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## Parent's Toolkit – Youth for Love 2

A guide for parents and tutors furnishing tools aimed at  
preventing and managing School-Gender-Based Violence and Peer Violence



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*The content of this toolkit represents the views of the authors only and is their own responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.*

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The **Youth for Love 2** project aims to prevent, detect and address peer violence between adolescents (14-18 years) in 5 local communities in 4 European countries (Italy, Belgium, Greece, Romania), promoting the adoption of positive behavior and involving youngsters, families, education professionals and members of the community in general in local initiatives developed and led by teens to prevent and address the problem.

The project is an extension of the original “**Youth for Love**” initiative, developed and implemented between 2019 and 2021 to prevent and combat gender-based violence. The decision to involve parents among the project targets in Youth for Love 2 is based on the diagnoses documented among girls and boys in schools during the first edition of the project. Approximately 68% of the students, in fact, declared they confided in their family if they were victims of violence and bullying.

Starting from these results, the toolkit intends to provide theoretical and practical guidelines to support families in preventing, contrasting and responding to models of intersectional discrimination<sup>1</sup>, specifically, peer/cyberviolence among adolescents, a complex and structural phenomenon with multiple forms and serious consequences. Other actors, such as educators or associations, can also benefit from the tool to promote and organize similar programs in other formal or informal educational settings. By following the principles of the Whole school approach, schools will find new allies in families, with parents more actively involved in organized initiatives.

The Whole school approach places the well-being and rights of female students at the center of the educational process and empowers school staff and the education community in pursuing those goals. This approach recognizes that all actors in education can have a positive impact on the health, safety and well-being of female students and thus on their learning.

The proposed methodological approach recognizes how important it is to listen to and recognize parenting as an ongoing, daily experience. Involving all participants within the complexities of contemporary society and the communities where they live, parenting is the reference and starting point for enhancing those activities that set out a path for growth.

# INTRODUCTION

## Youth for Love 2: Project overview

**Youth for Love 2** has been implemented within the legal and conceptual framework provided by the Council of Europe Strategy on the Rights of the Child 2016–2021 which identified the prevention of violence as one of the five priority areas needed to ensure and promote the rights of boys, girls and teenagers. Research shows that there are numerous risk factors strongly associated with peer violence occurring at different levels: individual level (e.g. personality and behavioral factors), family and close relationship level (e.g. negative peer influence, lack of social ties, poor parent-child relationships, antisocial parental behavior, etc.) and at community and social levels (i.e. low social cohesion, inequality, insecurity, gender and cultural norms).

While **Youth for Love 1** focused more specifically on school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV), in this second edition of the project, the partners have applied an intersectional lens to focus more on peer violence and channel the collective power of the local community to address the interdependencies that generate violence and discrimination. On a European level, the project aims to:

- **develop and test an integrated educational program** for the prevention and management of peer violence in 5 local communities across Europe;
- **inform and train 190 school professionals**

to strengthen their skills in the prevention and management of violence between peers, becoming the schools' reference figures on the subject;

- **provide 400 students with a deeper knowledge and understanding** of peer violence through an educational program based on participatory methodologies;
- **Involve 200 teenagers in mapping the needs of their local communities** particularly concerning peer violence among boys and girls, while engaging the entire educational community in actions to prevent and combat the phenomenon;
- **coinvolgere 200 giovani nella mappatura dei bisogni delle loro comunità locali** legati alla violenza tra pari, con particolare attenzione ai e alle giovani, e coinvolgere l'intera comunità educativa in azioni per prevenirla e combatterla;
- **Organize advocacy activities at national and European levels** through a participatory process to co-design the project's policy recommendations by involving school staff, girls and boys, parents, teens, social organizations and movements and policy makers;
- **Raise public awareness** regarding the problem of peer violence among young people, specifically, involving 1.5 million youngsters

across Europe through communication activities (website campaign and web game).

The project partnership is composed of the following organizations: ActionAid Italia (Italy), ActionAid Hellas (Greece), UC Limburg (Belgium), AFOL Metropolitana - Metropolitan Agency for Training, Orientation and Work (Italy), and CPE - Centrul Parteneriat Pentru Egalitate (Romania).

All the materials produced during the project are available for download in the “Get informed” section of the project website:

[www.youthforlove.eu](http://www.youthforlove.eu)

Duration: May 2021 – April 2023



## Objectives, contents and methodology of the Toolkit

### Objectives of the Toolkit

A phenomenon as complex and in continuous transformation as that of peer and gender-based violence requires cognitive and interventionary approaches capable of supporting the weight of this complexity and capable of soliciting the commitments of all stakeholders – from schools, to families, to the community – in constructing an educational and cultural fortress against violence.

In this context, the roles of mothers and fathers (and any guardian figures) appear to be central. In fact, these figures are important for more than the early opportunities they may have to identify those signals that expose episodes of violence, whether perpetrated, endured or indirectly experienced by their children. In their willingness to critically reflect on the role and effect that inequalities and forms of violence have on the growth of new generations, on present and future society and, last but by no means least, on themselves, they can actively contribute – inside and outside the family framework – to the development and promotion of a culture against violence and to the valorization of all the differences.

### The Parent's Support Toolkit, therefore:

- aims to **encourage parental figures to acquire a “gender lens” and an intersectional approach** to help them understand individual episodes or manifestations of violence, rather than as separate emergencies, as the consequences of a stereotyped and normative culture of gender roles and models and, at the same time, recognize the need and the possibilities for its transformation;
- aims to **raise awareness around the models of masculinity and femininity and the relations between genders**, which are often inadvertently acted upon or proposed to sons and daughters, complicating and, potentially, adding a level of violence to the relationships that these standards frequently represent;
- aims to improve mothers', fathers' and guardians' abilities to **recognize and not underestimate signals attributable to experiences of peer violence** and to understand how to solicit, deal with and manage any request for help, including by acquiring information and guidance on services, associations and institutions dedicated to fighting and preventing violence, in general, and of peer violence, in particular;
- aims to **help mothers' and fathers' recognize how they themselves can contribute to significantly reducing the phenomenon of violence between peers** by actively strengthening the network between school, families, children and the community, as well as, by promoting activities, discussions, synergies and collaborations (Gerard Coll-Planas, 2011).

**IMPORTANT:** the approaches proposed in the Toolkit are not to be taken as exhaustive or conclusive neither concerning the identification of existing needs, nor regarding the scope investigated more completely over the course of the three modules.

### Who is the Parent's Support Toolkit for?

The Toolkit contains guidelines for reflection and mobilization *intended for both those parents who are aware of the theme of violence between peers, and for those who consider it a distant theme* from the life and experiences of their family. The Toolkit promotes a framework aimed at all mothers and fathers, offering them occasions and space to accumulate information and knowledge, make comparisons and foster opportunities to connect with the other actors involved (teenagers, schools, other parents, associations and local authorities. Despite its central focus on the gender dimension, it is important to remember that *the Toolkit is aimed primarily at people who have never attempted to use intersectional lenses to link gender with other differences defining identities* or, even more so, to those who have adopted prejudicial attitudes with respect to these differences. Conducting the workshop, the facilitators are obliged to guarantee the acceptance of ALL participants in a non-judgmental context and, as issues are gradually proposed and addressed, must offer opportunities for reflection and space for eventual complications, as well as, the deconstruction of possible taboos, fears and preconceived opinions.

As structured, the framework can be interpreted as a additional opportunity to support tho-

se parents who hold representative functions in the school environment. In fact, it is a useful resource for building and strengthening parental involvement in intervening, collaborating and establishing broader alliances around the theme of peer violence.

### Organization of the Toolkit

The Parent's Support Toolkit consists of 3 modules (corresponding to three meetings lasting, approximately, three hours each) which include information on:

- objectives
- materials to use
- preparations
- description of activities
- important elements for the facilitators
- methodologies
- attachments



Each module needs to be conducted by competent personnel who have acquired knowledge and training experience on the topic of peer violence and gender studies. We invite you to pay close attention to how the male and female participants are involved. It is necessary to verify that the program takes family organizational needs into account and that scheduling the modules respects the work schedules and logistical needs of the people involved. Even before starting, but also once initiated, the process must be calibrated to the linguistic and cultural profile of the recipients, so that the related activities and proposals (which may, for example, include writing) do not risk excluding those involved from actively participating. The potential language used as the modules progress must also offer examples of the premises and aims of the course. Avoiding the use of universal masculine forms can stimulate reflection on how some categorizations (primarily the more general ones relating to gender) are fundamental for “seeing” and naming otherwise imperceptible subjects or phenomena.

In preparing the location where the workshop exploration will take place, facilitators must carefully calculate capacity and preparation times that favor participation and conversation, even simply by arranging the chairs in a circle. Considering health protocols, we invite you to evaluate using outdoor spaces, where available, in an attempt to avoid suspending or postponing actually initiating the course.

We highly recommended the presence of two course leaders. This co-presence is of great help in terms of listening, receiving and interpreting messages and (not always explicit) signals from the group. Where possible, it would be extremely beneficial to entrust the workshop management to a woman AND a man. Given the subject under consideration and the proposed analytical structure, this co-presence would implicitly provide a further didactic tool, useful for showing a respectful and collaborative working relationship between the sexes.

The entire program must be considered a guide containing suggestions, ideas and proposals articulated in a coherent way in terms of content and methodology, but flexible enough to adapt to the context and needs of the participants. This personalization guarantees greater comprehension of the contents and greater involvement for mothers and fathers once they feel their presence and active participation, their point of view and their knowledge of the territorial and cultural (not just scholastic) context, where they grew up and are raising their children, is considered and valued.



## The intersectional approach of the Toolkit

All the materials and resources offered follow an intersectional feminist approach, in order to address the deep, structural causes of violence. This approach is based on the awareness that the analysis and action of feminist movements are not limited to so-called “women’s issues” such as reproductive rights or equal pay, but also include movements with a variety of priorities, such as fighting the climate crisis or the struggle for human rights.

