



# THIS IS ABUSE

## Discussion Guide



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# Introduction

## Background to the campaign

The 'This is Abuse' campaign is aimed at preventing teenagers (13 to 18 year old boys and girls) from becoming perpetrators and victims of abusive relationships by encouraging them to understand what a healthy relationship is, to re-think their views of controlling behaviour, violence, abuse, sexual abuse and what consent means within their relationships and directs them to places for help and advice. This learning is placed within the context of 21st century social norms and technology.

The 'Teenage Relationship Abuse' campaign was launched in February 2010 and focused on helping teenagers to recognise and understand the different types of abuse that can happen within relationships. In March 2012 the campaign was developed and the 'Teenage Rape Prevention' campaign focused on helping teenagers understand what consent means and how to recognise signs. In 2013 the two campaigns were brought together under the 'This is Abuse' campaign as evaluation showed that teenagers didn't see abuse and rape as separate entities, but rather viewed as a continuum of abuse.

Evaluation has shown the campaign adverts are good at prompting teenagers to think about these issues and also start to identify with them. However, the adverts are not able to continue the conversation and answer questions that might be raised regarding these complex issues, to embed messages and develop positive relationship behaviours. We've seen the valuable role that in-person discussions have in extending the impact of the adverts and consolidating learning, but recognise that these are challenging topics to hold discussions on with young people. In response to feedback and to support the valuable work you do, we have developed this discussion guide to help you use the campaign materials to facilitate discussion with teenagers on the issues surrounding abuse within their relationships. It contains ideas for setting out lesson plans with information which will help young people to recognise what abusive behaviours are and encourage them to re-think their views of controlling behaviour, violence, abuse and what consent means within their relationships. Since the guide was first published in December 2013 it has been developed to include further information on how to facilitate discussions with teenagers on sexting, and the specific issue of girls in gangs and to take account of new guidance from the Crown Prosecution Service on consent, sexual assault and rape. It also includes some information for facilitators on online pornography, and LGBT issues. **It is recommended that you read this guide in full and familiarise yourself with the support materials before starting any sessions with young people.**

This discussion guide has been produced so it can be used by a wide range of organisations who work directly with young people. The PSHE Association have quality assured this guide and if you are a teacher, or work in an educational institution, the PSHE Association recommends that these lessons should form part of a module on personal safety, underpinned by a comprehensive SRE programme. Teachers should always be aware of their school's safeguarding policy and should teach in line with it. You can find further information on the PSHE Association website [www.pshe-association.org.uk](http://www.pshe-association.org.uk), including its national programme of study for PSHE which shows how a spiral curriculum of learning about healthy relationships, consent and abuse can be integrated into a wider programme of learning focusing on linked issues such as emotional health, body image, and drugs and alcohol education.

This discussion guide has been developed in consultation with Home Office research agencies, Home Office insight team, the PSHE Association and partners. We would be interested to know what you think of this discussion guide and if it has been helpful facilitating discussions with young people. We have developed an online survey to evaluate the discussion guide, which we would like you to complete once you have used the guide a few times. You can access the online survey at <http://www.homeofficesurveys.homeoffice.gov.uk/s/thisisabusediscussionguide>. We will use this feedback to evaluate the guide and continue to develop and update it. If you have any questions about this discussion guide, please email: [VAWGcampaigns@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:VAWGcampaigns@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk)

The main aims of this discussion guide are to give ideas and suggested lesson plans which use the This is Abuse campaign materials and other partner materials help to facilitate discussions with young people. We have had feedback from a range of partners that using the materials offers a useful way to open and guide discussion with young people, allowing them to comment on the behaviour of characters rather than themselves or people they know. The aim of this guide is to support work aimed at preventing teenagers from becoming perpetrators and victims in abusive relationships: by

- building understanding of consent, and in particular the responsibility of the seeker of consent to ensure that the other person has the freedom and capacity to give their consent
- helping teenagers recognise what a healthy relationship looks like, and which behaviours are abusive and not consistent with a healthy relationship
- encouraging teenagers to re-think their views of violence, abuse or controlling behaviour in relationships
- improving understanding of what constitutes rape, sexual assault
- empowering teenagers to avoid, challenge and report sexually violent behaviour
- directing teenagers to places for further help and advice

There are a range of 'This is Abuse' support materials available to download from GOV. UK. We have also included links to other online resources from partners which you may find useful. Details on how to access these resources are listed in **Resource A**.

## Note to Facilitators

Due to the sensitive issues being discussed, firm ground rules should be established at the start of the lessons and distancing techniques used. Teenagers should not be encouraged to make personal disclosures in lessons and should instead be given information on where they can talk about personal matters in a safe, one to one setting. However, we know that in spite of these rules being set, teenagers may share information during the session which raises safeguarding or disclosure issues. If a disclosure is made you should follow your own Safeguarding Children and Information Sharing policies. There is further advice on 'Dealing with Disclosures' at Resource B and 'Further Sources of Help for young people' at Resource D, following up on these issues where appropriate. There is also advice on setting ground rules in advance of the session in Section One, so everyone feels comfortable joining in the discussions. These ground rules can also help you prepare for potential disclosures and handle them appropriately.

It is also useful to make yourself available after the session to talk to those young people who might not have felt comfortable talking in front of the group, and offer specific advice if needed.

## Key Messages

There are a number of **key messages in the campaign which teenagers need to understand and believe**, they are:

- consent is a free choice to give permission made by someone feeling comfortable in giving that permission
- abuse in relationships is not normal or acceptable – if you are in an abusive relationship, it's not your fault
- it's not just physical violence, like punching or kicking, that makes a relationship abusive – if you are threatened with violence, have no say over what you wear or who you see or speak to, or are constantly criticised, it is still abuse
- abuse is never OK – blaming abuse on anger, jealousy, alcohol or the other person's behaviour is not acceptable
- abuse can happen in any relationship; in heterosexual relationships the male or the female could be the perpetrator, and it can also happen in same sex relationships. Abuse can include threatening to 'out' LGBT young people, which is a highly manipulative form of abuse
- pressurising someone to have sex or take part in sexual activity (i.e. groping and sexual touching) who doesn't want to or hasn't given their consent is never acceptable for any reason
- you should never have to do something sexual that you don't feel comfortable with, even if many of your friends are comfortable with similar situations
- sex with someone who has not given their consent, is rape. It does not make a difference whether the people know each other or not, or what relationship they have
- rape does not have to involve physical force – threatening violence, or having sex with someone who is incapable of consenting (for example because they're drunk or asleep) is rape
- being sexually assaulted or raped is never the victim's fault; there is no excuse for failing to seek someone else's consent or respect their decision not to give or to withdraw their consent
- that gender double standards – such as young men who have lots of sexual partners being seen as 'experienced', but young women who have lots of sexual partners being seen as 'easy' – are not acceptable. Similarly, myths relating to consent, many of which are heavily gendered (men can't control themselves when aroused, or women need to be persuaded to have a sexual relationship) must be challenged
- help is available – if you need some support getting out of an abusive relationship or just want to talk to someone visit <http://thisisabuse.direct.gov.uk>

# Section One: Preparing for the session

## Key questions to help you plan your lesson:

1. **How much time do you have?** The full outline suggested in this pack takes approximately 5 hours to run. Depending on the length of time you have for your lessons, you may want to select certain sections or run them over a series of sessions.
2. **How much time should be devoted to each section?** We have suggested a structure and timing to cover a range of relationship abuse themes. Depending on available time, the objectives of your session and audience, you may not wish to cover all topics or prefer to dedicate more time to some of them.
3. **Have a structure and session time guide prepared:** Always make sure you have a really clear structure beforehand – timings, exercises, question outlines etc. You may not be able to stick to this exactly but it provides you with some boundaries and puts you in control. All sessions should include setting of ground rules, assessment for and of learning, setting of clear learning objectives and learning outcomes and differentiation of activities based on pupil assessment (visit the PSHE Association website [www.pshe-association.org.uk](http://www.pshe-association.org.uk) if these concepts are unfamiliar).
4. **Who is in the group?** Consider the group you will be teaching / facilitating and implications for how you manage the session, the content you include, structure you take, and preparing for potential difficulties. Consider the gender make up of the group; mixed gender learning can help young people better understand one another's feelings and beliefs whilst opportunities for single gender learning can generate more honesty and questions. It is essential that all students receive the same learning.<sup>1</sup> What is the age of the group and what does this mean for the areas of content you include or dedicate more time to? Do the young people know each other? Familiarity might help the session as they are comfortable with one another or it could present a challenge as young people may feel self conscious in front of peers. Consider the tips on questions and techniques later in the guide to help you plan and overcome these challenges.

