positive effects on the development of students, especially if they are exposed to negative circumstances and experiences. However, it is also pointed out that the school is also the **place of misunderstanding** between three main stakeholders – students, teachers and parents. Most frequent criticism of teachers by students is regarding their *lack of interest* in children and *insufficient human contact* between teachers and students.³³

Why is trust important when students are exposed to violence?

Teachers and professional support staff in education institutions can have a key role in raising students' awareness on the equality of female and male students and on the unacceptability of gender-based violence, including (digital) sexual and gender-based violence in youth intimate partner relationships. However, the *necessary assumption* here is that they themselves **do not have** attitudes reflecting prejudice and discrimination or justify gender-based violence. Without trust in teachers and professional support staff, students will not show readiness to seek help from, confide in them or report violence.

³³ Polovina, N., 2014. Vršnjačko nasilje u školi: porodični faktori uticaja u ekosistemske perspektivi. *Nastava i vaspitanje*, 63(4), 717-732;
Zotović-Kostić, M., Beara, M. 2016. Mentalno zdravlje mladih u AP Vojvodini – stanje i perspektive. Centra za proizvodnju znanja i veština, Novi Sad. Available at: http://cpzv.org/cpzv_uploads/Mentalno-zdravlje-mladih-u-APV.pdf

► **Important:** *Trust is necessary because it creates the experience of safety and certainty, the feeling that the person we trust is there for us when we need it, that they will help us and protect us if necessary.*

How is trust between teachers and students developed?

In order for the school to be a **safe and encouraging place** for the development of children and youth, it is necessary to ensure an environment of trust where female and male students can *openly and honestly* speak about different problems and different aspects of their safety, as well as take *responsibility* for their behaviour. This includes encouraging their *participation* in providing suggestions and creating different activities, the readiness of teachers, professional support staff and school management to *hear and respect* students' proposals, as well as to *integrate* them into the curricula and activities.

The role of teachers as **models** of non-discriminatory and non-violent behaviour is especially important in adolescence. Teachers should clearly show, by what they are saying and doing, that they respect diversity, promote equality and fairness in schools, so that students have a sense that their personality is respected, and they can build a sense of belonging to a group and the school context. By showing *interest* in students, teachers build a relationship of trust with them and show their readiness to support and help their students).

Who are teachers that students confide in?

In every school there are teachers that students (parents, colleagues) **confide** in the most. We often call them "persons of trust", and describe them as persons who:

- know how to listen (to hear and recognize non-verbal signs of the person they are talking to) - *I hear your problem,*
- who try to understand what the other person is trying to say or how they feel - *I understand how you feel,*
- they are clearly showing that they are ready to help find a solution to the problem - *I will help you think about the problem, we will try to find a solution.*

We call this skill **active listening**. Active listeners find the time and space where they can focus their attention to the person they are talking to, without interference, they pay attention to the privacy of the person they are talking to, they show that they are sincere and that they care about them.³⁴

Useful advice for building trust

- *Affirm positive values and relations, as well as respect of common and clear rules.*
- *Encourage students to gain knowledge, express their thoughts and feelings, recognize their needs, identify their problems, acquire positive goals and behaviour.*
- *Create opportunities for students to learn and practice positive behaviour and orientation towards problem solving.*
- *Encourage your students to develop self-respect.*
- *Show patience, compassion and readiness to help students deal with their problems and solve them.*
- *Stop all forms of violence! React – stop, report, ask for information – each time violence occurs, when there is information or suspicion of it happening!*
- *Ensure support of adults and peers for students exposed to violence, including support of experts.*

³⁴

Vranješnjić i sar. 2020. *Ka sigurnom i podsticajnom školskom okruženju – Vodič za škole*. Beograd *Ka sigurnom i podsticajnom školskom okruženju – Водич за школе*. Ministarstvo prosvete, nauke i tehnološkog razvoja Republike Srbije. Available at: <https://uni.cf/3aLcqEj>

3.1.2. Recognizing signs of victimization in the school context

Information on and/or suspicion of violence affecting students

How can you find out about and/or suspect that a student is exposed to violence, specifically (cyber) sexual and gender-based violence (in an intimate partner relationship)?

- **By directly observing violence acts or statements**

It is easiest to get information about a case of violence if the acts are **occurring** directly and can be **observed** in a school context (during a school recess, in class, during extracurricular activities, etc.). However, sometimes, some teachers and school staff **do not recognize** certain behaviour or statements as violence (more frequently when it comes to psychological violence). Sometimes, teachers can believe **it is not** a “serious” problem that requires a reaction (that it is a “minor thing”). Some teachers, sometimes even professional support staff (pedagogues, psychologists), believe it is a case of a “private” relationship that should **not be interfered with**. The latter is common for violence occurring in intimate partner relationships (of youth).

Important: Violence **cannot be** a “private matter”. Violence is unacceptable, it is a crime, it must be stopped and its repetition must be prevented, as well as help and support provided to the person who was exposed to violence. All school staff has an **obligation** to recognize and respond accordingly to all violence affecting or perpetrated by students of the school.

- **Through disclosure by students who were exposed to violence**

Teachers, as well as other school services are in a unique position to be “persons of trust” who students can turn to and confide in in case they have a problem and look for support, information and concrete help. **A necessary precondition** for this is the existence of **trust** of the pupil in the teacher, trust that the teacher is interested, reliable and competent, ready to listen without prejudice, to believe the experience of the person who survived the violence, at the same time, paying attention to the safety and confidentiality of information gained, respecting the boundaries of the student who survived the violence and ready to provide support and participate in the solution of the problem.

- **Through peers and parents as sources of information on violence affecting students**

Peers are the **dominant source** of information and support for youth, which increases the significance for achieving a high level of their awareness and knowledge of different forms of violence, as well as positive beliefs and attitudes, and readiness to support the victim, instead of being passive bystanders, and to condemn violence rather than deny it, minimize, normalize or even justify and support it. Therefore, education of youth must include accurate information on risks of violence, ways of recognition, response skills and available resources for (professional) support.

Parents can also be a **source of information** about their children being exposed to some form of violence. When there is good cooperation between parents and the school, if parents believe teachers care about the children, when there is trust between parents, teachers, professional support services in the school and the school management, parents are more ready to speak about problems of their child and ask for information and support to solve them.

• Recognizing signs of violence

Violence does not always occur in school premises or in a way that is easily noticed and recognized. Still, there are some **changes** in the behaviour of students in different aspects of their activities that can arouse suspicion of signs of victimization by violence, including (cyber) sexual and gender-based violence in intimate partner relationships.

Signs of victimization of students by different types of violence

There are no direct (sure) signs in behaviour, emotions, social relations, school activities and achievements that definitely indicate (unequivocally) a student being exposed to some form of violence. However, changes in behaviour, expressing emotions, social relations, school activities and achievement, could be a warning sign that the student has a problem. Relevant literature³⁵ discusses some of the signs indicating that students is exposed to violence that teachers or professional staff could recognize, such as:

- **Changes in behaviour**, involving a wide range of reactions, such as loss of interest in or abandoning of activities that were previously important to the students, but also tension, confusion, “secrecy”, avoiding eye contact, psycho-physical difficulties (such as headaches, stomach pain, insomnia, fatigue, appetite loss), presence of injuries (bruises, scars),
- **Changes in mood and expression of emotions**, also includes a wide range of reactions from loss of cheerfulness to a gloomy attitude, nervousness, withdrawal, apathy, fear, caution, guilt, shame, ambivalent feelings, helplessness, distrust, anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts, irritability and bursts of emotional reactions (sudden, inappropriate burst of anger, crying),
- **Changes in social relations**, loss of interest in socializing with peers, increased distancing, avoiding common school activities, withdrawal and distancing even from the closest friends, to a complete cessation of relations with friends and (self)isolation,
- **Changes in school interests and achievements**, loss of interest in and abandoning school activities, withdrawing from participation in school activities, missing out classes, trouble concentrating, learning problems, drop in school achievements (school results can even get better, as a result of additional efforts invested, especially when the violence comes from someone outside the school, most often in the family),
- **Changes in the use of computers and mobile phones**, such as decreased to complete stop in use, to increased use (obsessive following of content or messages, closing of pages/chats as someone approaches), avoiding answering questions related to time spent using devices, to person they are communicating with, what they follow online, deletion of accounts and opening (completely) new ones,
- **Jealous and possessive behaviour of a partner**, leaving the impression that they never leave their partner’s side, that they are trying to control (all their) relations, movement, behaviour, constantly checking up on them, demanding the partner to report on their activities, contacts and movement (to send them “proof” of who they are with and what they are doing), no decisions can be made without the partner’s agreement (one decides on behalf of the other), changes of decisions if the partner does not agree about them,
- **Bad self-image** (which is different from an earlier period, low self-respect, emotional and/or economic independence from their partner, being blackmailed, forced to acts they would not agree to before.

³⁵ Tsirigoti, A., Petroulaki, K. & Ntinapogias, A. (2015). Master Package “GEAR against IPV”. Booklet III: Teacher’s Manual. (Rev. ed.). Athens: European Anti-Violence Network.
#HerNetHerRights – Mapping the state of online violence against women & girls in Europe. 2017. European Women’s Lobby (EWL) - Observatory on violence against women. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3eYbYpv>
Ramljak, T. (ur.). 2018. Upoznajmo i prepoznajmo e-nasilje. Centar za nestalu i zlostavljanu djecu, Osijek. Available at: http://netica.hr/materijali/Digitalni_prirucnik.pdf

Important: Presence of **one** of the listed behaviours does not necessarily indicate the presence of abuse in an intimate partner relationship, but if a greater number of signs is observed, it should be checked what is going on. Sometimes the presence of a single sign is a (certain) indicator of high risk, that is, the possibility for the violence to escalate (such sign is, for example, the existence of jealousy in an intimate partner relationship).

Not everyone reacts the same way in situation of violence and abuse in intimate partner relationships, or they don't react with the same intensity, and some changes in the victim's behaviour are not necessarily negative. **Therefore, there are no typical signs and no typical victims.**

The consequences of digital violence are similar to those of real-life harassment or stalking occurring offline and can present a serious security risk due to the fast and uncontrollable dissemination of personal data, lack of protection and the possibility of the violence being broadcast live.

How to check the safety and wellbeing of students

When teachers, professional support staff suspect, receive information or observe that students are exposed to violence, they **can check** concerns for the students' safety, protection and wellbeing in different ways:

- **directly** – by asking/talking to the student showing changes in behaviour and reactions (always in private, in a safe environment),
- **indirectly** – by talking to their school friends or parents (also in confidence and in a safe space),
- **indirectly** – through activities with all students, focusing on various topics, from recognizing violence to differentiating healthy and unhealthy partner relationships, recognizing warning signs of (cyber) sexual and gender-based violence in youth intimate partner relationships (through which the teacher shows he/she is open to listen to problems related to this field and help in their solution).

3.1.3. 3 Effective response to suspicion or disclosure of sexual and gender-based violence

What is common to all response in case of suspicion and/or information about violence?

Though response to suspicion and/or information that students are exposed to violence, including (cyber) sexual and gender-based violence in youth partner relationships, depends on the specificities of the situation, there is agreement that teachers' response should focus on the fulfilment of **general principles** of response and protection of persons exposed to violence (Ignjatović, 2018³⁶):

- the **safety** of the victim is a priority in the response of all in the school and all other institutions beside the school,
- the **perpetrator is solely responsible** for the violent behaviour,
- all interventions need to take into consideration **inequality of power** between the victim/survivor and perpetrator of violence,
- it is necessary to **respect** the needs, rights and dignity of the victim of violence,
- the **urgency** of procedures to take should be adjusted to the assessment of the gravity of the situation and possible jeopardization of victim/survivor,
- the school and all relevant institutions are responsible **for stopping violence**, and **for taking necessary** measures for the protection of and support to the violence survivor,

³⁶ Ignjatović, T. (2018). Rodno zasnovano nasilje u partnerskim vezama mladih: uloga obrazovno-vaspitnih ustanova, in: Ignjatović, T and Ilić, M. (ed.): Odgovor obrazovno-vaspitnih institucija na rodno zasnovano nasilje i nasilje u porodici, Autonomni ženski centar Available at: https://www.womenngo.org.rs/images/publikacije-dp/2018/Odgovor_obrazovno_vaspitnih_institucija.pdf

Response in case of suspicion or disclosure of violence

It is important not to ignore signals that can indicate that there is some type of violence in the students' intimate partner relationship. Suspicion can lead to questions, dilemmas, insecurity and confusion in teachers, even worry – will the response be appropriate.³⁷

This is why it is **crucial** to have specific knowledge, absence of prejudice, listening and communication skills, good knowledge of school rules and procedures, consultations with experts in the school, information about responsible institutions, contacts of professionals in relevant services, phone numbers of specialized organizations providing support to violence victims/survivors. Not all teachers can have all the listed knowledge and information, but it is important that there are persons in the school who have such knowledge or know where useful information may be obtained. These persons represent support not only to teachers and the school management, but also to parents and students when violence occurs or is suspected.

Support, understanding, consideration, respect of boundaries and dignity – these are all common needs of persons who have faced harm, such as violence in an intimate partner relationship, but also reactions/characteristics constituting sensitive and responsible behaviour of persons in their environment. This is why it is important for teachers, professional support staff and school management to continuously implement:

- work on the creation of an environment that understands, helps, support and empowers people who have survived violence,
- clearly express the unacceptability of violence, as well as the attitude of the exclusive responsibility of the perpetrator for the violence occurred,
- clearly inform about the acceptable, unacceptable and prohibited forms of behaviour of students – it should not be assumed that students know what they should say or do in such situations.

