

WORKSHOP SCENARIO FOR STUDENTS OF POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Sexting

Workshop's goal: The aim of the workshop is to educate its participants' on one type of hazardous sexual relations known as "sexting". The participants will learn about the possible negative consequences of creating, sending, publishing and commenting sexual-tinted materials on the Internet. The participants will learn also how to make considerate decisions and where to seek help in difficult situations.

Duration: 90 minutes (option 1 – using two shorter videos) or 135 minutes (option 2 – using one longer video)

Target group: The workshop is intended for youth between 13 and 18 years old. It can be conducted at school – in such situation the group size is defined by class population. The workshop can also be carried out outside of school, for a group of people who don't know each other. In such situations, it is recommended that the age-wise homogeneous groups count no more than 20-25 participants.

Place: school class, day room, training room.

Materials needed: provided DVD (option)

Equipment required: laptop, projector, projection screen or TV set (if using the DVD).

Facilitator: the facilitators best suited for the proposed workshop are people who work with youth on a daily basis, who can run a facilitated discussion, and have at least basic knowledge of the sexting phenomenon. We encourage you to run the workshop with two facilitators. This should ease up the discussions that will follow each exercise, and ensure comfort during the workshop.

Types of work involved: lecture, team work, presentation, discussion

The content of the workshop and kinds of work involved can be difficult or poignant. Before running the workshop, it is advisable to read the materials addressing the problem of sexting, available at the www.fdn.pl webpage.

We have prepared three ways of presenting the story of young people engaged in sexting. You can either read the chosen story/-ies stories out loud, or play either the longer educational video "Forever", or the two shorter videos: Jane's story and Matt's story - on the provided DVD.

Workshop completion/evaluation form: We kindly ask you to fill in an evaluation form for the conducted prevention workshop. Your opinion will greatly help us create further educational materials. Once you have filled in the form, you will have the possibility to obtain a workshop certificate. The form is available at www.edukacja.fdn.pl.

1. Introduction

Duration: 5 minutes

The facilitator informs the participants that the workshop will deal with the phenomenon of sexting. The facilitator should propose to set and write down a few rules to which all participants shall comply throughout the workshop, e.g.:

- I listen when others speak.
- I don't judge other participants.
- In discussions and exercises, I refer to the story presented during the workshop.
- I treat with respect and discretion the information and opinions disclosed by other participants.
- I maximally engage in the workshop.

2. Lecture: sexualisation and sexting

Type of work: lecture

Materials needed: DVD, laptop, projector, screen/TV set

Duration: 5 minutes

The facilitator begins by introducing the definition of sexualisation. This phenomenon was initially connected only to the modern mass culture and advertising but is nowadays more and more visible in other areas of social life. Sexualisation means judging people based on their physicality, reducing a person's worth to their looks or behaviour, objectification. Promoting and using such representations by media or advertising companies makes us – regardless of age – unwittingly perceive, compare and judge these often modified representations of sexual tinge.

Objectification of oneself and others is dangerous. This tendency should be closely observed, especially in the age of instant access to information, that the new technologies allow, because it often leads to sexting, which is **producing and sending or receiving pictures (photos and movies) of sexual character, using new technologies (e-mail, Internet communicators or applications, MMSs, video chats etc.** Surveys show that one out of nine teenagers sends out such pictures and one third of the youth asked, admits to have received photos or videos of sexual character. More and more people receive such pictures through other channels than media and advertisements – they receive them from their acquaintances and friends, and often create such content themselves.

3. Exercise: Intentions

Type of work: brainstorm

Materials needed: blackboard and chalk or flipchart and markers

Duration: 15 minutes

The participants are now encouraged to consider reasons for which young people make and send out photos and videos of sexual character (question 1) and reasons for which young people ask their peers to make and/or send such pictures (question 2). The facilitator should put down answers to these questions in two separate columns on the board/flipchart.

Questions for discussion: Why do young people take and/or send out sex-tinged photos of themselves or others?

- to draw somebody's attention
- to feel appreciated/attractive
- to flirt
- to show off with one's body (related to self-objectification)
- to prove love, emotional engagement
- to create sexual tension in the other person
- to encourage the other person to reciprocate (by sending them one's own photo)
- for fun
- to be like everybody else (everybody does it)
- to keep somebody in a relationship
- to answer a request (from a potential/current partner)
- because somebody asked for it (potential/current partner)
- to hurt somebody.