You also need to ensure that before you start the session the group understand that you will be showing films and discussing issues on relationship abuse and rape. **You need to make clear that if any member of the group feels upset or uncomfortable with anything they see or you are discussing that they can leave the room, or speak to you privately after the session. If a young person is upset or uncomfortable with the issues being discussed and does want to leave the room, you need to ensure that they have somewhere safe to go. You may already have your own organisational procedures in place for this type of issue, or you could make a member of the pastoral staff aware you are running the session and that anyone who wants to leave could go to their office.**

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<sup>1</sup> A key principle of PSHE education is that all pupils, whatever their gender, are able to access the same key learning. However, we also know that in some instances, such as when talking about topics which pupils may find sensitive, it may be necessary to separate groups in order to ensure pupils feel comfortable talking about issues. In general, we would expect that if there is some gender separation, all groups know what the other groups are exploring and no pupil misses out on key learning because of their gender. We recommend a group plenary at the end of any lesson where separation has taken place in order to ensure it.

5. **How big is the group?** Can you run it alone or do you need a co-facilitator to help manage a larger number? Will you run the session as one group or split into smaller groups?
6. **Where is the lesson taking place?** What set up is best for the group? Do you have access to the internet to show the films which are available online on the 'This is Abuse' website. Or alternatively, you can download the posters and postcards from GOV.UK which have the campaign messages on them and are also a good way to prompt discussion if you don't have access to the internet.
7. **How will you start discussion and ask questions? What techniques will help?** Depending on the topic and audience prepare for how you open your session, frame your questions and try to facilitate discussion on these sensitive and personal issues. See later in the guide for hints and tips and the discussion guide outline for suggested questions.
8. **Disclosure and after the session.** It is important to let the group know that if they tell you about something that might indicate potential abuse, or risk of other harm, you will need to tell someone and follow your organisations Safeguarding Children and Information Sharing Policies. You should also make time at the end of the session and let the group know you are available in case any of them want to speak to you privately. You also need to make clear to the group that they should not share personal information about other members of the group. If they have a concern that someone in the group is being abused or is abusive they should speak to you privately after the session. Your organisation will have its own Safeguarding Children and Information Sharing Policies in place and these must be followed. We have also provided some advice on dealing with disclosures in **Resource B** which you may find helpful in addition to your own organisation's procedures.



## Asking questions:

Relationship abuse, rape and sexual violence are clearly challenging and sensitive topics to discuss, particularly among young people. This section offers advice on asking questions and the discussion guide template offers some specific pointers for ways of phrasing them.

**Try to keep questions open to invite discussion.**

**Don't ask leading questions or 'tell the answer':** try to draw out views, guide discussion and allow young people to develop their understanding through the conversation.

**Clarification:** while exploratory discussion is important, a key role for you in the session is to clarify questions, correct misunderstanding or rebut negative myths that surround these issues.

**Use gentle probing and prompting:** use follow up questions to get to the bottom of what people mean or to get them to clarify their idea or argument: example questions are given later in the guide.

**Don't be judgmental about young people's responses:** although you may have to clarify and correct try to do this in a neutral way that understands their position. This will help to ensure people don't feel embarrassed or afraid to continue to comment (or put others off for fear of 'getting it wrong').



## Example questions

Explorative open questions: good for starting discussion	Probing questions: good for helping flow, keeping discussion and getting deeper responses	Reflecting question to the group: good for gathering a range of views or managing difficult participants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can you tell me about..?</li> <li>• How do you feel about...?</li> <li>• What does 'x' make you think of...?</li> <li>• What types of 'xx' can you think of...?</li> <li>• Where do you go to find out about 'x'...?</li> <li>• How do we know this is a credible source of information about 'x'...?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell me more about?</li> <li>• Can we explore that a bit more?</li> <li>• What makes you think/say that?</li> <li>• I am curious why you say that?</li> <li>• What's that all about do you think?</li> <li>• I wonder why that is?</li> <li>• What do you think other young people would say (who are different to you)?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What kinds of feelings do people have about that..?</li> <li>• What do others think? Who agrees / disagrees?</li> <li>• Not everyone thinks the same thing about everything – who thinks something different about this?</li> </ul>

## Techniques:

Using techniques and exercises can help facilitate discussion, particularly for these difficult subject areas. Different options that can be useful are:

1. **Projective techniques** that allow young people to refer or project onto a third party. This is useful for getting under the skin and eliciting underlying feelings or 'honest' answers that might feel too scary to share in the group or be subconscious. By referring to a character or other person rather than 'me', young people can feel safer in expressing their view. We recommend that you use the support materials listed at the beginning of each section to allow the group to discuss the characters and issues, without referring to themselves. We've had wide feedback from partners that the campaign materials offer a useful and constructive way to open sessions and a way to guide discussion.
2. **Enabling techniques** are useful for helping young people to articulate views on difficult subjects. Examples might be mapping types of behaviours onto a spectrum of acceptability or getting young people to write a word cloud or other visual representation of what they see as a healthy relationship. You could then ask the group to discuss and respond to the results.

## Managing the group

Holding a session on a sensitive topic with young people will naturally bring its challenges. As mentioned earlier in the guide, familiarity within the group can work to your advantage or present an obstacle to overcome. The issue may be difficult for people to discuss, could be felt embarrassing, lead to giggles, silly comments or difficult challenges. Thinking about how you prepare for these factors and manage the group up front should help prevent the lesson being taken off course or disrupted.

Recognising the types of young people in your group and planning ways to deal with them can help you feel in control. The table below suggests potential personality type issues you might face and tips for managing them:

Dominant	Critical / challenging / controversy seekers	Recessive / quiet
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Withdraw eye contact</li> <li>• Avoid directly addressing</li> <li>• Be direct 'I need to hear someone else now'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of the word we or other inclusive words can be helpful if you want to control someone that is being a bit difficult</li> <li>• Referring to the group can allow the group to moderate the disruptor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask open ended questions</li> <li>• Use their name</li> <li>• Reward every response</li> <li>• Get them to work in pairs</li> </ul>

## Ground Rules and setting up the session (10 minutes)

If you are with a group you have not met before or do not usually teach, introducing yourself and setting up the session is an important step to help put the group at ease and establish the ground rules, so everyone feels comfortable to join the discussion. You may have a set of ground rules which you have used in previous sessions or there are some suggested group rules provided below.

### Explain

- Your role
- Purpose of the session
- Explain that the topics will cover issues of relationship and sexual abuse, ensure the group know that if they are upset or uncomfortable by anything they see or hear they can leave the room (be sure to tell them where they should go, as set out earlier in the guide) and/or talk to you privately after the session

#### Explain the rules: we all have the right to:

- privacy – nobody will be asked personal questions, and we will not reveal personal details about other members of the group
- speak without anyone interrupting
- be listened to
- our own personal space
- express our ideas and feelings (while not naming anyone in any examples we might offer)
- be respected for our views and opinions even if they are different from everyone else's
- learn
- make mistakes without being laughed at – there is no such thing as a silly answer.

#### Explain the aims for the group: we should all try to:

- join in and make a positive contribution to the session
- support other people who are less confident
- listen to and respect what others have to say

# Section Two: What is 'teenage relationship abuse'?

## Session objectives: learning outcomes

By the end of this session teenagers will be able to say:

- I understand and can explain what is meant by the term 'teenage relationship abuse'
- I understand and can identify the different types of abuse that can be present within teenage relationships
- I have some ideas about how to get help if I am experiencing abuse or how to support a friend who may be experiencing abuse

Explain to the group that you are going to show you a short film(s) about young people and relationships, if they are upset or feel uncomfortable by anything they see and hear they can leave the room (explain where to go) and/or speak to you privately after the session. They might have seen some before...

There are a number of films available on the 'This is Abuse' website (<http://thisisabuse.direct.gov.uk/videos/view/5>) which look at the issues of abuse within teenage relationships. The following lesson plans have been based on the 'Bedroom Boy/Girl' films, but there are a number of films on the website which look at the issue of abuse within teenage relationships and you can adjust the questions according to what happens in the film.

## Understanding relationship abuse (20 minutes)

Start by facilitating a group discussion to get a spontaneous reaction to what they have just seen, suggested questions to prompt discussion include:

- what are your initial thoughts?
- what do people think about the way the two young people were behaving?
- what do you think about the type of person the male character is?

Follow this up with further questions which will get the group to think more about relationship abuse. Depending on the size of the group you can either do this with the whole group or split them into smaller groups to discuss together and report back to the whole group.

What do they think constitutes a happy / good relationship? Suggested questions to prompt discussion could include:

- I'm interested in your thoughts on what a happy relationship might involve?
- what sorts of things do you think are important in a good relationship?