General rules of communication with a person who has survived violence³⁸

- **Respect and praise the decision to disclose violence:** It is not easy to admit/disclose the existence of violence – this takes a lot of courage that should be respected. The student should be praised for their decision to confide in someone that they have a problem. Disclosure of violence should always be taken seriously – compassion, understanding and readiness to help are of key importance at that moment.
- **Believe the person and provide support:** Be ready to listen and accept what you are hearing. Make sure the student disclosing violence has a supportive environment. Don't put pressure for more details to be revealed (encourage the person who confided in you to come back and continue the conversation, when they are ready; tell them they can have a person of trust present, if this makes it easier for them; make sure that the person of trust does not speak instead of the student exposed to violence).
- **Don't judge or blame:** There is no justification for violence! Clearly state to the person disclosing the violence that they did nothing bad or wrong, that they are not to blame for the violence. Violence is always a choice and responsibility of the person perpetrating it. Repeat this message to the victim/survivor of violence. Be careful - some questions may (unintentionally) sound as if we were blaming the survivor. Questions beginning with "WHY..." should not be used, because victims can perceive them as judging or blaming ("Why did you send your photos ... or Why didn't you...").

³⁷

Master Package "GEAR against IPV". Booklet III: Teacher's Manual. (Rev. ed.). 2015. Athens: European Anti-Violence Network.

³⁸

Master Package "GEAR against IPV". Booklet III: Teacher's Manual. (Rev. ed.). 2015. Athens: European Anti-Violence Network. Ignjatović, T. 2018. Rodno zasnovano nasilje u partnerskim vezama mladih: uloga obrazovno-vaspitnih ustanova

- **Make sure there is a safe and confidential space:** Find time and space where you can listen to the person disclosing violence in a safe and confidential environment (never talk in the presence of others, unless this is a trusted person chosen by the victim/survivor), or in common spaces (where other people pass or stay)).
- **Don't ask too many questions:** Teachers and school staff do not determine or need to prove what happened (they do not investigate the case). This means that, if the conversation is confidential, you will not check with (talk to) the person identified as the perpetrator of the violence what had happened and the statements of the victim/survivor of violence– you believe the experience of the person confiding in you and you are there to help. However, bear in mind the obligation of reporting every suspicion and/or information of violence to those responsible in the school (professional support service, school team for protection against violence), so if the conversation cannot remain confidential – you must inform the student about this.
- **Listen actively:** listen carefully, try to understand what the student is telling you, notice non-verbal communication, emotions, check that you understood them correctly.
- **Don't give advice:** Teachers do not have (specific) knowledge and skills for counselling and therapeutic work. They need to respect the experience of the student and provide students who confide in them with support. There are no “ready-made” solutions so do not try to think in advance about what you are going to say, to advise. Do not give general remarks about the situation of the student, neither good nor bad.
- **Control your reactions.** It is important to remain calm, not to show disgust, anger, fear. Overreacting can scare students (and cause them to choose not to talk about their experience). On the other hand, the absence of a reaction can have the impression that you don't think it is important that the student is confiding in you, that what they're saying is not important. Be aware of your non-verbal communication (facial expression, eyes, gestures, movements, tone of voice).
- **Don't talk to others about the topic of your conversation.** Unless you are obliged to report any suspicion and/or information about violence, don't talk to colleagues, other students, parents... about what you were told. Consultative conversations should be held only with experts in the school (professional support service, pedagogues, psychologists). Even then, it is good to have the informed consent of the pupil. In your consultative conversations with experts you do not need to provide the students' personal information.
- **Provide appropriate information:** Teachers should provide appropriate, simple and correct information about what they can and can't do, to clearly inform about their obligation to respect possible restrictions in the confidentiality of conversations with teachers. The school must respect the prescribed procedures, and each teacher should know who to turn to in the school in case he/she received information about violence occurring. Do not promise to do what you cannot fulfil. It is useful for the school to have an updated list addresses, telephone number, e-mails, website addresses of all relevant institutions, organizations and persons for consultations, support and help (important contacts have been listed in the annex of this guidebook).
- **Contact the appropriate institutions.** When it comes to violence you are obliged to report to the competent bodies in the school or to the responsible institutions outside the school, the student who disclosed the violence should be informed about this, and support of a “person of trust” should be ensured.

Responding to violence in an intimate partner relationship that OCCURS in school

In cases when (cyber) sexual and gender-based violence **occurs** in school, towards a student by their intimate partner, **steps** are taken by teachers, as well as other expert staff and the management, following prescribed procedures.

All undertaken steps should ensure the following:³⁹

- **safety of the person that has experienced violence:** physical and emotional safety is a priority in all procedures and involves the following steps: immediately separate the violence perpetrator from the victim – immediately and continuously until all envisaged school procedures and procedures before other institutions are completed, as well as prevent contact (regardless of the fact that such contact may not necessarily be negative, e.g. the perpetrator may send love messages or try to apologize) and possible influence on the victim (in the form of pressure to withdraw from reporting the violence or from participating in procedures, threats, intimidation, blackmailing, publicly sharing intimate content about the victim, etc.);
- **unconditional support to the victim/survivor** – the school’s support to and empowerment to the victim must not, in any way, depend on her participation or lack of participation in procedures initiated in the school or by other institutions;
- **respecting the needs and rights of the victim** – along with the issue of safety, this can be the right to be informed, right to psychological support and empowerment, referring to legal support, health protection if required, etc. The school cannot fulfil all needs, but it is obliged to provide appropriate, complete and correct information and provide information on or refer the student to other services available in the community;
- **consider the improvement of response of the school** – in cooperation with the survivors of the violence, check whether undertaken activities were appropriate, effective and efficient. Consider which activities could be implemented (discussions, informing, workshops or other activities with students/peers, parents, teachers, school management) in order to improve the school’s steps regarding response and prevention.

Specific forms of protection from cyber sexual and gender-based violence

Here are several important information about what should be done in cases of disclosure of cyber sexual and gender-based violence, regardless of whether it is happening in an intimate partner relationship or some other type of relationship⁴⁰:

- **refrain from** suggesting the victim to “turn off” the Internet and social networks as this does not stop violence, while the victim may get even more isolated,
- **ignore messages** that are not important, not jeopardizing and that do not affect one’s reputation (most perpetrators expect a reaction and are ready to continue and increase their harassment and violence once they see they have achieved) – instead,
- use the option of **blocking** those that send violence messages (on different platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter),

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Ignjatović, T. 2018. Rodno zasnovano nasilje u partnerskim vezama mladih: uloga obrazovno-vaspitnih ustanova.

#HerNetHerRights – Mapping the state of online violence against women & girls in Europe. 2017.

Ileš, M. 2018. Digitalno nasilje protiv žena i devojčica, u: Ignjatović, T., Ileš, M. Ignjatović, T., Ileš, M. (ur.): Odgovor obrazovno-vaspitnih institucija na rodno zasnovano nasilje i nasilje u porodici. Autonomni ženski centra.

Available at: https://www.womenngo.org.rs/images/publikacije-dp/2018/Odgovor_obrazovno_vaspitnih_institucija.pdf
STOP Cyber Violence – Toolkit for Trainers. 2017. Stowarzyszenie Instytut Nowych Technologii (Poland), Crystal Clear Soft (Greece), CSP - Innovazione nelle ict S.C.A.R.L. (Italy), Asociația Direct (Romania).

- **unfollow, untag** yourself from the post (Facebook) or photograph (Facebook and Instagram), unfriend the persons with whom you don't have safety and comfort in sharing content;
- **report content** (Facebook and Instagram) that violates community standards/guidelines (provide a clear description of where such content was found);
- **collect evidence** through screenshots and keeping messages (evidence of abuse is important for undertaking legal measures);
- turn for information and support to **specialized** organizations that deal with digital rights and organizations for the protection of children's and women's rights,
- report to **responsible institutions** – agencies fighting against high technology crime in the police or specialized departments of the public prosecutor's office,
- **remind** children and youth to **keep** their passwords safe from everyone, and that it is important to seek help – if violence cannot be prevented from happening, it is important to **stop it as soon as possible**.

3.1.4. Creating a safe and supportive school environment

Encourage students to seek help

How to encourage students – below are several suggestions that can be of use⁴¹:

- **Be clear:** Tell your students that abuse is unacceptable and that you consider it a very serious issue.
- **Talk to your students:** Ask your students what they think about violence in intimate partner relations and encourage them to critically think about the negative impact of such emotional relationships.
- **Listen:** Pay attention, listen to what students are telling you, let them know you are interested, that you are there for them.
- **Encourage, support, help:** Be careful not to minimize the significance of their problems on account of their age, lack of experience or length of their emotional relationships. Be their support and point out that you are on the side of the student that was exposed to violence. Bear in mind your students themselves must decide about ending/leaving the unhealthy relationship. Don't judge! Support and help!
- **Be ready:** Familiarize yourself with these topics, about ways of providing support, steps and procedures. Provide information without prejudice and judging. Be aware of the risk of violence escalation at the moment of leaving/ending an unhealthy and violence partner relationship. Be aware of the responsibility of reporting violence that students were exposed to.

Obligations of the school in encouraging students to seek help

Below we will list (repeat) the responsibilities of the school in creating a safe and encouraging environment for the development of students, which implies good, complete and clear information about steps and procedures in reporting violence and in seeking/receiving help to solve the problem.

- **Information on steps:** Students should be provided an explanation, in a simple and clear way, of school (internal) steps and procedures in cases of suspicion of or information in any form of violence, including (cyber) sexual and gender-based violence in youth intimate partner relationships. It is important for all students to know what the first step is, where they start from.

⁴¹ Healthy relationship high school educators toolkit. 2016. [The National Domestic Violence Hotline and Break the Cycle (pg .8). Available at: <http://www.loveisrespect.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/highschool-educators-toolkit.pdf>

- **Trust and confidentiality:** The school is obliged to create an atmosphere of trust – for students to know who they can confide in, and confidentiality of data – for students to know that information revealed to school representatives will be treated carefully, as well as to create a general “zero tolerance” environment for any type of violence towards children/students. This environment (culture) is developed with all activities and steps of all school stakeholders.
- **Support:** The school is obliged to provide support to a student whenever there is suspicion of violence, to support them to report violence, as well as to provide support during all steps taken by school and responsible institutions outside the school.
- **Safety:** School representatives must take care of the safety of students once the violence is disclosed, especially if this information is forwarded to those competent in the school and institutions outside the school.
- **Prevent harm:** If procedures are initiated in the school (e.g. disciplinary procedure) or in other institutions (police, prosecutor’s office, social welfare center), students must not be exposed to (secondary) traumatization (through conversations about the event a great number of times in inappropriate circumstances or in front of persons without specialized knowledge and/or license for work with children/youth or confronting the perpetrator) or (secondary) victimization (inappropriate, unprofessional, degrading or violent treatment by adults participating in procedures).
- **Cooperation relations:** It is important for the school to develop good cooperation with responsible institutions that constitute the “external support network” and to know resources of stakeholders in the community.

Important: Youth should learn through action and change! Adults also have something to learn from youth! Active meetings of youth and adults concerning topics relevant to youth, with acceptance and respect of different positions and perspectives, are of crucial importance for the development of a relationship of trust.

- **Supporting expertise development:** The school should ensure that its employees, especially representatives of professional support services and teams for protection of students from violence, abuse and neglect possess an appropriate level of sensitivity and knowledge on different forms of violence youth are exposed to, including specific knowledge on (cyber) sexual and gender-based violence in intimate partner relationships of youth.

What should teachers know about the prevention of digital violence?

Guidelines for teachers (similarly for parents)⁴² generally point out that it is not necessary for them to know all achievement in the field of digital technologies, but that it is **very important** for them to show interest in what students do online and on social networks (the experience with the SARS-cov 2 virus pandemic has directed many adults, including teachers, to shift communication to digital space, which can help that this type of communication – its advantages and risks – to be better understood and used more).

It is important to **talk** to students about the advantages of digital technologies, but also about risks. Talking about this topic sends the message that students are important, that teachers accept and respect them, that they are ready to exchange information and knowledge with them and to cooperate on the improvement of their and the teacher’s own knowledge. Therefore:

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Vranješević, J. i sar. 2020. Ka sigurnom i podsticajnom školskom okruženju – Vodič za škole.
Kuzmanović, D. i sar. 2016. Digitalno nasilje – prevencija i reagovanje. Ministarstvo prosvete, nauke i tehnološkog razvoja i UNICEF. (str. 38-39) Available at: <http://www.mpn.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/priru%C4%8Dnik-interaktivni.pdf>

- **ask for help** from students about new technologies – this is a sure way to establish and strengthen contact based on respect and trust,
- **talk** to students about **potential risks** on the Internet and social networks – listen to what they have to say about it, encourage them to explore protection strategies, to prepare a presentation on guidelines for protection from digital violence for their peers, teachers and parents; encourage them to define rules of safe Internet and social networks use (participation in the establishment of rules improved probability of them being respected); you probably already know that bans, orders, intimidations, threats or punishment are not satisfactory solutions,
- **talk** to students about the effects of **peer pressure** on their behaviour, about ways and strategies of dealing with social pressure to accept gender stereotypes and prejudice, sexist language and jokes, not only in real life but also in online reality; encourage them not to share or like such comments, to recognize them as violence against girls/women, as a form of their discrediting, degradation; talk to them about the importance of **solidarity, support and empowerment** of a person exposed to violence, as well as the importance of expressing a clear attitude and behaviour that does not justify the perpetrated violence,
- **control** your fear or anger, as these emotions **obstruct** constructive thinking and problem solving; **be consistent** – we want to teach youth responsibility by behaving responsibly; remember – the quality of relations established with teachers is of crucial important for trust and decision of students experiencing violence to confide in us and seek help.