Intersectional feminism raises the voices and experiences of many people to build shared multidimensional visions for the future and recognize that oppression against women and all other forms of oppression are interconnected, and must, therefore, be addressed together from one intersectional perspective. The term “intersectionality” was coined by civil rights activist and law professor Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989. Intersectional feminism is the awareness that everyone has specific experiences related to their gender and recognizes the different identities and challenges which can either be faced or provoke vulnerability. To achieve its goals, feminism needs to sustain the different needs, experiences and identities of different people, using an intersectional approach to recognize how privileges, power and circumstances can influence understanding and perspective. These identities overlap, intersect and can be lived with varying intensities at different times. They can be amplified when put together, so it’s important to listen to and acknowledge these different experiences.

Women are not only exposed to sexism; racism, ability challenges, age, homophobia, transphobia and religious persecution are intrinsically linked to how different women experience inequality. Intersectionality is a theoretic-

cal framework for understanding how aspects of one’s social and political identities (gender, race, class, sexuality, ability, etc.) are highly likely to combine to create unique forms of discrimination.

True feminist social transformation requires addressing political, racial and economic injustices in addition to gender issues. True change is only possible by challenging all forms of discrimination and power imbalances, not just those that affect women. This is why feminist movements focus not only on interpersonal interactions, but on the systems and structures of power that influence social inequality. While some may not be personally biased, that doesn’t alter the fact that we all live in a society where racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism and ability levels still impact the lives of people outside the dominant group.



Given that background, all the resources and materials proposed in this toolkit are based on feminist principles that emphasize several fundamental ideals and help put feminism into practice by challenging different aspects of gender issues:

- **The personal is political:** one of the central and distinctive elements of feminist thought. This principle is based on the belief that what we do in our personal life also has political significance and also that our political actions have a strong meaning and impact on our personal sphere;
- **Biology is not destiny:** people should not be forced to form their social identity based on their sex, or their private or public identities;
- **Equality:** feminism means equality for everyone not just for women;
- **Inclusion and diversity:** there are many forms of oppression and intersectionality;
- **Peace and security:** ensuring that women are not victims of sexual violence by allowing women to pursue their livelihood without interruption;

- **Physical integrity and freedom from all kinds of violence:** freedom from mental or physical abuse, including a woman's right to reproductive and sexual choices and the right to make decisions about her own body without fear.

### The contents of the modules: the three modules at a glance

#### First module: the gender framework of peer violence

The first module is intended to host activities aimed at exploring "normality" and the non-exceptional nature of the phenomenon through a recognition of its gender roots. This awareness allows for the reconstruction of the various forms that peer violence can take and the significant links that connect them to past and current gender roles and to the resulting relational profiles, unequal and discriminating, between the sexes.



### Second module: how to recognize peer violence and identify its signs

The second module invites a closer and more in-depth exploration of the forms of violence between peers, investigating, in particular, those expressions that risk being more hidden and more tolerated, as well as their complicity with some of today's more problematic, and still widespread, gender imagery. The activities will explore the meaning and significance that violence assumes along the developmental paths of younger generations.

### Third module: Peer violence: what can we do?

The third and final module aims to consolidate female and male participants' knowledge about the importance that parental figures can play in preventing and counteracting peer violence through school, family and community alliances. Such an alliance does not envisage parents as subjects delegating (or, conversely, being delegated) the total responsibility for their children's behavior, but which recognizes them as potentially active and critical protagonists for the development and maintenance of a broad educational and cultural defense against violence.

### **Using the Toolkit: Ethical recommendations**

Addressing gender and peer violence in a school setting means recognizing the complex interacting realities and identities of all the components, i.e. students, teachers, principals, tutors, counselors, administrative/technical staff, other relevant school staff and families. The specificities and needs of all these figures must be taken into account when designing and evaluating the creation of a healthy, school intervention system.

When using the Toolkit, the following ethical recommendations must be kept in mind:

- **Confidentiality:** when introducing the structure of the project/initiative, provide only general information (e.g. topics covered, number of modules created, etc.).

Without the explicit consent of the parties concerned, sensitive data resulting from the implementation of the program with adolescents or school staff must NOT be shared.

- **Consent to data sharing:** dissemination of the results of any program to other training groups will only be shared upon reaching a broad consensus; families should also be informed that the work results involving the boys and girls are protected and confidential.
- **Collaboration:** the role of male and female facilitators is to provide support for the creation of strong mechanisms against peer violence and not to highlight gaps in the school system.
- **Time:** make sure all participants have the time and space to express their expectations and concerns.
- **Additional Questions:** be sure to ask follow-up questions if answers are only expressed in very general terms.
- **Emphasize common ground:** be sure to highlight common interests and/or concerns, if any. Pay particular attention to what is mentioned by multiple participants; repetitions should not be interpreted only as a form of agreement, they could also indicate a significant area of investigation or of interest to the whole group.
- **Support each other:** competitive behavior can often occur between parents, as in any other work group. If necessary, make sure to point out that expressing opinions (such as, "My daughter/son is so kind and polite at school, I don't understand why yours is so unmanageable") is counterproductive and encourages division and shame. Clearly state that violence prevention and intervention strategies can only be coherently implemented by figures who share respect and esteem while working together.

# MODULE 1

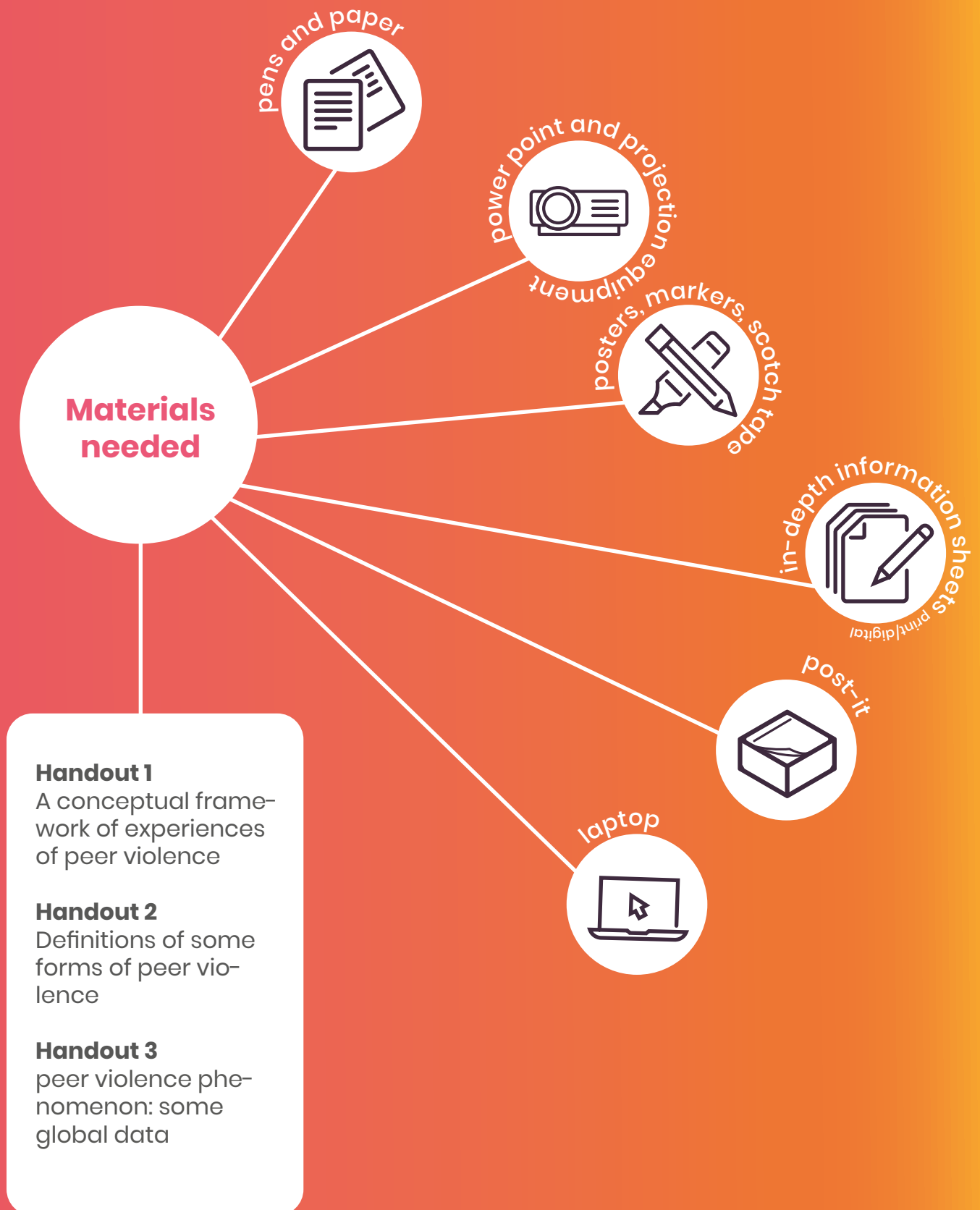
## Peer violence: an exploration of its gender matrixes



### Learning objectives

The activities proposed in the first module help the group focus on the specific object of interest of the course: violence between peers. The goals are as follows:

1. understand how gender represents a social construction, deconstructing and identifying limitations in its more domesticated interpretations while introducing the possibility of conceiving gender as a modifiable element creating opportunities for choice, awareness and self-determination.
2. experiment with an intersectional approach in exploring the gender frameworks influencing violence between peers or in recognizing the complexities of “normality” and its propagation, still marked by inequality, marginalization and oppression, in the daily lives of boys and girls.
3. recognize the continuum of violence that gender roles produce and reinforce; connect episodes that appear natural or trivial (for example, expectations about virile strength or female beauty) with experiences where violence becomes more evident.
4. explore and recognize the meanings, pay-offs and costs of peer violence, including from the perspective of the perpetrator.



# Suggested preparations



## Intro and setting up the group

Before acquiring form, the acting facilitator, briefly, presents the path forward, in all its complexity, illustrating its objectives and purposes, exploring what the group is already aware of and verifying that each participant clearly understands the meaning and importance of the initiative, as well as explaining their own presence and active participation. This introduction (which could be given both verbally and visually, through a PowerPoint presentation) should present: the project/initiative objectives, the motivation (data supporting the project at EU, country and school level, which can be collected through the *School Diagnosis Toolkit*), project/initiative activities undertaken involving various actors of the educating community.