What do they think are abusive behaviours? Suggested questions to prompt discussion could include:

- from what you have just seen in the film, and thinking about how relationships can sometimes not be so good, what sort of things do you think are 'abusive' or unhealthy relationship behaviours?

The films we use as discussion starters in the guide focus on the male as the abuser and the female as the victim. However, it is important to let the group know that abuse can happen within any relationship, this includes heterosexual relationships where the female is the abuser and the male is the victim, as well within as same-sex relationships.

## Understanding healthy relationships (20 minutes)

Then move the discussion on to ask the group to consider what they think the difference is between being controlling and manipulative versus having a 'normal' healthy argument? Perhaps ask them to shout out ideas that you capture on the white board, or put their ideas on post-it notes to be collected later.

You will then need to explain and clarify what's healthy and what's not (what is abusive). Abuse behaviour can include: violence (hitting, kicking, slapping); emotional (making someone afraid, humiliating and putting them down); and sexual (forcing them to do sexual acts they don't want to). A list of warning signs of potential abusive behaviours are listed in **Resource C**. Make it clear that in a healthy relationship both partners treat each other with respect.

Discuss with the group what the difference between a normal argument or bickering and controlling behaviour is that controlling behaviour is trying to force someone to do something that they don't want to do, or to stop them from doing something that they do want to do, using intimidation, manipulation, implied threats, isolation and so on.

Also, clarify that a 'normal' healthy argument can happen between two or more people who feel able to express their views and opinions but, they know it's important to respect the views and opinions of others. A healthy argument normally involves a bit of give and take and no one person emerges the 'winner' or the 'loser'.

## Understanding emotional abuse versus physical abuse (20 minutes)

Then move the discussion on to ask the group to consider the difference between controlling and emotional abuse versus physical abuse. Thinking back to the film they just saw:

- what do you think about the idea that this isn't really abuse because he didn't hit her?
- to what extent do you agree or disagree?
- what are people's thoughts on this?

As the group is discussing these points it is important to clarify and explain that **what they saw in the film was definitely abuse**, even though he didn't hit her and emotional abuse is just as serious as physical abuse. The impacts of emotional abuse can also be very long lasting.

**Key points** to ensure the group understand are listed below:

- relationship abuse happens when one person hurts or bullies another person who is or was their partner or who is in the same family. This can also be called 'domestic abuse' or 'domestic violence'. The perpetrator of such abuse is always responsible; no one else is to blame
- it can happen between people of any age, nationality, race or family background
- it can happen between young people who are going out together, living together, have children together or are married to each other. It can happen either when people live together or separately
- relationship abuse can also happen after a relationship has finished
- usually (but not always) it is the male who is the abuser and the female who gets hurt. The male can also be the victim of relationship abuse and males often find it harder to seek help. Both are equally serious
- it can happen in same-sex relationships
- abuse within relationships is often a repeated pattern of behaviour
- it often includes several different types of abusive behaviour, including physical, emotional, sexual and financial abuse
- people use both physical and emotional abuse to control other people they have a relationship with

Make it clear that controlling behaviour is strongly associated with physical violence – people who use controlling behaviour are likely to go on to use violence or are already doing so.

## Understanding controlling behaviour (20 minutes)

This section builds on the previous discussion to explore how people might use controlling behaviour. Ask the group to think about what controlling behaviours they saw in the film: perhaps collect their ideas on the board.

### Notes to facilitators

Behaviours exhibited in the bedroom film are as follows:

- using abusive language to pressure the girl into doing something she doesn't want to do
- controlling who she can talk to
- blaming her for his abusive behaviour
- name calling
- physical (throwing phone onto floor and pulling her hair)

Next ask the group to consider what the girl in the film is feeling and why she does what he is pressuring her to do; responses may include:

- because of fear
- because she loves him
- because she thinks this is normal
- because she is isolated from her friend
- to keep the peace

Conclude by discussing what everyone has learnt about what is meant by 'relationship abuse'. Revisit the first two intended learning outcomes: can they now say:

- I understand and can explain what is meant by the term 'relationship abuse'
- I understand and can identify the different types of abuse that can be present within relationships

## Warning signs and asking for help (20 minutes)

Explain that this section focuses on the warning signs of an abusive relationship and what the group might be able to do to help someone who is being abused. A list of warning signs of potential abusive behaviours are listed in **Resource C**.

Ask the young people to think about the films they have seen and the discussions you have had and then discuss these questions (you could show them on the board or produce discussion prompt sheets):

- what warning signs might indicate that someone is in an abusive relationship?
- what other warning signs can you think of that might mean someone is being abusive to their partner? What stops people asking for help? Why might someone who is being abused find it difficult to leave an abusive partner or take other action to protect themselves? Think about the practical, emotional and other possible consequences of leaving or taking action. Violence can sometimes escalate when a relationship ends, so victims should seek advice on how to do this.

Make sure that young people are aware of the organisations which can offer help and advice, especially if they are thinking about leaving an abusive relationship. A list of organisations which offer help which you can print out and give to young people is at **Resource D**. There is a link to a leaflet for teenagers in **Resource F**.

In groups, ask young people to have a discussion about things that friends and family might do to help someone who is being abused. Take feedback and make a list. Bear in mind that this can be an incredibly complex situation – it might be that they believe someone they love or care about (their Dad for example) is abusing someone else they love or care about (their mum). Only begin such a conversation if you feel you have time to do the discussion justice, otherwise use **Resource D** to signpost pupils to sources of support for those who have been abused or are at risk.

## Notes for facilitators

Review these and discuss how effective the suggestions might be. Remind people only to use safe methods, avoiding risky strategies such as physically tackling the abuser. Stress that, as a minimum, they should try to identify a safe person that they could ask for help (this could be a school counsellor, a parent or other relative, a teacher, a youth worker, another trusted adult). If they are really worried about their own or someone else's safety they should report their fears to the police as well, or use the sources of support highlighted in **Resource D**.

### Gender identity

Some young people may also be questioning their gender identity or in the process of transitioning and could also be in an abusive relationship. Trans young people may be highly vulnerable at this stage, particularly if an abusive partner threatens to 'out' them. Mermaids, is an organisation which provides support young people and their families on gender identity issues. You can find out more information on their website [www.mermaidsuk.org.uk](http://www.mermaidsuk.org.uk). The Gender Identity Research and Education Society has produced a resource for the NHS to build practitioner understanding of Gender Identity (<http://www.nlmcontent.nesc.nhs.uk/sabp/gv/>)

Following the discussion it is important that you let the group know that there are organisations which can provide support and advice for them, or their friends who may be in an abusive relationship. A list of the sources of help and advice that are available is in **Resource D**. Make sure these are accessible to the young people, it is preferable to print them out so they can be taken away with them, rather than relying on the young people to copy them down, as they may not wish others to see that they are choosing to write them down. If this is not possible it is better to insist that everyone copies them down.

## Plenary (20 minutes)

Conclude by asking everyone what they have learnt. Focus on the fact that there are warning signs of an abusive relationship that everyone needs to be familiar with and act upon.

- remind young people that relationship, domestic and sexual abuse is unacceptable and in many cases criminal. The police do take this seriously and have specially trained officers to respond to domestic abuse



- stress that abuse can never be justified and that nobody ever deserves to be abused. Anyone who is affected by the issues should talk to an appropriate adult about making themselves safer
- remind young people about sources of help that are available and how to access them
- if they knew, or suspected someone is suffering either physical or emotional abuse do they think they have a responsibility to do something?

Suggested questions to help prompt discussions, or for private reflection:

- do you feel differently about anything as a result of what you have seen and heard in this session?
- has anything surprised you/shocked you?
- if someone asked you what you thought was 'abuse' would you describe more things/ behaviours now than you would have before?
- how would you react if you knew someone was experiencing abuse but someone said 'it's nothing to do with us – it is between them? If he/she doesn't like it he/she can leave? Why might people say this? Do we have a responsibility to help? What might happen if we do nothing? How might we feel about that?
- if this happened to you, would you end the relationship? What could happen if you didn't? If you needed help who would you go to? What might stop you from going for help? After what you have heard today what might encourage you to seek help?

It is important to make clear to the group that they should never approach the suspected perpetrator of abuse, or put themselves or their friends in a dangerous position. They should always seek help from a trusted adult, or the organisations listed in **Resource D** can provide further advice and help with these issues.



# Section Three:

## Rape and consent

As before, it is vital that you remind the group about the ground rules established in the first session before any discussion takes place.

