



STOP:

STOP Child Abuse Through Effective Training and Augmented Reality

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Introduction

This handbook contains information for the prevention of child sexual abuse. This content is designed to be used in conjunction with an Augmented Reality game that will support youth workers in dealing with sensitive issues and involve children and youth in the learning process.

This handbook is the result of the project “Stop child abuse through effective training and augmented reality” (STOP). STOP project is an Erasmus+ KA2 Youth Project, financed by the European Commission (project number: 2019-2-HR01-KA205-061028). The project started in December 2019, with the duration of 26 months.

STOP project aims to provide an innovative answer to the adverse childhood experiences that affect children and youth in Europe. Sexual abuse of children occurs far more often than previously acknowledged. Children are vulnerable and often ashamed and afraid to report any incidents. As a result, this form of abuse is the hardest to detect, and it has many harmful effects on children and youth. International studies (Barth et al.) reveal that approximately 20% of women and between 5 -10 % of men, report having been victim of sexual violence as children.

Partnership:

STOP project is developed by a multidisciplinary approach that involve organizations from six different countries form Europe that bring different expertise.

- Coordinator of the project:
 - Parents' Association "Step by Step", from Croatia

- Partners of the project:
 - European Digital Learning Network, from Italy.
 - KENTRO MERIMNAS OIKOGENEIAS KAI PAIDIOU, from Greece.
 - UNIVERSIDAD DE VALLADOLID, from Spain.
 - ASOCIACION DESES 3, from Spain.
 - CCS DIGITAL EDUCATION LIMITED, from Ireland.
 - A & A Emphasys Interactive Solutions Ltd, from Cyprus.

Methodology:

The contents of this handbook have been selected through an educational design procedure that involves multidisciplinary professionals.

1. The first step was a desk research. A common model of case studies and research selected by the partners to create showcases regarding sexual abuse prevention, sexual education in youth centers and use of ICT. This first activity was carried out by the partners of the STOP project in Croatia, Italy, Greece, Spain and Cyprus.

2. After the desk research, two activities were carried out that allowed us to interact with the target group. These activities were carried out in Croatia, Italy, Greece, Spain and Cyprus.

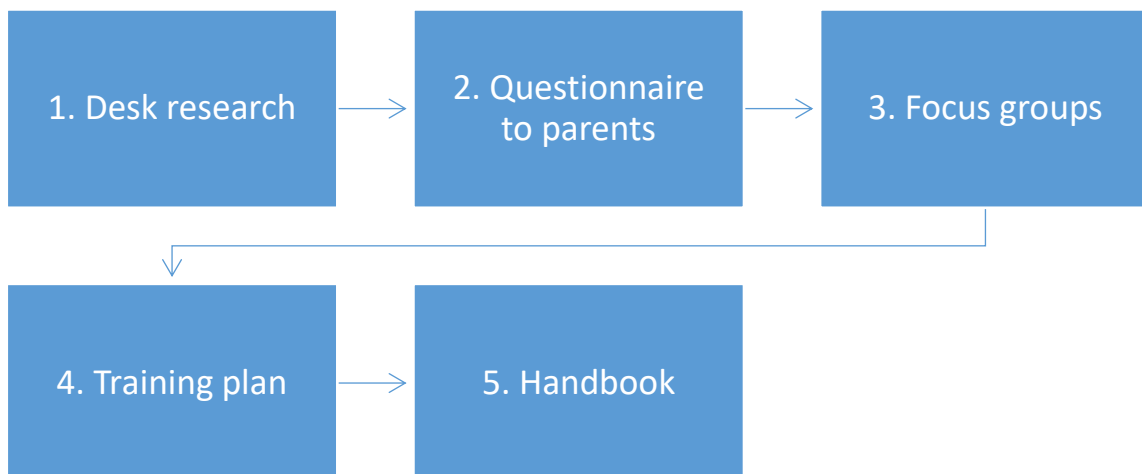
2.1 The first activity was a questionnaire addressed to parents to find out their degree of knowledge in relation to the risks and prevention of child sexual abuse. The questionnaire was divided into the following three parts: a) knowledge about sexual abuse; b) actions that parents take to prevent their children from possible abuse; c) knowledge of digital tools and the use of the internet by their children.

2.1 The second activity was five focus groups (in total for the whole partnership) for providing an overview about the state of the art about their understanding and knowledge about sexual abuse and sexual abuse prevention; furthermore, it investigates about the activities that youth workers do in order to protect their child from abuse and understand their digital competences. The focus group was divided into three parts a) knowledge about sexual abuse; b) actions that youth take to prevent their children from possible abuse; c) knowledge of digital tools and the use of the internet by children and youth. These focus groups were mainly attended by youth workers representing the target group of this handbook. Parents, teachers and professional experts in the prevention of child sexual abuse also participated.

3. As a result of the research activity carried out, the training plan was developed, where the modules and topics that would make up the handbook were decided and considered to be the most relevant as well as the most unknown by parents and youth workers. These are: 1) The concept of child sexual abuse; 2) Grooming; 3) Inappropriate touching; 4) The sexting.

4. The development of the content of the topics was completed by the partners of STOP project.

Illustration 1. Methodology used for the development of the handbook, training material for youth workers.



Handbook structure:

This handbook consists of this introduction and four training modules. Each of the modules is made up of 6 topics. Each topic has the same structure:

- Title of the topic.
- Description of the topic.
- Learning outcomes.
- Read: The main content of each topic. It is what the youth worker should “learn”.



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- Tips for youth workers.
- Supporting material. These are the additional resources that learners can have access to if they want to learn more about the topic.

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Module 1 – Inappropriate sexual behavior

Module description

The first module serves as an introduction. Introduction to all important definitions, aspects and concepts of inappropriate sexual behavior(s). You will get information about what sexual violence is, what forms it takes, what are the signs of such violence, how to talk about it, to whom and how to address it, and how to report violence that occurs and / or is reported.

Learning objectives

Upon completion of this module, you will:

- be able to teach children how to discern and identify inappropriate sexual behavior.
- be able to describe the definition and scope of child sexual abuse.
- know the definition of different types and forms of child contact and non-contact sexual abuse.
- be able to define and describe different behavioral, emotional and physical signs and symptoms of child sexual abuse and associate them with different types and forms of sexual abuse
- learn how to prevent, detect, respond to and report the cases of disclosed or suspected child sexual abuse
- be informed of the legal framework that protects children and youth rights

Content/Topics

1. Violence and sexual abuse
2. What is inappropriate sexual behavior and what is not?
3. Forms of sexual abuse
4. Signs of sexual abuse
5. How to prevent sexual abuse - promote youth safety and react
 - a) Safe and careful use of the internet and social media sites
 - b) Assertive communication
 - c) Asking for help and support
6. Reporting

Duration

The duration of this block is approximately 2,5 hours.

Topic 1.1 – violence and sexual abuse

Topic description

Topic 1 is an introduction to the notions of violence and child sexual abuse. In order to critically analyze and help to prevent it, topic 1 is contextualizing child sexual abuse into a human rights framework.

Learning Outcomes

- To understand violence and know the definition of a child sexual abuse
- To be able to teach children how to discern and identify inappropriate sexual behavior
- To be able to help, support and protect children applying a social justice and human rights framework

Read

What is violence? Violence against children is a multifaceted problem with causes at the individual, close relationship, community and societal levels whilst having life-long impacts on health and well-being of children, families, communities, and the whole of the nations. World Health Organization defines violence as “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation” (WHO, 2002). According to WHO, every five minutes one child dies as a result of some type of violent behavior that they experience in their families, educational institutions, communities and the Internet. According to UNICEF (2020), around 2 million children are sexually abused in the “sex industry” within the period of a year, whilst the Internet contains more than 1 million photos of between 10.000 to 20.000 sexually abused children. As such, child violence and abuse are a global problem, whereas child sexual abuse is one of the most complex problems of the modern society that requires collaboration between all sectors of society to end it. As there is no specific type or category of abusers and as they can come from the circle of family, friends, school, and community, it is important not to have prejudices about the identification of abusers as well as of the scope and different levels of sexual violence. With our joint efforts, preventing and combating sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children is more and more within our reach.

What is child sexual abuse? Although there is no consensual definition of child maltreatment and child sexual abuse, due to social constructs of phenomena in different sociocultural contexts, child sexual abuse always induces traumatization that is very complex. It undermines child's dignity and integrity *and imposes serious harms on child's health, emotional and psychosocial development*. It is often *connected to polyvictimization* and continuous experience of other types of violence and exposures to traumatic events. This is especially important in the process of a child's disclosure of the sexual abuse and different forms of sexually inappropriate behavior. In order to prevent complex burdens of polyvictimization, traumatic stress and harmful consequences that children and youth experience, focusing specifically on the sexual types of violence against children, we will first

introduce **the human rights framework** and most important terminology. As the fight against child sexual abuse is a priority for the European Union, there is a very comprehensive policy framework of promoting children's rights that is incorporated in a great body of legislation, institutional and strategic documents.

According to the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse of 25 October 2007, also known as the **Lanzarote Convention**, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union proclaimed that sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children, including child pornography, constitute serious violations of fundamental rights, in particular of the rights of children to the protection and care necessary for their well-being, as provided for by the 1989 **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child** and by the **Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union**.

The Lanzarote convention requires the criminalization of all kinds of sexual offences against children and countries signatories to adopt a specific legislation and are taking measures to prevent sexual violence, to protect children victims and to prosecute perpetrators.

This handbook applies 2 definitions of child sexual abuse. First one is proclaimed by the **1999 World Health Organization Consultation on Child Abuse Prevention (62)**:

"Child sexual abuse" is the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared and cannot give consent, or that violates the laws or social taboos of society. Child sexual abuse is evidenced by this activity between a child and an adult or another child who by age or development is in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power, the activity being intended to gratify or satisfy the needs of the other person. This may include but is not limited to: 1)the inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity; 2)the exploitative use of a child in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices; 3)the exploitative use of children in pornographic performance and materials".

World Health Organization defines child maltreatment as "the abuse and neglect that occurs to children under 18 years of age. It includes all types of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, negligence and commercial or other exploitation, which results in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power. Child maltreatment includes neglect, physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and fabricated or induced illness."

The second definition is applied in the **Lanzarote Convention**, which will also be applied throughout the handbook topics and lessons: **"Sexual abuse"** means intentional conduct that is criminalized by EU and national criminal law, and includes: 1)engaging in sexual activities with a child who, according to the relevant provisions of national law, has not reached the legal age for sexual activities; and 2)engaging in sexual activities with a child where: a)use is made of coercion, force or threats; or b) abuse is made of a recognized position of trust, authority or influence over the child, including within the family; or c)abuse is made of a particularly vulnerable situation of the child, notably because of a mental or physical disability or a situation of dependence.

Who is a child? "Child" means any person below the age of 18 years.

What is age of sexual consent? „Age of sexual consent“ means the age below which, in accordance with national legislation, it is prohibited to engage in sexual activities with a child. Signatories of Lanzarote Convention decided the age below which it is prohibited to engage in sexual activities with a child in their national contexts. Most Member States set a minimum age for sexual consent between 14 and 16 years of age.

SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES - Method:

1 - In order for children to understand what is sexual violence and sexual abuse, one can explain it in a non-threatening and a safe way using simpler concepts. In the delivering explanations to a younger child, instead of using the terms such as sexual violence, exploitation and abuse, it is developmentally and age-appropriately to use a concept of inappropriate behavior and inappropriate sexual behavior.

2 - Describe to the child that they have the human right to be safe, free and protected from all forms of harmful behavior, including from all forms of inappropriate sexual behavior.

3 - Discuss with children the concepts of violence, abuse and sexually inappropriate behavior by telling 3 different case studies in which the effects of behavior of others can include pain, but not all are violent behaviors (i.e. doctor, dentist-non-violent behavior, peer-violent behavior (bully), adult-sexually inappropriate behavior).

4 - Explain who are the abusers by telling there are people who are very dangerous, who are mistreating and hurting others whilst behaving in ways that are not appropriate. Describe that there is no type or category and that these people can come from their family, friends and their families, school, and community. Emphasize to the child that even if these people are older than the child, they don't have the right to behave in a sexually inappropriate way.

5 - Explain that sexually inappropriate behavior includes touching and/or photographing and making videos of private body parts of the child for sexual pleasure and gratification of these individuals.

6 - Brainstorm why this kind of behavior is a serious criminal offence and that these dangerous persons should be legally punished for their misbehavior. Explain why there is no single case when this kind of behavior is right to be performed. Explain that it is always a wrong action for someone to do and they need to immediately tell about this kind of behavior to a person who they trust.

Tips for youth workers

In order to enhance confidence, create a friendly and non-intimidating atmosphere in which the child will feel secure and happy to learn and express themselves. Ask open questions and tell them they can ask you questions and tell you whatever they need to. Make sure you have the attitude of openness in regard to the questions they may ask you during the teaching process.

Supporting material

Additional Resource 1

Title:	World Health Organization - Violence against children
Description	This is the official website of World Health Organization and its work in relation to ending violence against children. A May 2016 World Health Assembly resolution endorsed the first ever WHO Global plan of action on strengthening the role of the health system within a national multisectoral response to address interpersonal violence, in particular against women and girls, and against children
Link to resource:	https://www.who.int/health-topics/violence-against-children#tab=tab_1

Additional Resource 2

Title:	The Council of Europe - Children's Rights
Description	The Council of Europe protects and promotes the human rights of everyone, including children. Based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the European Convention on Human Rights and other legal standards, the Council of Europe promotes and protects the rights of 150 million children in Europe. Here you can find legal as well as policy documents on human rights of children in general, and in regards to sexual abuse specifically.
Link to resource:	https://www.coe.int/en/web/children/publications https://www.coe.int/en/web/children/sexual-violence

Additional Resource 3

Title:	The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) - International technical guidance on sexuality education: an evidence-informed approach
Description	In UNESCO's International technical guidance on sexuality education: an evidence-informed approach you can find guidelines for teaching concepts of violence and sexual abuse to children 9-12 years old. One section of the International technical guidance on sexuality education is intended for learners at primary school levels whilst promoting a learner-centered approach to teaching in which the focus of the instruction is on the learner.
Link to resource:	https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000260770

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Topic 1.2 – What is inappropriate sexual behavior and what is not?

Description

The topic deepens the concept related to coercion, flirting vs. sexual harassment and consent (also in partner relationship) to define which are the limits of sexual abuse.

Learning Outcomes

- To describe the definition and scope of child sexual abuse.
- To understand the dynamics and identify the risk factors associated with child sexual abuse.