Useful advice about messages to encourage students

Teachers (the same refers to parents) should provide students (children) with messages of support, interest, trust and respect, and some of them are⁴³:

- **Support:** *I would like you to know that you can count on me. I am glad you turned to me for help, we will work together on finding a solution.*
- **Showing interest:** *What I heard yesterday about insulting messages that you are exchanging on Facebook really worries me, would you like to talk about it? Did you manage to make a decision? Are you safe? How do you feel?*
- **Trust:** *Thank you for sharing this experience with me. You can always tell me if something is troubling you. What we talked about stays between us.*
- **Respect:** *I would like to talk about new applications, it means a lot to me to learn from you. I am proud of your skills and that you can find so many useful information online.*
- **Add your own words:**

⁴³ Kuzmanović, D. i sar. 2016. Digitalno nasilje – prevencija i reagovanje (pg. 40).

3.1.5. Roles and responsibilities of teachers and school in responding to (cyber) sexual and gender-based violence

Two complementary activities of teachers and schools

Teachers, professional support staff (pedagogues and psychologists), administrative and managerial school staff, education institutions as a whole, have two complementary tasks:

1. **preventing** violence towards students from happening;
2. provision of appropriate **protection and support** to students that have experienced violence⁴⁴.

Preventing violence towards students is key

Prevention of any type of violence, including (cyber) sexual and gender-based violence towards children/youth must be a basic task of education institutions, as well as society as a whole, and it is also a formal (legal) obligation of teachers and the school. This implies **informing and teaching children** about these topics within the education system – at all levels, in the curricula and syllabi of mandatory and elective subjects, free activities and activities implemented in cooperation with the community. Prevention also implies **empowerment** of students to recognize risks, seek help and report any harassment and violence.

Important: Prevention activities implemented by the education institution should be **systematic** and **continuous** and include all stakeholders in the school, primarily students, as well as parents,

There are numerous ways to organize school activities regarding the prevention of (cyber) sexual and gender-based violence towards students, including in their intimate partner relationships, below we list some of the key points:

- **„Situation mapping“:** At the beginning, it would be good to know what situation is – what youth think and know about the topic, how widespread different types of violence are – as part of their experience of victims/survivors or perpetrators or as bystanders/witnesses – what needs there are in terms of information and knowledge. The collection of this information, that is “situation mapping” is usually conducted in the form of anonymous surveying of as many as possible of students from all grades, or in other forms that allow students the freely express their views, attitudes, questions and express their experiences. Results of other research can also be used (such as ours) as a basis for the planning prevention activities, or as help in drawing up a list of relevant questions.

⁴⁴ Ignjatović, T. 2018. Rodno zasnovano nasilje u partnerskim vezama mladih: uloga obrazovno-vaspitnih ustanova. Ignjatović, T. 2018. Seksualno nasilje i uznemiravanje: uloga obrazovno-vaspitnih ustanova u prevenciji i zaštiti učenika i učenika, u: Ignjatović, T., Ileš, M. Ignjatović, T., Ileš, M. (ur.): Odgovor obrazovno-vaspitnih institucija na rodno zasnovano nasilje i nasilje u porodici. Autonomni ženski centra. Available at: https://www.womenngo.org.rs/images/publikacije-dp/2018/Odgovor_obrazovno_vaspitnih_institucija.pdf
Dalla Pozza, et al. 2016. Cyberbuččyng Among Young People – Study for the Libe Committee. Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs, European Union. Available at: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/571367/IPOL_STU\(2016\)571367_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/571367/IPOL_STU(2016)571367_EN.pdf)
STOP Cyber Violence – Toolkit for Trainers. 2017.
Popadić, D., Kuzmanović, D. 2013. Korišćenje digitalne tehnologije, rizici i zastupljenost digitalnog nasilja među učenicima u Srbiji (str. 133). Institut za psihologiju Filozofskog fakulteta Univerziteta u Beogradu. Available at: <http://sbn.rs/clientpub/uploads/Digitalno%20nasilje-lzvestaj%202013.pdf>

Important: It is of crucial importance that students **actively participate** in these activities, in all phases, in cooperation with a greater number of teachers (with different fields of expertise – sociology, psychology, mathematics, informatics, art...) and could represent a model of inter-subject cooperation contributing to a greater number of goals and results of education, as well as competencies necessary for the solution of different developmental and life tasks and problem solving.

- **Joint planning:** Collected data should be presented to students, but also to other stakeholders in the school – teachers, parents, school management, in order to encourage a discussion on needs and possible activities, as well as to recommend and develop a program of prevention activities that is in accordance with the specific situation in the school and needs of students.
- **Activity plan** – contains a list of activities and measures the school needs to implement to prevent any type of violence from happening, to create a safe and encouraging environment for youth development, to nurture respect and trust among students and school employees and tolerance of differences, to question stereotypes and prejudice, gain knowledge and skills for establishing health intimate partner relationships, recognize risks of violence, to increase knowledge of rules and procedures, develop readiness to react to all violence, as well as to increase readiness of supporting persons who are exposed to/survived violence.
- **Implementation of activities and monitoring effects:** The existence of a prevention activity plan is necessary, but it is important for the activities from school plans to be implemented. In addition to this, it is important to also plan ahead a way to collect information on the effects of implemented activities, as well reactions to them by participants. Processed data can help in the planning of future activities, in directing towards the selection of those best assessed, that encourage most positive changes, reaching the most people...
- **Informing all:** The school is obliged to organize the informing of all employees, teachers and parents about the ban of all types of violence, about legal solutions, obligatory steps and procedures for reporting suspicion of or knowledge of acts of violence. Information should be clear, accessible and in written form, which means that they should be found on posters, bulletin boards, school papers, webpages and similar spaces. It is good if the information is placed in places where students can easily access and read them in a confidential way (e.g. on the inside of the door in the school washroom). It is important for the information to be discussed in class, in head teacher's class, workshops, professional meetings, pedagogues' association meetings, during panel discussions, student parliament meetings, etc.
- **Gaining knowledge:** The school is obliged to organize and or ensure that teachers, head teachers and professional support staff gain appropriate knowledge and skills to be able to fulfil the tasks they are required to. This includes attending training (seminars, workshops) or consulting educational materials.
- **Role of peers:** Secondary school students most frequently confide in their peers about their experience of violence, including (cyber) sexual and gender-based violence in their intimate partner relationships. That is why informing and knowledge of students on (cyber) sexual and gender-based violence, but also other forms of violence and all here mentioned topics is of key importance for prevention, but also for support to persons who survived violence.

If violence still occurs – appropriate protection and support should be provided

Response of teachers and the education institution in a situation when there is suspicion or knowledge of or the violence is currently happening, is **obligatory** – and is **regulated** in each country by specific laws and by-laws. Below, we list the **common** characteristics of these procedures⁴⁵.

- Firstly, it is important for all stakeholders to respect **general principles of protection** of the person who was exposed to violence.
- It is necessary to respect specific **general rules in communication** with the person who was exposed to violence.
- If the violence **occurs in school**, the first reaction includes **stopping violence** and ensuring **the victim's safety**.

All **rules** (regulations) for response (regardless of national specificities) contain the following steps teachers, professional support staff, administrative and managerial staff should implement:

- **Interviewing** the student who was (suspected there were or there is information they were) exposed to violence – always **first** with the victim of violence and never in the presence of the **perpetrator – immediately** upon receiving information about the violence;
- **Interviewing** the student who perpetrated (suspected or there is information on this) the violence – **never** in the presence of the person who survived the violence - **immediately** upon receiving information about the violence;
- **Interviewing** students who have (or may have) information about the violence happening (bystanders and witnesses of violence) - **immediately** upon receiving information about the violence;
- **Inviting parents** of children who participated in the event (or have information about it) to individual interviews, in accordance with relevant rules and procedures – **as soon as possible** (according to the law);
- **In-school consultations**, organization of meeting with the professional support service of the school, team for protection of students from violence (or other competent school body, in accordance with rules of procedure), for **assessment** of the situation and **deciding** about taking appropriate (legally defined) measures and procedures – as soon as possible (according to the law);
- **Initiation of appropriate procedure in school**, in accordance with the law and by-laws regulating this field – within the **legally prescribed** timeframe;
- **Reporting the event to responsible institutions** (police, prosecutor's office, social welfare center), in accordance with the law and by-laws regulating this field – within the **legally prescribed** timeframe;
- **Developing individual support plan** for the student who was exposed to/survived violence, that includes clear and concrete activities for the recovery and empowerment of the victim/survivor, responsible parties for concrete implementation, deadlines, method of monitoring and assessment of effects and deadline for review and revision of the plan; the person who survived the violence **actively participates** (in all phases) – **as soon as possible**;
- **Developing individual plan** of action for/towards the student perpetrating the violence, including clear and concrete, measures, responsible parties for concrete implementation of activities, deadlines, method of monitoring and assessment of effects and deadline for review and revision of the plan; organization of specialized work with the perpetrator in the school or referral to institutions that implement psycho-social treatment for perpetrators of violence cannot by no means be a replacement for measures representing sanctions for the committed act – **as soon as possible**;

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Ignjatović, T. 2018. Rodno zasnovano nasilje u partnerskim vezama mladih: uloga obrazovno-vaspitnih ustanova.
Ileš, M. 2028. Digitalno nasilje protiv žena i djevojčica.
Kuzmanović, D. i sar. 2016. Digitalno nasilje – prevencija i reagovanje (pp. 44-50).
Ramljak, T. (ur.). 2018. Upoznajmo i prepoznamo e-nasilje (pp. 35).

- **Implementing measures, monitoring of effects, revision** of planned measures and activities, in case planned measures do not yield anticipated effects or changes in circumstances occur – **continuously** (according to deadlines in the individual plan);
- **Informing** teachers and professional groups in the school on measures taken and their effects, **analysis** of causes and consequences, analysis of the appropriateness of the school's response, recommendation of plan for lowering risk factors and strengthening protection factors, initiation of obligatory **prevention** activities in order to prevent violence from happening and/or repeating, improve level of awareness, knowledge and skills of all stakeholders on all important topics and issues - **continuously**;
- **Developing regular cooperation** between key stakeholders in the school and all relevant representatives in the community in order to join efforts in preventing violent behaviour and encouraging prosocial behaviour in the school and the community – **continuously**;
- **Keeping appropriate records** about the event and all planned and implemented steps – **continuously**.

Once again - what should we pay special attention to?

The school should not make “typical mistakes” in the discussed procedures, such as⁴⁶:

- minimize, evade, cover up, hide, misrepresent, deny, blame the victim/survivor of the violence, or in any other way directly or indirectly contribute to avoiding responsibility by the perpetrators, nor suggest the victim/survivor to withdraw, forgive, reconcile with the perpetrator of the violence;
- organize mediation or reconciliation of the victim and perpetrator of gender-based violence, because the basis of (cyber) sexual and gender-based violence is the abuse of power and control of one intimate partner over the other, setting the basis for future behaviour in partner relationships for both girls and boys;
- disrespect all rules concerning confidentiality and personal data and especially sensitive data protection;
- omit to provide information during procedures initiated in the school, as well as help the person who was exposed to violence (their parents/carers) to get adequate information;
- have a compassionate attitude towards the perpetrators, which means it must not negate, minimize, justify (that it was a “joke”, “children’s game”, “private matter”), hide, feel sorry for, forgive the unacceptable attitudes and behaviour of the student perpetrating (cyber) sexual and gender-based violence, because it is not helping this way, to the contrary; if holding the perpetrator responsible is avoided, they will learn that such behaviour is acceptable, that they are “right”, that they can disrespect their partner, disrespect rules and restrictions, manipulate other people, which means they will learn to be irresponsible towards their own behaviour and probably repeat violence in future partner relationships.

⁴⁶ Ignjatović, T. 2018[], pp. 15 Rodno zasnovano nasilje u partnerskim vezama mladih: uloga obrazovno-vaspitnih ustanova (pp. 15).

Useful ideas for prevention activities in school

There is a practically endless list of ideas for prevention activities in schools, below is a list of a few (the list is not final)⁴⁷:

- special pages on the school website dedicated to online safety and digital violence, including sexual and gender-based violence,
- finding appropriate content (see: True 2 You -Youth Magazine, project website and other recommended sources), analysis and discussion on the content, development of different presentations (school bulletin boards, posters, school newspaper, graphs...),
- finding and/or preparing interactive content for learning (quizzes, tests, solving problem situations...) (see: Youth Magazine, project website...),
- watching video clips, films on discussed topics and organization of discussions,
- developing and dissemination educational materials, especially online (with obligatory respect of data and photo privacy),
- preparing scenarios and implementing plays, with discussions with viewers on different aspects of the situation, consequences, possible solutions,
- organizing different peer trainings (see: Youth Magazine and project website), organizing training for younger students (e.g. in elementary schools),
- involvement of students who have attended courses to provide direct support to their peers (brothers, sisters) in adjusting their security setting on devices used,
- inviting representatives of relevant institutions and organizations to the school to speak about different aspects of relevant topics,
- organizing knowledge quizzes on relevant topics that can include both students and teachers or parents (mixed teams can comprise of youth and adults),
- organizing discussions about books or movies on relevant topics, in which both students, teachers but also professional support staff and parent can participate,
- implementing actions in the school or local community, marking international and national day (e.g. security, digital learning, protection of children from violence, 16 days of activism against gender-based violence),
- increasing the visibility of platforms helping teachers, where information can be disseminated, as well as experiences, dilemmas; forums where teachers can communicate with colleagues, have access to experts to answer their questions and referral of teachers to use them,
- **(continue the list):**
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3.1.6. Youth sensitive and confidential reporting mechanisms

School mechanisms for reporting violence

Each school should consider, based on information, knowledge of, research, personal experience, what the school mechanism for reporting suspicion of, information on and experience of violence. This is a basis for initiating positive changes. These could be the positive characteristics of this mechanisms:

Easily accessible – the mechanisms exists in reality, not only “on paper” (rulebook or other school document); everyone knows what the mechanism is: everyone knows who the involved persons are; reporting/informing on violence lead to positive changes (the violence was stopped, its repetition was prevented, the person who reported/informed about the violence was supported, empowered), encouraging all students to seek help in the future;

Sensitive to youth needs – all those involved should have sufficient knowledge on *characteristics of the developmental stage* of students and that their needs, attitudes and opinions are respected and addressed (proactive approach); that topics relevant for students are followed, including digital technologies, communications and social networks, with awareness on *basic needs* (safety, trust, love, support, self-confirmation...), *developmentally specific needs and changes* (increased physical growth, abstract/formal though, development of moral opinion, focus on possible and future situations and time, independence, rebellion, conflicts with adults and peers, peer friendship, emotional relations and sexuality...), as well as bearing in mind the *context and different characteristics* (sex, sexual orientation, disability, specific culture, social, economic/class and many other factors);

Confidential – there is clear information that each conversation is completely confidential, which means that its content will not be considered **without the consent** of the student who sought help; students have information about **restrictions of confidentiality**, and can make **informed decisions** about what to do; everyone in the school, especially the school mechanism, know what the confidentiality of information means, and are ready to respect the rules; all information about violence that students of the school are exposed to and their personal data are treated carefully in communication (in the school and with other institutions), in all procedures, including record keeping and documentation.