Questions for discussion: What are the young people's motivations for wanting to receive such photos?

- to get a proof of love or interest
- to relieve sexual tension
- to impress others
- to see if one can persuade another person to do it (test own manipulation skills)
- to test the other person's limits
- to laugh at somebody, ridicule them
- to have an advantage over somebody, be able to blackmail them
- out of boredom, as an entertainment
- to experiment within the sexual sphere
- out of curiosity FOR the other person's body
- because everybody does it (to be like everybody else).

If any of the given examples does not come up in the discussion the facilitator should ask the participants' opinions on them, while informing that they were taken from a GfK Polonia survey conducted for FDN (2014).

Summing up, the facilitator should emphasize that sexting usually happens between peers, however one should always remember that a new Internet acquaintance may not be who he/she claims to be. A person requesting a nude photo, who claims to be a teenager, may actually be an adult. Moreover, a teenager may feign interest in another person, only to manipulate them into sharing photos of sexual character. In both cases, this will be a dangerous situation, however many young people do not consider risks while involving in such situations.

The facilitator informs that when we see a person in a positive light (due to their age or looks) we often tend to perceive them as good. A parallel thing happens when we feel good and pleasant: we tend to perceive such situation as safe. This relates to the psychological “halo effect” which makes us think that a person similar to us (e.g. in our age group) has positive – similar to our – intentions. This may not be true – a good looking, attractive (in any way) person doesn’t necessarily have good intentions towards us.

The participants should remember that while the riskiness of a given situation is obvious to the outside observer, not for the people who are in it. A good example here is sexting, where different motivations are involved (someone may seek others’ attention while the other party may encourage them because he/she considers this a great prank or wants to acquire some material for blackmail). A Internet- or SMS-based conversation often does not allow you to learn what the motives of the other side are.

It is worth noticing that sexting may not be safe even when people who engage into it try to hide their identity and privacy (e.g. by hiding their face during a “nude” chat session). They don’t know who is on the other side and what their motives are. There’s no guarantee that the chat isn’t being recorded and that the recording will not be published on the Internet, where it will simply go out of anybody’s control. Even if it will not be possible to identify the person in such a “safe” recording, the very existence of this recording (created without the knowledge or consent of its “protagonist”) is an open breach of privacy and may negatively influence this person’s wellbeing or sense of security.

Closing this part, the facilitator should mention that such situations may not be safe even if the people who exchange pictures of nude character are in a relationship (e.g. they want to show each other how deeply involved they are in the relationship).

4. Presentation: Jane and Matt

Type of work: presentation

Materials needed: DVD, laptop, projector, screen/TV set (when using the recorded story)

Duration: 10-30 minutes

The facilitator introduces the story of Jane and Matt in one of three possible ways:

1. Reading out loud the story – first, from Jane’s and then from Matt’ point of view
2. Playing two videos “Jane’s story” and “Matt’ story” (about 10 minutes)
3. Playing the “For ever” short movie (30 minutes).

Video materials are available at www.edukacja.fdn.pl.

Introducing the story, the facilitator should emphasize that even situations, where two people are in a relationship and exchange nude photos (e.g. because they want to show affection), may not be safe. Jane's story is a good example.

Matt

I thought this would be an easy year. School was alright, classmates were awesome. I thought nothing would surprise me. I was wrong. Jane landed in our class after her father got a job in our city – they moved from the other corner of the country. On the inauguration she looked pale and scared. I looked her up on Facebook. She moaned about missing her old friends. And her boyfriend...

With every passing day she grew more and more alright – the shy and witty kind of girl. Like she had been one of us for a long time. Guys started drooling to her from the start. I liked her too, but she had this boyfriend of hers... A few weeks in, I threw a party. It was pretty cool – we always partied hard. Jane looked amazing – I couldn't take my eyes off her. What did it hurt to dance with her? We... danced all night long. I thought there was something between us – and I wasn't alone: we're on a half of the photos from the party and the comments... Oh well, we had a great time and it simply showed. This didn't go along with some of her old friends – she got a few nasty comments and... broke up with that bloke. I felt guilty. I talked to her and it turned out that they had been having problems for some time. She deleted their photos, got rid of a few „friends”. She was sad but eventually I managed to take her out to the movies. And that's how it happened. I lost my head for this girl: she was the only thing that counted. We were together every minute, and if we couldn't we would browse the Internet together or talk on Skype. In early December I ruined my cellphone – I thought I'd go mad. I wouldn't leave the computer, had to dust up the tablet. That's when I realized I loved her. It was an amazing feeling.