If you are not exactly sure what sexual abuse is, you're not alone. To help identify abuse, identifying behaviors that are abusive can help determine what sexual abuse is. Sexual abuse does include both Touching and Non-Touching Behaviors. Any sexual touching between an adult and a child is sexual abuse. Sexual touching between children can also be sexual abuse when there is a significant age difference (often defined as 3 or more years) between the children or if the children are very different developmentally or size-wise. Sexual abuse does not have to involve penetration, force, pain, or even touching. If an adult engages in any sexual behavior (looking, showing, or touching) with a child to meet the adult's interest or sexual needs, it is sexual abuse. This includes the manufacture, distribution and viewing of child pornography (Stopitnow.org). Children and teens in all racial, religious, ethnic, gender and age groups, and at all socio-economic levels can be sexually abused. While there are risk factors that may increase the possibility of sexual abuse, sexual abuse is found in all types of families, communities and cultures. The impact of sexual abuse does not end when the abuse ends. Survivors of sexual abuse are at significantly greater risks for severe and chronic mental health issues, including alcoholism, depression, anxiety, PTSD and high-risk behaviors. While no child is immune, there are child and family characteristics that significantly heighten or lower the risk of sexual abuse. The following risk factors are based on reported and identified cases of abuse (Darkness to Live, 2014):

- Family structure is the most important risk factor in child sexual abuse. Children who live with two married biological parents are less likely to be abused. The risk increases where children live with step-parents or a single parent.
- Children living without either parent (foster children) are 10 times more likely to be sexually abused than children that live with both biological parents.
- Children who live with a single parent that has a live-in partner are at the highest risk; they are 20 times more likely to be victims of child sexual abuse than children living with both biological parents.
- We must not forget and neglect the extended family (grandparents, relatives, uncles, aunts, ...) who can also be abusers. It often happens that it is precisely the persons who could be characterized as persons of trust who are the potential abusers.
- Gender is also a major factor in sexual abuse. Females are five times more likely to be abused than males.

- The age of the male being abused also plays a part - 8% of victims aged 12-17 are male. 26% of victims under the age of 12 are male.
- Age is a significant factor in sexual abuse. While there is risk for children of all ages, children are most vulnerable to abuse between the ages of 7 and 13.
- However, of children who are sexually abused, more than 20% are abused before the age of 8: a child older than 8 years old already has a conscience, however, a child younger than 8 years old can be a victim because they can be made to believe that it is a game.

CONSENT

Consent is defined as a voluntary agreement to do something. When it comes to sex it's important for everyone involved to give/receive enthusiastic consent. Enthusiastic consent means everyone is into what's happening, and shows they're ready through words and actions. Establishing enthusiastic consent before and throughout sexual activity means everyone is on the same page and having fun together. Remember, if consent is not given by everyone involved, it's sexual violence. Children are not old enough or mature enough to give free and informed consent, which is agreement based upon a true understanding of the situation. Children are dependent upon adults. As a result, children can be exploited easily. Therefore, when an adult or adolescent sexually interacts with a child in any way, it is considered child sexual abuse. To protect children, such acts are severely punished.

COERCION

In any act of coercion, you are more or less forced to do something you do not want to do. Psychological coercion or pressuring can take many forms. At its mildest it involves insisting, nagging, and begging, such as "Please, just this once". More forceful means are shaming ("Don't act like a baby"), bullying ("Do as I say"), and threatening ("You'll pay for this"). Accusation ("You don't love me") and the threat of breaking up or withdrawal ("You won't see me again") are other ways of pressuring. By definition, sexual coercion is "the act of using pressure, alcohol or drugs, or force to have sexual contact with someone against his or her will" and includes "persistent attempts to have sexual contact with someone who has already refused." Think of sexual coercion as a spectrum or a range. It can vary from someone verbally begging you on to someone actually forcing you to have contact with them. It can be verbal and emotional, in the form of statements that make you feel pressure, guilt or shame.

Flirting vs. sexual harassment

A hand resting on the knee. A flirty text message. From the right person at the right time, they can make you feel great. But from the wrong person or at the wrong time, an innuendo-laden text becomes creepy and an unwanted touch can make you feel uncomfortable and ashamed.

Flirting	Sexual harassment
Both sides are equally motivated	It is motivated by a sense of power
Both sides like it and are interested in it.	One side likes it, the other doesn't.
It makes you feel comfortable	It makes you feel uncomfortable.
You feel attractive and flattered	You feel ashamed and attacked

It results in a positive self-image.	It results in a negative self-image.
It is an act in which both persons treat each other with respect.	It is an act between two persons, in which one person sees their feelings and desires as important, and the feelings and desires of the other person as unimportant and secondary

For youth workers, is not easy to work and talk about this topic with children and young people, but it's very important. Also, it's responsible and can be overwhelming, so:

Apply knowledge to practice: While there is a lot that research doesn't yet tell us about sexually abusive behavior, there are some very helpful and well-established models of how abuse takes place which we can apply to our practice to make children safer. (see supporting material and other internet sources)

Look after yourself: The emotions aroused by working with cases of sexual abuse can be overwhelming. Using peer and supervisory support is key to keeping healthy in our work and containing the distress of those with whom we work.

Tips for youth workers

Don't assume that a child will behave or react in any particular way. Every situation that involves child abuse is different, and every child responds differently. Simply being an available, responsible adult may provide the support a child needs.

Supporting material

Additional Resource 1

Title:	The Scope of Child Sexual Abuse Definition and Fact Sheet
Description	Free online article with statistic data and examples for child sexual abuse
Link to resource:	https://www.stopitnow.org/faq/the-scope-of-child-sexual-abuse-definition-and-fact-sheet

Additional Resource 2

Title:	Child sexual abuse: key advice for (social) workers working in this area
Description	Tips taken from a new hub on Community Care Inform Children about intrafamilial child sexual abuse (CSA). The full hub covers the factors that can make a child and family vulnerable to abuse, what practitioners can do to support children and young people with the difficult task of disclosure, and different ways of working with a child and family after abuse has been disclosed.
Link to resource:	https://www.communitycare.co.uk/2018/12/19/child-sexual-abuse-key-advice-social-workers-working-area/

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Topic 1.3 – Forms of sexual abuse

Topic description

Topic 3 aims to distinguish the different types and forms of child sexual abuse both online and offline, and the circumstances in which they may occur.

Learning Outcomes

- To know the definition of different types and forms of child contact and non-contact sexual abuse.
- To understand that child sexual abuse may happen in different contexts and circumstances.
- To be able to demonstrate the ability to explain, analyze and recognize different types and forms of inappropriate sexual behavior.

Read

All forms of sexual abuse can be put into two categories: physical or contact and non-physical or non-contact sexual abuse.

This is why all forms of sexual abuse can happen in person and online via the Internet.

When sexual abuse happens in person, it can take different forms, such as situations when the perpetrator:

- Forces a child to participate in sexual activities.
- Touches the body of a child (in the cases the child has or hasn't their clothes on).
- Penetrates a child with a part of their body or using external object.
- Makes or tricks a child into undressing.
- Makes or tricks a child into touching them or someone else.

The abusive and inappropriate sexual behaviors can take forms of kissing, touching, oral sex etc.

A child is at risk of sexual abuse in the situations where the perpetrator doesn't physically touch the child.

Sexual abuse happens in its non-physical or non-contact form and it can happen in person and online.

Non-physical or non-contact form of sexual abuse can manifest in many ways, such as situations when the perpetrator:

- Exposes a child to activities of sexual nature.
- Forces a child to masturbate.
- Makes photos or videos of a child and/or distributes them physically and/or online.
- Shows photos or videos with pornographic content to the child.
- Shows intimate parts of their body to the child.
- Secretly watches at (spies on) a child in their private and/or public spaces.

- Forces or tricks a child to be involved into sexual activity through conversations, via the Internet and using digital technology.

SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Method:

1. The case studies given below can be used for better understanding the different forms and types of sexually inappropriate behavior.
 - 1) A school football teacher continuously rubs his hands on the bodies of football players when training them and watches boys undressing when they are going to take a shower after the football class is over. He also walks around with his mobile phone and shoot pictures when the football team is undressing. He sometimes shows photos of nude persons to the players.
 - 2) Uncle hugs his nephew (give a name) and cuddles her/him. He/she doesn't like it and asks her/his uncle to stop hugging and cuddling her/him, but even though he/she doesn't like it, uncle continues to do it. Uncle is making fun of him/her and shooting a video while he/she is expressing dislike. Uncle says it is for his Internet family photo gallery.
 - 3) Older neighbor from the building tells a younger neighbor to take off his/her clothes in front of them in order to take a photo. They say to younger neighbor that if they don't listen and do what they say that they will steal their bike and beat them. The younger neighbor fears the older neighbor and does what they told them. The younger neighbor feels very ashamed and doesn't tell anyone about what happened and keeps it as a secret.
 - 4) Parents of a 13-year-old boy hire a home teacher while they are at work. Home teacher proposed to play an educational quiz on the computer. After they're finished learning lessons, the teacher proposed to play a new fantastic computer mimic game with the boy - but only if they don't say to anyone about it. The teacher asks the boy to take their T-shirt off – because it is a rule of a game. Then, she asks them to sit in their lap to play a game together. The computer game is displaying videos and photos of naked persons wearing no clothes. The teacher asks the boy to touch them in the same way as it is in the computer game - because it is a part of the mimic game – and starts to touch their private body parts and talks to the boy about how it makes them feel good and excited.
2. At the end of the case study, you can give to children a list of questions in order to initiate discussion.

Example

QUESTIONS

1) Can you identify sexually inappropriate behavior in the story?

What are the ways in which the character in the story is being mistreated or abused?

2) Can you share some of your thoughts and feelings when reading/listening to the story?

3) Can you think of any other ways in which children and youth can be inappropriately sexually related to?

Suggestion: situations in which a child is being continuously observed.

3. According to the list of forms of sexual abuse and its two categories - physical or contact and non-physical or non-contact sexual abuse, as well as different contexts in which it can happen – provide the child with feedback and further explanations in order to teach them how to protect themselves.

Tips for youth workers

If a character in a case study is a girl, you can explain that boys too may face sexual abuse (and vice versa).

- Ask a child to think of the examples.
- Ask a child to provide examples with both female and male victims.

Supporting material

Additional Resource 1

Title:	The International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) - The Terminology Guidelines for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse - Luxembourg Guidelines
Description	The Terminology Guidelines for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, also known as the Luxembourg Guidelines, offer clear guidance on how to navigate the complex lexicon of terms commonly used when addressing the exploitation and sexual abuse of children. The Luxembourg Guidelines were developed by a group of 18 international partners, including INTERPOL.
Link to resource:	https://www.interpol.int/en/Crimes/Crimes-against-children/Appropriate-terminology

Additional Resource 2

Title:	The Council of Europe - Children's Rights
Description	The Council of Europe protects and promotes the human rights of everyone, including children. Based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the European Convention on Human Rights and other legal standards, the Council of Europe promotes and protects the rights of 150 million children in Europe. Here you can find additional educational materials on forms of child sexual abuse.
Link to resource:	https://www.coe.int/en/web/children/publications https://www.coe.int/en/web/children/sexual-violence

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Topic 1.4 – Signs of sexual abuse

Topic description

Topic 4 will deal with the specific signs and symptoms related to the different forms of child sexual abuse and how to recognize them.

Learning Outcomes

- To understand that there are common signs of child sexual abuse as well as understand that some signs are not so obvious.
- To be able to define and describe different behavioral, emotional and physical signs and symptoms of child sexual abuse and to associate them with different types and forms of sexual abuse.
- To be more confident in their ability to detect and respond to the specific signs of child sexual abuse and more able to cope with their emotions and feelings in case of child sexual abuse.

Read

After we understand what violence and child sexual abuse are, and knowing their different forms and situations in which they can occur, it is critical to learn and understand what are common behavioral, emotional and physical signs of child sexual abuse. They are alerting or warning us that we need to give more attention to a particular situation. As child sexual abuse is a complex phenomenon and every case or situation is unique, they might indicate to you that sexual abuse or that other psychological or physical traumatic events happened. A sign by itself doesn't prove that sexual abuse happened, but points to us that something needs more attention. Here is a list of possible signs that might indicate to child sexual abuse.

Physical signs	Emotional and behavioral signs
A sexually transmitted infection and disease	Changes in eating habits and having eating disturbances (overeating or under-eating)
Genital and/or anal bleeding	Changes in sleeping habits and having sleep disturbances (i.e. having nightmares, fears to fall asleep)
Unusual scars on the body such as bruises and irritations around mouth, hands, legs, and genital and anal areas	Changes in mood, personality, and behavior – such as being aggressive, harmful to themselves and/or others, being more upset and irritated, shy, withdrawn, and clingy
Signs of blood on the underwear, bed sheets and clothes	Displaying excessive worry, new fears (especially related to a certain person or group of people) and/or compulsive behaviors
Having difficulties while sitting and walking because of the trauma in genital and anal areas	Anxiety, depression, feelings of shame and guilt

Having difficulties during urinating or defecation	Inability to concentrate
Psychosomatic symptoms such as abdominal and head pains, and other psychosomatic symptoms	Eyes cast downward when talking about the topic
	Problems in school and having difficulties with learning (difficulties with concentrations, lower grades etc.)
	Age-inappropriate (especially sexual behavior) and/or regressive behavior
	Changes in language and vocabulary, using words inappropriate to their age
	Not wanting to be alone with certain persons and/or frightened to spend time with someone whom they know
	Loss or lowering the level of interest to engage in school, leisure activities, and time with friends
	Being secretive and holding secrets
	Spending lots of time alone and being extremely quiet
	Child having unexplained money and gifts of unknown source.

SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES - Method:

1. The case studies given below can be used for better understanding of different signs and symptoms of sexual abuse.

“Peter observes behavior that is very unusual for their classmate Ivan. Ivan, who is usually always cheerful, has been extremely quiet and unsocial for the last few days. They even avoid eye contact. When someone approaches them, they avoid physical contact, especially hugging. They stopped using a computer which was their favorite hobby. During physical education class, they change clothes in the toilette alone and not with everyone in the dressing room. When other classmates approach Ivan, Ivan gets very angry. Also, Ivan starts to get lower grades and usually he is an excellent pupil.”

2. After telling this case study, you can give to children a list of questions in order to initiate discussion. You can lead a child by telling that the story reveals a few different signs of inappropriate sexual behavior, and that some of the signs that we can notice are more obvious and some of them are less obvious, but they are pointing to us that something is not quite right. You can ask a child how they think someone can recognize a child being sexually inappropriately acted towards, and why.
- Being extremely unsocial, avoiding physical and eye contact, changing clothes alone during physical classes.
 - Being angry, acting out in the class, being extremely quiet.
 - Or all of the above.

According to the list of common physical signs and behavioral and emotional signs of child sexual abuse, you can provide a child with feedback on their answers.

Tips for youth workers

If the younger child mimics sexual activities, when they mimic sexual intercourse, it is always a warning sign. This behavioral sign is having high correlation with children being sexually abused. According to evolutionary psychology, if the child is less than 3 years old, it is a normal behavior as a sign of exploration of the body.

You are obliged to report, whoever the suspected victim may be and whoever the suspected perpetrator may be. Always have in mind that the child's best interests must be your primary consideration.