3.2 Legal framework

Introduction

In order to fully understand the notions and correlations of cyber violence, sexual and gender-based violence, specifically in the context of intimate partner relationships, including those of youth, it is important to be familiarized with the content of relevant documents, both international, as well as national. These are especially important for implementing responsibilities of education institutions in preventing and responding to sexual and gender-based violence affecting their pupils, including that occurring in cyber space and among pupils in a partner relationship. Below is a brief overview of the **most relevant international documents**, as well as **national legislative** framework of Hungary, Croatia, Serbia and Spain relevant for combating cyber and gender-based violence, especially documents regulating the concrete response of education institutions and education professionals (teachers, school pedagogues, psychologists, specialized school teams, school management). In addition to this, the relevant **institutional framework** for each of the above-named countries will be briefly presented, with special focus on stakeholders outside the education system responsible for protection from violence, that schools cooperate with or may rely on for further support. Finally, the step-by-step response of education institutions is presented for each country, based on the existing legislation and protocols of actions, as well as cooperation with and concrete responsibilities and actions of other relevant agencies.

3.2.1 International framework – brief overview

Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (1989)

<http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/crc.pdf>

While the document does not specifically address cyber violence Articles 19, 34 and 39 are relevant as they refer to the protection of children from all forms of violence and abuse, including sexual abuse.

- Article 19 defines that such protective measures should include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment.
- Article 34 refers to protection of children from all forms exploitation and sexual abuse, and is stated here that „State Parties shall in particular take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent: (a) The inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity; (b) The exploitative use of children in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices; (c) The exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials“.
- Article 39 defines States Parties’ obligation to take all appropriate measures to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of a child victim.

Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (2017) (“Lanzarote Convention“)

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/rms/0900001680084822>

The Lanzarote Convention is aimed – through a holistic approach – at the protection of children against sexual violence. It covers:

- preventive measures such as the recruitment, training and awareness raising of persons working in contact with children (article 5), education for children (article 6), preventive intervention programmes and measures (article 7), measures for the general public (article 8) and the participation of children, the private sector, media and civil society (article 9);
- protective measures and assistance to victims, including reporting suspicion of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse (article 12), helplines (article 13), assistance to victims (article 14);
- intervention programmes or measures;
- substantive criminal law, including - sexual abuse (article 18), - child prostitution (article 19), - child pornography (article 20), - participation of a child in pornographic performances (article 21), - corruption of children (article 22), - solicitation of children for sexual purposes (article 23);
- investigation, prosecution and procedural law, including measures to protect and respect the rights, interests and special needs of children during investigations and criminal proceedings;
- international cooperation. The Convention establishes a monitoring mechanism which is in place since 2011 in the form of the “Lanzarote Committee”.⁴⁸

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women General recommendation No. 35 on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19 (2017)

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/1_Global/CEDAW_C_GC_35_8267_E.pdf

- In Article 20 of the document it is acknowledged that gender-based violence against women occurs in all spaces and spheres of human interaction, including violence occurring in the Internet and digital spaces.
- When it comes to prevention of gender-based violence, it is pointed out (in Article 34) that these should address the “underlying causes of gender-based violence against women, including patriarchal attitudes and stereotypes, inequality in the family and the neglect or denial of women’s civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, as well as to promote women’s empowerment, agency and voice”.
- Article 35 explains that integration of gender equality content into curricula at all levels of education both public and private from the early childhood on and in education programs should have a human rights approach, and that it should “target stereotyped gender roles and promote values of gender equality and non-discrimination, including non-violent masculinities”.

Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (2011) (“Istanbul Convention”)⁴⁹

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/rms/090000168008482e>

In its Article 3, the Convention defines violence “as a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women and shall mean all acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.”

Some of the relevant articles of the document include:

- Article 33 – Psychological violence - Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure that the intentional conduct of seriously impairing a person’s psychological integrity through coercion or threats is criminalized.

⁴⁸ Ibid pg. 21-23.
⁴⁹ Ibid, pg. 23-24.

- Article 34 – Stalking -Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure that the intentional conduct of repeatedly engaging in threatening conduct directed at another person, causing her or him to fear for her or his safety, is criminalized.
- Article 40 – Sexual harassment - Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure that any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, in particular when creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment, is subject to criminal or other legal sanction.

None of these articles explicitly mentions ICTs, but the Explanatory Report, with regard to article 34, takes into consideration that the threatening behaviour may consist of repeatedly following the victim in the virtual world (chat rooms, social networking sites, instant messaging, etc.). Engaging in unwanted communication entails the pursuit of any active contact with the victim through any available means of communication, including modern communication tools and ICTs. GREVIO is the independent expert body responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence.

Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime (2001) (“Budapest Convention”)

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/rms/0900001680081561>

The Budapest Convention, through a number of substantive criminal law provisions, addresses directly some types of cyberviolence. Articles with direct connection to cybercrime include:

- Article 4 – Data interference in a critical system may cause death or physical or psychological injury.
- Article 5 – System interference in a critical system may cause death or physical or psychological injury.
- Article 9 – Child pornography. Article 9 (1) (a) criminalizes producing child pornography for electronic distribution. Production of child pornography may cause death and necessarily entails physical and/or psychological violence.

Other provisions address acts facilitating cyberviolence. The procedural powers and the provisions on international cooperation of the Convention on Cybercrime will help investigate cyberviolence and secure electronic evidence. The Budapest Convention and treaties such as the Istanbul and Lanzarote Conventions complement each other⁵⁰.

For a full list of international and European binding and non-binding documents related to the field of topic, please consult the Council of Europe Mapping Study on Cyberviolence (pages 50-53), available in English at: <https://rm.coe.int/t-cy-2017-10-cbg-study-provisional/16808c4914>.

⁵⁰ Short description adapted from COE Mapping study on cyberviolence, pg.36, available in English at: <https://rm.coe.int/t-cy-2017-10-cbg-study-provisional/16808c4914>

4. GOOD PRACTICES OF CYBER SEXUAL AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION IN SCHOOL SETTING

4.1 Introduction

Effective and systematic prevention of intimate partner violence among adolescents represents the key strategy for reducing rates of gender-based violence. We must work to initiate change on an individual level, on the level of relationships, community, and society as a whole. Given the fact that almost all children and adolescents attend school, the education system serves as the ideal setting for the implementation of gender-based violence prevention programs, including those addressing cyber violence in intimate partner relationships.

The programs have to focus on changing the cultural and social norms surrounding gender, while bringing such efforts into the digital age – there is a need to educate the next generation of ICT users on information and media literacy as well as their perception of security. At the same time, prevention initiatives addressing healthy relationships could play a fundamental role in changing the stereotypical attitudes that fuel and reinforce gender inequality, but also in raising adolescents' awareness about issues concerning their own safety in their relationships and/or in other contexts. Creating expectations for healthy, non-violent relationships and developing skills that are important parts in this respect (e.g. empathy, respect, and healthy communication and conflict resolution skills) can help reduce risks of experiencing and perpetrating intimate partner violence.

If prevention is to be effective, it has to be accompanied by appropriate legislation and public policies. The inclusion of (cyber) sexual and gender-based violence in the youth-oriented strategies, the provision of funds, the monitoring and evaluation of programs, the identification as well as dissemination of good practice, can all have positive long-term results.

A systematic approach to gender-based violence prevention in schools needs to combine workshops and other educational activities with broader school-level prevention strategies.

"Besides educational preventive programs, it is necessary to create and provide gender and age-sensitive mechanisms of protection and support to youth who have experienced any form of gender-based violence, including in the cyber sphere. Adequate legal sanctions for perpetrators are also necessary both from the perspective of a victim and from the perspective of preventing further crimes from happening."⁵¹

⁵¹ Awareness and attitudes of secondary school students towards youth intimate partner violence – Joint report for Hungary, Spain, Serbia and Croatia, 2020

The purpose of this chapter is not to give teachers a comprehensive overview of everything schools can do to prevent violence, but rather **to cover certain practical interventions schools can initiate to address violence at a school level or to strengthen existing interventions**. In addition to these, we provide a set of recommended actions that go beyond the school level, usually involving additional stakeholders, like parents, CSOs, institutions, local governments etc.

4.2 Principles of effective (cyber) sexual and gender - based violence prevention programs in school settings

Creating culture of non-violence and safe environment

A climate that feels both safe and non-violent at school is crucial for the prevention and intervention in violence, particularly cyber sexual and gender-based violence in intimate partner relationships. To create a safe school environment, the focus must be on the values and principles upheld at school, and **the ways in which they are put into practice**. Schools need to actively promote gender equality, and a culture of respect and non-violence amongst students, teachers and other staff members. This requires the efforts of everyone involved in the school environment.

“Work on establishing a positive school climate and culture that supports gender equality and has zero tolerance to gender-based violence and build trust of students in teachers and school staff”; it is one of the recommendations based on the results of the research on secondary school teachers across countries. Any improvement of school policies and procedures, especially meaning new policies and practices that promote gender equality, would help foster protective environments. Implementation would advance democratic processes, establish respect for diversity, make the school a safe and discrimination-free space, and make it easier to report incidents by giving support to students experiencing dating violence. School policies should address the safety and wellbeing of survivors of dating abuse and clarify procedures for students to ask for help and report violence or any inappropriate use of technology to control, intimidate or harass others, which they witness or know about. It is important to share the policy widely and display it publicly to make sure the entire school community is aware of it and to consistently implement measures and actions in schools.

In some countries, broad policies that address violence in schools and the education sector are developed at a national level or in the context of national action plans to address peer violence or violence against children. These can guide the program development and describe in more detail how to address violence, including cyber sexual and gender-based violence in schools.

KiVa is a research- and evidence-based antibullying program that has been developed at the University of Turku, Finland. KiVa program takes a whole-school approach and is based on three main elements: prevention, intervention and monitoring. KiVa aims to improve social and emotional skills, influence group norms and bystander behaviour, and create a climate of non-violence in classrooms and the rest of the school by incorporating curricula, online games, work with bullies and victims, materials for teachers, and a guide for parents.

www.kivaprogram.net

Incorporating cyber dating abuse into the existing curriculum

A central part of school-based (cyber) sexual and gender-based violence prevention involves working directly with students to look at some of the root causes of violent behaviour and help them to be less vulnerable to violence. Educational measures aimed at promoting gender equality, tackling discrimination and preventing violence should be considered as part of an ongoing process that cannot be limited to a one-off educational activity in a single class.

If a school has the capacity **to review the existing curricula** and routines, it can identify where possible activities can be integrated rather than having to create them as stand-alone programs. For example, they could be incorporated in health and sexuality education, life-skills education, ICT education and civic education, where teachers may already be dealing with issues such as developing healthy relationships and/or communication skills, resisting peer pressure, managing emotions, online safety, promotion of gender equality and human rights. By relying on key groups such as teachers, students and other staff who are already involved in delivering lessons, it will help to make sure that the most appropriate and acceptable entry points are selected for lessons on sexual and gender-based violence prevention.

How to recognize and appropriately respond to sexual and gender-based violence – intimate partner violence in particular – is the cornerstone of **comprehensive sexuality education curricula**, too. When possible, teaching this curriculum should be organised as part of a comprehensive sexuality education, so that students are clear about safe and healthy dating behaviours. Sexual education should encourage respect for others, regardless of their gender or sexuality, and help unlock the potential of schools as sites of empowerment for both girls and boys, as well as for the prevention of gender-based violence. The *International technical guidance on sexuality education*⁵² was developed to help educational bodies and other relevant authorities to develop and implement school-based and out-of-school comprehensive sexuality education programs and materials.

One way of empowering young people to stay safe online is in class, **boosting their digital media literacy skills**. Raising awareness and addressing underlying structures of gender disparity and the culture of sexism that facilitates the perpetuation of online SGBV can play a role in creating a safer environment online. Schools need to raise gender awareness and provide education on safe use **of technology and digital citizenship** as part of **civic education**. Alongside the issues of privacy and digital citizenship, students should learn about creating gender-sensitive content and having a meaningful impact on the Internet.