For Christmas, as usually, my family went to the mountains. The snow, the board – it was awesome. Only Jane wasn't there. I missed her. I must have had too much free time in the evenings because I came up with this idea and asked her for a photo – a bold one. I sent her one of me as an encouragement. It worked and she sent me back one of hers. She wrote „forever” underneath. We talked late that night.

In the morning, we went skating and stayed out until dark. I forgot to take my phone from charger. The weather was fantastic. It was an awesome day until...

When I came back, I couldn't make it out for a time. I had about 30 unanswered calls from Jane and a lot of texts: „how did it end up there?”, „how could you?"; she gave me a last chance to explain myself. I had no idea what it all meant but I felt it was big.

And the same mess was in the Internet: people wrote me on FB, on Skype... that I deserved it, that we both deserved each other, that Jane was quite a chick, that we should go to a talk show with our story. Total mayhem. Finally, in one of the notifications, I found one of the photos we exchanged the night before with Jane. I thought I would burn with shame. And the damn sounds of incoming messages... I called Jane. She started talking rubbish about being wrong, that her ex tricked her, that

she was sorry. I've never felt more let down by another person. Later I called a friend who kept an eye on the whole disaster in the Internet and he told me everything: that somebody published Jane's photo on the net, that everybody kept re-posting it. And that she was convinced I did it. I don't know how she could think that! With all that between us! She didn't even care to talk to me, she just posted my photo as a revenge. Just for a moment – she quickly deleted it but... it was enough for everybody to see and copy it. The photo boomeranged back – mostly photoshopped. Mostly jokes and hates.

I don't know how long I sat there looking at the wall. Then I kicked her out of my friends and deleted all the photos of us together. And the nasty comments. And people who posted them. I thought they were my friends. I thought I could trust my girlfriend...

Jane

A new school year in a new place. We moved because my parents found better jobs here. It was quite a change – new people, new school. I left my friends behind and all I knew with them... I missed home so much. My old crew were all on Facebook. I just kept posting sad faces.

We talked for hours – on Facebook or Skype, but it just wasn't the same anymore. Well, maybe apart from Anita, my best friend – she stayed the same. I was worried about the thing with Jack... my boyfriend. He was jealous and annoying even before I left. We were still together, he was being supportive after my move but... he kept being more and more ill-tempered, making scenes. Later, he would apologize and promise to behave. Long distance relationship proved to be really hard for us...

My new class mates... they were ok. I had been really afraid they wouldn't want to hang out with me, being all that close together, not needing anyone else. But they were really alright – funny, cool, open people. We liked each other and I really wanted to keep it this way. On my second weekend there, somebody decided to throw a party. I didn't know what to do, since I had already promised to my old crew that I would come down for the weekend and for Anita's birthday. I promised Jack to spend time with him as well.

And there was this party. Everybody just kept pushing me to come. I tried talking to Jack about it, but he wouldn't listen. That's when I decided to ditch him and go to this party.

It was amazing. Something else entirely! A total integration – I felt like I've known them forever. And there was Matt. He danced like a devil. I've never had so much fun! Not everybody thought it good. There were a few unpleasant comments on how I got swallowed by the big city – too good for my old friends. And Jack... Jack just wouldn't get it up to the point where I no longer had the strength to explain.

School life, new things... Before I knew it, a few weeks passed and nearly everything has changed. My new friends took the place of the old ones, I went out a few times with Matt and... we became a couple. Everything was going just wonderful, I was so happy...

The Christmas break came and Matt went with his family to the mountains. He wrote me how much he missed me, that he can't wait until the New Year's... He asked me to send him a photo, but not the

usual kind. He wanted a sexy pic. He sent me his. I didn't know what to do, I was afraid that if I send him the picture he wanted, he will think there's something wrong with me but... I wasn't sure.

I took the photo and sent it to Anita to tell me whether this was something he would like. She told me to send it. Matt was overwhelmed. We talked for a long time, I was utterly happy.