Obviously, it is essential that those who lead the project present themselves, explaining their role. A presentation that illustrates the training and professional experience acquired and the interest cultivated on the subject can reassure participants making comparisons with what they are about to undertake.

Obviously, it is essential that those who lead the project present themselves, explaining their role. A presentation that illustrates the training and professional experience acquired and the interest cultivated on the subject can reassure participants making comparisons with what they are about to undertake.

As already mentioned, it is important that the relationship between the trainer (and the institution they work for) and the school hosting the program (where the sons and daughters of the parents involved are enrolled) is clear and offer convergences in their purposes and intentions. In this way, the mothers and fathers involved can accept the proposal as integrated into and representative of the school body's objectives and priorities while, in turn, contributing to national and international research and recommendations.

Subsequently, participants will be asked to present themselves; in addition to their names, something more about the parental role they cover, some information on sons and daughters (how many children, their age, gender, special curricula, residential location). In this first round, gathering information on the relationship that the participants have with the school can be very useful; if, for example, they hold or have held specific roles or responsibilities, and so on. These first references can prove to be a good litmus test concerning how the invitation was received and offer indications on future actions aimed at increasing participation.

After this first round, each participant has a new opportunity to express individual expectations and wishes regarding the merits of the course, as well as any fears and/or concerns. One option is to give parents two different



post-its (one dedicated to expectations/desire, one to fears/worries), on which they will be able to write some key words or draw an image that can evoke the contents they will later, in turn, explain and share with the group<sup>2</sup>, placing them on a poster where they will be clearly visible<sup>3</sup>.

This activity explicitly clarifies everyone's expectations, highlighting those shared by many, as well as those that are the expression of a minority in the group or even of a single participant. It also allows the conductor to add to their knowledge of the group (at the same time giving people time to know each other), to understand what the group already knows or feels is urgent, and how much remains unexpressed or appears absent.

The importance of creating a safe space where men and women feel free to express themselves without being judged or attacked can not be overstated. At the same time, it is also necessary to foster conditions for reciprocal learning and that any risk of discrimination and abuse of power be mitigated. In particular, where painful memories and deep emotions emerge, they need to be recognized and addressed with mutual respect and empathy. Self-reflection is the first step in defining

the structural causes of violence and bringing about transformative change both as an individual and as a community. As feminism reaffirms, the personal is political!

### **Important elements for the conductor**

It is important that everyone has the opportunity to express themselves. For this, courteous invitations or solicitations may be useful, respectful of the possible decision of some participants to listening first, at least in this initial phase of the meeting.

The task of the conductor is to receive and record, without judgment, what emerges, using it to assist participants in opening a conversational space that allows everyone to express themselves freely and to reflect, with others, on the complexity (in terms of content and emotions) of the issues gradually addressed.

<sup>2</sup>Molte delle attività proposte nel presente percorso implicano momenti preliminari di scrittura e/o rammemorazione, cui seguono spazi di confronto che nascono sulla scorta della condivisione del materiale su cui ogni partecipante ha lavorato. È fondamentale che chi conduce espliciti da subito questo passaggio, in modo che ciascuna/o possa orientarsi al meglio intorno a cosa voglia o meno condividere con il gruppo, nel rispetto della propria privacy e di quanto si ritiene attinente a una dimensione personale che non si desidera diventi oggetto di condivisione.

<sup>3</sup>In caso di incontri da remoto (Covid-19) o della disponibilità di un proiettore, è possibile che chi conduce prenda nota delle parole chiave sul suo pc e le proietti, man mano che le raccoglie, sulla lavagna (whiteboard, padlet ecc.).

## Detailed activities

### Educational co-responsibility pact

It is essential that, albeit briefly, the direction and participation of the group start by sharing a training agreement. Earlier work on expectations and fears sometimes generates useful content, for example, remembering a moment where the expression of some expectations met differing opinions. The leader can, if useful, underline (circle or copy/paste) these suggestions and propose them as a starting point for defining and signing this pact; then asking the group to continue by compiling a list of indications regarding behaviors and attitudes that can favor or, vice versa, impede the group's path and individual participation. Each person must be given the necessary time (a few minutes) to reflect and propose two or three indications that they consider important for the success of the process and that they will subsequently describe in detail. Alternatively, the following questions can be asked:

What can NOT happen on this path for me  
**to consider it successful?**

To establish a pact whose rules everyone can respect, it is important that each participant feels free to express doubts or perplexities or ask for clarification or eventual reformulations. The organizer will finally have the task of synthesizing the shared and negotiated rules, reorganizing them before returning them to the group to maintain as a framework and reminder for subsequent meetings (on a poster or shared file). If no one mentions it, the need to respect confidentiality must be reiterated and integrated into the proposed rules.

For me to consider this path successful,  
**what needs to happen?**





## FIRST ACTIVITY: What is peer violence?

Invite the group to participate in a brainstorming entitled “Peer violence”. Ask each participant to think about experiences associated with this phenomenon, drawing both from those they have known directly<sup>4</sup> (for example, in the schools their sons and daughters attend), and from those they have heard about in the news, on social media, etc. Each person will be invited to think and write down some examples individually before starting the brainstorming.

When the group believes that it has shared all the situations they consider important, the facilitators must verify that important areas have not been forgotten, such as, peer harassment and abuse of girls or violence against those who express non-binary sexual orientations and gender identities. In this case, they must be introduced, asking the group if these experiences have only been forgotten or, instead, if they are not considered part of the parameters and, if so, why not.

Given the picture that will have emerged, solicit a first round of comments on the basis of the following stimuli:

**What does this scenario suggest to you?**

**Do you have any comments or reflections suggested by this set of experiences?**

If large enough (not less than ten people), you could invite the group to divide into two or more sub-groups, each having the task of choosing one case that emerged and responding to and reflecting on the questions proposed in Sheet 1. In the event the group is not very numerous, these two questions can be proposed, in sequence, to the group. The organizers will then encourage the formulation of a shared synthesis of the ideas expressed.

<sup>4</sup> Nel rispetto della norma della riservatezza e, quindi, omettendo dati che possano ricondurre quanto si sta raccontando a singole persone quindi identificabili.

# Detailed activities



## SHEET 1

### Violent acts:

Dopo aver mostrato il video, chiedete di condividere idee e pensieri alle e ai partecipanti. Se la discussione non inizia, si possono utilizzare le seguenti domande:

### The recipients of the violence:

- What actions constitute violence?
- Who perpetrates them?
- What kind of “purposes” or meanings do these acts suggest?

### Important elements for facilitators

The purpose of the brainstorming is to solicit the reconstruction of a picture that will certainly appear blended and variegated internally, using a gender sensitive reading. Organizers should explain how fundamental dimensions such as those related to ethnicity, disability and social belonging are not separate and need to be interpreted as integral and interacting axes of oppression intersecting gender identity.

In summary, it may be useful to provide the group (online or, if necessary, in print) with the essential vocabulary (Appendix 1) needed to define the conceptual framework constituting the individual experiences of violence under investigation.

### Break time 15”

### Reflection

Starting from what has emerged during the brainstorming and from the first shared reflections, the proposed gender “lens” should now be easier to understand and can, at this point, be introduced and presented. Here, gender is a useful analytical category to identify and illuminate some aspects of the phenomenon (causes, meanings, consequences) which, if left within the definition of “bullying” alone, would risk remaining, conversely, in the background, or even disappearing. In support of this interpretative proposal and the introduction of some basic theoretical references (See bibliography), it is useful to present data and statistics that highlight the dimension of the phenomenon, inside and outside the school (for some ideas, please consult the documentation accompanying the conclusive form in Appendix 3). This data can be shown in a powerpoint.

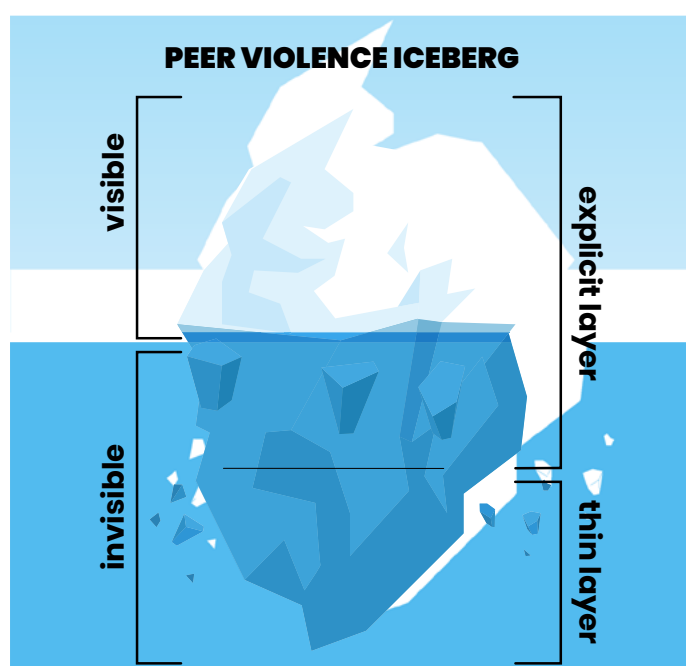
## SECOND ACTIVITY: What does it mean today to be a man? And be a woman?



The aim of this second activity is to show how gender is a social construction that informally shapes what is meant by men, women and relations between genders. The exploration of this social training, and its transformations over time, will assist in overcoming naturalizing interpretations and introduce the possibility of conceiving gender as a modifiable element creating opportunities for choice, awareness and self-determination.

A **second objective** is to recognize the continuum of violence that gender stereotypes (ALT: roles) produce and reinforce; connect episodes that appear natural or trivial (for example, expectations about virile strength or female beauty) with experiences where violence becomes more evident. Using images regarding the “pyramid of violence” could be effective.