⁵² International technical guidance on sexuality education. An evidence-informed approach. (2018) UNFPA Available at: www.unfpa.org/publications/international-technical-guidance-sexuality-education

► **Educational programs aimed at preventing violence** against women vary from country to country. In Spain, teachers are obliged to attend a permanent training in equality-related matters, although schools themselves can choose whether they follow it or not. In Hungary, the National Core Curriculum states that students have to be educated about sexuality and intimate relationships, but the document mainly highlights the biological aspects of traditional gender roles in the family. This document does not mention the importance of gender equality and offers no guidance to teachers regarding the deconstruction of restrictive gender roles and stereotypes. In Croatia, all schools are required to implement prevention programs. Prevention of gender-based violence in a school environment is based on a sporadic implementation of programs in (some) schools. A newly introduced national curriculum of Health Education makes no mention of gender-based violence nor any other issue that is related to gender. In Serbia, there is no systematic education on topics related to gender equality and gender-based violence, including cyber violence, neither as part of formal education, nor through professional development programs. One thing that all countries have in common, though, is that most educational prevention tasks and programs, including their creation, for both youth and teachers, is carried out by NGOs.⁵³

Safe Dates, USA

Safe Dates (Foshee et al, 2005) is a school-based prevention program which includes several different school-based activities: a 10-week curriculum looking at behaviour and attitudes associated with dating abuse, a play about dating abuse and violence, a poster contest, and materials for parents such as newsletters. Alongside this, community activities such as support services and training for service providers are provided. In the USA, the curriculum has been successful in reducing sexual, physical and emotional abuse due to changes in dating-violence norms, gender role norms and knowledge of support services.

<https://rb.gy/npwwzb>

Integrating the gender perspective in the education and prevention

A systematic approach to (cyber) gender-based violence prevention needs to acknowledge the role of patriarchal and hegemonic social norms and the gender imbalance of power and include interventions that call for change in attitudes and behaviours that perpetuate sexual and gender-based violence. Gender-sensitive education improves the quality of teaching and facilitates a deeper understanding of the needs, behaviour and attitudes of the population, enhancing students' critical thinking skills by providing them with new tools to identify social stereotypes, norms and roles related to gender.

The ways in which inequality and sexism in offline environments are reflected and amplified in online spaces are also important enabling factors for online violence. Cyber sexual and gender-based violence can also limit women's ability to take advantage of the opportunities that ICTs provide, act as a barrier to their access, thus possibly exacerbating the gender digital gap and contributing to gender stereotypes being reaffirmed and reproduced. Effective action has to be taken to include a gender-informed perspective and counter cyber gender-based violence, which in turn serves as a positive driver for change and development. This also helps in building a safe and secure environment for women and girls in every sphere of life.

⁵³ Awareness and attitudes of secondary school students towards youth intimate partner violence – Joint report for Hungary, Spain, Serbia and Croatia, 2020

Through their project “No Tolerance for Gender-Based Violence”, **the Autonomous Women’s Center (AWC)** explored possibilities for integrating the topics of gender equality and gender-based violence into the curricula of Serbian secondary schools.

One initiative was to analyse the curricula of secondary schools (grammar and vocational), whether and to what extent they deal with topics of gender equality, gender-based discrimination and violence, and to identify entry points for these topics. The result of their work is a detailed overview of parts of the secondary school curricula where gender-related topics and the issue concerning gender-based violence could be integrated, along with concrete suggestions on how it could be done: <https://www.womenngo.org.rs/publikacije/razvoj-dobrih-praksi/1352-zasto-i-kako-o-temi-rodno-zasnovanog-nasilja-u-skolskom-programu-u-srednjim-skolama-2018> .

An additional benefit of the said activity is that the analysis was conducted by the students of the Women’s Studies alternative program in Belgrade; this gave them the opportunity to learn more about this topic as well as work on their analytical and research skills.

Another initiative was to give concrete examples of how the topics of gender equality and gender-based violence could be integrated into lessons of various subjects within the existing school curriculum and offer teachers guidelines on how to include these topics in their regular work. A set of lesson plans was developed in cooperation with motivated secondary school teachers and support staff who participated in the AWC’s training for teachers, demonstrating the wide range of possibilities of informing students and encouraging them to discuss the mentioned topics. This included both curricular work (as part of subjects such as literature, language, sociology, but also mathematics, computer science, etc.) and extracurricular activities: <https://www.womenngo.org.rs/publikacije/razvoj-dobrih-praksi/1399-nulta-tolerancija-na-rodno-zasnovano-nasilje-2018>

In **Croatia, the Forum for Freedom in Education** started a project⁵⁴ with the objective of initiating systemic and comprehensive change in elementary and secondary schools through the creation of a Gender Equality Charter Mark (GECM) quality standard and accreditation tool. This is expected to have an impact on young people’s expectations of gender roles by challenging their gender stereotyping. The questions cover the areas of School Leadership, Curriculum, Environment, Attitudes and Community. This tool will enable a school to measure progress in their handling of the effects any gender stereotyping still has on pupils with regard to subject (and career) choices and which stands as the root cause of sexual harassment and gender-based violence in schools and the wider society; thereby, it will promote gender mainstreaming.

Training for teachers

Teachers are crucial for the implementation of violence prevention programs. Well-trained, supported and motivated teachers are key to delivering high-quality prevention programs, including those aimed at tackling cyber sexual and gender-based violence in intimate partner relationships. Our data⁵⁵ shows that the majority of teachers believe that their role should entail addressing the problem of cyber sexual teen-dating violence in their work with students. They emphasise the need for professional training and useful educational materials, as well as the need to improve multi sectoral cooperation.

⁵⁴ The innovative rationale for this project has been built on the experience and results of a three-year Gender Respect Project run by DECSY. For more information on: www.decsy.org.uk/project/gender-equality-charter-mark/

⁵⁵

Not only do teachers follow the **formal curriculum** in schools, but they also **contribute to the 'hidden curriculum'**. Teachers' behaviour and practices, often carried out unconsciously, convey powerful messages to students, which can and do indeed contribute to the perpetuation of gender stereotyping and gendered self-perception.

A training organized specifically for teachers could help them get a better understanding of the nature of gender-based violence and its effects, how to respond if they observe violence, and how to work with others at the school to help prevent gender-based violence. To implement the curriculum effectively, teachers need to feel confident, be committed and have enough resources at their disposal; they have to feel supported by the legal framework, the school management and all relevant institutions and authorities; they also need to have access to training and resources. The head of school should provide encouragement, guidance and support to teachers involved in the training.

▶ In Croatia, CESI – Center for Education, Counselling and Research provides training for teachers (and peer educators).

The main aim of the educational program is to promote gender equality, healthy and equitable relationships and institute zero tolerance towards gender-based violence in intimate partner relationships. Theoretical and practical trainings can motivate and give teachers the skills and the “know how” necessary for the implementation of primary prevention programs and interventions, help to raise their awareness of gender stereotypes in the education system and contribute to the development of skills related to identifying, handling and reporting acts of sexual and gender-based violence. In order to be able to educate students and improve their knowledge about the topic, the program is directed towards changing the existing attitudes and raising teens' awareness on the following: the characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships; the influence that gender-stereotypical attitudes and socially imposed gender roles have on their relationships; how power inequality is related to psychological, physical and/or sexual abuse against women/girls, and how adolescents can contribute to the prevention of all forms of gender-based violence, including cyber intimate partner relationships violence.

www.cesi.hr

4.3 Promising practices in the prevention of intimate partner violence among adolescents

Article 14 of the Council of Europe (2011) Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence clearly states that such type of “teaching material on issues such as equality between women and men, non-stereotyped gender roles, mutual respect, non-violent conflict resolution in interpersonal relationships, gender-based violence against women and the right to personal integrity, adapted to the evolving capacity of learners” should be included not only “in formal curricula and at all levels of education”, but also “in informal educational facilities, as well as in sports, cultural and leisure facilities and the media”⁵⁶.

Learning through experience and usage of creative methods and art forms

Educational prevention programs should be put in place through formal primary and secondary education and should be adapted to the communication needs of young people and apply an interactive, gender- and age-sensitive approach. By hosting prevention workshops on sexual and gender-based violence in adolescent relationships **in schools**, it conveys the message that violence is not acceptable. Working directly with young people in the form of **extracurricular activities using creative methods** and art forms can be a helpful tool in changing individual attitudes and behaviours, helping people learn about healthier ways to relate to one another, and encouraging them to speak out against violence and provide support to any victims. Continuous and long-term work in a school setting will help change the existing social norms in a given school, making it less tolerant of abuse and more invested in establishing healthy norms.

In a school setting, **teachers with proper training** can be instrumental not just in providing educational activities for youth, but also in designing different extracurricular activities, organizing campaigns and facilitating the process of creating artistic products. Teachers have to be trained and have support to use participatory methods and creative techniques to raise awareness, stimulate creativity, innovation and engagement of students. Teachers as facilitators should focus on **building a partnership with all participants**, fostering their enthusiasm and motivation, and helping them develop the additional skills and confidence they might need to design and implement other activities and raise awareness. After the workshops, the participants could create content of their own choice, with the support and guidance from their teachers, and use them in awareness-raising activities and campaigns, aiming to sensitize their peers. The types of artwork that students can create include: short animations or films, comics, photographic exhibitions, slogans, posters, drawings; lyrics or songs; short stories or website articles, social media campaigns; plays; information leaflets and brochures; concerts and interviews for the media. Young people feel empowered when they can take the initiative on this issue, implement activities, start campaigns offline and online, design art products and make their online and offline activities and art public. They are given space and their voices are supported, and their visual images contribute to the sustainable impact of such educational activities. Through their exploration of these issues, young people begin to realize that they hold the power – both as individuals and collectively – to prevent violence and abuse from affecting their lives.

⁵⁶ Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, (2011) – Council of Europe, www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention/text-of-the-convention

However, one of the greatest challenges in organizing gender-based violence prevention activities concerns **how to engage boys**. As per lessons learned from the different projects implemented in a school setting, when young people are given a chance to be creative, boys and young men engage in the fight against gender-based violence more.

The research conducted in different countries clearly indicates that youth very rarely turn to their teachers or other members of the school staff in situations when they are exposed to sexual and gender-based violence. Their close collaboration on designing and implementing this type of activities could improve the confidence and trust young people might have in teachers, particularly when it comes to disclosing and seeking help in concrete cases of abuse.

The collaboration of teachers and students, combined with their involvement in the educational and creative activities, improves student-teacher rapport, increases confidence levels and provides insights into the way young people think. This, in turn, leads to a much better mutual understanding. Our experience shows that the students express a high level of satisfaction with this type of work, they are eager to participate in further activities that deal with the prevention of gender-based violence in adolescent relationships, and some of them even consider volunteering and working with their peers on the issue of teen-dating violence.

▶ Play it for Change project

Teachers and education professionals specialized in different subjects were involved in the project. Through the Capacity Building Program, they were provided knowledge and practical tools to address gender stereotypes more effectively and prevent gender-based violence when working with adolescent girls and boys. Theoretical input and practical activities were combined to meet different training needs. Music and audio-visual media were used as a sensitization tool on gender issues throughout the training sessions. Professionals were encouraged to challenge sexism in music contents and learned how to promote reflection and critical thinking on this issue among students. As a result, they acquired competences to promote gender equality and healthy relationships among adolescents through innovative and creative methods.

These competences were demonstrated when they designed and implemented educational and awareness-raising activities for the empowerment of students. Teachers also played a crucial role in providing support to their students during the creation of songs and music videos for the promotion of gender equality.

Adolescent girls and boys felt empowered when they assumed a leading role in the development of songs and videos, along with the support and monitoring of the teachers. As they were creating songs and music that reinforced gender equality and healthy relationships, they became active agents of change in preventing gender-based violence among their peers. Their work was presented and promoted on national and EU levels.

Furthermore, students used the process to develop their creativity and the project contributed to building group cohesion. Taking part in the same activities and sharing a common objective resulted in a stronger bond between classmates and fostered an atmosphere of support and cooperation between students and teachers.

www.playitforchange.org

▶ **Would you like a cup of tea?!** - theatre play about sexual consent followed by an interactive discussion with the audience. The theatre play was developed by NANE (Hungary) involving actors and experts on the topic of domestic violence. It uses the tea metaphor for sexual consent: we see different scenarios when one person wants to have sex but the other does not, and then we see the exact same scenario but with tea: one wants to have tea, and the other does not. It is a very easy tool to show how simple the concept of consent can be: if someone doesn't want tea, don't pour it in their mouth - if someone doesn't want to have sex, don't pressure them into having sex. We also see cases of sexual harassment and "grey zones" of sexual abuse.

After watching the play, the spectators have the chance to talk about the different scenarios and their feelings and thoughts about them with each other and the experts. The play was developed in response to emerging cases of sexual abuse among university students and was played many times for a young audience. The play is also suitable for a theatre performance (not in the school context) with paying audience.

▶ Youth workshops implemented by **the Autonomous Women's Center (Serbia)**, aimed at preventing gender-based violence in partner relationships, involved encouraging secondary school youth engagement in the topic. This included planning youth actions to be implemented at school or in the local community, disseminating information on the unacceptability of control and violence in partner relationships and increasing youth engagement as part of the awareness-raising efforts about this topic. One of the participating schools was a music school, so it comes as no surprise that the students decided to send the message against violence by doing what they do best, music and song. With the support of their teachers, they prepared and recorded the song titled 'I Can Choose to Say No'. The song garnered a significant amount of public attention and was promoted through various media.

The song's video is available on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YkNrBHTHpr0> .

In several other schools, youth engagement was achieved through graffiti. With the approval of secondary schools, graffiti messages against gender-based violence were painted on the school building walls or fences. These outdoor events proved popular with the students and were an opportunity for youth workshop participants to share their knowledge on gender-based violence with their peers.