When I woke up in the morning, I was surprised to see there were no new messages from Matt. I wrote him but he didn't write me back. And then it all begun. Somebody posted THAT photo on my class' timeline. Before I saw it, the first comments were already there: „slag”, „bitch”, „whoa, I didn't know you were that easy”, „nice!”, „nice bod”, and so on. And these were all „my friends” from school. I got mad. How could he do this to me? I kept calling and writing him but there was no answer.

Somebody told me not to leave it like this, to get my revenge. I don't know why I did it but.. I posted his photo. People fell on him instantly. They threw shit on him. And on me. They wrote we deserve each other. Then Anita called on Skype, asking what was going on. I told her about Matt posting my photo and the rest of it. She acted really strange. Finally she told me that it was all my ex. He took hold of her cellphone and sent himself the photo. He went berserk and posted it on the net.

Matt said I disappointed him. I felt my world crumbling at my feet. I deleted all the photos I could find but they just kept coming back. People made them into memes, photoshopped them... I turned off my cell and my computer. I just wanted to disappear.

5. Exercise: feelings and thoughts

Type of work: work in groups

Materials needed: A4 sheets of paper and pens for each team; blackboard and chalk or flipchart and markers

Duration: 20 minutes

The facilitator groups the participants into homogenous teams of 5 or 6 (girls and boys separately).

The girls' team/s need to decide: “What can a boy, whose naked/private photo/video became public (through the Internet, MMSs, e-mails, etc.), feel?”

The boys' team/s need to think: “What can a girl, whose naked/private photo/video became public (through the Internet, MMSs, e-mails, etc.), feel?”

The facilitator should try to encourage each team to start the discussion based on the situation described in the stories/videos they have just heard/watched, and then consider what other feelings/emotions girls and boys whose private photos/videos have become public may experience.

The facilitator takes down all the answers – one sheet of paper should list all the answers of the girls' teams and the other – the answers of the boys' teams.

All the below listed feelings should come up during the exercise:

- shame

- anger, feeling cheated
- helplessness
- remorse, self-blaming
- embarrassment
- treason
- disappointment
- fear (for what will happen next, how will the friends/adults react, etc.)
- urge to cease all contacts (with the person who disclosed the photo, with people who comment it, or a more general urge to change one's environment)
- feeling of being judged/unfairly treated
- the feeling of being in a situation "of no way out" ("my life is ruined", „there's nothing I can do" etc.)
- constant feeling of insecurity, of being in danger
- tension, stress
- low self-esteem
- fear for the future
- dread
- shock
- difficulty in trusting others in the future

If any of these answers is not mentioned by the groups, the facilitator should ask the participants about it.

Summing up, the facilitator should explain that although the groups were discussing two separate cases – feelings of a girl and feelings of a boy in a similar situation – their answers are comparable. Feelings and thoughts of people, whose nude/private photos were published without their knowledge or consent, can be alike, regardless of the person's sex. Both boys and girls may feel shame, guilt, stress, being cheated etc.

6. Exercise: Reactions

Type of work: work in groups

Materials needed: 4 copies of the jumbled reactions sheet (one for each group)

Duration: 30 minutes

The facilitator groups the participants into four teams. Each of the teams receives a jumbled reactions sheet describing typical reactions to publishing sexting photos/videos (or sending them, making them public) without the consent of people being pictured.

The teams will be decide which of the given reactions may appear when:

Team I – the published picture features a boy and the commenting party are girls

Team II – the published picture features a boy and the commenting party are boys

Team III – the published picture features a girl and the commenting party are girls

Team IV – the published picture features a girl and the commenting party are boys.

Blame the person for what happened to them	Sex-tinted offline comments (e.g. “rating” the person’s looks)	Report the pictures to the administrators of the website where they were published	Ignore the situation (e.g. when one doesn’t consider the situation worth getting involved in)
Ignore, reject the person (by e.g. excluding them from a group)	Ignore the situation (e.g. when one doesn’t know how to react in such situation)	Sex-tinted offline comments (by e.g. making sexual proposals to the featured person)	Photoshop the photos, edit the videos, create memes and repost them on other websites
No interest in the picture	Report the situation to an adult person (e.g. at school)	Provide offline support (by e.g. talking to the featured person)	Gossip (backbiting the featured person behind their back)
Negative opinions on the featured person (their motives, stance, morality)	Provide online support (by e.g. chatting with the person, send them an e-mail)	Download the picture to own disc for future use (e.g. blackmail)	Sex-tinted online comments (publishing opinions on the featured person’s looks)
Fuel the “sensation” – sharing, liking, promoting the picture	Show sexual interest in the featured person	Provide online support (by e.g. posting positive comments about the featured person)	Look down on the featured person, show them disrespect

Next, the facilitator asks the teams to divide the reactions into two categories: constructive (which help a person whose photo was published) and non-constructive (that can only be perceived as further negative consequences). Finally, the groups should present effects of their work.