Supporting material

Additional Resource 1

Title:	The Council of Europe - Children's Rights
Description	The Council of Europe protects and promotes the human rights of everyone, including children. Based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the European Convention on Human Rights and other legal standards, the Council of Europe promotes and protects the rights of 150 million children in Europe. Here you can find additional educational materials on signs of child sexual abuse.
Link to resource:	https://www.coe.int/en/web/children/sexual-violence

Sources:

Council of Europe (2007). Lanzarote Convention. <https://www.coe.int/en/web/children/lanzarote-convention>. Date of access: November 21 2020

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Topic 1.5 – How to prevent sexual abuse - promote youth safety and react

Description

The topic will present how to balance caution and caring and things you can do to help keep them safe.

Learning Outcomes

- To learn how to prevent, detect, respond to and report cases of disclosed or suspected child sexual abuse.
- To learn to monitor potential risk situations and harmful behaviors.

Read

Sexual abuse of defendants/offenders, whether adult or juvenile, in community corrections violates the law. It also violates their basic human rights, impedes the likelihood of their successful reentry into the community, and violates the Government's legal obligation to provide safe and humane community corrections supervision. Youth-serving organizations strive to create a safe environment for youth, employees, and volunteers so that youth can grow, learn, and have fun. Part of creating a safe environment is making sure that youth are not harmed in any way while participating in organization-sponsored activities. One risk in any organization working directly with youth is child sexual abuse. It is vital that organizations create a culture where child sexual abuse is discussed, addressed, and prevented.

The same dynamics that create a nurturing environment, and may ultimately protect against child sexual abuse, can also open the doors to sexually abusive behaviors. Research has shown that youth who are emotionally insecure, needy, and unsupported may be more vulnerable to the intentions of offenders.

By promoting close and caring relationships between youth and adults, organizations can help youth feel supported and loved and, thus, reduce their risk of child sexual abuse. But that same closeness between a young person and an adult can also provide the opportunity for abuse to occur.

When developing policies for child sexual abuse prevention, organizations must balance the need to keep youth safe with the need to nurture and care for them.

All adults and adolescents need to know that child sexual abuse is a crime that often causes severe damage to children, that help is available for those who seek it, and that children can never consent to sexual activity. Further, a comprehensive prevention strategy should include increasing parents' and other caregivers' awareness and knowledge of protective measures they can take on behalf of their children. A powerful public education message must be transmitted to the general public, encouraging society to recognize that child sexual abuse is both everyone's problem and responsibility. The goal of such public education efforts is to eliminate any tolerance for sexual abuse or confusion over what society condones as appropriate interactions between adults and children.

Things you can do to help keep them safe

There are certain things you should talk about (Nidirect, n.d.):

- The right to be safe - reassure them that they will not be punished if they say they feel unsafe or threatened in any way by any person (including family members).
- The truth will always be believed - encourage them to tell you if anything is making them feel uncomfortable, confused or scared (children rarely lie about abuse).
- Their body is their own - talk to them about the areas that should be covered (swimsuit areas) and encourage them to tell you if anyone tries to go beyond these boundaries.
- Say 'no' - children often think they have to do whatever an adult tells them to, particularly if they have been made to hug or kiss adults when they don't want to.
- Reassure them that no harm will come to them or their loved ones if they tell the truth about abuse.
- If a stranger tries to talk to them, tell them to pretend not to hear them and go to you immediately.

These two last tips cover all sorts of situations:

- Tell them it is okay to break the rules if they are in danger - encourage them to yell, kick, scream, lie or run away if they feel they are in danger.
- Have a code word or sign that only the child, their parents and you know - if they need to be pick-ed up, they can give that person the code.

Tips for youth workers

Since abusers and bullies often say 'it's our secret' or even threaten the safety of other family members, tell them that secrets like that should never be kept – teach them about „good“ and „bad“ secrets (more on that in additional materials).

Supporting material

Additional Resource 1

Title:	Good Secrets and Bad Secrets: How to Help Kids Tell the Difference
Description	things you can do to help protect children from keeping a secret that could harm them.
Link to resource:	https://defendinnocence.org/good-secrets-bad-secrets-surprises/

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Topic 1.5A – Safe and careful use of the Internet and social media sites

Description

The topic will cover personal information, concept of “Stranger Danger” online/offline and inappropriate Internet behavior as well as the importance of being safe and careful on the Internet.

Learning Outcomes

- To identify types of personal information and inappropriate Internet behavior.
- To understand importance of being safe and careful on the Internet.

Read

Surfing the Internet used to be one of the last bastions of privacy and security. After all, since you didn’t have to get dressed, get in your car, and drive anywhere to shop or meet new people, you could build any kind of profile you wanted for yourself. You could have any name and be any person you wanted to be (theoretically) and nobody would be able to uncover your identity if you didn’t want them to have it. But unfortunately, things have changed. Today, most people tend to be naïve and unaware of the many different ways that their personal information may be stored online. They’re even less likely to know how both companies and individuals gain access to this data. Just because you may not be aware of all the different avenues that exist to gather personal information about you, that doesn’t mean that your information is safe! Even the most seemingly innocent or innocuous activities can lead to sharing personal information with anonymous sources across the Internet. The more aware you are about this information, the better you’ll be able to protect yourself, your family, and all of that valuable information.

If you’ve ever written anything about yourself online, or made purchases, or visited websites, there is personal information about you floating around in the ether. Some of the most common tidbits of personal information that someone could find about you may include: Your full name; Your home address; Where you went to school; Where you work; Your Social Security number, its last four digits, or other identifying information; Favorite websites that you visit; General search information and parameters; Your computer’s IP address; Personal banking information, etc. Upon a quick review of this list, there should be a few items that stand out and give you reason to pause. Your Social Security numbers? Personal banking information? Maybe you haven’t ever purchased anything online, but you’ve probably have accessed your bank account online to check your balance or conduct transactions. So how could someone gain access to such personal information?

The key to that one is through your computer’s IP address. Once an individual has your IP address, if you don’t have a firewall and other security features setup, he or she could – theoretically – gain access to your computer and “observe” your activities while you’re connected to the Internet. This would give these hackers access to just about any personal information they want about you. It sounds scary, but there are plenty of tools and resources

available online that teach wannabe identity thieves how to hack into another computer using the IP address alone.

Protecting your personal information can help reduce your risk of identity theft. There are four main ways to do it: know who you share information with; store and dispose of your personal information securely, especially your Social Security number; ask questions before deciding to share your personal information; and maintain appropriate security on your computers and other electronic devices.

Keeping Your Personal Information Secure and safe both offline and online.

STRANGER DANGER

Teaching a kid about “stranger danger” isn’t as simple as telling them strangers are bad and calling it a day. In fact, the idea of stranger danger is vastly overblown: The majority of child abductions and sexual abuse cases are committed not by strangers, but by people in a child’s life — and most missing children are not kidnapped but have run away from home. Child safety experts recommend a more comprehensive approach that goes beyond stranger danger — one that teaches children to recognize suspicious behaviors regardless of the context (Fatherly, 2021). Prevention of adults on the use of the internet. It is necessary to consider that in adolescence there is an overexposure to digital tools, social networks etc. Therefore, the reference figures (parents) should consider controlling the privacy and use of said activity.

The Better Way to Teach Stranger Danger according to Fatherly (2021) is:

- Don’t accept rides from strangers — Adults have no business asking a child to get into their car.
- Offenders can look like anyone — A third of abuse perpetrated against minors is committed by another minor; 10 percent of offenders are female.
- “Stranger Danger” isn’t enough — 93 percent of childhood sexual abuse is committed by an adult known to the child.
- Consent is key — Kids need to understand that they control who can and cannot touch their bodies, and they can leave when a situation feels wrong.
- Talk about it — Kids need to practice saying no and telling an adult when someone touches them in an inappropriate manner.
- Back them up — When a child decides they don’t want to be touched, either in a tickle fight or when they meet some family member, parents need to respect that.

Teens who don’t use privacy settings on social networking and gaming sites often place their information—including their deepest desires, likes and dislikes, real-time moods, pictures, addresses, and phone numbers—for anyone to see. Teens who post personal information, blog, or journal about sensitive issues may also be easy targets for predators who seek to isolate children from their parents and friends and exploit a child’s emotional vulnerabilities.

Risky Online Behaviors

The riskier behaviors kids engage in online, the more likely they will receive an online sexual solicitation. These risky behaviors include: Posting personal information (50%*); Interacting

with online strangers (45%); Placing strangers on buddy lists (35%); Sending personal information to strangers (26%); Visiting X-rated sites (13%); Talking about sex with strangers (5%).

*Percentage of teens demonstrating indicated behavior.

Tips for youth workers

It's important to explain expectations of internet behavior. Tell them: By acting responsibly and respectfully, you will enjoy your time online and get the best of the Internet while mostly avoiding things such as cyberbullying and inappropriate content.

Supporting material

Additional Resource 1

Title:	How to Keep Your Personal Information Secure
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping Your Personal Information Secure Offline • Keeping Your Personal Information Secure Online • Securing Your Social Security Number • Keeping Your Devices Secure
Link to resource:	https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0272-how-keep-your-personal-information-secure

Sources

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Internet Safety 101SM (n.d.). Risky Online Behavior A Closer Look: Who Is At Risk?.
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Topic 1.5B – Assertive communication

Description

The topic will cover the importance of assertiveness and assertive communication skills.

Learning Outcomes

To understand assertiveness and assertive communication skills as protective and preventive factors and tools against child sexual victimization.

Read

Assertiveness is a skill regularly referred to in social and communication skills training. Being assertive means being able to stand up for your own or other people's rights in a calm and positive way, without being either aggressive, or passive accepting 'wrong'. Assertive individuals are able to get their point across without upsetting others or becoming upset themselves. In other words, assertiveness means standing up for your personal rights - expressing thoughts, feelings and beliefs in direct, honest and appropriate ways. It is important to note also that by being assertive we should always respect the thoughts, feelings and beliefs of other people. Those who behave assertively always respect the thoughts, feelings and beliefs of other people as well as their own. Assertiveness concerns being able to express feelings, wishes, wants and desires appropriately and is an important personal and interpersonal skill. In all your interactions with other people, whether at home or at work, with employers, customers or colleagues, assertiveness can help you to express yourself in a clear, open and reasonable way, without undermining your own or others' rights. Assertiveness enables individuals to act in their own best interests, to stand up for themselves without undue anxiety, to express honest feelings comfortably and to express personal rights without denying the rights of others.

Aggressive behavior can sometimes be confused with assertive behavior because both communication styles involve people speaking up for themselves and feeling in control. However, there is a big difference between how you state your needs in each style. Assertive communication is direct but not offensive. In fact, part of being assertive is respecting others' feelings and opinions, being able to take criticism in a constructive way, and being willing to negotiate when having a disagreement.

Therefore, according to Melburny Child Psychology, assertive children are more likely to be able to:

- Identify their own feelings.
- Speak up for themselves and others.
- Avoid and respond to bullying.
- Disagree respectfully.
- Negotiate with others.
- Say "no" without feeling guilty.
- Build up stronger relationships.

- Build confidence and self-esteem; and,
- Feel in control.

Teaching Assertiveness

Teaching assertiveness early in life is very valuable as, generally speaking, assertive children grow up to be assertive teens and adults. Here are some ideas for how you can teach your children to be assertive:

Model assertive behaviors when interacting with family members, acquaintances, and others. At times, you will need to explicitly teach children how to be assertive. If your child is feeling left out at recess, teach him/her how to manage this situation. For example, you can coach him/her on how to join in activities or games that he/she enjoys playing. You can also role-play different scenarios so children have an opportunity to practice being assertive. Other traits to teach include: body language (body upright, shoulders relaxed, relaxed facial expression and good eye-contact) and listening without interrupting. As with any other skill, learning to be assertive takes time and practice, so be consistent and persist, it will soon pay off!

Assertive communication means considering the needs of others, but never at our own expense. Exist a lot of conflict resolution strategies, such us “I” message (It is an assertion about the feelings, beliefs, values, etc. of the person speaking, and is contrasted with a "you-message", which often begins with the word "you" and focuses on the person spoken to).

Foster the active listening - look at the eyes, save some time in private for speaking about the problem.

Consider these ideas:

- Explain that setting boundaries (saying “no,” “stop” or “I don’t like that”) keeps our bodies and minds safe and healthy.
- Support kids in saying “no” over negotiable issues (not wanting to wear certain clothing, hug someone or read a particular book are good places to start).
- Review the “Circle of Control” poster and discuss how we can only be in charge of our own feelings and behavior, not the behavior or reactions of others.
- Read “**Listening to My Body**” by **Gabi Garcia** to stay connected to the important sensations and emotional cues our bodies send us.

Tips for youth workers

Here’s the simple formula to teach assertive communication: “I feel (insert feeling) when you (insert behavior). I would like you to (insert request).”

Supporting material

Additional Resource 1

Title:	Circle of Control Poster
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Description	It can help your children overcome disappointments and frustrations and focus on the problem-solving instead. It's a great visual showing that, in each situation, there are things we can control and things we cannot control. It helps children understand putting their energy into things they can control will help them arrive at solutions more effectively.
Link to resource:	https://biglifejournal-uk.co.uk/products/circle-of-control-poster-kids-hardcopy

Additional Resource 2

Title:	Listening to My Body
Description	Guide to helping kids understand the connection between their sensations (what the heck are those?) and feelings so that they can get better at figuring out what they need.
Link to resource:	https://biglifejournal-uk.co.uk/products/circle-of-control-poster-kids-hardcopy

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Topic 1.5C – Asking for help and support

Description

This topic will present how victims may get help and support from trusted adults and organizations in the community.

Learning Outcomes

To learn and understand the importance of support from adults trusted by children and help services available.

Read

In moving toward adulthood, **young people make formative choices about their social and economic engagement while developmentally seeking autonomy from parents.** Who else then contributes to guiding young people during this formative life-stage? Past research has shown **that these adults provide motivational, emotional, and instrumental support to young people, but less is known about how and why their support** is appropriate particularly during young adulthood. A trusted adult was defined as someone who **‘children and young people may turn to for help, and will take them seriously’.** The concept of trusted adults has come into sharper focus, **with children being encouraged to develop networks of dependable adults to turn to for support in times of need.** While many child protection processes highlight risks to younger children, there has been less emphasis on older children. The role of trusted adults may be particularly important during adolescence, due to burgeoning independence, developing sexuality, relationship formation, and associated vulnerabilities. While important choices relating to health and education are made during this period, there is little formal evidence relating to the impact of trusted adults on such outcomes.

We want to make sure that all children and young people who are looked after away from home are safe and well. To do this, all looked after children should have a chance to choose a trusted adult.

What is a trusted adult?

A trusted adult is someone that you have a good relationship with. It is someone who you think has your best interests in mind. You have a right to choose whether you want a trusted adult and who that person will be. Your social worker can give you more information about trusted adults and advise you on whether the person you have chosen is suitable.

Your trusted adult is there for you to talk to and support you. They:

- Can talk to you about any concerns or worries that you have and help you to do something about them.
- Could support you to talk to other people about your concerns or worries.
- Should be someone that you have regular contact with.