### Session objectives: learning outcomes

By the end of this session the young people will be able to say:

- I understand and can explain what is meant by the term 'consent' and what it means within healthy relationships
- I have some ideas about how to get help if I experience abuse and how to support a friend who may be experiencing abuse

### Is This Rape?

Explain to the group that you are going to show you a short film(s) about young people and relationships. They might have seen some before...

It is important to let the group know that the film you are going to show them is about a more intimate scenario than the previous film(s), and you are going to be discussing the issue of rape, if they are upset or feel uncomfortable by anything they see and hear they can leave the room (letting them know where they should go) and/or speak to you privately after the session. Let the group know that the things they see in the film(s) might happen between people who are in a relationship, or people who are not in a relationship. These things might seem quite personal but remind the group that we are all here to have a helpful discussion and learn from each other. They shouldn't be scared to ask questions or check if they don't understand anything.

The films are available on the 'This is Abuse' website: <http://thisisabuse.direct.gov.uk/videos/view/5>. There are a number of films on the website which look at the issue of rape and consent but the following lesson plans have been based using the 'Rape/Zoe's Story' and Hollyoaks Rape adverts. However, you can use and of the other films and adapt the questions accordingly.

If you decide to use Rape and Zoe's story which are part of the Teenage Rape Prevention campaign, questions for prompting discussion could include:

- what are your initial thoughts about the film you have just seen?
- what do people think about the way the two young people were behaving?
- what do you think about the type of person the male character is?

Then move the discussion onto the specific issue of consenting to sex. Use the following questions as a starting point if necessary:

- Zoe told the boy to stop. Why do you think he did not respect her wishes?
- if Zoe and the boy were in a relationship, would this make a difference? Why?
- 'Do you think that Zoe was raped?' Discuss. It may be interesting to see if there is a difference of opinion depending on gender – as mixed groups might make open discussion more difficult. If this is the case, make sure that a plenary at the end enables the group to hear each other's perspectives.

**During this discussion, you need to make it very clear to the group that you do not need to say 'NO' to not consent and that Zoe was raped, irrespective of whether she was in a relationship with the boy or not.**

If you decide to use the Hollyoaks rape advert, questions for prompting discussion could include:

- what are your initial thoughts about the film you have just seen?
- what do people think about the way the Patrick and Maxine were behaving in the film?
- what do you think about the type of person Patrick is?

Then move the discussion onto the specific issue of consenting to sex. Use the following questions as a starting point if necessary:

- Maxine said she didn't want to. Why do you think Patrick did not respect her wishes?
- does the fact that Patrick and Maxine are in a relationship make any difference? Why?
- 'Do you think that Maxine was raped?' Discuss. It may be interesting to see whether if there is a difference of opinion according to gender – as mixed groups might make open discussion more difficult.

## Consent (20 minutes)

Next find out what the group understand by the term 'consent'? Depending on the size of the group you can either ask them to shout out answers and write them up, or ask them to discuss in smaller groups and report back to the whole group.

Ask the group what ways there might be that someone shows they don't really want to have sex / do sexual things?

The group may come up with the following suggestions:

Body language can include:

- stop kissing
- pulling away from the other person
- don't want to be hugged
- nervous/frightened
- 'freeze' or become unresponsive
- stop speaking

Then clarify what the definition of **consent** is:

- Consent is defined in law as agreement by choice by someone who has the freedom and capacity to make that choice. Depending on the age/maturity of the pupils, you (the facilitator) might want to make it easier for young people to understand and would suggest using the following definition "consent is someone giving permission or agreeing to something, after they have thought carefully about whether or not they want to do something"
- to be able to give your consent you should be sure that it is your decision and not one you have been pressured to make
- the law in Britain says that both people need to give their consent before sex or any physical closeness
- the law also says that to consent to sex a person must be over 16 and have the ability to make informed decisions for themselves (this means for example they have to be mature enough to make the decision and are not so drunk or high to be unable to make the decision)
- the law is clear that the seeker of consent has the responsibility to make sure that the other persons is able to make the informed decision to give their consent

Before going on to discuss how to check for consent with the group, first talk about the legal consequences and the commonly held myths around rape, to give the group the full picture. There are some suggested questions on 'checking for consent' later in this section. You could also show the film of Charlie McDonnell, a You Tube vlogger (video blogger) who talks about the importance of understanding consent.

The PSHE Association have also published guidance on teaching about consent in PSHE education at key stages 3 and 4 which you might find useful: [www.pshe-association.org.uk/consent](http://www.pshe-association.org.uk/consent)

## Legal definitions of rape and sexual assault (20 minutes)

You should now explain to the group the legal definitions of what rape and sexual assault mean:

**Rape** is when a male forces his penis into the mouth, anus or vagina of another person when that person doesn't want him to do so; the law calls this 'without consent'. Rape can be committed against men or women, but since it involves penile penetration it is only committed by men. The most important bit to remember is that pressuring or forcing someone to have sex when they don't want to is a crime. All other sexual offences can be committed by either men or women, including 'assault by penetration', which – like rape – can be punished by life imprisonment.

**Sexual Assault** is a crime that can be committed by both men and women against men or women. Different types of sexual assault include:

- objects or parts of the body (e.g. a finger) being put into someone's vagina or anus when that person didn't want it to happen
- someone being touched in a sexual way that makes him or her feel uncomfortable or frightened. This could be through their clothes (like bottom pinching)
- someone being made to sexually stimulate themselves, or the other person, using their hands or fingers (known as masturbation)
- any other form of physical closeness that happens without consent is known as sexual assault. It can also include; watching other people having sex, 'sexting' (texting sexual images), and forcing involvement in watching or making pornography

Explain that rape and sexual assault don't have to involve physical violence. There are ways someone might try to make someone do things without physically forcing them, these can include:

- being made to feel stupid, bad or 'not normal' for saying 'no'
- being bullied into having sex
- being encouraged to drink lots of alcohol or take drugs to make them more likely to have sex
- manipulating their emotions, for example saying 'If you loved me you would...'

If they are being forced or pressured into doing sexual things they don't like or aren't sure about, then this is abuse.

## Myths (20 minutes)

There are a number of misconceptions which young people have when it comes to understanding rape and sexual assault. Some of these myths are listed below and it is important that they are addressed if young people express these views.

Depending on how much time you have available you could use the myths below as a task. Cut out the sections on the left hand side only, but do not include the heading 'myths' and hand them out to the group. Ask them to identify which they think are 'true' or 'false'.

It is really important to make clear to the group that all these myths are false. You could ask the group if they are surprised by this, and which ones in particular surprised them.

Myth:	Fact:
Only loud or flirtatious girls in tight clothes, or wearing short skirts get raped	Rape is never the victim's fault. People who are assaulted can be of any age, sex, religion, come from any culture or background and be gay, straight or bisexual
A rapist is likely to be a stranger who rapes someone in a dark alley	The majority of rapes are committed by people the person who is raped knows and probably trusts. They could be friends, partners, family members or know each other from school, college or work
Alcohol and drugs turn people into rapists	Drugs and alcohol are never the cause of rape or sexual assault. It is the attacker who is committing the crime not the drugs and/or alcohol
When it comes to sex girls say 'no' but they really mean 'yes'	It's simple - if two people want to have sex with each other it should be something that they both agree and consent to. Even if this were true, the fact that they have said 'No' means consent has not been given
Rape is only rape if someone gets physically injured	In some cases people who have been raped have injuries outside or inside their bodies, but not always. Just because someone hasn't got any injuries doesn't mean they weren't raped
It is not rape if the victim does not clearly say 'no'	Someone does not have to say the word NO to withhold permission. There are lots of ways they might say they don't want to have sex. Many people find it hard to say anything, and will show through their body language that they don't want to
Rape is only rape if someone gets physically forced into sex	This is not true. Rapists may threaten violence, or may take advantage of their victim being unable to consent (for example because they're drunk or asleep)
If two people have had sex before, it's always OK to have sex again	This is not true. Just because two people have had sex before it does not mean that consent is not needed every time they have sex

People often lie about being raped as they regret having sex with someone	Most people who have been raped or sexually assaulted tell the truth. Estimates suggest very few cases of all rape complaints are false. Many people also do not report rapes – sometimes because they are scared and sometimes because they are unsure how
Boys and men don't get raped	While many more girls are raped and abused than boys, you'd be surprised how many boys it happens to as well. 1 in 6 boys will experience sexual abuse. And nobody thinks they're any less manly because of it. For many boys they may have had a physical reaction to the experience (erection or ejaculation). This doesn't mean they enjoyed it or wanted it, just that their body responded
If someone is raped while drunk they are at least somewhat responsible	It is not acceptable to see someone who is drunk and take advantage of their vulnerability, nor is it ok for the attacker to blame drink or drugs for their actions
If you go back to someone's house, you are saying you want to have sex with that person	Consent should never be assumed. Misplaced assumptions are no excuse, either ethically or in the eyes of the law
Men don't usually intend to force sex on anyone but sometimes they get carried away	Consent to one sexual activity is not consent to another activity. Consent should not be assumed or treated as a 'one off' but rather as a continual process of checking a partner is happy to proceed. Withdrawal of consent at any point must always be respected, and failure to control oneself is inexcusable

## Checking for consent (20 minutes)

During the discussions on consent it is important to ensure that the group understand that it is important to get consent and to look out for the signs that their partner is consenting. There is a very important legal and ethical responsibility on the seeker of consent to do this.

