

Lesson #2 Recognising

What is online sexual harassment?

13–17 years

⌚ 45min

Lesson outline:

Recognising online sexual harassment

In this lesson students will identify what online sexual harassment is and the range of behaviours it includes. Using discussion and interactive activities, students will reflect on the type of behaviour they may see online, explore issues of consent and how this helps to define online sexual harassment. In being able to recognise online sexual harassment, young people will be better equipped to resist becoming involved in it.

Lesson objective:

To understand what types of behaviour constitutes online sexual harassment.

Learning outcomes:

Students will be able to...

- Define the term online sexual harassment
- Recognise examples of online sexual harassment
- Understand the emotional impact online sexual harassment can have on those involved

Vocabulary:

'Harassment'
'Relationship'
'Consent'
'Sexual'
'Boundaries'

Before the lesson:

- Review the Teaching Guide for information about online sexual harassment and further advice on how to deliver these lessons.
- Work with the group to agree on a set of ground rules. See the Setting Ground Rules Lesson on p.2. Ensure these are clearly visible in the room.
- Refresh your knowledge of your school's reporting procedures and speak to your DSL about how the school supports students who make a report.

Activity

Timing

Resources

Activity		Timing	Resources
Starter	Scenario comparison	5 min	
Activity 1	Defining online sexual harassment	10 min	Appendix 1
Activity 2	Flirting vs. harassment – Where's the line?	10 min	Appendix 2a Optional – string and pegs Appendix 2b
Activity 3	Emotions and impact	15 min	Appendix 3 and Appendix 4
Optional activity	Hot seat	45min	
Plenary	Shared learning	5 min	

 Revisit the behaviour expectations students agreed on in the Ground Rules Lesson.

Starter

 5 mins

Display or read aloud the following scenarios and ask the group to reflect silently on how each one is different.

1. A photo was taken of a girl, Ama, hugging a boy, Callum, who was not her boyfriend. Ama and Callum are really close friends and always joke that people will think they are a couple. They have a running in-joke that Ama has lots of different boyfriends. Ama posted the photo online and Callum sent Ama a direct message saying 'slag (winking face emoji 😏)'.
 2. A photo was taken of a girl, Ama, hugging a boy, Callum, who was not her boyfriend. It got sent around to people in their school and other schools in the area. People took screenshots and posted it to their online stories, commenting with terms like 'slut', 'slag' and 'cheater.'

Reflection questions:

- How would you describe Ama and Callum's relationship?
- Why did Callum send that message to Ama in Scenario 1?
- Callum sent his message privately, not publicly. Why?
- Why did other people take screenshots of Ama's photo in Scenario 2?
- Other people shared Ama's photo in Scenario 2. What effect do you think this had on Ama and Callum?
- Who is responsible for Ama's photo getting shared around with a wider group of people?
- What do you think the difference is between Callum's actions and the actions of the other young people?
- Would the consequences be different if it had been Callum who posted the photo, and not Ama?

Supporting students with additional needs: Work with students on understanding each scenario and going through each one step by step. You may wish to draw each character to help illustrate each one. You could also provide a list of emotions and ask students to decide if they apply to Scenario 1 or Scenario 2, eg. Calm, upset, confused, excited etc.

Activity 1


 10 mins

Explain that Scenario 2 is an example of peer-to-peer online sexual harassment, the focus of this lesson. Explain 'peer-to-peer' describes when it happens between young people in local communities, e.g. In school, or in a local area.

Divide the group into pairs. Give each pair a copy of **Appendix 1**, and ask them to think of words that are connected with each of the three terms ('online', 'sexual' and 'harassment').

Supporting students with additional needs: You may wish to provide the definition of online sexual harassment and ask students to annotate on the paper all the things that it makes them think of or feel.

Ask each pair to think of their own definition of online sexual harassment, in a peer-to-peer context. Take some suggestions and highlight any answers that focus on online behaviour of an unwanted nature.

 Remind students of the ground rules, and the need to keep individuals' names and experiences out of the discussion and definitions.