Tips for youth workers

Google search and find few civil society organizations, institutions and / or government institutions in your town/country that deal with these topics and can be contacted when you are faced with such difficult situations.

Or

Do activities with children/youth to help them to express their fears with trusted adults, coaches, monitors, doctors, teachers, neighbors etc.

Supporting material

Additional Resource 1

Title:	How to Find a Trusted Adult to Talk to
Description	Three methods and ways of finding trusted adults and step by step instructions are explained. There are also helpful tips on how to talk to children about this topic.
Link to resource:	https://www.wikihow.com/Find-a-Trusted-Adult-to-Talk-to

Additional Resource 2

Title:	Finding An Adult That You Can Trust
Description	This video encourages young people to find an adult that they're able to talk to about navigating situations that may arise during adolescence. Some young people may find it helpful to talk to a relative, but others prefer to talk to a teacher, coach, or friend's parent. The video acknowledges that some adults aren't good listeners, don't always believe young people, or tell young people what to think. The video advises young people to find an adult that respects them enough to listen without judgment and to test out whether an adult would be a good fit to talk to, such as if the young person has heard them give good advice to others.
Link to resource:	https://amaze.org/video/healthy-relationships-finding-an-adult-you-can-trust/

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Childline (n.d.) HOW CAN TALKING TO AN ADULT HELP?. <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/you-your-body/getting-help/asking-adult-help/>.

Topic 1.6 – Reporting

Description

The topic will explain to youth workers reporting procedures, reporting authorities and description and explanation to children.

Learning Outcomes

To know the definition and description of the legal framework that protects children and youth rights.

Read

Everyone, everywhere has the same rights as a result of our common humanity. We are all equally entitled to our human rights without discrimination. These rights are all interrelated, interdependent and indivisible.

The United Nations set a common standard on human rights with the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. Although the Declaration is not part of binding international law, its acceptance by all countries around the world gives great moral weight to the fundamental principle that all human beings, whatever our nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, race, religion, language, or any other status, are to be treated equally and with respect.

Children's rights are a subset of human rights with particular attention to the rights of special protection and care afforded to minors. The 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) defines a child as "any human being below the age of eighteen years, unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier. Children's rights include their right to association with both parents, human identity as well as the basic needs for physical protection, food, universal state-paid education, health care, and criminal laws appropriate for the age and development of the child, equal protection of the child's civil rights, and protected from discrimination.

Child protection is the safeguarding of children from violence, exploitation, abuse, and neglect. Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child provides for the protection of children in and out of the home. One of the ways to ensure this is by giving them quality education, the fourth of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, in addition to other child protection systems. Child protection systems are a set of usually government-run services designed to protect children and young people who are underage and to encourage family stability.

Maybe you have a suspicion that a child is being abused based on something you've witnessed, or a child has told you that abuse is happening. Either way, it's your responsibility to report it to the authorities.

You do not need to have proof that abuse is occurring to make a report, only reasonable suspicion. Reasonable suspicion means that you have witnessed physical or behavioral signs

of maltreatment, either in the child or parent/caregiver, or both. Or, you have received a disclosure from a child about abuse, neglect, or boundary violations towards them.

How do I report abuse?

Laws vary by state – it may be child protective services, a department of family and child services of your county, or law enforcement.

Do I have to report?

Adults should always act in the best interest of the child, but for some individuals it may be legally required that they report abuse such as an authority or social service officer.

What are the laws about child sexual abuse?

Child abuse laws exist on the European, National and local levels. European laws provide standards and guidelines; however, most child abuse issues are governed by state laws and regulations. All countries have enacted laws for the protection of children from abuse and neglect.

What types of abuse and neglect have to be reported?

Differences exist in the types of abuse and neglect that must be reported. It is mandatory to report suspicions of all five recognized types of abuse and neglect (i.e. physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, and exposure to family violence). As sexual abuse should always create a suspicion of significant harm, in practical terms all suspicions of sexual abuse must be reported. While not required by the legislation, suspicions of less severe child abuse and neglect may still be referred to child and family welfare agencies.

It is important to note that the duty to report applies to suspicions that significant abuse or neglect is likely to continue in the future, not just suspected cases of significant abuse or neglect that have already happened.

Tips for youth workers

Maybe you have a suspicion that a child is being abused based on something you’ve witnessed, or a child has told you that abuse is happening. Either way, it’s your responsibility to report it to the authorities or your supervisor.

Supporting material

Additional Resource 1

Title:	How to Find a Trusted Adult to Talk to
Description	Three methods and ways of finding trusted adults and step by step instructions are explained. There are also helpful tips on how to talk to children about this topic.
Link to resource:	https://www.wikihow.com/Find-a-Trusted-Adult-to-Talk-to

Sources



"Children's Rights" Archived 2008-09-21 at the Wayback Machine, Amnesty International.
Retrieved 2/23/08.

Convention on the Rights of the Child, G.A. (1989).
<https://www.unicef.org/georgia/convention-rights-child>

Darkness to light. To make a report, state laws require that you have reasonable suspicion
that abuse is occurring. <http://www.d2l.org/get-help/reporting/making-a-report/>

Module 2: Grooming

Module description

Grooming refers to the different practices used to lower child's inhibitions with the objective of sexual abuse. This module provides useful information to the youth workers about grooming, and aims to equip them with the knowledge and skills on how to recognize and protect youth from grooming practices and actions. The following module includes topics such as Befriending/ Gaining Trust, Offering Favors, Testing Boundaries and Control.

Learning objectives

Upon completion of this module, you will:

- Understand what grooming is, the different stages of grooming manifestation and the risks associated with it.
- Understand the reasons groomers will try to gain the trust of the child/ young person and the different ways they might use to achieve it.
- Understand the reasons why groomers will offer gifts and favors to the child/ youth.
- Understand the importance of boundaries and when they are violated.
- Understand the reasons why groomers will try to exercise control over the victim and the different ways/ tricks will employ to achieve this.
- Understand how to approach and communicate with someone when suspicious about grooming practices and how to report a disclosure of abuse.

Content/Topics

This module will discuss the following topics:

1. Introduction to Grooming
2. Befriending/ Gaining Trust
3. Offering Favors
4. Testing Boundaries
5. Maintaining Control/ Secrecy
6. How to react when suspicious about grooming practices

Duration

The duration of this block is approximately 2-3 hours.

Topic 2.1 – Introduction to Grooming

Description

The topic serves as an introduction to the notion of violence in general through child abuse to sexual abuse, and includes online abuse.

Learning Outcomes

- Understand what grooming is and the reasons behind it.
- Understand the risks and dangers associated with grooming.
- Understand the different stages of grooming manifestation.

Read

The online grooming of young people for the purpose of online and offline sexual abuse is a global issue that affects societies all around the world and the known cases reveal only the tip of the iceberg. Grooming can be defined as:

‘The use of a variety of manipulative and controlling techniques, with a vulnerable subject, in a range of inter-personal and social settings, in order to establish trust or normalize sexually harmful behavior, with the overall aim of facilitating exploitation and/or prohibiting exposure.’ - McAlinden (2013, p.11)

Grooming is a complex set of behaviors - it can take place over a short or long period of time – from hours to days, even years. Children and young people can be groomed on-line or in the real world, by a completely stranger or by someone they know and who consider a ‘friend’.

The impact on these children and young people can be detrimental and long lasting. Often young people who had experienced grooming feel very upset, embarrassed, are unable to stop thinking about it (Wolak et.al., 2006). Similarly, links have been found between grooming victimization and experience of substance misuse, symptoms of depression (Mitchell et.al., 2007) and even self-harm tendencies (NSPCC, 2020).

Sexual assault can take many forms, and so it is grooming, thus we cannot fully cover all different grooming approaches for every single type of assault. However, some commonalities and patterns of behaviors seem to emerge from the different ways used by sex offenders to manipulate others.

The first stage that we will talk about is how perpetrators target their potential victims and try to gain their trust and become friends with them. The second stage involves an attempt to fill a need in the child’s life through offering favors, gifts and attention to the child. Moving further, the grooming perpetrator will apply different tricks to persuade the child to keep what is going on between them secret and after the development of a sufficient emotional dependence and trust, will begin to test the boundaries and sexualize the relationship. Lastly, the groomer might try to exercise some form of control to the child in order to ensure the child’s continued participation, submission, and silence.

Although we refer to it in different stages, it is important to be aware that this does not necessarily mean that it always develops in the same way and that there is no clear distinguishing line between them.

Our goal in the following topics is to provide you with a solid understanding of the main approaches and in turn allow you to be able to identify the manifestations of grooming practices in particular cases.

Tips for Youth Workers

- In order to start working these contents with children and young people in a group setting, it is necessary to identify their previous knowledge they may have about the topic. This analysis will help us identify the level of understanding, detect deficiencies and start building a plan based on their knowledge and skills. This reflection can be done using a case study scenario or watching a film/ short-clip.
- Always be vigilant to evolving behavior of the children/ youth – always look for any signs of distress or discomfort when initiating a discussion on such topics and offer opportunities to discuss individually in a friendly and safe space.

Supporting Material

- A video by Paul Mones, children’s rights advocate and sexual abuse attorney, explaining on what is grooming and how child molesters groom children.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qyz3CpJftYU>
- In this video, experts in the field of sexual abuse, survivors of abuse and convicted perpetrators talk about the grooming process.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vUaN3Q5EU4E>
- A case study video showing a survivor of abuse sharing her story– can be used as an example when explaining grooming to children/ youth.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5P4alQgtHNA>

Sources

- McAlinden, A. (2013). SEXUAL OFFENDER TREATMENT: McAlinden. Retrieved 1 December 2020, from <http://www.sexual-offender-treatment.org/118.html>
- Mitchell, K., Ybarra, M., & Finkelhor, D. (2020). The Relative Importance of Online Victimization in Understanding Depression, Delinquency, and Substance Use - Kimberly J. Mitchell, Michele Ybarra, David Finkelhor, 2007. Retrieved 2 December 2020, from <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1077559507305996>
- NSPCC. (2020). Retrieved 2 December 2020, from <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/grooming/#effects>



Welner, M. (2010). Child Sexual Abuse: 6 Stages of Grooming. Retrieved 2 December 2020, from <http://www.oprah.com/oprahshow/child-sexual-abuse-6-stages-of-grooming/all#:~:text=Grooming%20is%20the%20process%20by,an%20essential%20feature%20of%20grooming.&text=Different%20law%20enforcement%20officers%20and,the%20%22stages%22%20of%20grooming>

Wolak, J., Mitchel, K., & Finkelhor, D. (2006). Online Victimization of Youth: 5 years later. Retrieved 1 December 2020, from <http://unh.edu/ccrc/pdf/CV138.pdf>

Topic 2.2 – Befriending/ Gaining Trust

Description

The topic deepens the concept related to coercion, flirting vs. sexual harassment and consent (also in partner relationship) to define which are the limits of sexual abuse.

Learning Outcomes

- Understand the reasons why groomers try to gain the trust of a child.
- Understand the different ways groomers might use to gain the trust of the child.
- Be able to explain who is a trusting adult and when certain behaviors can be identified as suspicious.

Read

“You can trust me because no one understands you more than I do”

Gaining the trust of the child/youth is a major part of what makes grooming so effective as groomers aim to create a special bond with the victim, in order to gain and maintain access and at a later stage to avoid disclosure by the victim. Often, the relationship a groomer aims to build with the victim can take several forms such as (NSPCC,2020):

- A romantic relationship.
- Act as an authority figure.
- Act as a mentor.
- Act as a dominant and persistent figure.

In their effort to build trust, a perpetrator may also look to exploit a child’s vulnerabilities by filling a need or through luring the victim. While all children/ youth are at risk of sexual abuse, there is evidence (Staller,2012; Llewellyn et.al, 2016) that some children are more vulnerable to be manipulated and victimized if they:

- Are socially isolated
- Are facing mental health or behavioral difficulties
- Have low self-esteem
- Have bad relationship with their parents/guardians.

Hence, the perpetrator gains trust by observing and gathering information about the child (online or offline), getting to know his/her needs and how to fulfil them. More information about offering favors and luring the child/youth can be found in the next topic.

It is also important to note that in the vast majority of sexual abuse cases the abuser is known to the victim – but obviously the perpetrator being a stranger to the victim is more likely in online grooming cases. In those cases, that the perpetrators are known to the family, they might try to build trust with the people close to the victim (parents, guardians), which is known as ‘environmental grooming’, in order to gain and maintain access to the child/young person and make it hard for the victim to report it out of fear of not being believed (Turner

and Brake, 2013). Additionally, by building trust with the environment of the victim any interaction between the perpetrator and child is seen as legitimate activity, distinguishable only by the perpetrator's motivation, hence they are willing to excuse or ignore patterns in the behavior. This is also known as 'confirmation bias', where the environment of the victim fails to see what is going on behind the mask (Munro and Fish, 2015).

There are various factors which can assist an offender to gain the trust of the environment of children. Firstly, the social and personal position of the perpetrator can affect the way he/she will be perceived by the environment of the child (Tarner and Brake, 2013). For example, being a police officer, a member of the clergy or a philanthropist are given the 'benefit of the doubt' in most cases, and lessens the probability of being perceived as suspects. Additionally, individuals who come along as charmers and attract people around them is hard to raise concerns as people will think the 'good guy' could never do that.

As a result, we will need to keep a critical eye and look behind those 'masks' for any warning signs.

Tips for Youth Workers

- Become a trusted adult – there may be kids/youth who for many reasons might not feeling safe to talk at home. Allowing them space where they can be themselves, where they can work through emotions in a healthy way and open up can make a huge difference in their lives and can keep them safe.
- Encourage children/ youth to reflect on their Circle of Trust and support them according to their age groups. Use for example the following questions:
 - Who is in your circle of trust?
 - How do these people interact with you?
 - Where do these people interact with you?
 - When should you create boundaries for people in your circle of trust?

Supporting Material

- Find out here how to be a better listener in order to build trust with children/ youth. <https://defendinnocence.org/child-sexual-abuse-risk-reduction/proactive-parenting/open-communication/3-ways-to-be-a-better-listener-with-your-child/>
- A case study video showing alarming signs from a trusted adult – can be used as an example when explaining grooming to children/ youth. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R3navrYewq4>

Sources

Llewellyn, G., Wayland, S., & Hindmarsh, G. (2016). Disability and child sexual abuse in institutional contexts. Retrieved 2 December 2020, from <https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/file-list/Research%20Report%20->

%20Disability%20and%20child%20sexual%20abuse%20in%20institutional%20context
ts%20-%20Causes.pdf

Munro, E., Fish, S. (2015). Hear no evil, see no evil : understanding failure to identify and report child sexual abuse in institutional contexts. Sydney: Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Available at: <http://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/getattachment/620678bb-6c9d-45da-94c3-63c4b40e648f/Hear-no-evil,-see-no-evil>

NSPCC. (2020). Grooming. Retrieved 2 December 2020, from <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/grooming/#effects>

Staller, K. (2012). Missing Pieces, Repetitive Practices: Child Sexual Exploitation and Institutional Settings - Karen M. Staller, 2012. Retrieved 2 December 2020, from <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1532708612446420>

Tanner, J., & Brake, S. (2013). Exploring Sex Offender Grooming. Retrieved 2 December 2020, from <http://kbsolutions.com/Grooming.pdf>

Topic 2.3 – Offering Favors

Description

The topic will deal with the forms of sexual abuse online and offline.