### Making sure you have got consent:

- sex with anyone under 16 is unlawful, including oral sex. It doesn't make any difference if permission (consent) is given or not, if you're under 16 sex is illegal
- consent to one sort of sexual activity does not mean you are getting consent to everything. Permission is required for each activity
- consent may be withdrawn at any time. If your partner changes their mind, it's their right to do so
- even if you have had sex with someone before, you still need permission the next time
- giving oral sex to someone without permission is illegal. If you are male, forcing someone to give you oral sex - it's rape
- if you do not get consent – it's rape

**More things for young people to look out for to make sure you have consent:**

- unless someone gives their consent, assume that consent has not been given
- when it comes to sex or physical closeness you should feel safe with your partner, be able to trust them and feel that they would respect you whatever your decision
- good communication between you both will help to ensure you know how your partner feels about sex or physical closeness. It is a good idea to check things out with your partner by asking if they are enjoying what you are doing and asking if they want to continue
- reading body language is also important. If your partner is relaxed it is likely that they feel comfortable. If they are tense, they may be nervous or frightened and are probably trying to hide how they really feel
- someone doesn't have to say the word 'NO' to withhold their permission, there are lots of ways they might say they don't want to do something or have sex
- look out for signs of someone not consenting to sex – sometimes people might find it hard to say or show anything at all if they don't want to have sex, so for example if someone stops kissing you or doesn't want to be hugged or held, this could be a sign of non-consent. Don't ignore it
- if one person doesn't want to have sex, the other person just needs to accept that, it's not OK to try and change their minds as pressuring someone into sex is rape and there are serious consequences

**Consequences (20 minutes)**

It is also important that young people understand the consequences of their actions. During the discussion ensure that young people are aware and understand the following:

**What are 'consequences'?**

Everything that a person does has an effect on something or someone. This effect is known as a 'consequence'. Consequences can either be positive or negative. Both positive and negative consequences can have a lasting impact on people's lives.

Sex or physical closeness without consent can have extremely damaging consequences for both people involved.

**What are the consequences if you have pressured someone into sex?**

- having sex without gaining consent is an exceptionally serious violation of another person and could potentially lead to you spending up to 8 years in prison
- sexually assaulting another person could lead to a community order, fine or prison sentence
- both having sex without consent and sexual assault could lead to your details being put on the Sex Offenders' Register
- having a criminal record, and/or being put on the Sex Offender's Register will have a serious and huge impact on the future, such as making it hard to get a job.
- potential consequences could include sexually transmitted infections for both you and your partner
- potential consequences could include being labelled an abuser by people who know you



## What are the consequences if you have been pressured into sex?

potential health consequences could include:

- unwanted pregnancy
- sexually transmitted infections for both you and your partner
- physical damage
- internal injury
- mental health problems
- depression
- self-harm

potential emotional consequences can include:

- lower self-esteem and sense of worth
- humiliation
- fear
- hurt

Make the young people aware of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (refer to **Resource E** for information on crimes within this Act). Ensure young people know that if someone is drunk or under the influence of a substance and is unable to consent to sex, this may lead to a charge of rape. It is the responsibility of the seeker of consent to make sure that the other person has the capacity to give their consent – this includes being sober enough to do so.

## Warning signs and asking for help (20 minutes)

Following the discussion explain that you are going to focus on the warning signs of an abusive relationship and what the group might be able to do to help someone who is being abused. A list of warning signs of potential abusive behaviours are listed in **Resource C**.

Ask the young people to think about the films they have seen and the discussions you have had and then discuss these questions (write them up on the board or give them to the group on discussion prompt sheets). Suggested questions include:

- what warning signs might indicate that someone is in an abusive relationship?
- what other warning signs can you think of that might mean someone is being abusive to their partner?
- what stops people asking for help? Why might someone who is being abused find it difficult to leave an abusive partner or take other action to protect themselves? Think about the practical, emotional and other possible consequences of leaving or taking action.

In groups ask young people to have a brief discussion about things that friends and family might do to help someone who is being abused. Take feedback and make a list.

## Key messages

Review these and discuss how effective the suggestions might be. Remind people only to use safe methods, avoiding risky strategies such as physically tackling the abuser. Stress that, as a minimum, they should try to identify a safe person that they could ask for help (this could be a school counsellor, a parent or other relative, a youth worker, another trusted adult, or even possibly a police officer).

Following the discussion it is important that you let the group know that there are organisations which provide support and advice for them, or their friends who may be in an abusive relationship. **Resource D** is a list of sources of help for young people, make sure these are accessible to the young people, either write them up on the board or print them out so they can be taken away with them.

## Plenary (20 minutes)

- conclude by asking each of the group what they have learnt. Focus on the fact that there are warning signs of an abusive relationship
- stress that abuse is never acceptable and can never be justified
- stress that nobody ever deserves to be abused and anyone who is affected by the issues should talk to an appropriate adult about making themselves safer
- remind young people about sources of help that are available
- remind young people that relationship, domestic and sexual abuse is unacceptable and in many cases criminal. The police do take this seriously and have specially trained officers to respond to domestic abuse

Suggested questions to help prompt discussions, or for private reflection, could be:

- do you feel differently about anything as a result of what you have seen and heard in this session?
- has anything surprised you/shocked you?
- do you understand what is meant by 'consent'?
- if you thought a friend didn't respect other people's consent or was abusive in another way, would you know what to do?
- if you thought a friend was experiencing any form of abuse, would you know how to get help?
- how would you react if you knew someone was experiencing abuse but someone said 'it's nothing to do with us – it is between them? If they don't like it they can leave?' Why might people say this? Do we have a responsibility to help? What might happen if we do nothing? How might we feel about that?
- if this happened to you, would you end the relationship? What could happen if you didn't? If you needed help who would you go to? What might stop you from going for help? After what you have heard today what might encourage you to seek help?

# Section Four:

## What is a 'nude selfie' or 'sexting'?

### Session objectives: learning outcomes

By the end of this session teenagers will be able to say:

- I understand the issues and risks around sharing intimate pictures
- I understand the implications, including legal implications, of sending or forwarding sexual images
- I know how to get help if I am experiencing abuse or how to support a friend who may be experiencing abuse, including being pressured to send or share inappropriate images

As before, it is vital that you remind the group about the ground rules established in the first session before any discussion takes place.

First of all, start off the session by asking the group if they understand what is meant by the term 'nude selfie'. The young people in the group may call this different things, such as naked selfies, sexts, nudes or sexting. Clarify with the group that you are talking about when someone sends or receives a sexually explicit text, image or video on their mobile phone, email or through social media.

They can be sent from a partner, a friend or someone they have met and can be sent via mobile phone or online, for example through social networking sites, email, or apps such as snapchat or instagram. They can be photos, videos or text messages.

Next explain that you are going to show the group a short film about a young girl who sends naked pictures to her boyfriend. Reassure the group that if they are upset or feel uncomfortable by anything they see and hear they can leave the room and/or speak to you privately after the session.

The film we are using in this section has been produced by CEOP as part of their 'Thinkyouknow' campaign. You can access the film 'Exposed' on the CEOP website at: [www.thinkuknow.co.uk/14\\_plus/Films/Exposed](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/14_plus/Films/Exposed)

## Understanding the implications of sending a 'nude selfie' (20 minutes)

Start by facilitating a group discussion to get a spontaneous reaction to what they have just seen, questions to prompt discussion could include:

- what are your initial thoughts about the film you have just seen?
- what do you think about what happened to Dee?
- what do you think about Dee's boyfriend, Si?

Follow this up with further questions which will get the group to think more about this issue. Depending on the size of the group you can either do this with the whole group or split them into smaller groups to discuss together and report back to the whole group.

Start by explaining that, as they have seen in the film, things can easily go wrong – even when they didn't mean for them to. Ask the group to consider the reasons why young people might send a naked photo of themselves and capture their ideas on a flip chart or the board. In the film, Dee trusted her boyfriend and wanted to show him how much she liked him. She thought the pictures would just be between them, she didn't think he would forward them on. There are many reasons why people might send a naked photo of themselves.