Ask the group to compare their own definitions to the following provided definition:

Peer-to-peer online sexual harassment is unwanted sexual behaviour on any online platform content (images, videos, posts, messages, pages)

Other factors:

- It can happen in public or in private online.
- Peer-to-peer online sexual harassment happens between young people of similar ages who may or may not know each other.
- There is no 'typical' victim, it can happen to anyone. There may be other factors that increase the risk of harassment, such as gender, sexual orientation, race, religion and special educational needs.



Educator's notes: In Scenario 1, Callum is able to comment on Ama's photo because they have a shared mutual trust and understanding. Ama had a part to play in creating the joke in Callum's comment and the joke is private so only Ama and Callum can share in it.

In Scenario 2, Ama has not given her consent for her photo to be shared publicly, or for the other people to comment on it. Due to the sexual nature of the comments, these can be categorised as unwanted sexual behaviour, making this an example of online sexual harassment. Ama would possibly feel humiliated, judged and sexualised – further reasons to classify this behaviour as online sexual harassment. If it's unwanted, it's unacceptable.

**Further challenge**

Extra discussion questions:

What makes online sexual harassment different from cyberbullying?

Online sexual harassment has a sexual element to the behaviour.

Do you think boys or girls experience more online sexual harassment? Why?

Online sexual harassment can happen to anyone, but research suggests girls are more likely to be targeted than boys – particularly for some forms of online sexual harassment, e.g. ‘slut-shaming’ – and these incidents often resulting in more negative outcomes for girls. This is discussed further in Lesson Plan #2.

Think about the person carrying out the online sexual harassment in each scenario. Why do they behave in that way?

Much of the unhealthy behaviour that plays out in online sexual harassment is shaped by the perceived ‘norms’ within peer groups, gender dynamics and wider cultural influences. The pressure to participate, and the widespread cultural value placed on sexual appeal can be another factor.

Who do you think has the final say on whether something is online sexual harassment or not – the victim, the perpetrator or bystanders (people who saw it happen but were not involved)?

If a young person feels they have been sexually harassed online, their experience is valid and they have a right to be taken seriously. However, young people may not always identify themselves as victims, or want to be called a victim as they may not want to be defined by the behaviour of others.

Activity 3

⌚ 15 mins

Ask: ‘Think back to Ama and Callum in Scenario 2. How do you think that situation made them feel?’

Take examples and record these somewhere visible.

Once the group has thought of several examples, show them the following list to compare their answers to.

Online sexual harassment can make a person feel:

- Threatened
- Exploited
- Coerced
- That their dignity is lost
- Humiliated or degraded
- Upset
- Sexualised
- Discriminated against (because of their gender or sexual orientation)
- Feel guilty or like they are to blame

Work through the list of emotions to check the students understand what they mean. You could provide, or ask for, examples for each one.

Use this opportunity to stress that to make a person feel any of those emotions is never acceptable, offline or online, and depending on the situation, can break the law. Online sexual harassment does not have to be accepted as a normal part of growing up.



Supporting students with additional needs: You may wish to print out Scenario 2 and ask students to draw or write how each character might be feeling. Use the list of emotions above and work through these with the students to come up with a definition. For example; coerced is feeling like someone is making you do something you don’t want to do.

Explain that the group will now hear Ama’s story, who they first heard about in the Starter activity.

Play the recording, pausing it at the markers indicated on the transcript (**Appendix 3**).

At each pause, ask the students to record how they think Ama is feeling on **Appendix 4**. They could do this using a variety of different media – text, colours, images, symbols etc.

Optional activity

⌚ 45 mins

May be suitable for an extra 45 minute class

Hot-seat

Work in small groups, or as a whole class. Ask the students how each character played a part in this scenario.

Characters:

- Ama – the main character who experiences online sexual harassment
- Callum – Ama’s best friend, who gets targeted by the online sexual harassment too
- Alfie – Ama’s friend, who she suspects spread the rumours and the photo
- The bystanders who shared the rumours and the photo

The students should decide on a character and the point in the story they want to focus on, before taking it in turns to ‘hot-seat’ the different characters involved. Students may wish to see a copy of the transcript as a prompt. The group can ask the hot seat character questions about their experience and feelings. Remind the group of the ground rules that they originally agreed.