Learning Outcomes

- Understand the reasons why groomers offer gifts and favors.
- Understand when receiving gifts and favors without expecting anything in return can be suspicious.
- Be able to explain to children who they should trust and when they should be suspicious about someone giving something to them without expecting anything in return.

Read

‘I know you love reading so I got you this book’

Have you ever watched a young child open gifts at a birthday party or a holiday celebration? However, the joy is not limited to children as we all love expressions of thoughtfulness and receiving surprises. Nevertheless, not all gifts are simple expressions of love.

Offering gifts and favors is a strategy employed by a lot of groomers to assume noticeably more importance in the child’s life and a way to increase child’s dependence on the abuser. These lures tend to focus on:

- Behaviors which provide access to otherwise restricted material or activities.
- Behaviors which aim to fill child’s emotional needs.

Tanner and Brake (2013) describe a few examples of common set of lures used by offenders to engage children/ youth and keep them in the relationship. Please note that the following are just a few examples for your reference.

- **Access to Car/Driving** – Taking the child/youth to places, but also allow the young person to drive. Especially for male teenagers driving can be seen as a status symbol and used as a way to approach children and establish a relationship.
- **Drinking/Drugs** – Giving access to alcohol or drugs is another way for perpetrators to approach children/youth who might want to experiment with illicit substances and won’t be able to gain access to them otherwise. It is also important to note that getting the child ‘high’, also lowers the child’s resistance for the abuse to take place.
- **Desires** – Providing the child with things that he/she desires – for example if the child is interested in music, providing them with a digital player/ access to music platforms or taking them to concerts. For children this might be in the form of toys or games – anything to draw the child closer.
- **Increased Attention** – Perpetrators might take an interest in all things the child/youth does or say. Listening to them, encouraging them and taking their side in their daily drama is a key way employed by groomers to become the child’s ‘best friend’. This is also key in

cases of online grooming where the interaction between the two is initially taking place online.

Finally, although there is no way to be 100 percent sure for every case you will encounter, there are situations that should raise concerns about gift-giving to children. For example:

- An adult who overly favors one child over the others.
- An adult who provides gifts to children/ youth without acquiring parents' permission
- Children who become secretive or unwilling to explain an expensive gift
- When the gift is prohibited by the parent.

Lastly, it is important to note that growing access to technology by youth and children brought new opportunities for perpetrators to lure potential victims. Online predators can use social media or online gaming to meet children and youth, in order to lure them for sexual purposes (Sinclair, 2007; Wolak et.al, 2008).

Tips for Youth Workers

- You can use real case studies of grooming to explain this section to children/youth after delivering the theory – an example of a case study can be found in Supporting Material.
- Remind children/youth that gifts are usually an indication of care and friendship, hence nobody should ask them to keep it secret.
- Encourage children/youth to think critically about accepting gifts from adults they don't know well.

Supporting Material

- A Case Study in Sandusky showing how gift giving was used to groom children. <https://www.d2l.org/lessons-from-sandusky-lesson-2-grooming-thru-gift-giving/#:~:text=Gift%20giving%20is%20an%20important,kept%20a%20secret%20from%20others.>
- An educational video showing how gift giving and increase attention by a relative was used as part of grooming. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WOyg6IrfuzA>

Sources

Sinclair, R.L. 2007. Identifying International Research Gaps in Internet Child Sexual Exploitation. http://rcmp-grc.gc.ca/gazette/archives/vol69no2_e.pdf. Accessed December 2 2020).

Wolak, J., Finkelhor, D., Mitchell, K., & Ybarra, M. (2008). Online "Predators" and their Victims: Myths, Realities and Implications for Prevention and Treatment. Retrieved 2 December 2020, from <http://www.unh.edu/ccrc/pdf/Am%20Psy%202-08.pdf>

Tanner, J., & Brake, S. (2013). Exploring Sex Offender Grooming. Retrieved 2 December 2020, from <http://kbsolutions.com/Grooming.pdf>

Topic 2.4 – Testing Boundaries

Description

The topic will deal with the different signs related to the forms of sexual abuse and how to recognize them, but also how to react on time.

Learning Outcomes

- Understand the importance of boundaries.
- Understand which questions are appropriate to ask and which are not.
- Understand what information can be shared and with whom.

Read

‘Have you ever watched porn? I can show you what it is.’

Once emotional dependence and trust have been established, from the previous mentioned stages, the perpetrator will start testing the boundaries and ultimately the child’s comfort levels.

This can take many forms, and the groomer will try to exploit the child’s trust to progressively sexualize the relationship. The aim of this process is essentially the desensitization of the child to sexual contact.

Here are few examples on how perpetrators might try to test child’s boundaries:

- **Physical Contact**

The offender might begin with appropriate touch such as high-fives, hugging and systematically moves to inappropriate ones i.e. ‘accidentally’ touching a private part of the body, to test the reaction of the child.

- **Sexualized Jokes / Games**

Sometimes perpetrators might try to test the boundaries of a child through telling sexualized jokes or through games such as truth-or-dare. Also, non-sexualized games such as wrestling and tickling might be used to establish a physical contact with the child.

- **Sharing Sexually Explicit Material**

Perpetrators often expose children/ youth to sexual content, in order to normalize sex. Especially for youth who might develop some curiosity on the subject, perpetrators might use this as an opportunity to test the boundaries and advance the sexual nature of the relationship. Another way that might be used to sexualize the relationship, especially during online grooming, is through messaging or texting. More information about sexting can be found in Module 4.

As a final note here, it is important to keep in mind that some of the behavior signs mentioned are common in a given setting, and this does not automatically make this person a perpetrator. However, the goal here is to strengthen your knowledge and intuition and help

you be alert when your gut feeling tells you that something is 'off' in a given situation. Children/Youth need mentors and trusted adults to guide them, as a youth worker you will need to find a way to encourage healthy relationships with adults, while at the same time being vigilant for signs of unhealthy relationships/grooming practices.

Tips for Youth Workers

- Teach children/ youth about boundaries and what to do if those boundaries are violated – for more information on this check the Supporting Material section below.
- As teenagers' interest in sex develops, you can support them to stay safe from grooming practices through developing their understanding of positive sexual behavior – this can be in the form of a seminar, a workshop or during a one-to-one conversation.
- Remind children/ youth that anything that makes them feel uncomfortable it is probably a violation of their boundaries and they should speak with a trusted adult – always trust your 'gut feeling'.

Supporting Material

- Here you can find a guide on how to teach boundaries and safety to children and youth. http://www.seattlearchdiocese.org/Assets/SEP/10755_TeachingBoundaries&Safety.pdf
- Here are some tips on how to support positive sexual behaviours to kids and youth. <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/articles/Supporting-positive-sexual-behaviour/>
- A short video explaining the different types of boundaries and why boundaries are important. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fw0FRj5lw00>

Sources

Darkness to Light. (2020). Grooming and Red Flag Behaviors - Darkness to Light. Retrieved 2 December 2020, from <https://www.d2l.org/child-grooming-signs-behavior-awareness/>

NSPCC. (2020). Grooming. Retrieved 2 December 2020, from <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/grooming/#effects>.

PACE. (2020). The grooming process. Retrieved 2 December 2020, from <https://paceuk.info/about-cse/the-grooming-process-in-the-spotlight/>

Tanner, J., & Brake, S. (2013). Exploring Sex Offender Grooming. Retrieved 2 December 2020, from <http://kbsolutions.com/Grooming.pdf>

Topic 2.5 – Exercise Control/ Secrecy

Description

The topic will present how victims may get help and support from trusted adults and organizations in the community.

Learning Outcomes

- Understand the reasons why groomers try to exercise control over the victim and maintain secrecy.
- Understand the different ways groomers employ to gain control over the victim.
- Understand the different tricks groomers employ to maintain control over the victim and when to be suspicious.

Read

‘If you tell anyone, something bad might happen to you or your family’

As part of the grooming process, predators weave a tight web that makes it hard for the victim to escape. Specifically, groomers might try to exercise some form of control to the child/youth in order to ensure their continued participation, submission, and silence in order to keep the relationship/abuse secret.

Here are few ways used by perpetrators to trap the victim in the relationship (Tanner and Brake, 2013):

- **Direct threats** – the victim is told that if they reveal the abuse, they or their family/ friends will be hurt or killed.
- **Reflexive threats**– at this point the offender has established a position of value in the victims’ life and they threaten the victim that they will be in trouble.
- **Belief** – the victim is often told that even if they reveal the abuse, nobody will believe them.
- **Shame** – offenders point out that if the victim tells, everyone will find out. Additionally, sometimes the perpetrator might try to evoke ‘guilty’ feelings to the victim that it is their fault or that they provoked them to commit the abuse.
- **Ongoing Grooming** – sometimes the process of grooming (giving compliments, gifts) continues and after the abuse, with the abuser finding different excuses (‘It won’t happen again – I slipped’) to keep the victim in the relationship.

These approaches of entrapment are particularly evil, and it is important to keep in mind that at this stage, the victim may feel confused, disoriented and anxious as they don’t want the abuse to continue, but at the same time they do not want to lose the other aspects of the relationship. As a result, the impact on the child/youth can be detrimental both emotionally and psychologically and generate a substantial and long-lasting impact (NSPCC, 2020).

Tips for Youth Workers

- Make sure to let the children/ youth know that the abuse is NEVER the victim's fault and to be able to identify the different tricks and lies the offenders might try to use.
- Use scenarios and examples from movies/ books to teach children and youth about 'safe' (a surprise party) and 'unsafe' secrets (inappropriate touch).
- Let children/ youth know that you are a safe adult to talk, that you will always believe them and they can come to you with any problem for help.

Supporting Material

- An article providing more information about good and bad secrets. <https://www.kidpower.org/library/article/safe-unsafe-secrets/>
- A video with a case study that can be also used with your learners to teach them about abuse, secrets and control. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uAD17zMgjHc>

Sources

Darkness to Light. (2020). Grooming and Red Flag Behaviors - Darkness to Light. Retrieved 2 December 2020, from <https://www.d2l.org/child-grooming-signs-behavior-awareness/>

Focus for Health. (2020). How Predators Groom and Control their Victims - Focus for Health. Retrieved 2 December 2020, from <https://www.focusforhealth.org/how-predators-groom-and-control-their-victims/>

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Tanner, J., & Brake, S. (2013). Exploring Sex Offender Grooming. Retrieved 2 December 2020, from <http://kbsolutions.com/Grooming.pdf>

Topic 2.6 – How to react when being suspicious about grooming practices

Description

The topic will explain to youth workers how to react in case they are suspicious about grooming practices.

Learning Outcomes

- Understand why monitoring potential risk situations related to grooming practices is important.
- Understand how to approach and communicate with someone when suspicious about grooming practices.
- Understand how to ensure the safety and the confidentiality of the person involved.

Read

Equally important to the identification of the warning signs of grooming practices is to be able to take action. The last part of this module will look into more detail on the steps you can take when being suspicious about grooming practices, but also when a child/young person discloses information to you about grooming practices.

If you suspect a child/young person is a victim of grooming practices:

- Start a conversation – Ask them if everything is okay – by starting the conversation you are giving them the opportunity to speak out, even if they choose not to disclose anything you are reminding them you are there and they are able to ask for help if they need to.
- Do not frighten the child/youth by asking confronting questions – try to keep it casual.
- Keep monitoring for potential signs and changes in the behavior.
- If in doubt, seek expert advice using your country's support line if any.
- If at any time you believe a child/ youth is in immediate danger, call the police.

If a child/young person talks to you about grooming it is important to:

- Listen carefully to what they are saying
- Avoid asking leading questions ('Did he touch you on your private parts?'), and try using open questions (i.e. 'Tell me more about that') instead.
- Let them know that it is not their fault and they have done the right thing by telling you.
- Say you will take them seriously and explain the next steps – follow your obligation to report as soon as practically possible and follow your organization's protocol if any, or contact directly the police.

Tips for Youth Workers

- Make yourself aware of any related protocols/guidelines regarding raising concerns and/or reporting abuse in your organization.

- Remember that your role is simply to receive the information in an unbiased way and to reassure the child/ young person that they are not alone. It is the role of the relevant authority to investigate the concerns raised.

Supporting Material

- Here you can find tips on how to initiate hard conversations.
<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/how-to-have-difficult-conversations-with-children>

Sources

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NSPCC. What to do if a child reveals abuse. Retrieved 2 December 2020, from <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/what-to-do-child-reveals-abuse/>

Victoria Education. Report child abuse in schools. Retrieved 2 December 2020, from <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/childprotection/Pages/report.aspx#link79>

Module 3: Inappropriate touching

Module description

The present module will introduce youth workers to inappropriate touches and the difference between safe-unsafe and unwanted touches, while capacitating them to communicate these differences to children and adolescents. Furthermore, it will introduce the importance of privacy and private parts, the perpetrators of inappropriate touching, the indicators of the psychological impact of such behaviors to children and will capacitate them to teach children to identify these indicators. Lastly, the module aims to guide youth workers on the way they should react when they are informed about relevant cases or identify them.

Learning objectives

Upon completion of this module, you will:

- Understand what inappropriate touching is.
- Define inappropriate touches.
- Comprehend and explain to the child the private areas of their body/their body privacy as a principle that should be respected.
- Comprehend and explain to the child that perpetrators of inappropriate touching are often people that the child is familiar with (i.e., family members, school staff, coaches, older students).
- Comprehend and explain to the child the way to respond to behaviors that could lead to inappropriate touching from people of their environment.
- Identify the indicators and consequences that inappropriate touching can have on the victim as a form of sexual abuse practice.
- React properly during the identification of the victim.
- React properly when the victim expresses themselves and are in the same room with the perpetrator.

Content/Topics

This module will discuss the following topics:

1. Inappropriate Touching – General Information.
2. Private parts/privacy.
3. Perpetrators of inappropriate touching.
4. Indicators of psychological pain caused by inappropriate touching.
5. How to react when informed about a case of inappropriate touching.

Duration

The duration of this block is approximately 2.5 hours.

Topic 3.1 – Inappropriate Touching – General Information

Topic description

The present topic will function as an introduction of the general module, defining inappropriate touching and the difference between safe, unsafe and unwanted touches.

Learning Outcomes

Upon the completion of this unit, you will be able to:

- Define inappropriate touching.
- Define the difference between safe, unsafe and unwanted touches.
- Recognize inappropriate touches.
- Reflect on cases you find suspicious as practices of inappropriate touches.