Summarizing, the facilitator should emphasize that, although thoughts and feelings of people whose sexting photos or videos have been published against their will are often identical (recall the exercise “thoughts and feelings”), people’s reactions to such situations may largely differ, depending on who’s in the picture/video and who’s watching it. These reactions may often be driven by so-called “sexual double standards”. Boys engaged into sexting situations may often be justified, admired, highly judged (although they may just as well get very negative reactions). It is worth remembering that boys, trying to stand up to cultural expectations regarding their sexual activity (emanating from the Internet, TV, etc.), may force girls to engage and produce sex-tinted photos/videos. Girls who submit to such pressure are often negatively judged if the photos/videos are published.

The facilitator now reminds the participants that in this exercise, they divided potential reactions to published sexting photos/videos into those that might be helpful to the victim, and such that will only become further negative consequences. Next he/she should underscore that being judged, ridiculed or isolated doesn’t help such people deal with their problems. The helpful reactions should also be emphasized.

7. Discussion: What can I do?

Type of work: discussion

Duration: 15 minutes

The facilitator should emphasize that every day we all are subject to various types of social influence: expectations and pressure coming from others. This isn't always good or safe and sometimes we fail to see the danger. It's always worth to consider the choices we make and care for our safety.

The facilitator now invites the participants to discuss the risks conveyed in the story of Jane and Matt: what could they do in order not to bear the negative consequences of their intimate photos being shared online?

Questions for discussion: When did Jane's and Matt's situation become dangerous?

The correct answer to this question is: "When they took and exchanged the photos", however the point is to talk, share different perspectives, reason. The participants should be asked for their opinions and what they think could provide safety on each level of the story.

The facilitator can ask the participants if the following actions could have prevented Jane's and Matt's situation spiral out of control: Jane and Matt could spend more time together instead of communicating online, they could avoid exchanging photos, Jane could refrain from sending her photo to her best friend, Jane's friend could delete the photo/not give anyone her cellphone.

Questions for discussion: What should have Jane done when she received Matt's sexting photo with a request to reciprocate?

The suggested answer is: She should have deleted the photo (step 1) – if the photo doesn't exist it cannot be used by anyone, and talk to him about safer ways of showing each other's interest/engagement/feelings (step 2).

The facilitator should emphasize that you can be 100% sure that sexting materials don't leak/fall into the wrong hands only if such photos/videos never come into being.

8. Conclusion

Duration: 5 minutes

Many young people consider exchanging sex-tinted photos/videos to be a way to present themselves. During the lesson, its participants witnessed a story of two teenagers, Matt and Jane, whose relationship broke down following their engagement into sexting. The two had no idea how dangerous this phenomenon is and what negative consequences it bears. Many young people fall victim to pressure, want to draw somebody's attention or prove their feelings and engagement. They think: *nothing bad will happen, or on the Internet I have full anonymity; maybe some of the participants think what happened to these two will never happen to me.* Unfortunately, studies show that more and more people engage into this phenomenon, risking

its negative consequences, which the participants have discussed during the lesson. Thoughts and feelings of boys and girls whose photos/videos have been published online without their consent may be very similar. It's the reaction of their surroundings to such material that will differ. It is worth remembering that sexual double standards may cause in young people reluctance to seek help in difficult situations. Both boys and girls may fear negative judgement of their friends and families. Among places where one may seek help in such situations there is the toll-free 116 111 Helpline for Children and Youth. Young people can either talk with the 116 111 counsellors or write them a message (www.116111.pl/napisz). They will learn: how to not give in to pressure of one's partner or friends, how to decline unwanted sexual activity, plus – how to deal with potential negative consequences of published sexting photos or videos.