A **third objective** concerns the need to explore the meaning, the pay-offs and costs of peer violence, including from the perpetrator’s perspective. The activity explores how masculinity still allows access to undeniable privileges (the so-called, “gender dividend”) but requires boys to constantly undergo tests that confirm, to themselves and to others, that they are “real men”<sup>6</sup>. This pressure fosters a condition of perpetual insecurity, the consequences of which reflect on men individually and on other men and women (in terms, such as, cases of engaging in risky behaviors; or refusing to accept parts of themselves that are culturally less accepted or considered appropriate, etc.).



Source: Amnesty International

<sup>6</sup> Per approfondimenti si rimanda a Giuseppe Burgio, 2012, 2018, 2020.

## Detailed activities

### Activity description

To explore gender roles (ALT: stereotypes/order), their transformation and problematic immobility, help the group reflect on the meanings behind the (current and widespread) definitions of “man” and “woman”; “boy” and “girl”; elderly men and women. The invitation is to “begin with one-self”, from one’s own experience and personal biography, which no one will be asked to explain or share but to use as a reference and starting point for the exploration of an everyday life that is the usual setting for life as a man and woman.

Ask each person to take a few minutes to fill in Sheet 1.

#### SHEET 1

	For my parents	For me (thinking about my life)	For my daughters and my sons
What does it mean to be a man?			
What do you think leads/led to an individual being excluded from this category?			
What does it mean to be a woman?			
What do you think leads/led to an individual being excluded from this category?			

To facilitate initial compilation, participants will be invited to draw on a collection of social norms, customs and etiquette as well as the relative “rewards” and “punishments” they provoke. Additional cultural references include idioms, mottos or images borrowed from films, TV, media, social media, that is, everything that can help to reconstruct and recognize what it meant in the past (that of participants’ parents and, in part, their own) and what it means in the present (to them and, above all, to their sons and daughters) to be a man, to be a woman. Subsequently, the participants will identify elements that contribute (or, in the past, have contributed) to invalidating this recognition; which is to say: What leads/led to an individual being excluded from the category of “real man” or “real woman”?

Do NOT discuss the merits of every single answer, collectively, even if each person can refer to their forms to answer other questions/stimuli that will be proposed to the group at this point:

A preliminary (short) stimulus should focus on the task itself, that is, on any difficulties encountered in completing the form, on the interests or curiosities provoked, memories evoked. This step allows organizers to “take the pulse” of the working climate.

A second stimulus will concern how the group has identified what men and women “must be” today, or “had to be” yesterday (without forgetting to take into consideration the cultural, religious and territorial contexts each person will have referred to). Ask the group to pause and reflect on how and why these changes occurred, taking care to underline (if necessary, introducing) that not everyone’s experience has changed nor are the changes all identical.

A third stimulus will allow the group to reflect on the costs they imagine are associated (once again, in the past and today) with these requirements.

Finally, the final question investigates the advantages that compliance with these socially prescribed duties has brought – and entails, with particular attention to considering: to the detriment of whom? in favor of whom?

The facilitator will, once again, sum up the contributions and reflections that have emerged (aided, if necessary, by a poster) regarding the categories introduced: conformity, costs and advantages.

### Closure and conclusion of the first module

As the meeting begins to end, the conductor can synthesize the main contents and points that the work in this first module have sparked while indicating the direction the second will take. This is an opportunity to promote a short and conclusive discussion, inviting participants to express doubts, questions, the need for clarification, as well as any difficulties or interests raised by the meeting (Sheet 2).

## Detailed activities

### SHEET 2

1. What have I discovered? What have I learned?
2. What didn't I understand?
3. What curiosities or needs did this first meeting raise that require further study?
4. What got me involved, what attracted my interest?
5. What bothered me?

If time allows, you can ask each person to think, write and then present to the group some of their answers. Alternatively, the completed forms can be collected and, in preparation for subsequent meetings, reviewed by the facilitator. These returned forms are, in fact, very valuable for monitoring the progress of the path taken by the group and the participation of each individual, and offer opportunities to make changes or additions as work progresses.

Before saying goodbye to the group, remind everyone of the dates and times of subsequent appointments.

#### Important elements for facilitators

As before, during this activity some clarifications regarding some definitions could be useful, (See Handout 1)

As the group reflects on today's women, their duties and opportunities for self-determination, particular attention should be paid to how the topic of managing one's own body is expressed. In a neoliberal cultural climate, the

issue appears to be the exemplification of an acquired freedom, traced immediately back, however, to a entrepreneurial self-management ("because I'm worth it!", as a well-known advertisement put it). This interpretation, as studies indicate (Brunella Casalini, 2018), lends itself to a confusion between a (presumed) acquired freedom and renewed forms of objectification and commodification of the female body.

#### Methodological additional reference

Brainstorming  
Discussion



# Handout 1

## A conceptual framework of experiences of peer violence

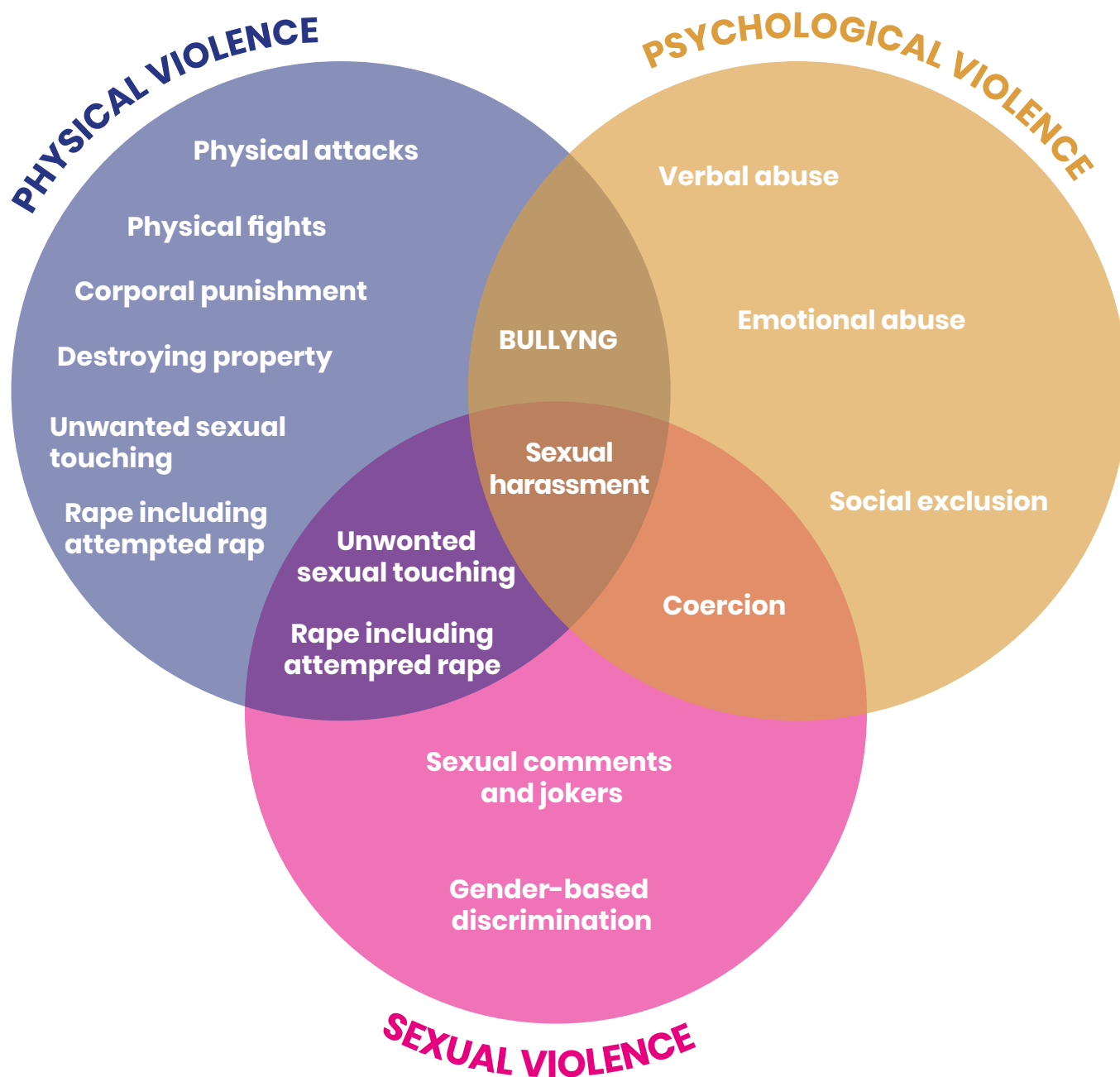


Image taken from United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2019), "Beyond the numbers: ending violence and bullying in schools" <https://www.miur.gov.it/documents/20182/4394634/15.%20Report%20bullismo.pdf> (retrieved 25.02.22)

# Handout 2

## Definitions of some forms of peer violence

### Bullying

Repetitive, prolonged form of aggressive and/or violent behavior towards one or more persons against their will (for example, due to their race, cultural background, religion, socio-economic class/status, language, political opinion, physical appearance or abilities, body size, intellectual abilities, gender, age, sexual orientation, etc.) and with the aim of harming, hurting, intimidating, humiliating, excluding, isolating, discriminating against or oppressing the target or targets of bullying. Bullying behavior has a social function, resulting from and/or to establish an imbalance of power within a social group, classroom and/or community. It has the aim to establish a hierarchy of power relationships within a society, group, classroom and/or community, where a person or a group of persons establishes his/her/their position of power over others. The imbalance of power is usually directed to others in a more fragile situation and therefore the possibility of the more fragile one to respond is invalidated. (EU-funded project "From Peer to Peer", Baseline Study on State of Art on Bullying in Europe, 2018, p. 4)

### Cyberbullying

Bullying carried on through modern information technologies (e.g. social media, email, mobile phones, etc.) using videos, photographs, drawings, chat, to promote the humiliation of the victims. The different level of power is given by the technological capability of the aggressor to produce a "content" that can reach (potentially) billions of users at the same time. Cyberbullying does not depend on the personal characters, implies an insensitivity toward the social disvalue, can become a multiplier for crimes like defamation and due to the technological means it is hard to identify the active subject. (EU-funded project "From Peer to Peer", Baseline Study on State of Art on Bullying in Europe, 2018, p. 5)

### Cyberviolence

"The use of computer systems to cause, facilitate, or threaten violence against individuals, that results in (or is likely to result in) physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering and may include the exploitation of the individual's circumstance, characteristics or vulnerabilities." (Council of Europe)

### Peer Violence

Intentional and repeated infliction of harm on a person by one or more peers that are usually more powerful in some regard". Peer violence or victimization may be direct (physical aggression, threats and teasing) or indirect (spreading rumors and exclusion from peer groups) and may involve bullying, which is generally a more targeted and chronic or repetitive type of peer violence.

### Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a theory that was developed by Kimberlé Crenshaw, Professor of Law at UCLA and Columbia Law School. Crenshaw is a leading authority in the area of Civil Rights, Black feminist legal theory, critical race theory, and race, racism and the law. Intersectionality is the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, gender identity, sexual identity, and disability as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage. These places of marginalization are not separate in creating impact but are interconnected and often compound one another.

### Multiple intersecting identities

Intersecting identities is the concept that an individual's identity consists of multiple, intersecting



factors, including but not limited to gender identity, gender expression, race, ethnicity, class (past and present), religious beliefs, sexual identity and sexual expression. These intersecting factors are what make us multi-layered individuals, as one aspect of our identities influences the other aspects of our identities to paint the full picture of who we are.

### Additional useful definitions

#### Gender role

is “the expression of oneself as a woman or as a man (or both or neither) in presentation and / or outward appearance through behavior, clothing, hairstyle, voice , physical characteristics, etc. “ (Takács, 2006). The gender role is strongly conditioned by people’s social expectations of how men and women must behave. The gender role does not necessarily have to be fixed or coincide with the person’s sex or gender identity.

#### Gender identity

“refers to the inner and individual experience of gender that each person deeply feels as their own, which may or may not correspond to the sex attributed at birth, including the sensation that one has of one’s own body (which may involve, if chosen freely, the modification of physical appearance or bodily function by clinical, surgical or other means), and to other expressions of gender, including clothing, language and behavior. Gender identity is not the same as sexual orientation and transgender people can be identified as heterosexual, bisexual or homosexual “(FRA, 2009).

#### Transsexual

describes “a person who prefers another gender than that attributed at birth and feels the need to undergo physical changes to the body to express this sensation, through treatments ranging from taking hormone to surgery” (FRA, 2009). Trans women are those who go from male to female (MtF), while trans men are those who go from female to male (FtM).

#### Transsexuality

describes identifying with the opposite gender to that socially assigned based on sexual characteristics.

#### Sexual orientation

refers to the “ability of each person to feel deep emotional, affective and sexual attraction and to have intimate and sexual relationships with individuals of different genders or of the same or more than **one gender**” (FRA, 2009).

#### Heterosexuality

is the emotional, romantic or sexual attraction towards people of the opposite sex.

#### Heteronormativity

is defined as «the strengthening in the common perception of certain beliefs about the canons relating to the type of sex, gender and sexuality taken for granted by many social institutions. Among these beliefs is the idea that human beings fall into two distinct and



## Handout 2

complementary categories, male and female; that sexual and marital relations are normal only if they occur between people of different sexes; that intimate relationships between people of the same sex have no sexual value; [or] that each sex has a natural role to play in life. Therefore, heteronormativity can be considered as a set of social rules that also influence heterosexual people who do not strictly subscribe to these rules “(Gusmano, 2008).

### **Homosexuality**

is the emotional, romantic or sexual attraction towards people of the same sex.

### **Bisexuality**

refers to a person who feels “emotionally and/or sexually attracted to people of more than one sex” (Takács, 2006).

### **Transgender people**

“are people who have a different gender identity from that attributed to them at birth and people who wish to represent their gender identity in a different way than the gender assigned to them at birth. This definition includes persons who believe they must present themselves, or who prefer or choose to present themselves, in a different way from what is foreseen for the gender role assigned to them at birth, through clothing, accessories, cosmetics or modifications of the body. Transgender people, transvestites, crossdressers, people without gender or genderqueer, among others, can be defined as transgender “(Transgender Europe5).

### **LGBT**

is the acronym used to collectively refer to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

### **Homophobia**

“is the irrational fear and aversion towards homosexuality and towards lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people based on prejudice” (FRA, 2009).

### **Transphobia**

“can be described as the irrational fear of gender nonconformity or gender transgression, such as fear or aversion towards masculine women, effeminate men, crossdressers, transgender, transsexuals and others who do not fit the common stereotypes concerning one’s gender of birth. The use of the word “phobia” in this context does not indicate that transphobic people and/or victims of transphobia are people suffering from some disorder “(FRA, 2009).

### **Discrimination**

refers to the ‘less favorable treatment given to individuals or groups, compared to other persons or other groups, for various reasons, including sexual orientation (direct discrimination), or to an apparently neutral provision which involves disadvantages for groups of persons, based on the same reasons of direct discrimination, if this measure is not objectively justified (indirect discrimination) “(FRA, 2009).

*Freely referencing Coll-Planas, Gerard (coord.) (2011), Combat homophobia. Local policies of equality with respect to sexual orientation and gender identity. A European White Paper, Turin: City of Turin. p. 19 et al.*

## Handout 3

### peer violence phenomenon: some global data

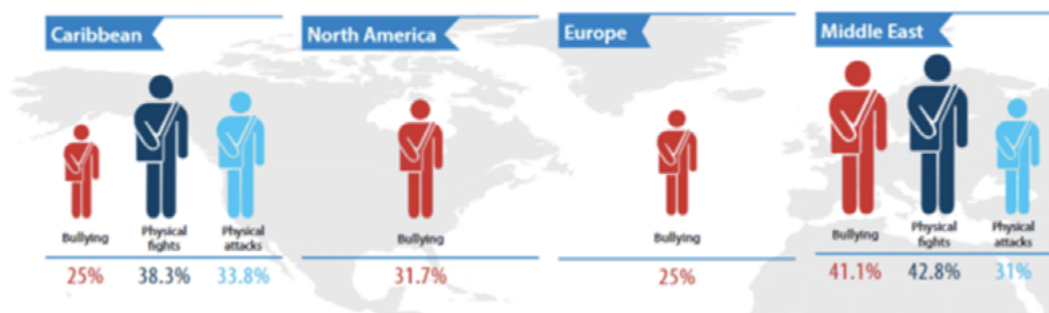
School violence is a global problem<sup>7</sup>. Almost one in three students (32%) has been bullied by their peers at school at least once in the last month, almost one in three (32.4%) has been physically attacked at least once in the past year, and more than one in three students (36%) has been involved in a physical fight with another student. Physical bullying is the most frequent type of bullying in many regions, with the exception of North America and Europe, where psychological bullying is most common. Sexual bullying is the second most common in many areas. Cyberbullying, while occurring less than other forms of bullying, is increasing

to be 'different' in any way are more likely to be bullied. International surveys reveal that physical appearance is the most common reason for being bullied, with race, nationality or skin colour the second most common reason. Children from poorer families as well as migrant children, also appear to be more vulnerable to bullying and cyberbullying. Other studies show that students seen as gender non-conforming, including those who are or are perceived as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT), are more at risk of school violence and bullying than those who fit into traditional gender norms.

School violence and bullying affects both girls and boys, but there are differences between the sexes. Boys are more likely to have been involved in a physical fight and to have been physically attacked than girls. Physical bullying is more common among boys than among girls, while the opposite is true for psychological bullying. Age is also a factor. As children grow older, they are less likely to be bullied, to be involved in a physical fight or to be physically attacked. In contrast, older students appear to be more at risk of cyberbullying than younger students. Children who are perceived

Children who are frequently bullied are nearly three times more likely to feel like an outsider at school and more than twice as likely to miss school as those who are not frequently bullied. Children who are bullied have worse educational outcomes than children who do not. They score lower in mathematics and reading tests, and the more often they are bullied the worse their score. Children who are frequently bullied are also more likely to expect to leave formal education after finishing secondary school compared with children who are not frequently bullied.

Figure 1. Percentage of students who were bullied, in a physical fight or physically attacked, by region