Read

Inappropriate or unwanted touches are those touches that can make a child feel uncomfortable; they usually pertain a sexual context, for example looking or touching children's private parts or asking them to look or touch someone else's private parts. It is the inappropriate exposure or subjecting of a child to sexual contact, activity or behavior. These touches might not hurt/be safe, but they are unwanted and make you feel uncomfortable.

Safe touches have a good purpose and are not aimed to hurt the child physically, sexually or emotionally. On the contrary, they aim to keep the child clean and healthy, even if they might hurt. For example, taking the child to the doctor to be vaccinated might hurt, but it is to keep the child healthy.

Unsafe touches are inappropriate and aim to scare or hurt the child and violate the safety rules. Such touches can hurt the child, physically or emotionally, such as shoving, hitting, punching, kicking, etc.

Some characteristics of inappropriate touching are the following:

- Inappropriate touches might hurt the child.
- The person who touches the child inappropriately might ask them not to tell anyone or keep it a secret.
- Such touches make the child feel uncomfortable.
- Such touches make the child feel scared and/or nervous.
- It is an unsafe touch if a person forces the child to touch them.
- It is an inappropriate touch if a person threatens to hurt the child if they tell someone.

It is useful to provide examples of inappropriate touching to the children as a form of safety rules:

- It is not okay for someone to touch your private parts.
- It is not okay for someone to ask to see your private parts.
- It is not okay for someone to show you their private parts.

- It is not okay for someone to touch their private parts while you are present.
- It is not okay for someone to show you pictures or videos of someone else’s private parts.
- It is not okay for someone to ask you to take your clothes off.

Tips for youth workers

In order for children to understand the differences between safe, unsafe and unwanted touches, it is advisable to provide concrete examples and explain the differences. Also, it is good to explain that for example, a touch of a doctor in the presence of the parents might hurt but it is not unsafe.

Supporting material

Additional Resource 1

Title:	Kiko and the hand
Description	A practice of the Council of Europe to teach children about inappropriate touching. The hand touches Kiko in several body parts and Kiko permits the touch or not. Also known as the underwear rule.
Link to resource:	https://rm.coe.int/16806b068b

Additional Resource 2

Title:	Be Safe: What are Private Parts
Description	The slides illustrate the private parts (for younger and older children) and describe the formal names of the private parts.
Link to resource:	https://paautism.org/resource/what-are-private-parts/

Additional Resource 3

Title:	Caring for Kids: What parents need to know about sexual abuse
Description	The Child Sexual Abuse Committee of the U.S. National Child Traumatic Stress Network has developed a document with core facts about children sexual harassment/ abuse, frequently asked questions and ways to react if a child discloses such an incident.
Link to resource:	http://www.ncsby.org/sites/default/files/Caring%20for%20Kids%20-%20What%20Parents%20need%20to%20know%20about%20Sexual%20Abuse%20--%20NCTSN.pdf

Sources

Central MN Sexual Assault Center. (2017). Teaching Children Safe/Unsafe/Unwanted Touches. Retrieved from: <https://cmsac.org/2017/05/11/teaching-children-safeunsafeunwanted-touches/>. Date of access: 08/01/2021

Kids Safety Council. (2015). Teaching Good Touch Bad Touch. Retrieved from: <http://familyhelpcenter.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/18-Teaching-Good-Touch-Bad-Touch1.pdf>. Date of access: 06/01/2021

Normand, B. (2017). Teaching Touching Safety Rules: Safe and Unsafe Touching—Activity. Committee for Children. Accessible at: <https://teachingsexualhealth.ca/app/uploads/sites/4/6-DA-Personal-Space-and-Touch-2015.pdf>. Date of access: 08/12/2020



Co-funded by the
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Safety Club. (N.D.). "Safe and Unsafe" Touch. Accessible at: <https://www.safetyclub.org/safe-and-unsafe-touch/>. Date of access: 08/01/2021

Topic 3.2 – My private parts/privacy

Topic description

It is important for children to understand the concept of privacy and the private parts, as well as how to communicate their needs or describe an incident. The private parts are usually the ones covered by an underwear or a swimsuit

Learning Outcomes

Upon the completion of this unit, you will be able to:

- Define private parts;
- Teach children that they ‘are the boss of their bodies’;
- Guide children on privacy and private parts;
- Teach children the proper names and ways to express about their private parts.

Read

The private parts are defined as the external genital and excretory organs (Merriam-Webster). A useful way to teach children about the private parts is the swimsuit/underwear rule; according to the rule, no one can touch or see the parts of your body that are covered by a swimsuit/underwear or ask you to touch their body parts that are covered by a swimsuit or an underwear. Nonetheless, children’s privacy should be respected regarding any parts of their bodies.

Children should be taught that ‘they are the bosses of their bodies’ – no one has the right to touch them without their permission. Everyone should respect their privacy and in case this is not respected, they should inform someone they trust.

Children should also be taught the official/formal names of their body parts, so as to be able to describe an incident and set their boundaries. Children should be aware of the proper names of their body parts, such as genitals, penis, vagina, breasts, buttocks and private parts. The correct anatomical words for their body parts, will make children understand that it is ok to talk about these parts and will help them talk about sexual harassment and/or abuse, in case it happens. Older children can be provided more information.

Tips for youth workers

Explain to children what are the official words used for the description of their parts and that it is not bad to talk about them or ask questions if needed.

Supporting material

Additional Resource 1

Title:	My Boundaries: Personal Space And Touch
Description	Includes exercises on personal space and touch, including case studies, in order to address the topics; they can be adapted accordingly if needed.

Link to resource:	https://teachingsexualhealth.ca/app/uploads/sites/4/6-DA-Personal-Space-and-Touch-2015.pdf
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Additional Resource 2

Title:	Understanding the private parts of our bodies
Description	The video includes a presentation of the private parts (swimsuit rule), along with examples of inappropriate touching and explanation of the ways one should react in case of inappropriate touching.
Link to resource:	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cVyLJ3u33aU

Additional Resource 3

Title:	Talking To Your Child About Body Safety
Description	Includes exercises/ questions that can be asked to children in order to guide them to understand about their privacy and private parts, divided per age group.
Link to resource:	https://www.cac-kent.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Talking-Body-Safety-Disclosures-1.pdf

Sources

HealthyChildren.org. (2019). Sexual Behaviors in Young Children: What's Normal, What's Not?. Retrieved from: <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/preschool/Pages/Sexual-Behaviors-Young-Children.aspx>. Date of access: 11/01/2021

Merriam-Webster. (N.D.). Definition of private parts. Retrieved from: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/private%20parts>. Date of access: 04/01/2021

Virtus Excellence Builds Trust. (2015). Teaching Boundaries and Safety Guide: Guide for Caring Adults, Parents and Guardians. Retrieved from: <http://dioscg.org/wp-content/uploads/Teaching-Boundaries-and-Safety-Guide.pdf>. Date of access: 15/12/2020

Topic 3.3 – Perpetrators of inappropriate touching

Topic description

It is very common for children to know the perpetrators of inappropriate touches, meaning that they might be coming from their familial or close environment. Nonetheless, perpetrators can be a stranger, unknown to the child.

Learning Outcomes

Upon the completion of this unit, you will be able to:

- Define the process commonly followed by the perpetrators.
- Define the potential characteristics of the perpetrators.

Read

Although it is hard for children to understand that someone close to them could hurt or abuse them, it is important that they understand that a person from their close environment could be a perpetrator as well. However, it should be clear that the rules usually set for the communication with strangers still apply. For example, children should never get in a car with a stranger, accept gifts or invitations.

Perpetrators usually try to earn the trust of the child and remove them from their safe environment. Some of the common practices can be efforts to spend time alone with the child, photographing the child, befriending the child in social media, constant gestures of excessive affection such as constant kisses, hugs and tickling, buying treats and gifts for the child. Perpetrators often try to spend their spare time with a specific child and not with people at their age; insist on hugging, kissing, tickling or express relevant behaviours, even when the child has expressed their opposition and/or discomfort; are overly interested to the sexuality of a specific child; manage to get time alone with the child; or offer alcohol or drugs when other adults are not around.

The perpetrator may have made threats towards the child or a close person to them, e.g. their mother, causing fear in case of disclosure.

Some frequent methods used by the perpetrators are the following:

- Perpetrators work patiently to gain the trust and friendship of the child and, often, the people close to the child; they try to engage the child in a gradual process of sexualising the relationship.
- They pay special attention to the child's habits, likes and dislikes, finding ways to interact.
- They might also try to 'test' whether the child is able to protect themselves, by engaging in physical touches, such as hugs, kisses, back rubs and other gestures involving touching.
- Finally, they take advantage of the child's curiosity; if they identify that the child seems comfortable and/or curious about touching, they slowly increase the sexual contact.

Tips for youth workers

It is advisable to provide concrete examples to the children for them to clearly understand the characteristics and the common behavior of the perpetrators.

Supporting material

Additional Resource 1

Title:	Davis school personal safety k-1 overview
Description	The document includes exercises regarding stranger management, touching and assertiveness, that could work as preventive measures to inappropriate touching.
Link to resource:	https://www.bedfordps.org/sites/g/files/vyhlif2786/f/uploads/grk-1personalsafety.pdf

Additional Resource 2

Title:	Perpetrators of Sexual Abuse
Description	List of resources provided by the Child Welfare Information Getaway.
Link to resource:	https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/can/perpetrators/perp-sexabuse/

Sources

National Children’s Advocacy Center – US. (2018). Child Sexual Abuse: Perpetrators-Manipulation-Disclosure. Retrieved from: <https://www.nationalcac.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/CSA-Perpetrators.pdf>. Date of access: 12/01/2021

Raising children: the Australian Parenting Website. (2020). Signs that someone is involved in child sexual abuse: suitable for 0-18 years. Retrieved from: <https://raisingchildren.net.au/school-age/safety/child-sexual-abuse/signs-that-someone-is-involved-in-child-sexual-abuse>. Date of access: 22/12/2020

Stop it Now! (2006). Let’s Talk - Speaking up to prevent child sexual abuse. Retrieved from: https://www.stopitnow.org/sites/default/files/documents/files/lets_talk.pdf. Date of access: 08/01/2021

World Health Organisation (WHO). (2003). Guidelines for medico-legal care for victims of sexual violence. retrieved from: https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/publications/violence/med_leg_guidelines/en/. Date of access: 11/01/2021

Topic 3.4 – Indicators of psychological pain caused by inappropriate touching

Topic description

Children who have experienced inappropriate touching can show signs of the emotional impact that the abuse/experience had on them.

Learning Outcomes

Upon the completion of this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand that abuse/harassment can have an emotional impact on the victim.
- Understand the signs of psychological pain inappropriate touching can have to children.
- React in case you notice such signs.
- Explain these signs to children as an additional measure for peer support.

Read

The impact of the harassment/abuse might differ based on the age of the child. This developmental impact means that a person receiving therapy might reflect on such an incident in a different way during the various stages of their life; e.g. puberty, adolescence, etc.

Although there are no absolute diagnostic indicators of harassment/abuse, it is common for children that have had relevant experiences to feel shame, guilt, anxiety and fear, as they frequently take personal responsibility for the abuse when the perpetrator is someone they trust. Additionally, childhood harassment and abuse have been correlated with higher levels of depression, guilt, shame, eating disorders, self-blame, somatic concerns, sexual problems, dissociative patterns, repression, anxiety, denial, and relationship problems, with depression being the most common long-term symptom.

Some signs of such incidents can be the change in mood and appetite, the withdrawal from family and friends and the avoidance of specific people. Children that have experienced inappropriate touching can have sexual knowledge that does not correspond to their age and present inappropriate sexual contact with other children. Bed-wetting and nightmares are also considered common indicators. Furthermore, in case of such incident, the child might talk about a new older friend that they have, refuse to talk about a secret that they have with an adult or an older child, try to provoke conversation about sexual issues or suddenly acquire money, toys, or other gifts without reason. Adolescents might develop fear of intimacy or closeness, depression, anxiety, drug or alcohol abuse, self-injury or run away from home.

In terms of sexualized behaviors that can be considered problematic, WHO identifies the following:

- Incidents have a greater frequency or take place during a much earlier developmental stage than what considered appropriate (e.g. a 10-year old vs. a 2-year old boy playing with his penis in public).

- Sexual behaviors interfering with the child’s development (e.g. using such behaviors as a way of interaction).
- Sexual behaviors that are accompanied by the use of coercion, intimidation or force (e.g. a child forcing a peer to engage in mutual fondling of the genitals or an imitation of intercourse).
- Sexual behaviors that are associated with emotional distress (e.g. aggressive or withdrawn behaviors).
- Sexual behaviors that reoccur in secrecy upon the intervention of a caregiver.

Tips for youth workers

It is important for children to understand that such incidents are not their fault and they should confide to a trusting adult that will be able to provide support and assistance. In case they notice such behaviors by their friends, they should inform them that they are there for them and address it to their parents.

Supporting material

Additional Resource 1

Title:	Alberta Health Services/ Teaching sexual health Grade 9/Consent
Description	The document includes exercises for the evaluation of the consequences of harassment to victims, that can be adapted accordingly depending on the age of the child.
Link to resource:	https://teachingsexualhealth.ca/app/uploads/sites/4/Grade-9-LP3-Consent2-Feb5.pdf

Additional Resource 2

Title:	Alberta Health Services/ Teaching sexual health Grade 8/ Abuse
Description	The document includes exercises for the evaluation of the consequences of harassment to victims, that can be adapted accordingly depending on the age of the child.
Link to resource:	https://teachingsexualhealth.ca/app/uploads/sites/4/Gr8LP5-Abuse-ENGLISH-FINAL.pdf

Additional Resource 3

Title:	Understanding Child Sexual Abuse: A Guide for Parents & Caregivers
Description	The guide includes a categorization of psychological indicators of child sexual harassment and/or abuse, along with physical and behavioral/emotional indicators.
Link to resource:	https://childdevelop.ca/sites/default/files/files/Understanding-Child-Sexual-Abuse.pdf

Sources

Hall, M., & Hall, J. (2011). The long-term effects of childhood sexual abuse: Counseling implications. Retrieved from https://www.counseling.org/docs/disaster-and-trauma_sexual-abuse/long-term-effects-of-childhood-sexual-abuse.pdf?sfvrsn=2.
Date of access: 06/01/2021

Mayo Clinic. (2018). Child abuse. Retrieved from: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/child-abuse/symptoms-causes/syc-20370864>. Date of access: 18/12/2020

Stop it Now! (N.D.). Tip Sheet: Warning Signs of Possible Sexual Abuse In A Child's Behaviors. Retrieved from: <https://www.stopitnow.org/ohc-content/warning-signs-possible-abuse>. Date of access: 05/01/2021

World Health Organisation (WHO). (2003). Guidelines for medico-legal care for victims of sexual violence. retrieved from: https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/publications/violence/med_leg_guidelines/en/. Date of access: 11/01/2021

Yamamoto, D. (2015). The advocate's guide: Working with parents of children who have been sexually assaulted. Enola, PA: National Sexual Violence Resource Center. Retrieved from: https://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/publications_nsvrc_guides_the-advocates-guide-working-with-parents-of-children-who-have-been-sexually-assaulted.pdf. Date of access: 11/01/2021

Topic 3.5 – How to react when informed about a case of inappropriate touching

Topic description

In case you are informed or notice an incident of inappropriate touching you should encourage the child to open up without being pressured and provide constant support.