More information available at the organization's website dedicated to violence prevention: www.mogudanecu.rs

Engaging boys and young men to prevent gender-based violence

Given that many of the forms of violence are perpetrated primarily by men and boys, it is important to emphasize their **role in the prevention** of such violence. They have to be told and shown that the **normalization of violence is damaging and dangerous** and that it has negative impacts on everybody. Teaching teen boys about positive expressions of masculinity could be a way of combating violence against women and girls. With critical and analytical conversations about gender norms, young men will learn how they can base their concept of masculinity around respect, care, generosity, and rejection of violence. Violence prevention programs need to make boys see that their contribution in this fight can take on many forms, e.g. as role models, agents of change and advocates for equality and mutual respect between women and men.

However, a major challenge here can be convincing men and boys to understand they need to take part in gender-based violence prevention sessions. Within educational programs, boys should be provided

with information and strategies on how to deconstruct their gender stereotyping and attitudes related to gender-based violence, resist the patriarchal norms and peer pressure, as well as how to react in situations of cyber sexual and gender-based violence.⁵⁷ As the evaluation conducted by the WHO shows, **gender-transformative approaches** that seek to transform gender roles and promote more gender-equitable relationships between men and women were discovered to have a higher rate of effectiveness.⁵⁸

In Croatia, the Status M association deals with questioning and deconstructing harmful gender norms and stereotypes, particularly the ubiquitous determinants of masculinity. Through youth work, non-formal education and activism, Status M encourages and empowers young people, primarily boys and young men, to actively contribute to the creation of a non-violent, inclusive and gender-equal world.

Gender inequalities and gender-based violence are all-present and harm billions of girls and women worldwide. They have adverse effects on boys and men, too. Status M addresses these issues through direct work with vulnerable groups of young people, such as young offenders, members of Roma communities, students facing economic hardships or displaying anti-social behaviours, using a robust methodology with a strong gender-transformative approach (Program Y). Their work with the youth is experiential and interactive and addresses a wide spectrum of topics, such as gender, violence, emotions, relationships, sexuality, conflict resolution, reproductive and mental health, addiction and parenthood.

Our work is carried out in numerous primary and secondary schools, juvenile detention centres, correctional facilities and local communities in Zagreb and neighbouring regions. Status M also empowers youth workers, teachers and other professionals to implement the Program Y independently across the country.

In addition to the Program Y workshops, they also support young people in the so-called *Be A Man* clubs which operate in schools according to the principles of self-organization and peer education. Young people use this platform to raise awareness about gender equality and gender-based violence in their local communities and among their peers.

The involvement of youth: Peer education and peer support groups

Peer-education approaches are effective because they make use of peer influence in a positive way. In contrast to adult facilitators, peer educators can earn more trust and credibility as they are less likely to be seen as authority figures teaching about how young people should behave. Peer educators can therefore create an environment where young participants feel comfortable to explore sensitive issues such as gender inequality or (cyber) sexual and gender-based violence. A young person gets a great deal of information from their peers, especially on issues that are sensitive or are not usually explored within the mainstream education system, i.e. the school curriculum. Teens that experience dating abuse are more likely to tell their friends than anyone else. Therefore, peer education groups can be a great source of support, while also creating a positive, powerful influence.

By training as **peer educators**, young people are empowered because they can see in themselves the potential to become role models; they are more confident when they feel that their needs, views and opinions are being listened to and that they are a part of something. This could inspire a great sense of achievement in them, encouraging them to develop valuable life skills, including presentation, facilitation, communication and empathy.

⁵⁷

Ibid

⁵⁸

World Health Organization (2007). Engaging men and boys in changing gender-based inequity in health: Evidence from programme interventions. Geneva

To ensure that potential peer educators feel comfortable and confident enough to conduct peer-education programmes, it would be preferable that teachers devote as much time as necessary to train the students that have expressed the desire to be peer educators. By participating in the training for peer educators, students will gain skills and insight into the theoretical background, and they will learn how to address sensitive topics. Students need to participate and be actively encouraged to provide input on the planning, monitoring and evaluation of activities and programs and to implement activities or initiate dialogues with parents and other students. Providing peer educators with personal feedback and acknowledgement will help them improve their skills, make them more motivated and enthusiastic, as well as support them to continue their work and participation.

By fostering a culture of openness in peer groups, adolescents are likely to feel safe to disclose personal experiences of abuse. Peer educators might not be aware whether the young people they are working with have personal experience of gender-based violence, but any disclosure should be taken very seriously. However, it is not the peer educators' role to provide counselling or advice or to try to 'rescue' survivors from abuse. Instead, they can listen to them and encourage survivors to talk to people who can provide help and guidance. The general idea of these activities is to support students' involvement and voice in fighting inequality, (cyber) sexual and gender-based violence and discrimination, while promoting gender equality among their peers.

EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES AND YOUTH INITIATIVES

- In one school in Croatia, the students were trained by their teachers to become peer educators. They held presentations and workshops with peers in their school but also in other secondary schools located nearby. Their aim was to educate their peers and to motivate them to join in organizing awareness-raising activities for all students at school. They would organize a group on a regular basis and offer individual support in school premises for their peers who encounter some difficulties in romantic relationships. The role of the teacher was to provide them with feedback, support and acknowledgement for their work and help them organize sessions. In another school, students were trained on how to become peer educators, and beside educational activities, they took an active part in a social media campaign against violence in relationships. They created and filmed a video about gender-based violence and organized actions on the main town square and in front of schools, wanting to encourage their peers to question the widespread stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination, all the while promoting equality and human rights.
- Együtt egyenlően (meaning "together, we are equal") is a new project of NANE (Hungary). NANE has conducted school workshops on intimate partner violence for many years now (Heartbeat workshops) and have an accredited training program developed for teachers who want to organize workshops with their students on the topic. NANE holds 3 school sessions per month on average. NANE's new development (Együtt egyenlően project) is aimed at getting young people involved into the prevention work: we created new training materials based on our years of experience and recruited individuals between the ages of 18 and 30 to be part of the peer educators team for young people.
- As part of the Autonomous Women's Center's (Serbia) gender-based violence prevention activities, a number of youth workshops were organized with students from 30 secondary schools. At the same time, teachers and other members of the school staff were attending training and follow-up meetings. Following these, several schools decided on their own to work towards systematizing peer prevention work, including all students in their broad informing efforts, and allowing students and teachers to be proactive in applying the acquired knowledge. These steps involved organizing groups of students who participated in workshops (by the teachers involved in the prevention activities) and having them present topics related to gender-based violence. This way, students of all grades had access to this important information throughout the school year. In some cases, students were invited to hold presentations for higher grades of elementary schools in the local community.

Activities aimed at empowering girls and supporting them to stand up to violence

Groups and workshops for girls can be a great way for teens **to get support for dealing with the challenges surrounding self-esteem and body image issues, to work on their assertiveness, to know they are not alone and learn skills that help them build confidence.** Sometimes they can feel more comfortable in a women-only environment.

While the digital world can provide positive opportunities for girls, it also presents new dangers; particularly in adolescence, when girls are coming of age and becoming sexually active, without necessarily having developed the skills or the knowledge to protect themselves.

As a result of online abuse and/or gender-based violence, women commonly experience fear and suffer from anxiety and depression, which can lead to their reduced online presence and complete withdrawal from online spaces. Online violence is, then, translated into offline environments, as women experience their mobility being limited because of online abuse, including the disclosure of personal information online, which carries the real threat of physical violence.

Working in groups or workshops with girls can **encourage participants to share their experiences, express feelings, ideas, and work through the emerging issues, such as those related to self-esteem, assertiveness and boundaries.** Facilitators should always guarantee a safe, secure and supportive environment, while stimulating a constructive and interactive debate between the participants, always ensuring the secrecy of the group by explaining and respecting the participants' rights to privacy. If any boys are present in the group, it could inhibit disclosure and affect women's sense of safety to talk honestly and freely about their experiences.

Through social interaction and involvement in the group process itself, the group members have a chance to work on their independence, self-esteem, self-confidence; they also become stronger and empowered. We want girls to learn their rights and be able to identify a potentially abusive or violent situation; to understand and communicate their own needs and desires, practice assertiveness and nurture healthy and positive relationships. They need to know where they can report violence and seek help and support when they need it. Girls have to learn as part of their group work that they should not be blamed or stigmatized for the violence they might experience, and that they feel trusted when talking about violence and supported when making their own choices.

Take Back the Tech! is a collaborative global web-based campaign that calls on everyone – especially women and girls – to take control of technology and strategically use any ICT platform at hand for activism against gender-based violence. It's a global project that highlights the problem of tech-related violence against women, incorporating research and solutions from different parts of the world. The campaign offers safety roadmaps and information and provides an avenue for taking action. Take Back the Tech! leads several campaigns at various points in the year, but our biggest annual campaign takes place during *16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence* (25 November - 10 December).
www.takebackthetech.net

Working with bystanders

Violence often takes place in the presence of other people. Cyber sexual and gender-based violence often happens in online spaces as well, with – besides the perpetrator and the survivors – numerous other people present, as bystanders. However, most of them are very unlikely to intervene. The explanation of why people tend to refrain from helping is because they believe another person will eventually step in and do something. Sometimes they fail to notice the assault, they do not believe it is their responsibility or they do not have the skills to intervene.

As the research mentioned before indicates, though, young people would first turn to their peers if they found themselves in a situation of digital violence. Bearing this in mind, it is clear that young people are, in fact, of great help to each other and present a significant link in the response to violence behaviour in the digital sphere. If given the skills to act against violence, it could help them to prevent dating violence and make sure that the victim gets help and support.

The innovative approach used in many countries **involves teaching bystanders how to intervene in situations that involve sexual and gender-based violence**. The role of a bystander includes interrupting situations that could lead to assault before it happens or during an incident, speaking out against the social norms that support (cyber) sexual and gender-based violence, and having skills to be an effective and supportive ally to survivors. Effective actions for bystanders include: giving the perpetrator less attention; redirecting the perpetrator to a different activity; showing support for the victim, even in a safe situation after the incident; helping the victim to get away; reporting the incident and getting support from a trusted person; and setting a good example.

Schools can offer educational programs for bystanders which would provide the participants with the skills helping them to act when they see behaviour that puts others at risk for violence, victimization, or perpetration. These include speaking out against rape myths and sexist language, supporting victim/survivors, and intervening in potentially violent situations.

Hollaback! have worked with partners to develop tools and training aimed at helping bystanders intervene when they see harassment happen. The Five D's – Distract, Delegate, Document, Delay, and Direct. – present different methods people can use to support someone who is being harassed, emphasize that abuse is not okay, and demonstrate to other people that they too have the power to make our communities and workplaces safer.

More information on: www.ihollaback.org/bystander-resources/

Engaging parents in the prevention, and why it matters

Parents have an unquestionably significant role in the development of their child's understanding of gender, gender roles, gender equality, as well as their learning about responsible behaviour in partner relationships, including responsible online behaviour. Therefore, cooperation between school representatives and parents is essential for the violence prevention, as highlighted in the legal-strategic framework addressing the protection of children from abuse and violence. While parents are already involved in school matters in different ways and there is a clear understanding that teacher-parent cooperation is necessary for the benefit of educating and upbringing students, if they are to tackle cyber violence, gender-based violence, in the context of youth partner relationships, this requires additional competences and knowledge from both sides.

An EU-wide research⁵⁹ has shown that in most countries, most of the children say that their parents engage in active mediation at least occasionally (talk to them, encourage them, help them and suggest ways to use the internet safely). According to the same research, parents are the main source of help when something upsetting happens to their children online.

Talking regularly and openly with the child about their relationships and what they are doing online will help build trust and may decrease the parents' desire to check up on their children without them knowing. The youth can benefit from the opportunity to talk to trusted adults, like their parents, about sexual health and healthy relationships.

Insufficient parental involvement and focus, lack of clear boundaries and information regarding possible dangers present on the Internet, violent behaviour of parents – they all contribute to young people's violent behaviour⁶⁰. Furthermore, an unfavourable school climate – including poor communication and negative relations among the participants of school life (teachers, other professionals and parents) – leads to a rise in all forms of violence, digital sphere included.

Besides working on their own level of digital competence, teachers also have an important role in the empowerment of parents, especially in terms of a better understanding of their children and their development and their role as parents, encouraging them to work on their parental capacities and competencies within the family upbringing.

By involving parents in the discussion on (cyber) sexual and gender-based violence, there will be more opportunities to directly address sensitive topics, such as sexual harassment, adolescent sexuality and relationships, intimate partner violence etc. These conversations might be challenging, but by giving a chance to parents to speak on such issues can lead to greater awareness and mutual understanding between parents, students and teachers. Having representatives from women's groups present may enrich these discussions and enhance collaboration with formal or informal referral sources in the community.

▶ **What can you do as a teacher to encourage parent involvement⁶¹?**

- Inform parents about your activities: Involve parents in creating a safe environment for students and building good relations with everyone. This can be achieved at parent-teacher meetings, or through messages or telephone conversations with parents.
- Encourage good relations: Cooperate with other teachers in organizing plays and meetings with students and parents, bring guest speakers to talk about topics of interest to parents, ask students to attend parent-teacher meetings, write or talk to parents on a regular basis, give homework that requires communication with parents, involve parents in class activities.
- Ask for information and establish contact with the parent. If a student exhibits warning signs of being exposed to violence or being violent to others, contact their parents. Make sure the meeting is held at school and ask the school pedagogue or psychologist to attend.
- Document and monitor: Make reports from meetings, write down all the important data, conclusions, agreements made. It is important to stay in contact with parents to monitor whether an agreement stands, i.e. to monitor the student's behaviour and keep records of any changes. It is good to have more positive than negative comments regarding the child's behaviour, because they will have an opportunity to view a positive side of their child.