There are some further prompts below to help guide the session:

- The audience can ask a maximum of 6 questions.
- The hot-seat character can spend no more than 1 minute in the hot-seat.
- Ask open ended questions.
- Respect each other's performances.
- Suggested hot-seat questions:
 - What's been going on?
 - Have you done anything about it? Why?
 - How are you feeling?
 - Why do you think you are being treated this way?
 - Have you spoken to anyone about it?
 - What would you like to happen next?

After the hot-set is complete, ask students to physically 'shake off' their characters and lead a debrief about what they learnt from the activity.

Plenary

🕒 5 mins

Arrange students in a circle on chairs. Nominate yourself as the first 'director'. In this role, stand in the middle of the circle and direct students to switch seats if the following statement applies to them:

Everyone who learnt something new about online sexual harassment.

Include yourself in the statement and take a chair. This means the last student standing will take on the role of 'director'. It is their turn to give a statement, and the cycle repeats for as long as you wish.

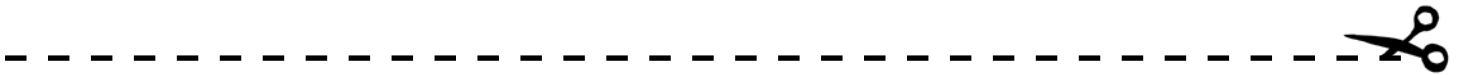
Suggested summary statements:

- Everyone who is still confused about something from today's lesson.
- Everyone who found the discussion around consent helpful.
- Everyone who wants to learn more about healthy relationships.

Make a note of students' responses and address at the next appropriate moment.

Ask: 'Think back to Ama's story. What 3 pieces of advice would you give her to help make the situation better? Students could write these as messages to Ama and read each other's suggestions.'

Online	Sexual	Harrassment



Online	Sexual	Harrassment

1 Nifa was messaging with a boy. She really liked him, and was hoping their friendship could turn into a relationship. He asked for nudes, she wasn't sure, so avoided the question. He kept asking and asking, so she blocked him.

2 Kamil posts a few selfies online, then receives some anonymous comments describing his body in a sexual way and making sexual suggestions.

3 Amy is a girl, but she feels more comfortable when she presents herself as a boy. She wants people at school to call her by a different name – Aidan. When she changes her online profile name to Aidan, some people 'like' the change and some make comments asking about it.

4 Kira gets sent a picture of male genitals. The sender is a friend of a friend. She shows her friend and they laugh about it, then she deletes it.

5 Sasha's boyfriend kisses someone else while they are dating. She shares around nude pictures of him to get her own back.

6 Jordan's classmates have a running joke that he is attracted to their teacher, Mr. Morgan. They make an Instagram account dedicated to pictures they make of Mr Morgan and Jordan together, and add emojis that suggest sexual behaviour.

7 Dan has a new girlfriend who is 2 years younger than him. His friends post comments online calling him a 'paedophile.'

8 Hassan gets photographed pretending to kiss one of his male friends. Someone adds heart emojis and sends it around school with a comment that says they are 'disgusting'.

9 Someone set up a fake account in Tarhik's name and used it to ask people in his year for nudes. Tarhik denied it was him but no-one believed him.

10 Maya takes a selfie with her best friend. She comments on it with 'love you slag xxx'.

11 Jamie posts a video of himself playing football. The girl he likes sends him a message saying 'looking good' and he messages back with 'thanks, but you're the one who always looks good'.

12 Hamir and Laura are in the first stages of a relationship. They text each other a lot, and have quite flirty conversations. Hamir tells Laura she's 'hot.'

13 Someone films a group of friends in their school forcing Emily, a girl in the year below, to touch Dev's genitals. The video gets shared around school.

14 Zoe has feelings for her friend Lola. She thinks Lola feels the same but she's not sure. She finds it awkward to talk about it face to face, but online she has the confidence to ask Lola about how she feels.

Lola is glad Zoe wants to talk about it.

15 Rumours get sent around school that Oli is gay. He gets annoyed by the gossip so sets his profile to 'interested in: men' to stop everyone guessing. People screen shot it and send it around, but later the rumours stop.