Learning Outcomes

Upon the completion of this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand how to react in case you notice a relevant incident.
- Think critically towards the best interest of the child.
- Talk to the child and address the topic.

Read

Children need to have a network of people they trust and be able to confide in them relevant matters. They should be encouraged to select a number of trusted adults, out of which only one should live with them. Children should have all the information of how to reach these adults.

In case such an incident is reported to you, talk privately with the child, pay close attention and be a good listener. Do not interrupt the child or bombard them with questions. Do not try to examine the credibility of the facts as expressed by the child; try to get all necessary data you need to report the incident to the police. Remain calm and try not to show any signs of shock or disgust. In case the child confides that the perpetrator was one of the parents do not try to accuse them, but try to show your understanding and support to the child. Reassure the child that they are doing the right thing and it is not their fault.

Bear in mind that the child might not remember all the details of an incident at once. Be patient and alert on triggers that might rake up memories that can cause a cluster of emotions and, in case of a traumatic incident, can lead the person to a fragile psychological state. In case this happens, one can use stress relief techniques, such as concentrated breathing and progressive muscle relaxation, as an emergency measure, before referring the child to counselling or other relevant interventions.

It is not uncommon for a child who has suffered sexual harassment and/or abuse to delay to confide to someone, maybe because they do not want to upset their family, or because they do not feel safe to do so. Children might decide not to confide the incident until the perpetrator is no longer in their life or might talk about it in an indirect manner; you should be alert on hints stated by the child, for example 'I don't want to play this game with aunt Cloe anymore'.

Tips for youth workers

- Let the child express the facts and describe the incident their own way. Do not try to instruct them on how the structure of their description should be.
- When working with parents of children who have suffered sexual harassment/abuse, bear in mind that each individual may react and cope with the situation in a different way. You should try to help them with their reactions, without judging them and try to build a relationship of trust and respect, in order to move forward.
- If any incident needs to be reported, document the incident including date, time, persons involved and avoid generalizations, opinions and evaluative comments.

Supporting material

Additional Resource 1

Title:	Encouraging good behaviour: 15 tips
Description	The document includes practical tips for the encouragement of specific behaviours to your child.
Link to resource:	https://raisingchildren.net.au/toddlers/behaviour/encouraging-good-behaviour/good-behaviour-tips

Additional Resource 2

Title:	Let's Talk Speaking up to prevent child sexual abuse
Description	The document includes practical tips for initiating and making conversation with a child that has suffered sexual abuse/ harassment.
Link to resource:	https://www.stopitnow.org/sites/default/files/documents/files/lets_talk.pdf

Sources

British Columbia, Ministry of Education. (1999). Supporting the Student Who Was Mistreated, Responding to Children's Problem Sexual Behaviour in Elementary Schools: A Resource for Educators, Retrieved from <https://www.icmec.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Responding-to-Improper-Touching-CA.pdf>. Date of access: 11/01/2021

Virtus Excellence Builds Trust. (2015). Teaching Boundaries and Safety Guide: Guide for Caring Adults, Parents and Guardians. Retrieved from: <http://dioscg.org/wp-content/uploads/Teaching-Boundaries-and-Safety-Guide.pdf>. Date of access: 15/12/2020

Yamamoto, D. (2015). The advocate's guide: Working with parents of children who have been sexually assaulted. Enola, PA: National Sexual Violence Resource Center. Retrieved from: https://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/publications_nsvrc_guides_the-advocates-guide-working-with-parents-of-children-who-have-been-sexually-assaulted.pdf. Date of access: 11/01/2021

Module 4: Sexting

Module description

The following module will explore the concept of sexting as a form of online harassment and reputation damage. Distinction will be made between positive and negative practices of sexting, as well as between primary and secondary sexting. Further phenomena of cyberbullying will be shared as risks related to sexting, health and social consequences of it will be listed. From the prevention point of view, GDPR will be mentioned and the key role of the Youth worker will be highlighted through possible abusive scenarios.

Learning objectives

Upon completion of this module, you will:

- Know about the concept of sexting, both primary and secondary.
- Comprehend the difference between a right and a wrong sexting practice.
- Be capable to understand the risks related to sexting (revenge porn, sextortion, cyberbullying, etc).
- Be able to identify the health consequences of this practice.
- Know about sexting prevention.
- Comprehend how to react to possible child sexual abuse emerged from sexting.

Content/Topics

This module will discuss the following topics:

1. Sexting, appropriate usage of digital contents and sociological factors.
2. Primary sexting and secondary sexting.
3. Risks related to sexting.
4. Health and social consequences of sexting.
5. Sexting prevention.
6. Youth Worker reaction to the child sexual abuse emerged from sexting.

Duration

The duration of this block is approximately 2 hours.

Topic 4.1 – Sexting, appropriate usage of digital content and sociological factors.

Topic description

Introduction to the concept of sexting through its positive practice and the negative effect on children and teenagers, who are not aware of the consensual boundaries; a list of tips for safe sexting is provided.

Learning Outcomes

- Understand the sociological reasons behind sexting.
- Be able to give examples of both positive and negative practice of sexting adapted to the age of the audience.
- Be able to understand when to ask for professional help in case of unpleasant situations that I'm not able to manage by myself.

Read

Child sexual abuse (whose features have been deepened in modules 1 and 2) is about engaging a child in nonconsensual sexual activities, and it can be offline and/or online. What these two modalities have in common is the perpetrator's willingness to harm and exploit the child's image (a lot of offline crime are unfortunately recorded and those videos diffused). The advent of the digital era is revealing a sad counterpart of the usage of technologies: a dreadful increase of the reported online sexual abuses that, from 2010 to 2019 has grown almost 32 times more. As well as for grooming (exhaustingly treated in the previous module 2), one of the online practices that lately flows into child sexual abuse is sexting.

As the same term suggests, sexting is a compound word between sex and texting and refers to the voluntary exchange of sexual content through digital devices and applications or social networks that allow the sending of messages and images by means of instantaneous chats. This practice is usually held between two consenting persons who form a couple and play an erotic game for reasons of physical distance, provoke arousal prior to a date or simply make the relationship less monotonous.

A positive sexting practice is made of a right balance between erotic and nudity, trust and respect of privacy: the person who decides to share sexual explicit contents with someone fits with that someone's willingness to respect the sharer boundaries of consent, that is free and always able to be removed eventually. From here comes the difference between primary (sharing) and secondary (receiving) sexting, which introduce further aspects of the same phenomenon, both positive and negative for the practitioners.

Despite this, it is evident that not always this practice is handled adequately and, in these later times, the problem of managing privacy is becoming more alarming. Just to mention some pre-pandemic data - since during the COVID-19 lockdowns the situation is quite worsening in this regard -, in 2019 in two UK countries have been reported to the police more than 500 cases of children victims of a bad usage of sexting, also known as revenge porn (a concept that will be deepened in topic 3 of this same module), showing the other side of the

proliferating technological evolution. What is more is that almost 400 children had been victims of the violation of their privacy by peers, whose average age was 15 years old. Behind the statistics, sexting reveals a new intimate way of communicating in an ICTs-driven society, where adolescents, instead of enjoying the relational good effect of the practice among the two members of a couple, mainly practice sexting to be popular. This could drive to several implications and risks to end up harmed for the rest of their lives.

Del Rey, Ojeda, Casas, Mora-Merchán & Elipe (2019) consider that the sociological factor that leads a child or a teenager to practice bad sexting – that most of the time results in abuse - is the need of being accepted among their group of peers, that hide depression symptoms, and discourage responsible behavior privacy talking. As soon as a child or a youngster takes ownership of a digital device, mainly a smartphone, he/she has unconsciously a weapon to try to gain influence on peers, disavowing the impact that actions carried out in the world of the Internet have on real life, in terms of consent and privacy.

For this purpose, it is essential to list a series of actions that differentiate a positive sexting practice from an erroneous one; a series of guidelines to be followed if willing to have safe sexting:

- **Trust:** it is important to have a relationship of trust between the sharer of the explicit content and the receiver of it, who is meant to keep the image/text message from him/herself.
- **Consent:** every time there is the intention of sharing a received explicit content of someone to third parties, the subject of the content or its first sharer has to be asked for permission. Otherwise, there is a violation of the other person’s privacy, incurring a crime.
- **Cryptography:** the usage of an application that does not require a telephone number and that encodes images, so to be deleted after being sought is advice for the sexting practice.
- **Tracing:** canceling pictures and messages that include sexual content or using applications that eliminate or save those in a way that allows the owner of such digital material not to risk to see the proper images shared without consent.
- **Recognizability:** when a person is willing to send nudes, it is quite better that, despite the degree of knowledge of the recipient of the explicit content, the picture does not show a face or any feature that might lead back to someone, such as tattoos, scars, birthmarks.

Tips for youth workers

- Adapt the explanation of this topic to the target group it is addressed to (children/teenagers).
- Introduce the positive/negative practice of sexting through clear age-oriented examples.
- Use empathy while introducing the topic, in case among the target group someone is a victim.

Supporting material

Additional Resource 1

Title:	How to practice safe sexting, by Amy Adel Hasinoff.
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Description	Ted Talk about the positive practice of sexting, consensuality, legal basis of the practice, violation of privacy, terms for the usage of the digital media, cases of revenge porn.
Link to resource:	https://www.ted.com/talks/amy_adele_hasinoff_how_to_practice_safe_sexting/transcript#t-13733
<p>Sources</p> <p>July the 24th, 2020. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, The European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. EU strategy for a more effective fight against child sexual abuse. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0607. Accessed on January the 5th, 2020</p> <p>December the 4th, 2020. Come fare sexting in sicurezza in questi mesi. Freedamedia.it. https://freedamedia.it/2020/12/04/come-fare-sexting-in-sicurezza-in-questi-mesi/. Accessed on December the 8th, 2020.</p> <p>Del Rey R, Ojeda M, Casas JA, Mora-Merchán JA, Elipe P. 2019. Sexting Among Adolescents: The Emotional Impact and Influence of the Need for Popularity. <i>Frontiers in Psychology</i>. Volume 10, 11 pages.</p>	

Topic 4.2 – Primary sexting and secondary sexting.

Topic description

The following topic will focus on the difference between the concept of primary and secondary sexting, pornography, usage of social networks among children and youngsters, and manipulation of data.

Learning Outcomes

- Understand the difference between sharing and receiving sexual pictures and the effects that both types of sexting have on one's own consent.
- Be able to understand when someone's identity is used for pornographic purposes.
- Be able to understand when to address the major problem of a possible happening sextortion to the relevant people (family, supervisors, etc).

Read

The phenomenon of sexting is quite complex and it cannot be reduced to its general definition. For this purpose, it is necessary to distinguish between primary and secondary sexting: **primary sexting** is the act of sharing explicitly sexual images of oneself, while **secondary sexting** is about receiving and forwarding someone else images or videos. The main difference stands in the basis of consent, since primary sexting, according to several studies, seems a consensual practice used by children and youngsters to discover sexuality among peers mainly; as for secondary sexting, the mismatch between the subject consent and the sharer's intention to harm is quite evident. In very few cases, secondary sexting is practiced for fun or can be considered a positive expression of the practice itself. Once again, it is to be remarked that sexting is a practice that is beneficial only if the sexts consensually interchanged are among peers –idealistically among youngsters who already reached the age to do so. On the contrary, whether primary or secondary, if sexting is the result of coercion or pressure from a peer or an adult, there would be certainly sexual abuse with relevant health consequences for the victim (this point will be treated in topic 4).

To the wrong practice of sexting a link can be pertained to **pornography** (visual material containing the explicit description or display of sexual organs or activity, intended to stimulate sexual excitement): a European study reveals that young people themselves identify similarities between the consumption of online pornography and the exchange of pictures and videos while in intimate situations. Furthermore, there is a sense of diffusing normalization of what is sexting as well as for pornography, not only in the acceptance of these practices as instrumental to certain attitudes in the offline physical relationships; but also, it is accepted as normal that sending and receiving sexual images and videos using digital devices facilitates the perpetration of coercion and sexual abuse. Although child pornography is a crime already regulated all over the EU countries, it is not applicable to sexting that, apart from being a new phenomenon, could be a cause of it, especially through the secondary sexting.

Whether it is because of an act of revenge or just to bully a peer, the manipulation of someone's private data is to be considered defamation and punished as a crime since it damages the victim's reputation and prestige. Despite this firm point, it is not easy to make that recognizable as such: the percentage of children with a social network account under the age of 13 is increasing, and that makes it complicated to define the limit of the terms of services of the proper social networks, especially when the interactions are among peers. Sexting, as well as cyberbullying, are strongly discouraged by all relevant social networks, at least in the paper, through legal terms and conditions and community standards that regulate the reporting of hate expressions.

As a further reflection point, it has to be underlined that the usage of social networks covers the right of freedom of expression, as well as the one of privacy. That is why one of the biggest victories, but also defeat is anonymity: while primary sexting is seen, as that above-mentioned expression of freedom, based on consent – if not a result of coercion of any kind -, secondary sexting is violating a person's privacy as pictured in the European Convention of Human Rights, alimending child pornography and invalidating someone's digital footprint. On the purpose to introduce a theme that will be deepened by the following topic, the worst expression of violation generated from secondary sexting is the forwarding of a third person sexually explicit content so manipulated to become a meme or pornographic material on the Internet.

Tips for youth workers

- Use examples to make children/youngsters understand the difference between primary and secondary sexting.
- Introduce the concept of pornography remarking how that can happen to everyone.
- Try to make your audience realize the boundaries of each other expression of freedom, especially when using social networks.

Supporting material

Additional Resource 1

Title:	Sexting and social distance - what we can do as parents and youth workers.
Description	“Stop Child Abuse through training and augmented reality” Erasmus+ project streaming held by four experts among the consortium of partners. It is an hour-long video explaining what sexting is and how to prevent it among children and youngsters.
Link to resource:	https://www.facebook.com/111115700431197/videos/166260664811161

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Topic 4.3 – Risks related to sexting.

Topic description

Definition of digital footprint and its importance and relation with cyberbullying. Main risks in doing sexting, such as revenge porn, deep nude, victim blaming, slut-shaming, child pornography and sextortion.

Learning Outcomes

- Understand that every action on the Internet has consequences for the rest of our lives.
- Be able to explain what a digital footprint is and how to keep it safe from abuses of any kind.
- Be able to show concern for a manipulated or abused digital footprint and act accordingly to prevent further risks.

Read

Apart from the social and health consequences of bad sexting and online victimization produces, the major risk that a child or a young person can go through is defamation and violation of their own privacy, that, as those crimes are perpetrated through digital devices, corresponds to the invalidation of someone's digital footprint. This term indicates the trace left behind every digital activity, whether done actively or passively suffered. The latter case shouldn't be that common since regulated by privacy policies, but it is a reality that a victim of secondary sexting could see the own digital footprint unjustly soiled since lacking his/her consent.