Reasons may include:

- being in love with the person and trust them completely and feel like it's ok
- feeling under pressure, from their partner, to send a naked photo
- feeling harassed, threatened or blackmailed into sending pictures
- feeling it's easier just to 'give in' to somebody who keeps asking for photos
- thinking they 'owe' their boyfriend or girlfriend or made to feel guilty if they don't do what they ask
- feeling like everyone else is doing it and want to fit in with friends – especially if their friends are boasting about sending or having photos on their mobile phone
- worrying about being seen as 'not sexy', 'frigid', or 'shy' and go along with things they aren't comfortable with
- having a long distance or online relationship with someone and want to have a sexual relationship with them
- feel proud of their body and want to share it with other people

Explain to the group that before they send a naked photo they need to remember that once they press send, it's no longer in their control. As we saw in the film, it can be forwarded on to other people, posted on the internet, social networking sites or even porn sites. Even if they completely trust someone, as Dee did with her boyfriend, they could still forward it on or other people using their phone might accidentally see it. Even if they use a webcam or an app like Snapchat, the person receiving it can take a screen shot and keep that image, or could be recording it.

## The impact of sending ‘nude selfies’

It’s important to get the group to understand that if they send someone naked or sexual photos or videos of themselves, they lose control over what happens to them. The person who receives the naked photos or videos could:

- show them to other people
- post them on social media sites, internet forums
- use them to blackmail them, into sending more photos/videos

Ask the group to think about what risks they take when they send a naked photo. Depending on the size the group either ask them to do this in smaller groups and report back, or ask them to shout out ideas and write them down.

The risks include, the person could share the photos with other people, or post it online, which means that anyone could see it, such as family, friends, teachers, even future employers. It could also lead to bullying or unwanted attention from others.

In the film, Dee’s boyfriend Si, shared the photos with his friend. Ask the group to consider why he did this? Si’s friend then forwarded it onto other friends and then it was posted online. Ask the group to consider why they did this and what impact they thought this had on Dee?

Having looked at Dee, now move the discussion onto Si. Ask the group to consider the impact this had on Si, questions to prompt discussion could include:

- how do they think Si is feeling now?
- do they think Si expected his friends to forward on the photos?
- do they think he regrets what he did?

The following section looks at the implications of what could happen if they shared a naked photo of someone.

## What to do if a naked picture has been shared?

If a member of the group has shared a naked photo of themselves and it has been put online, reassure them that it’s not their fault and that they need to tell a trusted adult, they could tell you, report it to CEOP or call ChildLine (display or provide the numbers). Also, if someone is pressuring, or threatening them to share a naked or nearly naked photo of them, or any young person they might know, the advice is still that they need to tell a trusted adult, report it to CEOP or call ChildLine.

Explain to the group that CEOP is the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) and they are dedicated to tackling the sexual abuse and exploitation of children and young people. They provide advice and support to adults and children who have concerns about online safety and exploitation. You can signpost the young people (11 – 16) to their website:

[www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/11-16](http://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/11-16). Part of CEOP’s Thinkyouknow campaign also provides specific advice to young people on the issues raised in this section of this guide at: [www.thinkuknow.co.uk/14\\_plus/need-advice/selfies](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/14_plus/need-advice/selfies) and sexting. Or they can contact ChildLine on 0800 1111 [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

## Is sexting against the law?

It is important to explain the law to the group and ensure that they understand they could be breaking the law. ChildLine explains the law as follows:

### **Having sexting photos or videos on your phone or computer**

If you are under the age of 18, the law sees you as a child. Therefore, if you have any indecent images or videos of somebody who is under the age of 18 you would technically be in possession of an indecent image of a child – even if you are the same age. This is an offence under the Protection of Children Act 1978 and the criminal Justice Act 1988.

### **Sending sexting photos or videos**

If you are under 18 and you send, upload or forward indecent images or videos on to your friends or boyfriends/girlfriends, this would be breaking the law, even if they are photos of yourself ('selfies').

## Notes for facilitators

Other issues which might be raised by the young people in this section are:

### Online grooming

Online grooming is when someone builds an online relationship with a young person and tricks them or forces them to do something sexual – like sending a naked video or image of themselves. It might include trying to meet up with the young person. People who do this often lie about who they really are.

If a young person discloses abuse, reassure them that it is not their fault and remind them that not only can they discuss this with you but that they can ring ChildLine on 0800 1111 for further help or reporting them on the CEOP website.

CEOP is a command of the National Crime Agency and is dedicated to tackling the sexual abuse and exploitation of children and young people. Young people, parents, carers and professionals can report concerns about online grooming, sexual abuse and exploitation direct to CEOP at [www.ceop.police.uk](http://www.ceop.police.uk).

### Pornography

During the session the group may raise the issue of pornography. It is important to let the young people know that pornography doesn't reflect 'real life' sex. People who watch porn can sometimes think that it portrays a true picture of sex and relationships, and this can therefore in some cases, manifest in unrealistic expectations about sex. The people in porn films are actors, who sometimes have cosmetically enhanced bodies, and can sometimes perform extreme acts. Consent is also rarely negotiated in pornography, and it often depicts sex as driven by men as opposed to mutually-agreed sexual activity. This isn't a true representation of what 'real life' sex is like for couples and if anyone is pressuring them into doing something, this is wrong and is abusive.

They may have also seen pornography online and been upset or distressed by it, they can contact ChildLine for advice and support.

### What is Revenge Porn?

Revenge Porn is the sharing of private, sexual materials, either photos or videos, of another person, without their consent and with the purpose of causing embarrassment or distress.

The offence applies both online and offline, and to images which are shared electronically or in a more traditional way so it includes the uploading of images on the internet, sharing by text and e-mail, or showing someone a physical or electronic image.

If the victim is 18 or over, they can now visit [www.revengeporn.org.uk](http://www.revengeporn.org.uk) or call 0845 6000 459 for advice and support.

If nude or nearly nude images of an under-18 year old are shared, these are child abuse images. The young person can contact Childline, who will report the images to the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF). The IWF can remove materials from most websites and services. If there is any concern or threat of sexual abuse or exploitation, young people, parents, carers and professionals can report direct to CEOP at [www.ceop.police.uk](http://www.ceop.police.uk)

Following the discussion it is important that you let the group know that there are organisations which provide support and advice for them, or their friends who may be in an abusive relationship. A list of the sources of help and advice that are available are listed in **Resource D**. Make sure these are accessible to the young people, either write them up on the board, ensuring everyone copies them down, or ideally print them out so they can be taken away with them.

## Plenary (20 minutes)

Conclude by asking the group what they have learnt. Focus on the fact that if they are being pressured into sending naked photo's of themselves this is abuse and they don't have to do it.

- stress that sharing sexual images of another person without their permission is a very serious violation of another person and a very serious criminal offence
- stress that there is no excuse for abuse and anyone who is affected by the issues should talk to an appropriate adult about making themselves safer
- remind young people about sources of help that are available
- remind young people that even though the abuse might be happening online, it is still abusive and is unacceptable.

Suggested questions to help prompt discussions:

- do you feel differently about anything as a result of what you have seen and heard in this session?
- has anything surprised you/shocked you?
- if you, or someone you knew, had experienced what you have seen in the film with Dee and Si, would you know where to go for help?



# Section Five:

## Girls and Gangs

### Session objectives: learning outcomes

By the end of this session young people will be able to say:

- I understand how girls can be exploited by gangs
- I understand the warning signs of girls being exploited by gangs
- I have some ideas about how to get help if I am experiencing abuse or how to support a friend who may be experiencing abuse

As before, it is vital that you remind the group about the ground rules established in the first session before any discussion takes place.

Women and girls can experience significant harm as a result of their association with gang members including sexual violence and/or exploitation. Gang related abuse remains under-reported as most victims of gang-related sexual assault do not report these crimes to the police, often because they fear of reprisals from gang members against them and their families.

Girls can be affected by gangs, but their involvement may be harder to spot. They may be asked to hide weapons or drugs, or be targeted by male gang members in acts of revenge or gang initiations. Girls who are linked to gang members, for example sisters, girlfriends, friends, cousins, daughters, as well as female gang members themselves, could be at risk of emotional, physical and sexual violence.

Many girls who are involved in gangs may not realise that they are being pressured or forced to do something, or that they have a choice. Or they may be afraid of what might happen to them, or their families, if they tell anyone and/or may think that no one will believe them or protect them.

The University of Bedfordshire have produced three films with young people which look at the issue of gangs which you could use as a discussion starter on the specific issue of girls in gangs. Each film features young people discussing the issue of girls and gangs. You can view the films on YouTube using the links below and we have set out some suggested questions for starting a discussion later in this section. It is essential that you watch each film in advance of preparing your session and allocate the questions accordingly.