1 Harassment.
The requests were **unwanted** and continued even when Nifa did not respond.

2 Harassment
Kamil has **not given his consent** to receive those comments, as he does not know who the person contacting him is.

3 It depends.
Why have people liked the name change? What sort of comments are posted? If they are discriminatory or transphobic, the behaviour could be **harassment**. If they were supportive, it **may not be harassment**.

4 It depends.
The picture did not seem to upset Kira, but the image was **unwanted**. By showing it to a friend without the sender's consent, is this **harassment**?

5 Harassment.
The images were used to **humiliate Sasha's** ex-boyfriend.

6 Harassment.
Jordan could find this situation **uncomfortable and embarrassing**, and be worried about how to explain this to his friends or ask them to stop. It would also count as harassment towards the teacher, as it is going on without his knowledge or **consent**, and could damage his professional reputation.

7 Harassment.
The term 'paedophile' has strong **derogatory sexual connotations** and is being used to shame Dan.

8 Harassment.
The language used has derogatory **homophobic connotations**.

9 Harassment.
Tariq did not give his **consent** for a fake account to be set up in his name, and the behaviour is **embarrassing** Tariq.

10 Not harassment.
The context suggests the sexual language is being used in a **familiar and friendly** way.

11 Not harassment.
The comments are part of a respectful conversation, and are **not unwanted**.

12 Not harassment.
The comments are part of a respectful conversation, and are **not unwanted**.

13 Harassment.
Emily was **forced** to touch Dev and did not give her **consent** for the video to be shared.

14 Not harassment.
The comments are part of a respectful conversation, and are **not unwanted**.

15 Harassment.
Oli is annoyed by the comments and the gossip is **unwanted**. He did not give **consent** for people to share screenshots of his profile.

Transcript of Ama's story

So, it was at Samira's house party. Everyone from school was there, including Alfie. Me and Alfie have this weird thing where we always kind of flirt in Maths, but don't really hang out the rest of the time because we don't have any other lessons together. Anyway, we got on okay, and I thought we were friends.

I saw him at the party, and he came over and we started chatting. It was nice not to be talking about Maths! He was getting pretty flirty and leaning in quite close. I liked him, but not in that way, and didn't want to give him the wrong impression, so I made an excuse and went and found my best friend Callum, who was chilling out upstairs.

I don't know how the next part happened. Apparently, someone must have seen me messing about with Callum, and thought we were a couple. We are definitely not! I've known Callum since primary school and we've always been best friends, but nothing more. I'm pretty sure he's in to guys anyway, ..

1. PAUSE

So, someone took a picture of me and Callum hugging. The next day, this picture was getting sent around, along with a rumour that we had done some stuff...you know, sexual things. This wasn't true at all. I couldn't believe what people were saying – most of it was aimed at me, saying I was slag and a whore and all that. But even Callum got some things said about him, like "he's into girls after all" and all this mean stuff.

2. PAUSE

I felt so humiliated; it was so embarrassing. I had only been hugging my best friend, but it felt like I had done something wrong. Some people who I thought were my friends started joining in online, and calling me those names. Maybe they thought it was funny. People even took screenshots of my other photos and put extra emojis and pictures on them, making out like I was flirting and doing things with loads of other guys too.

Obviously, I denied it, but not many people believed me. I thought I'd just try and ignore it. The strange thing was that Alfie started being a bit distant, and not as friendly anymore. He never brought it up, but I'm guessing it was him who started the rumours.

3. PAUSE

A few weeks later, I was in my room one evening and Callum texted me to say there was a nude photo being shared around and people were saying it was me. It wasn't, but whoever started it must have found some random nude online and posted it saying it was me. It was so horrible, everyone started messaging me and sending it to me, asking if it was true. I just wanted to hide from everyone- I definitely didn't want to face going in to school the next day. It was awful. I couldn't believe someone would do this. I felt so helpless. I'm really grateful that Callum stuck by me and supported me though all of it.

It happened a while ago, but I still feel nervous that someone is going to bring it up and it will start all over again. Why don't people realise this type of thing isn't okay?

4. PAUSE