⁵⁹ Smahel, D., Machackova, H., Mascheroni, G., Dedkova, L., Staksrud, E., Ólafsson, K., Livingstone, S., and Hasebrink, U. (2020). EU Kids Online 2020: Survey results from 19 countries. EU Kids Online. Doi: 10.21953/lse.47fdeqj01ofo, pps. 8 and 125.

⁶⁰ D.Kuzmanović, et al.(2016)., Digitalno nasilje-prevenција i reagovanje, Ministarstvo prosvete, nauke i tehnološkog razvoja Republike Srbije i Pedagoško društvo Srbije, Beograd, p 26.

⁶¹ Ibid. pg.98-99.

Here are some ideas for **activities** (based on school practices⁶²) **that can be initiated by teachers to improve cooperation with parents** and engage them in school activities, including violence prevention programs:

- Organize parent-teacher meetings where parents can say how they envisage their cooperation with the school, and what they can offer in that sense.
- Teams can be formed, comprising two teachers-coordinators and a group of parents. This can be done based on personal preferences and interests of the parents: e.g. a team for setting up visits, a team for organizing workshops...
- Provide parents with appropriate materials and resources to learn more about online safety, so that they can discuss topics such as pressures on social media, the question of consent and sharing photos, using a partner's password without their permission; being emotionally aggressive and expressing verbal threats through digital means, keeping online accounts secure.
- Initiate different activities which were planned and implemented with the help of parents: Organize meetings where students present specific topics to parents, mark significant dates, make visits to relevant institutions, initiate educational discussions on safety and protection from violence (with the participation of school representatives and external experts – including parents-experts); organize focus groups on different topics, promotional events, presentations of school or class rules for parents; organize a day of switched roles (parents and students take the role of teachers) or a parent-teacher club; inform on and engage in local activities, e.g. in municipality-level parent councils or national associations of parents and teachers; organize interactive workshops for students on relevant topics.
- Organize pedagogical-psychological counselling for parents or workshops aimed at strengthening parental competencies. These can focus on current topics and can involve discussions with experts in relevant fields.

Guidelines for adults on safe internet use⁶³

- <https://www.childnet.com/resources/a-parents-guide-to-technology>
- <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/parents-and-carers/parents-guidetotechnology>
- <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/blog/key-things-remember-when-helping-yourchild-set-new-profile>
- <https://www.esafety.gov.au/education-resources/iparent/online-safeguards/parental-controls>
- <https://www.childnet.com/parents-and-carers/hot-topics/parental-controls>
- <https://rm.coe.int/digital-parenting-/16807670e8>
- <https://www.breakthecycle.org/sites/default/files/LINA%20Parent%20Handbook.pdf>

Collaborating with the local community and other stakeholders

Given the seriousness of dating and intimate partner violence – as well as the complexity of this issue – an effective response requires an ongoing commitment and collaboration of schools, families and communities, as well as policy makers. Many local communities are involved in **coordinated efforts to prevent violence against women**, bringing together key sectors such as health, police, education and psychosocial support services. School representatives can take part in existing community-based coordination committees that address violence prevention.

⁶² Ibid, pg.101.

⁶³ Kuzmanović, D. et al. (2019), *Deca u digitalnom dobu – Vodič za bezbedno konstruktivno korišćenje ditalne tehnologije i interneta*. Užički centar za prava deteta, Užice. pg. 57.

Specific legal frameworks and action protocols currently in place already define what the communication with schools should be like, as well as what steps should be taken, by schools when it comes to reporting and addressing cases in cooperation with other institutions. However, as survey results show, teaching professionals in most countries encompassed within this project would benefit from better communication channels with professionals and specific contact persons from other institutions.

When it comes to interventions, be it at school or in other institutions, **schools can profit from consultations with professionals from other institutions and a stronger cooperation with persons on specialized positions.** It would help them ensure a timely and coordinated response on the part of the school, one that is in the student's best interest, adapted to their specific needs. In case the school reports or initiates procedures with other institutions, the **school has the right to be informed and request information on the outcomes of the steps taken by other institutions that affect their students.** The school can then act accordingly and is able to document developments and results of actions taken. In addition to this, school may refer students for support and information to specialized non-governmental organizations providing direct work or prevention work with youth on sexual and gender-based violence and cyber violence.

- When it comes to cooperating with other institutions and specialized organizations, representatives of these institutions can also get involved in prevention activities as well, through, for example: involvement in project-type school work as experts in the field; speaking at meetings with pupils, parents, teachers and other school staff; implementing interactive workshops with youth; speaking at municipality-level events initiated by the school with the aim of awareness-raising (including its form in the cyberspace); distribution of materials and providing contact information of these institutions/specialized organizations in the school (putting up educational/informative posters, making helpline numbers visible at school premises, alongside links to useful websites and specific pages on the school website); consulting/advising in the preparation of school plans for the prevention of violence, abuse and neglect.
- For instance, in Croatia, police officers have been trained to hold workshops with high school students, titled 'Living life without violence', aimed at preventing violence against women. This also allows the youth to develop positive relationships with the police.
- Civil society organizations are key players in the prevention of (cyber) sexual and gender-based violence in adolescent relationships. They have been recognized as partners/collaborators by other institutions, including schools which largely rely on CSOs, implementing their programs, using their manuals and other educational materials, participating in trainings or projects led by civil society organizations. Community organizations could offer space to display messages against gender-based violence through exhibitions of students' works, for example in local libraries, art galleries or community centres. Also, schools could host or take part in community events, such as organizing student theatre productions or holding workshops or information booths.

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TEACHER'S GUIDEBOOK ON CYBER SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

APPENDIX 1



Workshop 1: The Gender Box

Work-Sheet 1.1: Collage of stereotyped images of men

What we see on ads, television, movies....

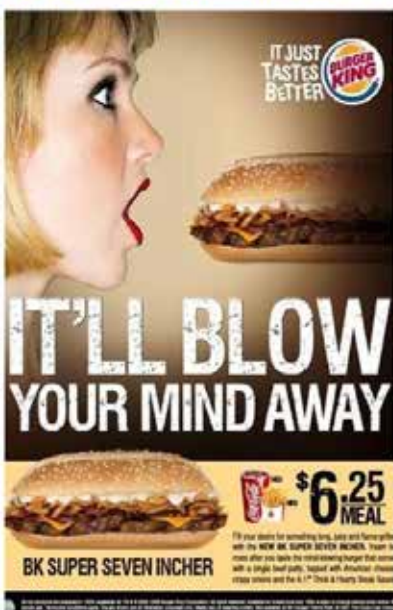
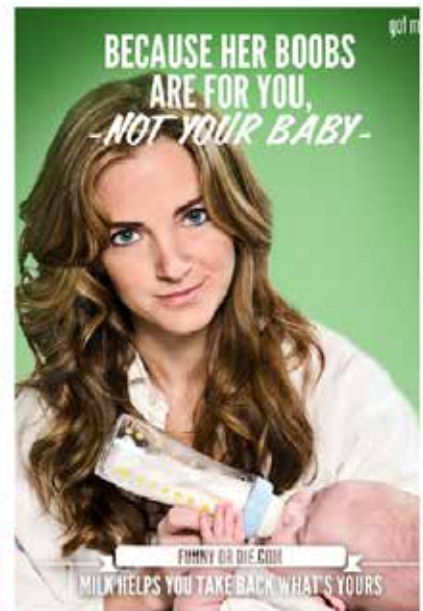
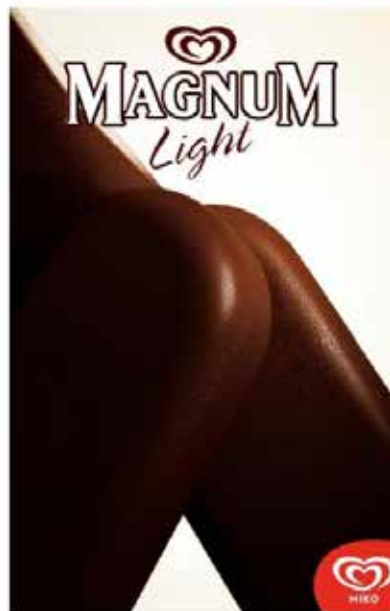


Like whiskey and a beautiful woman, timepieces demand appreciation, you gaze first and then indulge!!
-Mariner Watches ⚓



Work-Sheet 1.2: Collage of stereotyped images of women

What we see on ads, television, movies....



Work-Sheet 1.3: Gender Box Question

Please discuss the following questions in your group:

- How are the women/men portrayed in the pictures? Describe their appearance and their physical characteristics.
- What messages do these pictures project about the character of these women/men? How are they supposed to behave? Describe them with adjectives.
- Overall, according to your own experiences and reflecting on what you have heard (from your parents, peers, friends, the media, at school etc.), what different roles do women/men assume in their lives? Are they professionally successful? Do they hold a position of authority? What is their role within their own families?

Answer the following questions:

- What feelings is a "real man" or a "real woman" supposed to have?
- How do "real men" or "real women" express their feelings?
- How are "real men" or "real women" supposed to act sexually?

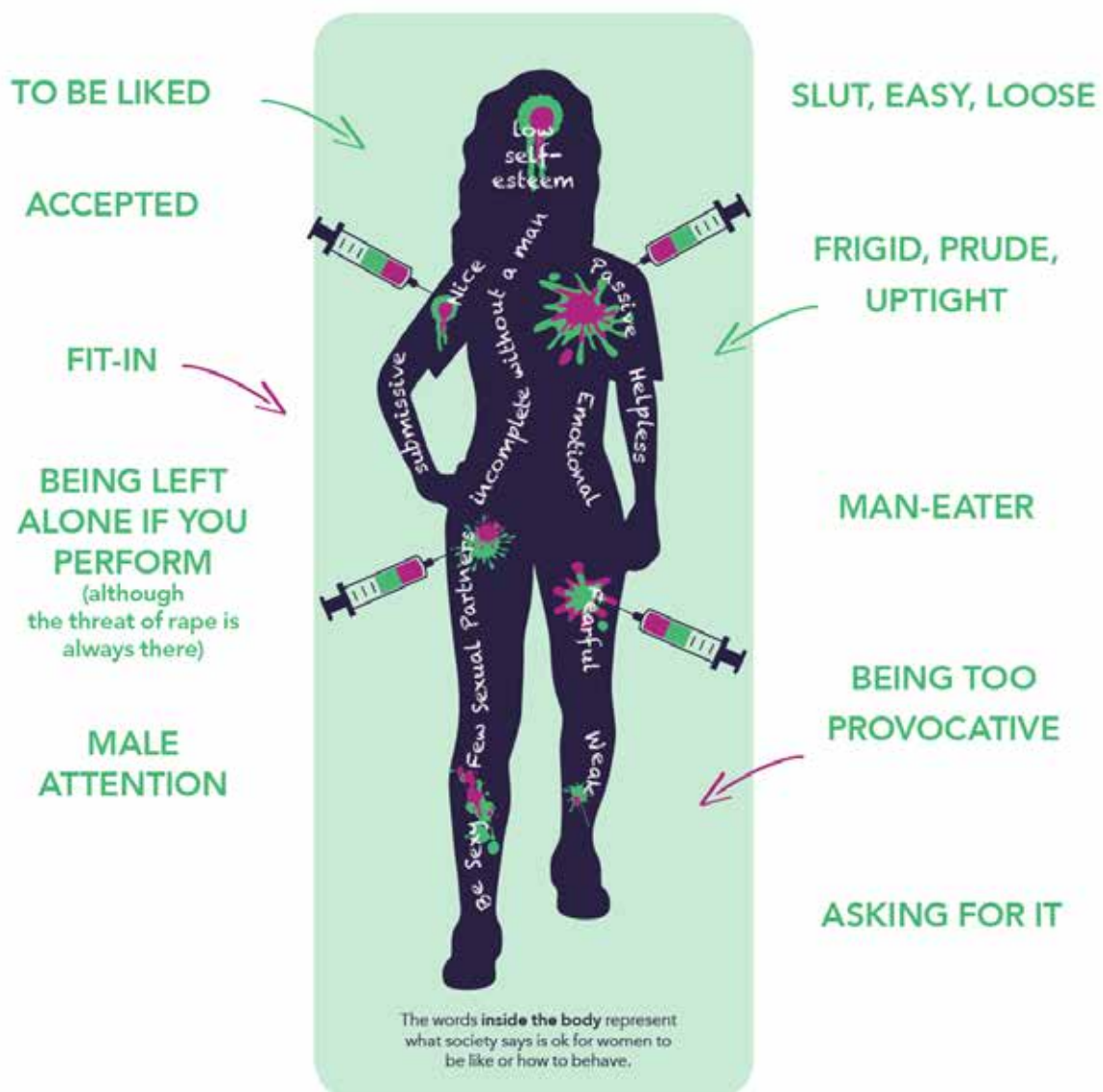
Adapted from: The Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (2012) "Empowering Young People in Preventing Gender-based Violence through Peer Education".