### ‘Just a link’ (3:00 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pKBnleg6las>

This short film and lyrics were devised, developed and filmed by a group of young women from City United and St George’s Hub, they look at issues associated with young women, gangs, sex and relationships.

## Love, sex, conflict (4:48 minutes)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PiPA2gB5xyk&list=UUvMM6JYIkJ\\_YNcutZ0TeIA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PiPA2gB5xyk&list=UUvMM6JYIkJ_YNcutZ0TeIA)

This short film was devised, developed and filmed by a group of young people from different areas in London. It looks at the issues associated with young women, men, gangs, sex and relationships.

## I define me (3:44 minutes)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2QpqsP9U4-l&list=UUvMM6JYIkJ\\_YNcutZ0TeIA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2QpqsP9U4-l&list=UUvMM6JYIkJ_YNcutZ0TeIA)

This short film was devised, developed and filmed by young women from Manchester. It shares their views and experiences of them and their peers on issues affecting young women growing up in gang affected areas.

## Understanding the issue of girls in gangs?

Start by facilitating a group discussion to get a spontaneous reaction to what they have just seen, suggested questions to prompt discussion could include:

- what are your initial thoughts about the film(s) you have just seen?
- what do you think about the role that young women play within a gang?

Follow this up with further questions which will get the group to think more about why young women are treated this way within a gang. Depending on the size of the group you could do this with the whole group or split them into smaller groups.

- how do you think the young women are manipulated?
- how do you think they could keep themselves safe?

There are many ways that young women can be exploited within a gang. They can be used to hold drugs or weapons for other gang members or even used for sex. In the film 'Love, sex, conflict' we saw the young women use the term 'set up chick' when young women are manipulated into establishing a relationship with, or feigning sexual interest in, a rival gang member as a means of entrapment.

Some warning signs that a girl might be involved with a gang include:

- unexplained money or possessions
- getting involved in fights
- committing crimes such as shoplifting
- regularly staying out late or going missing from home
- abusing drugs and/or alcohol
- physical injuries (which may indicate violence from others and/or self-harming)
- refusing to seek medical help for such injuries and becoming fearful and/or withdrawn and/or prone to unexplained outbursts of anger
- changes in physical appearance (for example wearing more 'adult' clothes, or wearing baggy clothes and no make up)

## Barriers to leaving gangs?

Next ask the groups to think about the barriers to leaving a gang and why young women don't want to, or can't leave the gang. Try to get the group to think about why the young women are drawn into a gang, and if they have different roles within the gang.

Questions to prompt discussions could include:

- why might young women become involved in gangs?
- what might encourage a young woman to want to leave a gang?
- what do you think might hold them back from leaving the gang?
- who do you think could help them to leave the gang/where could they go for help?

There are a number of things which could help a young woman to leave a gang. Discuss the following options with the group.

**MENTORING:** Mentoring, (where a young person works closely with a mentor to give advice and help to identify and solve problems) can prevent future behavioural problems, if it is done well.

- more regular contact, longer contacts, and combining with other supportive interventions appear to make mentoring more effective
- however, caution should be taken when implementing mentoring programmes. Unstructured mentoring, or unmotivated or otherwise unsuitable mentors can make things worse

**BULLYING PREVENTION:** Anti-bullying programmes can reduce reported victimisation

- the most successful programmes include: involving parents; using disciplinary methods; and high duration and intensity programmes
- however, some types of peer involvement (peer mediation, peer mentoring or peer group pressure as bystanders) as part of an anti-bullying programme may actually increase victimisation

### EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

- extra-curricular programmes that provide well structured, youth-led activities (for example, sports, art, music, drama) may have a positive effect on self-esteem and risky behaviour
- loosely structured activities may actually make things worse (possibly because unstructured clubs mean that young people will be meeting peers who may frequently engage in crime)

## Notes for facilitators

If you think a young woman in your session may be affected by these issues you can call the NSPCC for further help and advice on young people who are involved in gangs on 0808 800 5000.

### Plenary (20 minutes)

- conclude by asking the group what they have learnt. Focus on the fact that there are warning signs of gang related abuse
- stress that nobody ever deserves to be abused and anyone who is affected by the issues should talk to an appropriate adult about making themselves safer
- remind young people about sources of help that are available
- remind young people that relationship, domestic and sexual abuse is unacceptable and in many cases criminal. The police do take this seriously and have specially trained officers to respond to domestic abuse

Suggested questions to help prompt discussions, or private reflection, could be:

- do you feel differently about anything as a result of what you have seen and heard in this session?
- has anything surprised you/shocked you?
- if you thought a friend was involved in a gang and experiencing any form of abuse, would you know how to get help?
- how would you react if you knew someone was experiencing abuse but someone said 'it's nothing to do with us – it is between them? If he/she doesn't like it he/she can leave?' Why might people say this? Do we have a responsibility to help? What might happen if we do nothing? How might we feel about that?

# Resource A – ‘This is Abuse’ campaign support materials

You can download the films from the ‘This is Abuse’ website <http://thisisabuse.direct.gov.uk/>

You can download further resources from the GOV.UK website  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/this-is-abuse-campaign>

# Resource B – Dealing with disclosure

A young person may disclose that domestic abuse is happening in their home because they are hearing or witnessing the abuse of their mother/father/carer or other family member.

It is possible that they may also be experiencing abuse directly. Either way, what they are experiencing can be harmful to them. Any disclosure of domestic or sexual abuse should therefore be treated as a potential child protection concern, and appropriate steps taken in line with your organisation's procedures.

## **A three step approach – Receive, Reassure, Respond**

If a young person starts to tell you about something that might indicate potential abuse, listen but do not ask for detail. You need to let them know as soon as possible that if they tell you something that might cause concern, you will have to tell someone else, and you will need to follow your organisation's Safeguarding Children and Information Sharing policies and procedures.

Under no circumstances agree to keep it a secret. Remember abuse thrives on secrecy. Make sure you are aware of your organisation's Safeguarding Children and Information Sharing policies and procedures.

Do not ask probing questions. It may undermine any investigation by Police or Children and Family Services if it looked as though the young person was led to give their answers. The Police, Child and Family Services and the NSPCC are the only organisations that have legal powers to investigate allegations of child abuse.



When listening, try to make sense of what you are being told:

- are they being harmed?
- are they currently at risk?
- is anyone else at risk?
- do they need medical attention?
- what are their overall needs?
- what is important to them?

It can help to keep in mind the 3 steps of behaviour outlined below – but as mentioned, it is very important that you follow your organisation’s Safeguarding Children and Information Sharing policies and procedures.

### **Receive**

- listen, do not look shocked or disbelieving
- do not be judgemental
- take what they are saying seriously and believe them
- don’t make the young person feel bad, for example by saying things like ‘You should have told me earlier’.

### **Reassure**

- stay calm, tell them that they have done the right thing in telling you
- acknowledge how hard it must have been to tell you
- tell them that they are not to blame
- empathise – but don’t tell them how they should be feeling
- don’t promise confidentiality – explain that only those that need to know will be told (i.e. you will have to follow your organisation’s Safeguarding Children and Information Sharing policies and procedures)
- be honest about what you can and can’t do.

### **Respond**

- don’t interrogate – let them tell you as far as possible
- don’t ask probing questions – it’s not your job to find out who, where, when? etc;
- refer your concern on through your organisation’s Safeguarding Children and Information Sharing policies and procedures.
- record the date and time and any information given to you; always use the words said to you; never interpret what was said and put it in your own words (this information could be used as evidence)
- make a note of any injuries you have seen or been shown; this is very important as bruises, cuts, marks, etc. tend to heal, and this could be used as evidence

- record what you did next and with whom you shared the information – ensure that all this is in line with your organisation’s policies and procedures
- sign and date everything that you record
- don’t criticise or judge the abuser – the young person may have feelings for him or her; remember abuse often happens by someone known and trusted by the young person;
- try to follow things through yourself so they don’t need to repeat their story to other staff – again, only if this is in line with your organisation’s Safeguarding Children and Information Sharing policies and procedures;
- explain what will happen next – for example, the designated officer will be informed, and they may want to speak to the young person further; if it is safe, the non-abusing parent or carer might also be informed (but always take great care where there is domestic abuse) the police and social services might also be informed
- get support for yourself. It can be distressing dealing with disclosure.

Adapted from the Expect Respect toolkit for addressing teenage relationship abuse in key stages 3, 4 and 5<sup>2</sup>.

