MODULE 1:
UNDERSTANDING ONLINE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

CHILDREN OF INDIA FOUNDATION

Terre des Hommes Netherlands

Overview

This module explores the critical issue of online sexual exploitation, focusing on understanding it from the perspectives of both perpetrators and victims. Interactive elements, including quizzes, quick reminders, and infographics, are used to enhance learning and engagement.
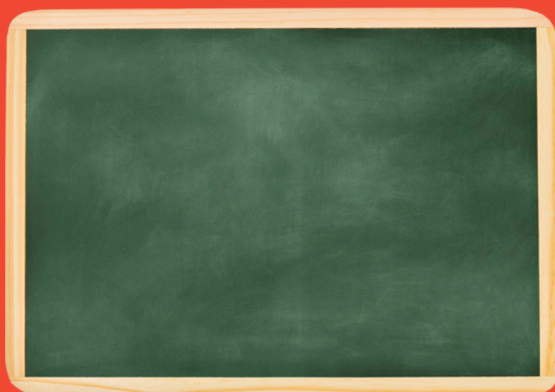
Objectives

- Define and differentiate forms of online sexual exploitation.
- Understand the psychological and emotional impact on victims.
- Identify and describe the tactics used by perpetrators.

RESOURCES REQUIRED

LESSON

In the digital era, the Internet and ICTs are essential in our daily lives, providing unique learning and connection opportunities. Institutions, communities, and youth frequently use social media like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram for sharing and community participation. While these platforms encourage positive engagement and creativity, they also pose risks, including the online sexual exploitation of children.

Online Child Sexual Exploitation (OCSE) refers to the use of the internet and digital technologies to exploit minors for sexual purposes. This can take place directly online or through a combination of offline and online interactions.

SEXUAL ABUSE VIS SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Aspect	Sexual Abuse	Sexual Exploitation
Definition	Sexual abuse is any sexual activity where there is no consent, including with children who legally cannot consent, and any forced sexual activity with adults.	Sexual exploitation is taking advantage of someone for sexual purposes, often involving manipulation or coercion of the victim, sometimes for material or monetary gain.
Consent	Consent is either not given or not possible (due to age, mental incapacity, etc.).	Consent may seem to be given but is typically obtained through manipulation or coercion, or for some gain. Thus consent is immaterial.
Victim's Position	Victims are often in a relationship of trust or authority with the abuser.	Victims are usually in a vulnerable position, exploited for sexual gain, potentially for someone else's benefit.

🔔 reminder:

A Child is anyone under the age of 18.

Legal Considerations	Always a crime, regardless of physical force.	Often involves criminal activities, including prostitution, pornography and human trafficking.
Psychological Impact	Leads to long-lasting psychological impacts on the victim.	Causes significant psychological effects, often with feelings of guilt.
Victim's Position	Victims are often in a relationship of trust or authority with the abuser.	Victims are usually in a vulnerable position, exploited for sexual gain, potentially for someone else's benefit.

🔔 **reminder:**

All types of online sexual exploitation and abuse are illegal. If you think you may be experiencing it, it's important to involve a safe adult.

Types of online sexual exploitation and abuse

- **Cyberbullying** is when someone uses things like computers, phones, or the internet to bully or upset others. This form of bullying can lead to severe mental health issues, including increased levels of stress, anxiety, and depression.

- **Cyber Stalking** is the act of using the Internet or other electronic means to persistently follow, observe, or contact an individual, group, or organization, often leading to harassment or intimidation. Victims of cyberstalking experience anxiety, depression, and fear.

- **Grooming** is a tactic where an exploiter uses manipulation to gain your trust. They might shower you with compliments, give gifts, or show excessive kindness. Imagine someone online constantly praising you, saying things like "You're the most beautiful person I've ever seen," and giving gifts or attention. They might seem friendly, but gradually they start asking you to keep secrets or ask you some favour that makes you uncomfortable.

- **Blackmail** in the context of OCSE typically involves threats to harm you or release your sexual photos/videos to coerce you into doing something against your will.