Work-Sheet 1.4: Female Gender Box

Examples of social **REWARDS** that keep women inside the gender box:

Examples of social **PUNISHMENTS** that keep women inside the gender box:

A Woman in the "Gender Box"

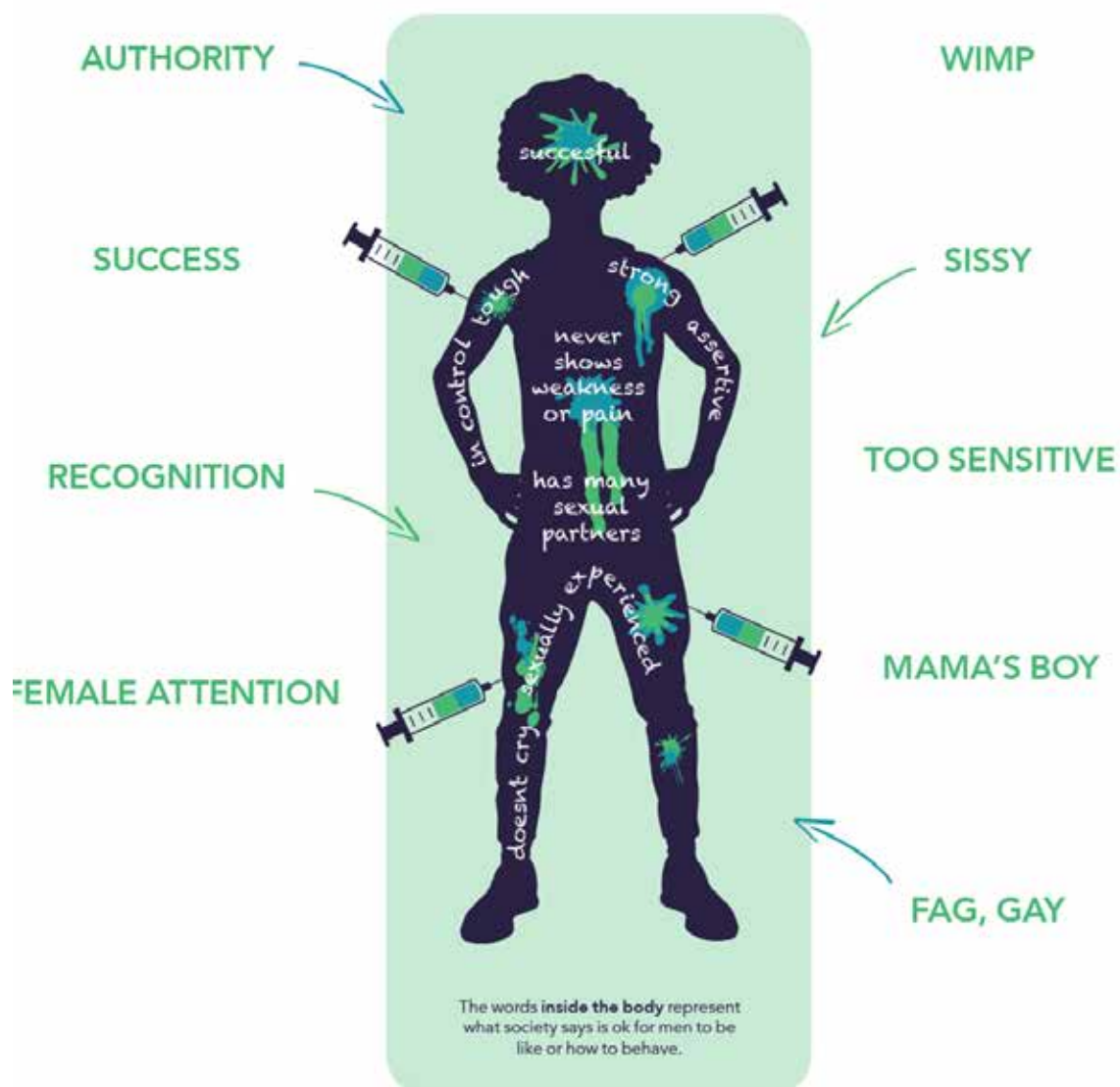


Work-Sheet 1.5: Male Gender Box

Examples of social **REWARDS** that keep men inside the gender box

Examples of social **PUNISHMENTS** that keep men inside the gender box

A Man in the "Gender Box"



Work-Sheet 1.6: But it was just a Joke



Adapted from a graphic by Artist Ashley Fairbanks

Workshop 2. Romantic Love

Worksheet 2.1:

The Prince on a White Horse

The Prince on a White Horse

- Tom:

You are beautiful! I love your style. You have the coolest personality. I never met anyone who was as charismatic as you are.

- Luisa's feeling:

I feel really good, no one ever said things like this to me before.

- Tom:

You know, I never felt anyone that close to myself. You are the only one who I really trust, with whom I can share every problem of mine and who is really able to help to deal with my problems. I love being with you, I love you so much.

- Luisa's feeling:

I'm so important to him and I also feel really safe when I'm with Tom.

- Tom:

I feel as if I have found my other half. I'm sure that we were born to be with each other. Do you also have these feelings, that we don't need anyone else just each other?

- Luisa's feeling:

Every minute that I'm not spending with Tom is a waste of time. Nobody ever had these kinds of feelings for me.

- Tom:

You know, you are very sexy. Don't you think that this skirt is a bit too much? I'm so worried about you. I think it would be much safer, if you would change to something less provoking.

- Luisa's feeling:

I'm really in love with Tom. I can do this little thing for him if this is what is bothering him. From now on I will pay more attention to what I wear. It should be okay with him as well.

- Tom:

You spend so much time with your friends. I can't understand. Until now, we were so happy together. I'm not enough for you anymore? I think they have a bad effect on you. You are always so grumpy after you are with them.

- Luisa's feeling:

I want to be kind with Tom. He is so into me and he always wants the best for me. He always says that I'm so grumpy after meeting with my friends. I don't want to cause bad feelings in him. Maybe he is true, they have a bad effect on me, I will pay attention and spend less time with them.

Worksheet 2.2:

Warning Signs of an Abusive Relationship

Warning signs of an abusive relationship

- Checking your cell phone or email without permission
- Constantly putting you down
- Extreme jealousy
- Explosive temper
- Isolating you from family or friends
- Blames you for everything
- Mood swings
- Physically hurting you in any way
- Possessiveness
- Telling you what to do
- Pressuring or forcing you to have sex

Workshop 3. Online control and violence in a partner relationship

Worksheet 3.1 – Situation 1

Read the chat and discuss the questions.



- Is this behaviour acceptable?
- How do you think Alice feels?
- What would be your advice to Alice?
- Do you think this is a realistic situation?
- Who can help and how in such a situation?

Worksheet 3.2 – Situation 2

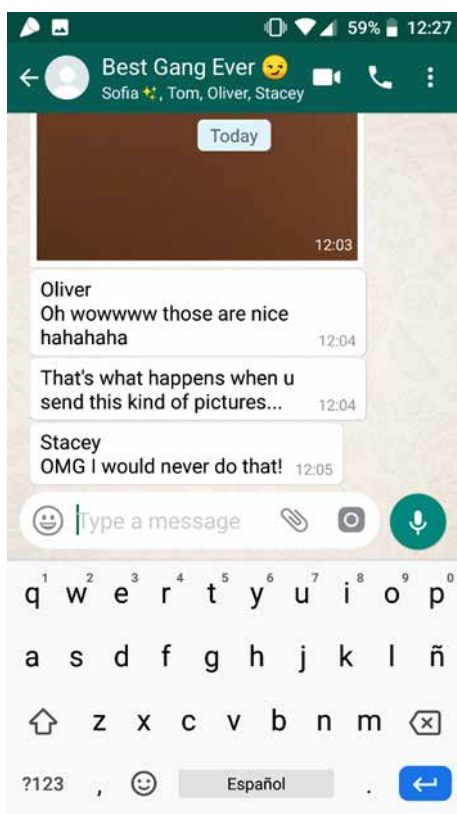
Read the chat and discuss the questions.



- Is this behaviour acceptable?
- How do you think this person feels?
- What would be your advice?
- Is this a realistic situation?
- Who can help and how in such a situation?

Worksheet 3.3 - Situation 3

Read the chat and discuss the questions.



- Is this behaviour acceptable?
- How do you think this person feels?
- What would be your advice to the group members?
- Is this a realistic situation?
- Who can help and how in such a situation?

Worksheet 3.4 – Online violence term and definition matching⁶⁴

Cyberbullying	Repeated behaviour using textual or graphical content with the aim of frightening and undermining someone's self-esteem or reputation.
Cyberstalking	Spying, fixating or compiling information about somebody online and trying to communicate with them against their will. The tactic is often used as an extension of intimate partner violence.
Online sexual harassment	Can involve 1) unwanted offensive sexually explicit emails or SMS messages; 2) inappropriate offensive advances on social networking websites such as Facebook, or in internet chat rooms.
Online Dating Abuse	Use of technologies such as texting and social networking to bully, harass, stalk or intimidate a partner. Often this behaviour is a form of verbal or emotional abuse perpetrated online.
Doxxing	Researching/manipulating and publishing private information about an individual, without their consent as to expose, shame and sometimes access and target the person in "real life" for harassment or other types of abuse
Revenge pornography	Type of behaviour consisting of accessing, using, disseminating private graphical or video content without consent or knowledge, content sent by means of 'sexting' can also be shared without consent.

Worksheet 3.5 – Blank speech bubbles



Workshop 4. Be an Upstander

Worksheet 4.1: Scene 1

You meet your friend to go to the cinema and you have the impression that she was crying just before. Sometime in the past, she had told you that her boyfriend screams and swears at her, insults and humiliates her, and he always wants to know where she is and with whom; she even had to give him all her internet passwords, so he can check who she writes to. It also seems that she has some bruises on her arms.

What are the reasons TO INTERVENE in this situation?

What are the reasons NOT TO INTERVENE in this situation?

What do you think you would do? What would you say? How do you think you would intervene?
Group Choice:

How do you imagine that others would respond to your intervention: Her boyfriend?

Your friend?

Worksheet 4.2:

Scene 2

There is a rumour that a boy that you know raped a girl. You discuss this matter with two of your best friends and one of them defends the accused by saying things about the girl such as: "she was asking for it... look at how she dresses... and have you seen her Facebook and the pictures she has there with boys she has dated? It's so clear that she was asking for it... someone should actually post a message in our Facebook group about her so that all will know that she was asking for it".

What are the reasons TO INTERVENE in this situation?

What are the reasons NOT TO INTERVENE in this situation?

What do you think you would do? What would you say? How do you think you would intervene?
Group Choice:

How do you imagine that others would respond to your intervention:
Boy who is rumored to have raped a girl?

Your friends?

Worksheet 4.3:

Scene 3

Your friend confides in you that she is stressed out about her relationship. She tells you how her boyfriend likes it when she sends him sexually explicit pictures of herself; so she has done it a couple of times. She didn't see any harm in it but now he demands that she does it, even if she doesn't want to. She says that she tries to tell him she isn't comfortable doing it anymore, and he said since she is his girlfriend this is something that she is expected to do. Recently he has told her that he will even leak the ones that she has already sent if she doesn't continue to send them.

What are the reasons TO INTERVENE in this situation?

What are the reasons NOT TO INTERVENE in this situation?

What do you think you would do? What would you say? How do you think you would intervene?
Group Choice:

How do you imagine that others would respond to your intervention: Her boyfriend?

Your friend?

Worksheet 4.4:

Scene 4

In school you overhear your classmate having a conversation with his girlfriend, who you also know. The conversation is getting pretty heated and you hear him call her "slut". Your classmate demands that she give him her cell phone, so he can check her text messages. The girlfriend tries to leave but the he says, "You're not going anywhere until we get to the bottom of this," and blocks her from leaving. What do you do?

What are the reasons TO INTERVENE in this situation?

What are the reasons NOT TO INTERVENE in this situation?

What do you think you would do? What would you say? How do you think you would intervene?
Group Choice:

How do you imagine that others would respond to your intervention: Her boyfriend?

Your friend?

Handout 4.1:

Helping a friend who is being abused

Watching a friend endure dating violence often leaves you feeling helpless and wanting to do something more to help them. By initiating a conversation about the violence, you are showing the victim that you care, and that she/ he is not alone.

- Tell the person who is being abused that you are concerned for his or her safety. Make it clear that you know about the abuse, and that you are concerned. Tell your friend that he or she does not deserve to be abused.
- Be there. Listen without giving advice, unless it is asked for; instead, talk to your friend about the choices they have and let your friend know that you believe them.
- Don't pressure your friend to break up with their partner, and don't put down their partner, as this may drive your friend away.
- Acknowledge that the abuse is not the victim's fault. Remind the friend that the abuser is responsible for the abuse. Tell the person that they are not alone.
- Be supportive and patient. It may be difficult for the person to talk about the abuse. Let your friend know that you are available to listen or help any time.
- Avoid judging your friend. The person may break up with and go back to the abuser many times before finally leaving the relationship. Do not criticize your friend for doing this, even if you disagree with the choices they make.
- Encourage the person to talk to others who can provide help and guidance. Offer to help the person talk to family, friends, a teacher/staff at school or to help them find a counsellor or support group. If your friend decides to go to the police, offer to go with them, but make sure you don't do the talking when you get there.
- Do not confront the abuser during an act of violence as it could be dangerous for you and your friend. It is best to call the police or get help from an adult in violent situations.
- Remember that you cannot 'rescue' the person who is experiencing the abuse. It is difficult to see someone you care about get hurt. However, your friend must be the one who decides what to do. Your job is to be supportive.

Handout 4.2:

How to help a friend who is abusing?

Most young people who act violently or abusive in a relationship do not consider themselves as being abusers. Many of them deny or do not think that such behaviour is a big deal.

You as a friend might find it difficult to believe that your friend is an abuser. Talking to a friend who has been violent is not an easy thing to do but it is a sign of a true friendship.

When you talk to the friend who is abusive the following might help:

- Do not pretend that you don't know what is going on
- Be specific about what you have seen and how you feel about it.
- Tell your friend that this is not ok and that you won't allow this to continue.
- Make sure that your friend understands that they are responsible for their behaviour and the consequences, because abuse/violence is a crime.
- Do not accept any excuses or justifications from them.
- Help them to find professional help, to talk with teachers at school or the school's psychologist or any other grown-up that they trust.
- Offer your friend your support during the process of seeking help.
- Tell your friend that you are worried and care about them.
- Be a role model for healthy relationships by treating them and others with respect.

Remember we all play a role
in creating a culture of respect
and Saying NO to violence and
abuse!

Don't be the bystander, be the hero!!!