Whatever you do, make sure it is in line with your organisation’s Safeguarding Children and Information Sharing policies and procedures. They may differ from what is written above. If in doubt speak to your designated member of staff responsible for safeguarding, your local Child and Family Services or the NSPCC.

If you’re worried about a specific incident that was brought to your attention during the session then you should follow safeguarding procedures as set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2013)<sup>3</sup>. You should contact the local authority children’s social care team, or the local police.

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2 A Expect respect Toolkit: produced by the Women’s Aid, AVA and the Home Office [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/97773/teen-abuse-toolkit.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97773/teen-abuse-toolkit.pdf)

3 <http://www.workingtogetheronline.co.uk/index.html>



# Resource C – Warning signs of abusive behaviours within a relationship

Abusive behaviour can be:

- violent (hitting, kicking, slapping)
- emotional (humiliating and putting someone down)
- sexual (forcing them to do sexual acts they don't want to)

Abusive relationships can start with verbal or emotional abuse and could happen to anyone (including those in same-sex relationships). It can often escalate into physical abuse, by which time the victim's self-esteem is likely to be damaged.

Some warning signs of potential abusive and violent behaviour which could happen with their relationships are:

- extreme jealousy
- anger when you want to spend time with your friends
- isolating you from friends and family
- trying to control your life (how you dress, who you hang out with and what you say)
- humiliating you, putting you down
- threatening to harm you or to self-harm if you leave them
- demanding to know where you are all the time
- monitoring your calls and emails, threatening you if you don't respond instantly
- excessive alcohol drinking and drug use
- explosive anger
- using force during an argument
- blaming others for his/her problems or feelings
- being verbally abusive
- threatening behaviour towards others
- pressuring you to send sexual texts and images of yourself
- someone sharing any sexual text and images of you with their mates

# Resource D – Further sources of help for young people

## This is Abuse

Direct teenagers to this website for advice or help on sexual and relationship abuse

Website: [www.thisisabuse.direct.gov.uk](http://www.thisisabuse.direct.gov.uk)

There are also a variety of national and regional sources of help and advice available to people affected by domestic violence or those supporting them.

<p><b>National Domestic Violence Helpline</b> Free 24 hour helpline providing a package of lifeline services to women and children experiencing domestic violence run in partnership between Women’s Aid and Refuge. Tel: 0808 2000 247 <a href="http://www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk">www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk</a></p>	<p><b>All Wales Domestic Abuse &amp; Sexual Violence Helpline</b> The All Wales Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Helpline is a bilingual information signposting service, to help and guide people with experience of domestic abuse or sexual violence, who are in need of information or access to support services. <a href="http://www.allwaleshelpline.org.uk">www.allwaleshelpline.org.uk</a> Open 24 hours</p>
<p><b>The Hideout</b> The Hideout is a dedicated website for young people up to the age of 21 where they can find information about relationship abuse and where to get help. <a href="http://www.thehideout.org.uk">www.thehideout.org.uk</a></p>	<p><b>Childline</b> 24 hour confidential listening service for children. Tel: 0800 1111 Website: <a href="http://www.childline.org.uk">www.childline.org.uk</a></p>
<p><b>Broken Rainbow</b> Broken Rainbow offers support for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people experiencing domestic violence. Email: <a href="mailto:help@brokenrainbow.org.uk">help@brokenrainbow.org.uk</a> Tel: 0300 999 5428 Opening Times: Monday &amp; Thursday 10am – 8pm, Tuesday &amp; Wednesday 10am – 5pm. <a href="http://www.broken-rainbow.org.uk">www.broken-rainbow.org.uk</a></p>	<p><b>Men’s Advice Line</b> A helpline for male victims of domestic violence, age not important. Email: <a href="mailto:info@mensadviceline.org.uk">info@mensadviceline.org.uk</a> Tel: 0808 801 0327 (free from landlines and most mobiles) Monday - Friday 9am - 5pm <a href="http://www.mensadviceline.org.uk">www.mensadviceline.org.uk</a></p>

<p><b>Respect</b> Respect runs support services and programmes for men and women who inflict violence in relationships. They also provide an advice line for men who are victims of domestic violence. Email: <a href="mailto:info@respectphoneline.org.uk">info@respectphoneline.org.uk</a> Tel: 0808 802 4040 (Opening Times: Monday – Friday 9am - 5pm) <a href="http://www.respectphoneline.org.uk">www.respectphoneline.org.uk</a></p>	<p><b>Rape Crisis</b> Rape Crisis Centres offer a range of services for women and girls who have been raped or experienced another form of sexual violence. Rape Crisis Centres are not just for women in 'crisis' - many women contact them years after they have been raped or sexually abused. You can contact the National Sexual Violence Helpline for help and advice and can find contact details for your nearest Rape Crisis Centre on Rape Crisis' website. Tel: 0808 802 9999 (Opening Times: Daily, 12pm – 2:30pm, and 7pm – 9:30pm) <a href="http://www.rapecrisis.org.uk">www.rapecrisis.org.uk</a></p>
<p><b>Mermaids</b> Mermaids offer support and advice to children and their families to understand and accept their child's gender identity issue. For more information visit: <a href="http://www.mermaidsuk.org.uk">www.mermaidsuk.org.uk</a></p>	<p><b>Brook</b> A provider of sexual health services for young people under 25 across the UK <a href="http://www.brook.org.uk">www.brook.org.uk</a></p>



# Resource E – Crimes within the Sexual Offences Act 2003

## Rape

Rape is classified as penetration by the penis of somebody's vagina, anus or mouth, without their consent.

(Consent is someone giving permission or agreeing to something, after they have thought carefully about whether or not they want to do something)

Rape can be committed against men or women, but since it involves penile penetration it is only committed by men.

## Assault by penetration

It is an offence to penetrate the anus or vagina of someone else with any part of the body or with an object, if the penetration is sexual and if the person does not consent.

## Sexual assault

This law covers any kind of intentional sexual touching of somebody else without their consent. It includes touching any part of their body, clothed or unclothed, either with your body or with an object.

## Causing a person to engage in a sexual activity without consent

This law covers any kind of sexual activity without consent. For instance it would apply to a woman who forces a man to penetrate her, or an abuser who makes their victim engage in masturbation.

## Administering a substance with intent

This law makes it a separate offence to give someone any substance – for instance spiking their drink – without their consent, and with the intention of stupefying them so that sexual activity can take place. In this instance, sexual activity could include stripping someone or taking pornographic photos of them. Someone can be charged with this offence on top of any separate charge for rape or sexual assault. They can also be charged when the intended sexual activity did not take place, for instance when someone sees what is going on and intervenes to stop it.

## Other 'intent' offences

Two laws – 'committing an offence with intent' and 'trespass with intent' – cover situations where abusers commit one offence (such as violence, trespass, or detaining someone against their will) with the intention of then committing a sexual offence.

## Other offences

Other offences under the Act include exposure (or 'flashing'), voyeurism, sex in public toilets, and sex with animals or with corpses. Voyeurism is a new offence which applies to watching people without their consent when they are involved in private acts. It includes setting up, viewing or recording people through electronic equipment such as webcams or cameras.

There are also important sections of the Act which deal with prostitution and trafficking, and with sexual offences against people with mental disorders, including learning disabilities.

# Resource F – Further resources for partners

Further resources which were developed with Women's Aid and AVA are available to download on the Home Office website:

Expect Respect: a toolkit for addressing teenage relationship abuse in key stages 3, 4 and 5

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/97773/teen-abuse-toolkit.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97773/teen-abuse-toolkit.pdf)

Teenage relationship abuse: a teacher's guide to violence and abuse in teenage relationships

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/97774/teen-abuse-teachers-guide.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97774/teen-abuse-teachers-guide.pdf)

Abuse in relationships: a leaflet for teenagers

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/97775/teen-abuse-leaflet.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97775/teen-abuse-leaflet.pdf)

More information and resources are available for teachers on the PSHE Association website

[www.pshe-association.org.uk](http://www.pshe-association.org.uk)

These include:

The PSHE Association Programme of Study: [www.pshe-association.org.uk/programmeofstudy](http://www.pshe-association.org.uk/programmeofstudy)

PSHE Guidance on producing the school's sex and relationships Education policy: [www.pshe-association.org.uk/resources\\_search\\_details.aspx?ResourceId=497](http://www.pshe-association.org.uk/resources_search_details.aspx?ResourceId=497)

Joint PSHE Association, Brook and Sex Education Forum guidance – SRE for the 21st Century: [www.pshe-association.org.uk/SREadvice](http://www.pshe-association.org.uk/SREadvice)

PSHE Association guidance on teaching about consent at key stages 3 and 4

<http://www.pshe-association.org.uk/consent>