Some years ago, researches revealed that 1 out of 10 European children aged 8-15 felt upset about certain things while using the Internet and social networks more specifically (Livingstone, Davidson, Bryce & Batool, 2017). Among those, receiving messages from strangers, watching expressions of violence or naked people having sex, receiving propositions to meet from unknown people, or requests for pictures to be uploaded on inappropriate websites. The same research concludes that very few of the interviewed children were aware of the impact certain of their actions on the Internet today have, as they could be problems tomorrow because of their digital trail.

The children and youngsters' online victimization pass through the wider concept of **cyberbullying** (usage of digital communication **repeated** to bully someone by sending intimidating messages or threats, and/or sharing videos and pictures for fun, mocking someone among peers with the aim of scaring, anger or shame the people it targets) to assume different connotations and consequences depending on the dynamics with which online sexual abuse occurs in a repetitively way. The following are risky phenomena that arise through an incorrect and abusive sexting practice:

- **Revenge porn.** Publication of someone's sexually explicit images or video to shame the victim as part of the offender's revenge on something personal occurred. It usually

happens when two ex-partners in a romantic relationship share intimate images or videos through consensual primary sexting.

- **Deep nude.** Diffusion of manipulated images where an APP “dress off” the picture’s subject, creating false pornographic content, under total unawareness of the victim.
- **Victim blaming.** In this case, prejudice against a victim that is considered partially or fully responsible for the troubles, coming from practicing sexting. Even if there is an offender, the victim is so blamed for the consequences derived from a single action of primary sexting, for instance; but that includes more complex effects like revenge porn or deep nude.
- **Sextortion.** Threatening to publicly reveal evidence of someone’s sexual activity or sensible data in exchange for money or sexual performances between the victim and the offender. It is a form of sexual exploitation lately spreading through peers respectfully to some adult-initiated activity.
- **Child pornography.** The crime of sharing images, videos, or recorded sounds of children wearing fewer clothes or being sexually abused.

Certain forms of cyberbullying are more gender oriented. It is no secret the mostly all the phenomena related to sexting as online sexual harassment have girls as preferred victims. Feminists created a neologism for this: **slut-shaming** or stigmatization of some girl’s behavior as promiscuous or sexually provocative, according to the socially accepted rules of behaviors of someone’s perceived sex (strictly related to the concept of victim-blaming). Not gendered, but related to sexual orientation, there are some normalized coercive and bullying behaviors that aliment the usage of insulting language through social networks, especially homophobic comments. More in general, the trend is for girls and young women to feel pressured about sending explicit images and videos of them to maintain their social status among peers; while for boys and young men is quite normalized to share the received images and videos or insult sexually for the same purpose of peer prestige and status.

Tips for youth workers

- While explaining the different risks of sexting, make sure you are using clarifying examples.
- Use some age-oriented activity to introduce the harsher contents.
- Take into consideration the statistics and be prepared for some child/youngster reporting episodes of victimization on the basis of online sexual harassment.

Supporting material

Additional Resource 1

Title:	How revenge porn can turn your life upside down, by Darieth Chisolm.
Description	First person experience of revenge porn. Explanation of the concept, lack of the needed legislation on international basis, feeling of shame among related people of the victim.
Link to resource:	https://www.ted.com/talks/darieth_chisolm_how_revenge_porn_turns_lives_upside_down#t-94458



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Topic 4.4 – Health and social consequences of sexting.

Topic description

The topic explores the long-term consequences of online sexual harassment among children and youngsters. Apart from the health symptoms that can be detected, also social aspects are shared.

Learning Outcomes

- Understand that sexting abuse can bring the victim to social and psycho-physical distress.
- Be able to list the symptoms that someone has been abused, so for the closer mates to be attentive and watch each other backs.
- Be able to recognize my limited knowledge on the issue and ask for specialized help whenever the situation needs it.

Read

Whenever sexting degenerates into online sexual harassment and offline coercion, the victim passes through different phases that eventually lead to the solvation of physical and psychological trauma. The wrong usage of sexting can be considered sexual abuse; the symptoms related to that are the well-known ones: anxiety, depression, and a generalized sense of distress. Whenever one of these symptoms is detected, it could be something deeper going on and menacing the wellbeing of the child/youngster.

For this purpose, it is important to be prepared and understand that anxiety and depression could lead to major consequences and extreme actions by the victim. On the most reported ones, pro-anorexia and self-harming behaviors, or even suicidal attempts. Victims may also develop PTSD, post-traumatic stress disorder, that if not treated or detected could worsen into dissociation, anger, and difficulties in engaging in romantic or sexual relationships in the long-term.

It can be said that the social dimension interferes with the physical and mental wellness since the emotional impact on the victim is so strong that needs to be manifested. **PTSD** shows what is known as a seizure of the amygdala, whose right development in the child is key in order not to grow with stressors. So, when a child's unwanted sexually explicit images circulate among peers, exclusion from that context follows, together with feelings of regret, shame, vulnerability, search for isolation, and discomfort of staying in company. Once again, here comes the social pressure, which could have been a factor that led the child to share images of him/herself in the first place. Lastly, the lack of control coming from social refusal or threats typical of sextortion leads the victim not asking for help and hiding the situation from adults, especially if not only peers are insulting with hate messages - practicing cyberbullying, if the behavior is repetitive -, but also adults make sexual advances due to the public online sexual harassment on social networks.

The humiliation and reputational damage to the online sphere can easily evolve into offline violence. The most detected forms of this phenomenon are linked to gendered sexual abuse,

which not only harms the victim, but also roots shared erroneous trends and socio-cultural norms among the adults of the future.

In topic 3 of this module, the perception that children and adolescents have on practicing primary and secondary sexting has been remarked: it is quite normalized that girls share explicit images and boys forward those pictures for a “better” social status among peers especially. It also appears as normal to consume pornography, among the same people practicing sexting, as well as engaging in digital fights that denigrate someone’s reputation. Phenomena like flaming (usage of vulgar language in electronic messages to build online fights between Internet users), or impersonation (pretending to be someone else threatening to reveal explicit images or videos that could damage someone’s life) risk to become more common among young people, inevitably conducting to ICTs demonization and health issues.

Tips for youth workers

- Try to introduce the concept by including real cases of sexual abuse consequences in the explanation, to generate more impact upon children/youngsters.
- Use empathy whenever talking about the topic among children/youngsters. Someone among them could be living or lived a similar situation of harassment and coercion.
- Adapt the language and the terminology to the audience, especially when talking about suicide, violence, and self-harm: some children/youngsters could be traumatized by it.

Supporting material

Additional Resource 1

Title:	How childhood trauma affects health across a lifetime by Nadine Burke Harris.
Description	Exposure to serious health problems due to traumatic childhood experiences, such as sexual abuse. Introduction to the nineteenth ACE study.
Link to resource:	https://www.ted.com/talks/nadine_burke_harris_how_childhood_trauma_affects_health_across_a_lifetime?referrer=playlist-what_is_your_body_trying_to_tell_you

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Topic 4.5 – Sexting prevention.

Topic description

The topic is an overview on parents' perception of Internet related risks for their children, an introduction to the relevant GDPR articles for this module and a series of recommendation to prevent sexting.

Learning Outcomes

- Understand the difference that having a certain age can have in practicing a right / bad sexting.
- Be able to recognize the right practice of sexting from an abusive one.
- Be a good ambassador of sexting prevention among children / Youth.

Read

In 2016, a European research about the perception that parents of children from 6 to 14 years old had, about the risks their sons and daughters could face on the Internet and by using social networks, was linked mainly to explicit violence and targeted advertisements. Especially concerning the last ones, the fear was that children and youngsters could be upset about videos or images popping from social media and apps they use with frequency. In this regard, it is interesting to mention that for the development of the present module and the previous ones, interviews with parents conducted: the principal weapon parents seem to have against possible risks of their children abuse is parental control.

The problem of sexual abuse related to the wrong practice of sexting is extensive: the dynamics that involve young people and adults inside the vortex of sexual victimization through technologies are several and those got their names in recent times, as well as the due legislation and recognition of those as a crime. The **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)** of the European Parliament and Council of 27 April 2016 “on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data” disposes of a series of articles that are relevant to be mentioned in this topic:

- Art. 8 states the chance to exercise parental or guardian control on the child's consent in relation with sensible data and information to be shared with information society services.
- Art. 12 about media's controller providing transparent communication and plain language while informing a child on the collection of personal data.
- Art. 17 or “right to be forgotten” states the right of the victim to see its exploited images or data to be deleted since “unlawfully processed” (think about revenge porn or deep nude).

Known the legal framework that somehow regulates online collection of personal data, it is relevant to underline that the practice of sexting by itself is the expression of the individual's

freedom. But, unfortunately from primary consensual sexting, it is pretty common to pass to secondary sexting where privacy is trampled and personal explicit contents are unauthorizedly diffused. A list of serious actions to be followed in order to prevent sexting is provided (go back and read the last paragraph of topic 1):

- Age-oriented sexual information and digital education to make children and youngsters understand the limit between safely experiment with their sexuality and risking online harassment.
- Educate the adult references of children and youngsters to be up to date when it comes to knowing technologies and their harmful effects, including knowing the features of cyberbullying, grooming, etc. and how these could invalidate their children’s digital footprint.
- Transmit to children and youngsters the importance of reporting to a trustful adult whenever they suspect that something wrong is occurring to them or an acquaintance;
- Whether at school, in free time activities, or at home, the creation of a safe space where to use technology, as well as to apply control on it, is key. Cultivating communication and positive values of respect and dignity usually better dispose of children and Youth to behave with peers.
- Always address the problem to a professional when in presence of obsessive behaviors of a child or a youngster that could be living a withdrawal with the Internet or social networks.

In fact, some warning signs could hide a victim or an offender willing to self-harm.

Tips for youth workers

- Organize awareness campaigns from time to time on sexual and digital education, in order to cover important gaps and taboos among children and youngsters.
- Foster values of respect and dignity during informal activities of any kind.
- Promote mentoring whenever there is a serious suspicion that a child/young person is a victim of abuse.

Supporting material

Additional Resource 1

Title:	How we can eliminate sexual child abuse materials from the Internet by Julie Cordua.
Description	Social entrepreneur sexual abuse of children in images and videos on the internet. She’s building technology to connect tech industry, law enforcement and government, so to end the viral distribution of abuse material and rescue children faster.
Link to resource:	https://www.ted.com/talks/julie_cordua_how_we_can_eliminate_child_sexual_abuse_material_from_the_internet#t-818176

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Topic 4.6 – Youth worker reaction to the child sexual abuse emerged from sexting.

Topic description

Introduction to the profile of the youth worker, lack of protocols to be applied if a victim of sexting cohabites the same environment as the offender, advice for policies to be assumed in youth working.

Learning Outcomes

- Understand that when the victim and perpetrator are peers, it is relevant to also act on the group to prevent further abuses in the same setting.
- Be able to rationalize the situation and keep your deep concern for yourself for the child's sake.
- Be impartial in case the victim and the perpetrator cohabit the same environment.

Read

The figure of the **Youth Worker** is quite less known just like the current risks that children and Youth are exposed to while navigating the Internet and having active accounts on social networks. So, in both cases it is needed to have more information.

As a person dedicated to training and education or just to the organization of free time activities, the youth worker is one of the closest adults that a child or an adolescent can have during their critical years of development. As a parent, a guardian, or an educator, the youth worker has a great responsibility inside his/her organization. In his/her career, a Youth worker will certainly detect distress and depression in his/her audience due to domestic violence, intimate partner violence, or bullying from the school environment. So, even if not adequately trained, a youth worker knows based on experience how to react to a suspect of abuse.

It is important to set inside organization protocols and policies to be activated in case of suspected abuses, but that is not the common praxis. Before engaging in the management of leisure activity for Youth, youth workers have to certify their clean records for child abuse-related crimes – at least in some European countries. That is why this topic will take into account different scenarios where a sexting victim and an offender are cohabitating in the same free time activities environment:

- **Suspect of abuse:** the youth worker detects unusual behaviors among some group members. It looks like someone is laughing at someone else while waving his/her mobile phone. The action to make is having a distended conversation with the group and try to understand who they are bullying. The following steps will be talking to their parents, especially with the victim's and the offender's. The intervention of a skilled professional would be needed to metabolize what occurred.
- **Confession of abuse:** the victim approaches the youth worker and confesses that visual sexually explicit content of him/her has been published through a messaging App. He/she doesn't know how to cope with the offender's presence and the feeling of shame, so

he/she wants to leave the organization. The youth worker has to remain calm and calm down the victim, by making him/her trust the help the worker is going to give and activate the reporting chain regarding the offender (authorities, parents or guardians, lawyers, psychologists).

- **Consequence of abuse:** the silent victim has a breakdown in front of the group and threat of self-harm. The youth worker has to isolate the victim from the group, not to let the offender worsen the situation, and try to calm him/her down. With patience and empathy, the worker will have to appeal to trust and make the victim feel safe. Once that the situation is calmed, the reporting chain should be activated and psychological support asked to avoid any PTSD to victim and offender's fellow mates.

As previously mentioned, even if it is not the trend, organizations working with children and Youth should be ready to face certain problems, since in a lot of free time activities technologies are involved. And, as in leisure time clubs and associations young people use to get engaged in personal relationships, every risk should be covered by policies and protocols to be known by all the staff members when to be activated. The following advice goes from the structural to the strategical tissue of an organization:

- Create a safe space: prohibition of technological devices while developing the activities or, if ICTs are needed, put a control on those and spread awareness.
- Identify the goals: an organization should have clear values to pursue and the wellbeing of its activities' users. If the medium to fulfill some objectives is applying a protocol, then do it.
- The policies to apply should be forged with specialized and professional help, as well as accepted by all the youth workers helping in the daily development of workshops and activities.
- Working personnel should periodically be trained on the emerging Youth issues, as sexting is.
- Avoid denial or fear behaviors on something that statistically can happen in every environment.
- Assume a free from prejudice conduct towards the offender and do not cover the abuse for fearing the possible bad reputation of the organization due to the occurred abuse inside it.
- Be ready to the possibility, that once the child sexual prevention protocol is active, victims could feel safe to raise their voice and finally confess past or current abuses perpetrated to their detriment.

Tips for youth workers

- Do not deny that a person may be a suspect in front of the possible sexting victim.
- Maintain a continuous communication line with your audience.
- Analyze the situation and ask for professional help if needed.

Supporting material

Additional Resource 1

Title:	Encounter Youth Inc.: Child Protection Policy
Description	An Australian example of child abuse policies to be applied in a Youth organization. It is a draft with interesting annexes, such as the youth worker code of conduct and the declaration of non-previous sexual crimes committed.
Link to resource:	https://www.encounteryouth.com.au/PDF/Encounter_Youth_Child_Protection_Policy.pdf

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