

10.2.1 – Recognising Online Sexual Harassment

Handout E - Additional discussion questions

1. What makes online sexual harassment different from cyberbullying?

Online sexual harassment has a sexual element to the behaviour.

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

Online sexual harassment can happen to anyone, but research suggests that for some forms of online sexual harassment girls are more likely to be targeted than boys e.g. 'slut-shaming'. These incidents often result in more negative outcomes for girls, however this is not to say boys are not victimised. Girls and boys can both feel pressure to conform to different stereotypes.

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

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

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

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