# MODULE 2

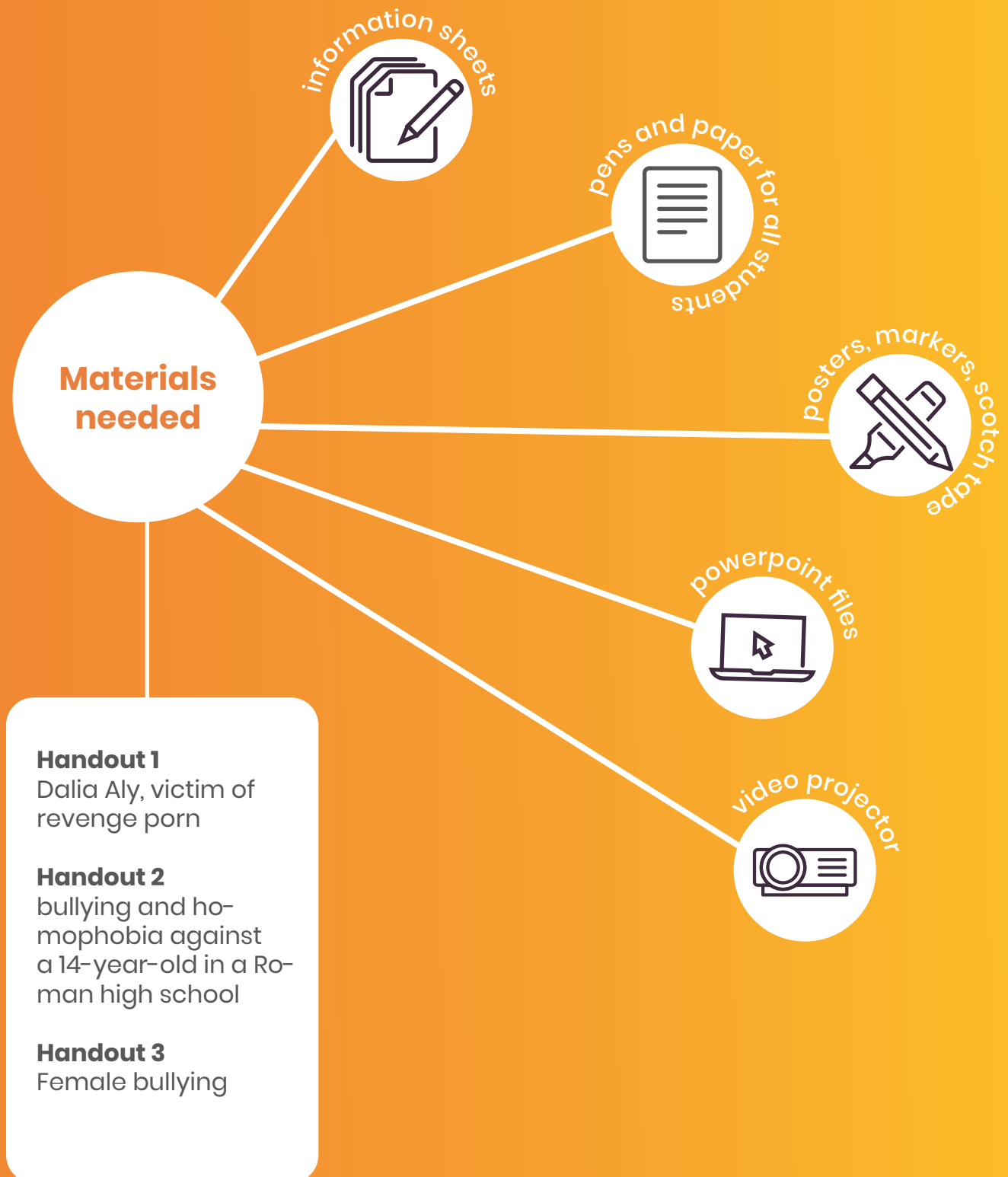
## peer violence: how it is discussed, how to recognize it



### Learning objectives

The second module is dedicated to the exploration of the forms that peer violence can take. By observing discrepancies between how peer violence is narrated and mediated and the way it manifests itself in the daily lives of girls and boys (online and off), mothers, fathers and male and female reference figures can play a fundamental role in how to recognize and possibly manage it. In this sense, the module envisages the following objectives:

1. recognize forms of peer violence in the daily lives of boys and girls, identifying possible indicators and alarm bells which need to raise attention levels, mobilizing early intervention actions, possibly including schools and local services.
2. understand how in everyday life some forms of peer violence risk remaining invisible or being normalized, exploring the mechanisms that impede most observers from recognizing peer violence (from the media narrative of these phenomena, to the processes of naturalization and acculturation of behaviors and attitudes to forms of unconscious collusion with gender myths and stereotypes).
3. recognize the meanings that violent behavior acquires for those who perpetrate it, for those who suffer it and for those who are spectators to it, allowing the reconstruction of underlying social and relational mechanisms, in order to create useful guidelines for understanding the phenomenon and its possible prevention and management.



# Suggested preparations



**15 minutes**

## Greetings and introduction to the contents of the second module

Facilitators, both male and female, are advised to choose one of the following icebreakers in order to cultivate good teamwork

With a rope, involve the participants in the game “What options do I have?”. The end of the rope is tossed from one participant to the other, while each holds their piece until completing a network pattern where all the participants are interconnected via the rope. When receiving the rope, each person share something they have seen happen in moments of peer violence. Emphasize that people’s real names should NOT be given during the exercise, only describing people’s responses to that violent situation. After everyone has described their experience, ask them to repeat the game in reverse, starting with the last person who received the rope during the first part of the exercise. In turn, the rope will be returned to the person that originally threw it, once again reflecting on the violent situation previously mention and, this time, describing an appropriate action for that specific confrontation, that they believe should have been taken to contrast that violence.

The second part of the game can be more active, with participants moving under, over and in between the rope net. In conclusion, ask for a reflection on how, in the second part of the exercise, the participants collectively helped each other move through the web of ropes. If there are participants with mobility problems, be sure to start the exercise with them, so they don’t have to move.

Otherwise, choose another icebreaker for the group. Remember to try to write down or remember the group’s responses and discussions; firstly the posi-

tions taken in real life in the face of a violent event and secondly what the participants consider a more appropriate response to the situation. The answers will be useful in defining and addressing the topics later in the module.

After setting up the room to work again, briefly present the topics that the planned activities will focus on. It is useful to explicitly link them to the objectives along the entire journey, recalling those already addressed in the previous meeting. In the event of people participating for the first time, focus longer on earlier objectives, asking the group for help with clarification or comments and offering space for any questions or reflections that have emerged between the first and second meeting. Here to, a short space must be dedicated to the presentation of the already shared training agreement, asking for any additions before signing it.

## Detailed activities



### How to recognize peer violence? How to identify hidden signals?

Using material from the media (print, online newspapers, social media), the group will identify the different forms that peer violence can take and analyze how the media represent them. Some of this violence could, for example, concern: harassment of girls (e.g. teen dating violence); homophobic bullying; female bullying, etc. Propose working in small groups, one for each form of violence chosen. Each subgroup will have the task of analyzing the content of the previously identified texts (Appendix 4) and the ways in which the phenomenon is described. In particular, you will be asked to answer the questions contained in Sheet 3.

#### SHEET 3

What does the news say? How are the facts and protagonists presented?

How do they describe people's behavior and their underlying motivations?

Are there any explicit or implicit charges of responsibility?

Which elements do you pay more attention to? Which less? Are any previous events or actions leading up to the narrated event taken into consideration?

Bringing together all the participants, invite each group to describe the work done and the elements on which the reflection has focused. Focusing on the media and their proposed narrative can help follow up on reflections, started in the first module, about stereotyped ways of constructing masculine and feminine identities and the relations between genders, which consequently allow participants to recognize the underlying culture and implicit informal education around gender (teaching that the victims are to some extent guilty or marginalized and that the aggressor is partially justified for reasons of mental health, culture, instinct...). At the same time, this work is important in understanding how the media narrative of peer violence hinders seeing its less striking, everyday forms where mothers and fathers nevertheless have more opportunities to identify early symptoms, recognize some initial forms and create possibilities for intervening with their sons and daughters, or in synergy with schools and local resources.

**Break Time 15"**

# Detailed activities



## Resumption of activities

Now invite the group to move beyond the media and ask participants to consider boys' and girls' daily familial, relational and scholastic experiences. The task explores what the news does NOT focus on and, in particular, on behaviors and attitudes in which less evident forms of violence are hidden but which constitute important alarm bells that need to be recognized. Ask participants to return to their subgroup and work on the questions contained in Sheet 4.

### SHEET 4

For each violent incident narrated, what attitudes and behaviors do you think could be identified as possible red flags? For each of these experiences indicate which were applied to:

- those perpetrating violence
- those submitting to violence
- male and female witnesses

What makes identifying these attitudes and behaviors difficult?

What attitudes and behaviors are likely to collude with these forms of violence?

- on the part of the school and its staff (minimization, homophobic attitudes of teachers, not cancelling homophobic graffiti, unclear school policies regarding expressions of violence and difference)
- by boys and girls
- from parents
- the territorial context and culture concerned

Quali comportamenti/azioni/atteggiamenti assumereste o avete assunto nel passato come reazione da genitori?

Once finished, return to the plenary and have the subgroup representatives (selected in the meantime) report on their activities and reflections. The facilitator will summarize this feedback on a poster (the alarm bells and the limits and possibilities of identifying them; complicity; actions already adopted or to be adopted). It is important to refer to the considerations each subgroup discussed and produced collectively when returning to highlight situations and moments in which acting to intervene could have or could, if not avoid, at least modify the course of events. Conclude by projecting some useful guidelines on actions to adopt.





15 minutes

## Closure and conclusion of the second module

The reflections that will conclude the second module should synthesize the contents and considerations that have emerged, underlining the important role that adult reference figures have in identifying and recognizing signals that indicate how often their children and daughters may witness or take part in (perpetrating or enduring) forms of violence. Facilitators should connect the importance of this role to parental willingness to listen actively, respectfully and non-judgmentally to their sons and daughters, trying to neither minimize nor ignore signs of violence, and to reflect on behavior and the choices to be made, also based on information concerning local support services.

As the meeting comes to conclusion, facilitators should briefly mention how the concerns in the next module connect to those already addressed. In particular, reflections should highlight the figure of the perpetrator or author of violence, recalling how violence, in addition to connecting with gender culture, responds to specific needs and complicates developmental tasks which boys and girls must learn to handle. Above all, this concluding clarification introduces the third and final module, dedicated to the construction of an intervention protocol that envisions parental figures directly involved, together with youngsters, schools and local institutions, in acting to prevent and combat violence among peers. In this sense, reflections on the male and female perpetrators of violence are an important step in understanding the need for actions that are not only punitive but aim at building a widespread educational climate against violence, composed of new sensibilities, alongside a coordinated network of services, interventions and tailored projects.

As already mentioned in the conclusion of the first module, this conclusive phase is an opportunity to promote a short discussion that can host doubts, questions, the need for clarification, as well as any efforts or interests solicited during the meeting (Sheet 2).

Here, too, before saying goodbye to the group, remind everyone of the time and date of the next and last appointment.

## Detailed activities

### Important elements for facilitators

Choose news stories that are relevant to the school context, involving young subjects in relation to one another (inside and outside of school), including episodes of cyber violence.

In the case of female bullying, the news often focuses on episodes of physical violence. Less space is given instead to forms of indirect violence (stereotypically considered a female prerogative) which, if more difficult to observe, are still evident and practiced. The facilitator must encourage the group to work on both direct and indirect forms of violence, starting in the daily life of their sons and daughters, but including their own experiences, even in virtual environments.

Offering a space for critical observation of youngsters' daily lives represents a precious opportunity for parental figures. This work, however, may not be easy (some parents may initially struggle to identify examples and experiences to reflect on). Starting in the initial phase, the facilitator should ask each subgroup if they clearly understand the objectives and, where help is needed, even sit in, listen to the work in progress, and attempt to understand if more information or encouragement on reflection may be appropriate.