- **Boyfriending/Girlfriending** is a misleading practice where the exploiter pretends to be romantically interested in you. This false relationship is often used as a tool for manipulation and abuse.

reminder:

Common strategies used by the exploiter:
- complimenting you over and over (e.g. "I've never met anyone as beautiful as you," or "I've never loved anyone as much as I love you.")
- lots of attention and affection
- lots of kindness
- gifts
- money

- **Love Bombing** involves an exploiter overwhelming you with affection and compliments to quickly earn your trust, only to manipulate you later. For example, they might say "You're the most amazing person I've ever met," even though you've only known each other for a very short time.

- **Luring** is an act where a person uses online communication methods, such as social media or messaging platforms, to establish contact with someone believed to be a minor (under the age of 18), in order to make it easier for them to commit a sexual offense against the young person. For example, someone might start by asking about your hobbies and then gradually suggest inappropriate activities.

- **Online Grooming for Sexual Purposes** means someone is communicating with you online with the sole intention of establishing a relationship that leads to sexual contact, either online or in person.

- **Persistence** is when someone repeatedly asks for something, like sexual images, even after you say "no". Standing your ground is important, and consider blocking them if they persist.

- **Trap through online gaming, online applications**

- Exploiters also use tactics like **Using Pity/Guilt** to manipulate you. For example, if someone tries to make you feel bad for them, pushing you to share personal details, they are using these emotions as tools to control and manipulate you.

- Be wary if someone sends you **Sexually Explicit Material** without your consent. This includes items such as pornography or nude photos, and it's a tactic used to normalise inappropriate sexual behaviour.

- **Sexting** refers to the sharing of sexually explicit messages or images, often through digital platforms. While it can be consensual, non-consensual sexting, where images are shared without permission, is a form of abuse.

- **Sextortion** involves someone using a sexual photo or video of you to blackmail or coerce you into doing what they want, such as sending more images or meeting them in person.

- Understanding **Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM)** is important. It includes any material that depicts sexual abuse of children or focuses on their genitalia. It's illegal and harmful.

- **Computer/Digitally Generated CSAM** is similar to CSMA but involves images that are digitally created and do not involve a real child. However, they're just as illegal and damaging.

- **Live Streaming** exploitation involves broadcasting abuse in real-time, often with offenders paying to watch. Tragically, this abuse can sometimes be enabled by the child's family members or acquaintances.

reminder:

OSEC can look like
- *An adult engaging a child in a chat about sexual acts*
- *An adult sending nude or pornographic images of themselves to a child or exposing themselves on live-streaming*
- *Asking a child to view pornographic images/videos*
- *Asking a child to perform sexual acts, expose themselves or share a sexual image*
- *Taking or making and sharing or showing indecent images of children*
- *Peer-to-peer exploitation involves individuals of similar ages. E.g. one minor might coerce another into sending sexually explicit images or messages*

QUIZ TIME

1. Is it safe to share your location with someone you met online if they seem friendly?
   - True
   - False

2. If someone online asks you for personal photos, what should you do?
   - Send the photos if you trust the person.
   - Block the person and tell a trusted adult.
   - Ask them why they need the photos first.
   - Share the photos only if they promise to keep them private.

3. What is the best course of action if someone online says they will hurt themselves if you don't send them photos?
   - Send them the photos because their safety is important.
   - Refuse and block them immediately.
   - Report the situation to a trusted adult or authority.
   - Try to talk them out of hurting themselves.

4. An online person insists on keeping your conversations secret from your family. This is likely:
   - Normal, as some things are private.
   - Sign of grooming.
   - Only okay if they are close friends.
   - Safe if you know them well enough.

IMPACT ON VICTIMS

This section delves into the complexities surrounding self-perception and interpersonal relationships in the aftermath of OCSE. The emphasis is on both immediate and long-term impacts, providing an understanding of the psychological environment faced by survivors.