Alternatively, propose work that includes analysis and case studies (refer to the document with collected cases). In any case, the invitation is to accompany people towards a reflection on their daily lives and on the specificities of the dynamics contained within.

### Possible exercises/invitations in preparation for the next meeting

#### SHEET 5

Try your hand at using gender lenses to look at your daily life

Explore the resources your territory has or claims to apply to preventing and managing peer violence: services, interventions, associations, cultural opportunities, etc.

#### Methodological additional reference

Cooperative learning  
Thought-based questioning  
Discussions



# Handouts

## Allegato 1: Dalia Aly, victim of revenge porn

**“Destroyed at 15 by the boy I loved”**

Publication: 20.01.2022 Davide Giancristofaro Alberti

Today is another day (Italian tv news show): The case of 20-year-old student Dalia Aly, victim of revenge porn when her boyfriend posted an intimate video online.

A life destroyed at the age of 15 by the boy she loved, the story of Dalia Aly in Today is another day. The 20-year-old, now a student of the Milan Polytechnic, was the victim of a private video posted by her ex-boyfriend. “It first spread among a group of friends, it was a sort of normal practice between my ex-partner and his friends,” explained the young woman. The private video was then “shared with my entire school, then across the city, reaching national dissemination”.

Dalia Aly remarked: «I felt very disappointed in the people who were close to me and a system that allowed all this. It would not have happened if I had been a man. I was very angry to be depicted as ashamed when that’s not what I felt. I am still proud I can express my freedom, but being portrayed as a whore and bitch hurt me a lot. I have always felt a need to respond, to come here and be able to talk about and spread my perspective ».

“A classmate of mine apologized. I was bullied from the second to the fifth year of high school and this exacerbated comments and jokes,” Dalia Aly told Serena Bortone: “The pain was too much, I closed myself in a bubble. It took me a long time to digest the pain. I tried to stop micro-violence from affecting me. They said it was my fault, that I should have expected the

repercussions. My parents helped me: there was an initial moment of shock. But then they were extremely supportive and they realized that I was the victim ». (MB update)

The case of Dalia Aly will now return to the spotlight. In fact, the Rai Uno broadcast, Today is another day, will examine what happened to this 20-year-old student at the Milan Polytechnic, victim of revenge porn by her former partner. “Four years ago,” Dalia Aly herself told the newspaper La Stampa a few days ago, “my ex-partner posted an intimate video of mine among his friends. It ended up on some Telegram channels and made my life at school hell.”

Within a few hours after the incident, the smartphone of the victim, who is studying in Lombardy but originally from Cosenza, Calabria, was overwhelmed with notifications warning her about what was happening: thousands of people could see her naked body. The offending video referred to an event in May 2017, when Delia and her ex-partner had decided to film their intimacy, but with the obvious expectation that the video should remain private, jealously guarded on their two smartphones. “I didn’t imagine it would be shared on a large scale. I trusted him,” she confided again to La Stampa, referring to when the video appeared on the web.

Aalia Ally, 20 year old victim of revenge porn: “my companions laughed”

## Handouts

The problem is that those who knew Dalia immediately recognized the protagonist in that 'red light' movie: "Her classmates laughed at the teachers while asking when a video, obviously referring to mine, could go viral. During the elections for the school representatives, in which I was a candidate, my opponent used that material to discredit me."

"And a large part of the school administration

- continued Dalia Ally - turned to me in harsh tones, wondering, for example, what some of my dead relatives would think if they were still alive". Given the hellish situation she was experiencing, Dalia decided to report the incident, but since the Red Code policy did not exist at the time, the investigations are proceeding slowly: "No hearing in sight, no important updates."

### Handout 2: bullying and homophobia against a 14-year-old in a Roman high school

insults, threats, even thrown urine, all at the expense of **a 14-year-old homosexual student in Esquiline high school in Rome**. The Gay Center in Rome denounced what happened to an adolescent two years ago. As stated on their information portal "the prosecutor of the Juvenile Court of Rome will evaluate the episodes of bullying, threats and humiliation to which a 14-year-old student of the Isaac Newton High School in Rome was subjected in 2015. Initially considered simple insults by the prosecutor, the student's family with the Gay Help Line lawyer, Mario Miano fought back."

**Bullying episode** - As can still be read on the Gay & Lesbian Center web page, "this is yet another episode of homophobic bullying that takes place every day in schools in Italy, this time the parents made the difference by noticing their son's anxiety and suffering that revealed the atrocious episodes and by contacting the Gay Help Line toll-free number, to ask for support."

**Student offended and humiliated** - "In almost all cases of bullying towards lesbian girls and gay boys - declares Fabrizio Marrazzo, manager at Gay Help Line and Gay Center spokesperson

**"You are a fag".  
Line lawyer: "Minors court must  
assess the gravity."**

- victims remain silent as many children prefer not to report the episodes, because they fear the reaction of parents who often do not know that their children are lesbian and gay. Therefore, we believe it is important that the Juvenile Court of Rome not view what the boy has suffered as mere insults but support the student's and family's efforts after the child was offended, humiliated and forced to change schools and miss the school year."

**Bullying in a Roman high school** - The facts date back to October 2015, the Gay Center repeats, the victim was 14 years old, "when he began to receive a series of voice messages on the class chat from a Newton high school classmate in the center of Rome. The chat messages, were repeated, continuous, of an offensive and homophobic nature, such as: "I smell a

faggot,” “you’re a shit, you’re a fag,” “suck balls “, and other very annoying and offensive phrases. In addition, the students had also decided to give the boy a “urine bath” with bottles they had filled once out of school, an episode that was thwarted only thanks to a classmate who told the boy what was about to happen.”

**Parents’ denunciation** – The boy’s parents, having learned of the facts and having listened to the voice messages, “promptly contacted the Headmaster of the institute. The administrator, after reassuring the parents that he would take all appropriate measures, minimized the episode and initially opposed the request to change the boy’s section. A few days later – read again on [gaycenter.it](http://gaycenter.it) – in a subsequent meeting with the Headmaster, the parents of the young victim asked the administrator if he had informed the boys’ parents about the seriousness of the complaints and what measures he had taken in this regard. To these questions, the Manager’s response was extremely evasive.”

**Theft of the jacket** – Fabrizio Marrazzo further explains: “The Headmaster asked the parents to wait, to be patient, not to get angry and, without implementing any action against the bully, suggested that they turn to the school’s psychology desk to denounce the facts again. After a few meetings with the school psychologist, the parents received no further news about the affair. Subsequently, the parents informed the Headmaster that their son’s jacket was stolen while he was out of class; here, as well, no action was taken.”

**Just suffer in silence** – “Regarding the behavior of the principal reported by the parents, – concludes Marrazzo – we are still awaiting the outcome of the district attorney investigation, but we appeal to Minister Fedeli, in order to implement an inspection at the Newton high school

in Rome to verify the facts and to avoid having other students suffer in silence.”



# Handouts

## Allegato 3: Female bullying

**Fifteen-year-old girl beaten by 7 girls over a disputed boy “That night in the disco, they surrounded me and groped me”**

Fifteen-year-old girl beaten by 7 girls over a disputed boy: police arrest 4 fifteen-year-olds

Seven girls beat her. They even filmed their endeavor and posted it on social media. All over a disputed boy. Three ended up under house arrest by order of the judge. One in a community. All 15 years old, they are accused of stalking, injuries and beatings. The other three friends under investigation, having not yet turned 14, were too young for prosecution. The facts: last April, the victim, a girl long in her classmates' crosshairs, showed up at the Carabinieri headquarters describing an aggression at the San Polo Park subway stop. She said she had been

insulted, attacked, thrown to the ground. From the emergency room, she brought the report citing a head injury. “We must not be afraid to speak – said the provincial commander of the police, Colonel Gabriele Iemma – this investigation is proof that reporting works.”

Female bullying at the nightclub. Conviction for sexual assault.

Brescia, 8 June 2021 – Brescia, 4 women surrounded and groped a “rival”: “It was supposed to be a joke”. For the adult-aged perpetrator, the sentence was 10 months. The idea was that of a “joke” which, however, quickly got out of hand. and turned into a sexual assault charge and conviction. Four girls at the discotheque had surrounded a girl of the same age, “guilty” of having stolen her boyfriend from one of them. They started touching her provocatively, probably to humiliate her. This settling of scores, or rather female bullying, landed in court in Brescia with a serious accusation of group sexual violence. Among the four girls at the time of the events, there were three minors, judged by the Juvenile Court with a dismissal and testing. The fourth woman, of legal age, was convicted and

sentenced to 10 months, after the prosecutor had asked for a year and 4 months.

“It was an embarrassing situation, yet another act of bullying suffered at the hands of those girls,” said the victim in court. “That night in the disco, they surrounded me and groped me,” explained the victim, who is now 22 years old. “I knew there was no sexual purpose in their gesture, but I was terrified of these girls,” she added. The defendant did not deny the facts but stressed that it was “only a joke. Of course in bad taste, and I didn’t think she would report us. I also immediately apologized”. For the prosecutor, however, “they were unwanted acts and, even if there was no sexual purpose, we cannot fail to consider what happened as group sexual violence”. Hypothesis shared by the judges with a conviction.





## MODULO 3

### Peer violence: what can we do?

#### Learning objectives

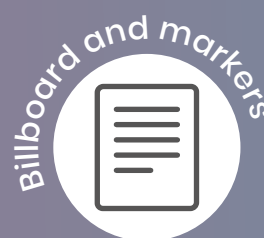
The third module intends to facilitate the participants perceiving themselves as important subjects in facing the issue of violence between peers and in promoting and implementing related prevention and intervention strategies. In this sense, the module will allow them to explore how they can take on an active, critical and proactive role within an alliance including schools, families and the territory that it is their right and duty to build, monitor, maintain and enrich. An alliance within which they can work to create and





support a cultural environment (inside and outside the school) that values differences, declares itself sensitive to gender, stands against the phenomena of violence and is able to actively show its support for whoever finds themselves in tense circumstances. In summary, the objectives are:

1. recognize how each mother, father or guardian can confront the phenomenon of peer violence, avoid either seeing their role as delegating responsibility (to the school or to experts) or, in front of this complex and burdensome task, feeling like the only one responsible for its prevention and management.
2. recognize techniques and opportunities for collaboration between parental figures, schools and local services in constructing educational reference points fighting violence and reinforcing differences.



**Materials  
needed**

# Detailed activities

## Greetings and introduction to the contents of the second module



In this module, as well, the group will be briefly presented with a summary of the issues addressed previously, linking them with those planned for this last module.

## Mapping non-violence

### Part one: the exploration of the individual dimensions that make up a non-violence map



During the first module and while brainstorming, the group had the opportunity to work on mapping experiences attributable to peer violence. The proposal now is to build a virtuous map, containing examples of subjects, interventions and services that operate or could operate against violence. Proceed again by dividing everyone into three subgroups, each of which will have the task of expressing and detailing its own map by turning its attention to a particular area:

- the school (from the structure to the figures who operate there);
- families (from the single family unit, to parents together, to some organizational group);
- the territory (local/global).

To proceed, each subgroup will be presented with the following orientational questions (Sheet 6). Each subgroup should display their observations on a poster.

### SHEET 6

With reference to the chosen area (school, families, territory) what resources already exist to prevent and act upon peer violence?

Can you imagine identifying and activating contact with these realities? How?

In reference to the chosen area (school, families, territory), what do you consider to be missing in terms of preventing and combatting peer violence and what priority would you give to creating alternatives? The invitation is to imagine possible activities, events, moments of exchange, synergies, etc.

**Break Time 15"**



## Resumption of activities

Following a short break, each subgroup, with the help of their chosen representative, will present the completed work. The following questions can be used to guide this collective session:

- What did you discover during the work with your subgroup?
- Among the resources identified, which are currently available? How can you activate them?
- What is missing? What alternatives have you imagined?
- What obstacles could the proposed alternatives encounter? How can you address them?

Groups should present their works one after another and subsequently, in order to start stimulating thoughts about the connections between the three different areas, approach point n. 4 in a more transversal way that can be applied to future implementation. At this point, insights from the different areas can be considered as three layers of a single map, reinforcing the concept by physically connecting the three completed posters.

### Important elements for the facilitator

This activity could be complicated for parents who do not believe they have or can play an active role in the school and in the area of the course material (or perhaps even beyond this). Precisely for this reason, the task asks participants to go beyond the family dimension alone, to recognize and take advantage of existing resources or consider contributing to (or even just imagining or supporting) the

development of new resources in areas, such as the school or community, where, even without having previous experience, they recognize roles as parents and citizens.

At this last meeting, it is critical to invite figures from the educational community - from teachers, to educators, school representatives, consultants.

That the subgroups demonstrate they know about existing resources is not important. The activity, in fact, constitutes an implicit invitation and motive for exploring these resources outside the workshop. The coordinator may, if necessary, ask the group to spend more time on the second part (the thought process and brainstorming). This lifts restrictions on imagining how to design activities, events, moments of exchange, synergies, given subsequent opportunities to verify whether they already exist or can be realized. Encourage parents to think of themselves as people, citizens, workers and to not forget to draw on and apply these interests, skills and passions to the creative work at hand. The plenary sessions also allow the three subgroups to interact with each other, so that each participant can contribute information or reflections on all three dimensions being explored.

## Detailed activities

### Second part developing premises for designing possible protocols between schools, families and the territory



Considerations and work will now continue around the previously-recomposed map, encompassing schools, families and the territory. Invite participants to reflect on the networks and connections that could hold these levels together and on the need to understand how to build and maintain them, paying particular attention to the role that mothers and fathers can play in this operation.

Each person present will be asked to reflect individually for a few minutes on the ques-

tions contained in Sheet 7 and, if possible, to write down some useful notes for subsequent discussion. These stimuli invite parents to rethink the options explored (between existing resources and those yet to be devised), imagining them now placed within a possible protocol, where they could be coordinated and synergistic, converging around meeting boys and girls developmental needs and training.

#### SHEET 7

What would allow these three dimensions (school, families and territory) to work together? (e.g. tools, activities, communications ...)

Thinking about your community, your son's and daughter's school and the adult/parent population, what existing strengths for coordinating this joint work can you envision? What are the weaknesses?

Which existing and active resources, as well as, relationships and alliances are you aware of?

Opening the plenary session, each person can describe their observations and proposals, which the facilitator will list (around keywords) on a new collective poster. As these elements are discussed, they will define the preliminary contents and methods for structuring possible premises for creating a school-family-community protocol and investigating potential connections with other mechanisms and with the Educational co-responsibility pact. Once finished, give the poster a title, e.g.: "A protocol for schools, families and community: some steps in this direction".

#### Important elements for the facilitator

For each theme explored, invite the participants to reflect on the specific role that each parent could play in this regard, individually or within a group of parents. Attitudes and problems to be examined (where present) are those that pertain, for example, to delegating responsibilities to schools or social services in general. (Schools, because they are frequently considered solely responsible for a child's education - once outside the domestic perimeter - and service providers, because parents approach these services as users with unresolved needs and not as citizens.) Other attitudes instead

could indicate a certain mistrust towards the school or the community. In this case, the facilitator once again should explore the reasons (e.g.: schools and communities perceived as hostile, dismissive, exclusionary; a school perceived as excessively bureaucratized, etc.).

Expand the discussion by inviting the group to reflect on two considerations:

- individual situations where a protocol could be proposed (such as meetings, assemblies, communication exchanges, events, meetings promoted by the school and held in the community, cultural events intended for the all citizens held inside the school), and

- the structure such a commitment needs in order to work effectively (e.g. progressive involvement of a larger number of parents or associations; monitoring protocols as they develop; evaluation metrics).

The facilitators must dedicate equal space to discussing the strengths, as well as, the weaknesses in defining work connecting all three levels. Not only. Coordinators must not forget how exhausting it is to take on these responsibilities, especially, in consideration of people's lack of social participation, as a proactive and critical citizen in a leadership role.



## Closing the third module

As this last meeting comes to a close, the facilitator can retrace the main stages of the journey undertaken, highlighting the materials produced, the reflections posed and questions raised by those who took part and energized the meetings. This recognition is particularly important so that parents (especially those with little participatory or representational experience) grasp the significance of their involvement and of what they are capable of contributing in defining a protocol against peer violence that understands how to integrate school, families and community.

To favor further commitment, use the stimuli in Sheet 8) to leave the group with some ideas from which, if necessary, they can renew their efforts.

### SHEET 8

What do I consider impossible?

What can I do right away?

- as a mother/father within my family
- in the school my sons / daughters attend
- in the territorial context in which I live and/or where I work

What do I think I will work on in the near future?

## Recommended resources

### Conclusion and evaluation of the three modules of the course

Provide the participants with paper and pen to facilitate the final considerations and the evaluation of the three modules, using the “Hand Evaluation”.

Ask participants to draw an outline of their hand and, on each finger, record the following:

- Thumb: something good, something they found interesting;
- Index: something they would like to point out (could be good or bad);
- Middle: something bad, something they didn't like or didn't find interesting;
- Ring finger: something they will treasure from the Module;
- Little finger - something they want to add

(could be positive or negative);

- Palm - A prediction for the future - What will they do next?

#### Methodological additional reference

Cooperative learning  
Discussion

### Legal documents, research and publications

Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention, full text, English), 11.05.2011 - <https://rm.coe.int/168008482e>

The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention): Questions and answers - <https://rm.coe.int/istanbul-convention-questions-and-answers/16808f0b80>

Council of Europe. Raising awareness of violence against women. Article 13 of the Istanbul Convention: <https://rm.coe.int/168046elf1>

EIGE – European Institute for Gender Equality - <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-ba>

[sed-violence/what-is-gender-based-violence](#)

FRA – European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. Violence against women: an EU-wide survey - <https://fra.europa.eu/en/data-and-maps/violence-against-women-survey/survey-information>

UNESCO and UN Women. Global Guidance on Addressing School Related Gender-based Violence (2016) - <https://www.paho.org/hq/dmdocuments/2017/violence-against-women-2017-03ws-schoolrelated-gender-based-violence-guidance-UNESCO-UNWomen.pdf>

UNESCO Behind the numbers: ending school violence and bullying <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000366483/PDF/366483eng.pdf.mul>

[ti?fbclid=IwAR0iTHitKenREcIIAKRXt3CM-q3Wlaa9EvsI9IkAgYIGbvc-cRfSEsPQXBRk](https://www.unicef.org/media/58081/file/UNICEF-WHO-UNESCO-handbook-school-based-violence.pdf)

World Health Organization. School-based violence prevention. A practical handbook (2019) - <https://www.unicef.org/media/58081/file/UNICEF-WHO-UNESCO-handbook-school-based-violence.pdf>

United Nations Girls' Education Initiati-

ve. A whole-school approach to prevent school-related gender-based violence: Minimum Standards and Monitoring Framework - <https://www.icmec.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Whole-School-Approach-to-Prevent-SRGB-V-Minimum-Standards-Framework-UNGEI.pdf>

## Websites, projects

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Myths concerning violence against women and girls: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/factsheet-eu\\_action\\_to\\_combat\\_violence\\_against\\_women-2019.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/factsheet-eu_action_to_combat_violence_against_women-2019.pdf)

Global women's rights organization - <https://www.womankind.org.uk/>

Safe and welcoming schools - <http://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/1756-safe-and-welcoming-schools-.html>

Violence in schools - <https://www.coe.int/en/web/children/violence-in-schools>

Co-funded by the Rights,  
Equality and Citizenship (REC)  
Programme of the European Union



Partnership:

The project involves 4 countries and 5 organizations:

**ActionAid Italia**, Italy

**ActionAid Hellas**, Greece

**AFOL Metropolitana**, Italy

**CPE – Centrul Parteneriat pentru Egalitate**,  
Romania

**UCLL – UC Limburg**, Belgium



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PENTRU EGALITATE

**UC Leuven  
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