Immediate and Long term Impact on Interpersonal Relationships

- **Isolation Post-OCSE**: Often, survivors may withdraw from close contacts, including family and friends. This distancing can result from various reasons, such as fear of being found by the offender or discomfort in discussing the exploitation they faced.

- **Challenges in Forming Relationships:** After experiencing OCSE, survivors might find it hard to establish trusting relationships. They may become particularly cautious in online spaces and worry about how friends perceive them, even without receiving any negative feedback.

- **Romantic Relationships:** Survivors may also struggle in their romantic relationships. They often face difficulty recognizing and responding to abusive dynamics, mistaking them for normal behaviour. Additionally, they might have challenges in setting boundaries and discussing their past experiences within these relationships.

Psychological Impact

- **Immediate Impact:** Initially, survivors may confront intense emotions such as embarrassment and shame. They might engage in self-harm or exhibit a decline in academic performance and a reduced interest in previously enjoyed activities.

- **Long-term Impact**: With time, the delayed recognition of the mental health impact becomes evident. Survivors frequently contend with persistent self-blame and experience anxiety, particularly triggered by their lack of control over the distribution of their shared sexual images.

Understanding the real risks of the Internet, especially in terms of online child sexual exploitation, it's important to recognize that excessively limiting our digital access is not the solution. Such restrictions can infringe upon our rights to access information and participate in digital spaces. Instead, the focus should be on finding a balance that includes empowering young people through online safety education and guided oversight. This approach is crucial for helping youth navigate and benefit from the digital world safely.

This guidebook represents a move towards this balanced method. It aims to educate, engage, and equip young people with the necessary tools and knowledge to flourish in both the real and digital worlds.

GLOSSARY

Words	Brief Explanation
ICTs	Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs); refers to technologies such as the internet, computers, and smartphones.
Minors	Individuals who are under the age of legal adulthood; typically under 18 years old.
Non-consensual	Something that happens without the agreement or permission of all parties involved.
Sexual Activity	Actions that involve sexual contact or behaviour, including physical or virtual interactions.
Consent	Agreement or permission given freely and willingly by all parties involved in an activity.
Coerced	Forced or pressured into doing something against one's will.
Prostitution	The act of engaging in sexual activities for payment or other material benefits.
Pornography	Visual or written content that depicts sexual acts or nudity for the purpose of sexual arousal.
Human Trafficking	The illegal trade of people, often for the purposes of forced labor or sexual exploitation.
Exploiter	A person who takes advantage of others, often for personal gain or to inflict harm.

Manipulation	The act of controlling or influencing someone in a deceptive or unfair way.
OCSE	Online Child Sexual Exploitation (OCSE) refers to the use of the internet to exploit minors sexually.
Sexually Explicit Messages	Messages that contain or describe sexual content or actions.
Genitalia	The external sexual organs of a person.
Offenders	Individuals who commit crimes or offensive actions, particularly in the context of sexual exploitation.
Self-perception	How one views or thinks about themselves.
Survivors	People who have lived through and endured a traumatic or harmful experience, like exploitation.
CSAM	Child Sexual Abusive Material
CSEM	Child Sexual Exploitative Materials

About DtZ SUFASEC

Sexual exploitation of children (SEC) is a grave violation of children's rights and affects millions of children and youth annually, regardless of gender. No region, country or child is immune. However, girls, boys and children with other gender identities face differing levels of risk to different manifestations of SEC depending on their intersectional vulnerability factors. It impacts heavily and long-lasting on their physical, emotional and mental well-being. It deprives children and youth of establishing healthy (sexual) relationships and from developing to the best of their potential. The DtZ SUFASEC programme is designed to combat SEC. It will work in 12 countries in Latin America and Southeast Asia: Bangladesh, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Laos, Nepal, Philippines and Thailand.

About Children of India Foundation

Children of India Foundation, an affiliate of Terre des Hommes Netherlands in India, is a non-profit organisation which empowers children and families from socio-economically vulnerable communities. We address child labour, child marriage and child sexual exploitation, ensuring access to education, health care, livelihood and child protection.