

6.CHILD ABUSE

This unit essentially focuses on child abuse and seeks to raise awareness among teenagers. Throughout the unit a number of real-life examples of such abusive practices will be showcased and students will have the chance to discover the different kinds of abusive behaviour according to experts. An opportunity will be put forward for them to take active part in debates and all kinds of activities directed to help them fight this malpractice.

Before starting off ask students what they consider child abuse to be. Rape will possibly be one of the answers but it should not be the only one, contrary to what they might think. Tell them that there are a number of different types of mistreatment which they will learn about later in the unit. Tell students, as well, that statistics on the abuse of children are rising and ask them what they consider the reasons for that could be.

What Is Child Abuse?

Students read the definition with the help of a dictionary if necessary.

“What Is Child Abuse?” activity

Students complete the activity as shown:



CONSEQUENCES OF CHILD ABUSE

- **Brainstorm** – Students' own answers. Possible answers: , lower self esteem irascibility, emotional problems, aggressiveness, fear, sicknesses, abuse other people, etc.

Videosong – Students watch the video once and listen to the song therein contained. Then they read the questions on the video and watch the video a second time while they answer the questions.

Answers:

- x Children show **medical** problems and develop **venereal** diseases.
- x Some try to commit **suicide**.
- x They become **insecure**.
- x They experiment a regression in **behaviour**.
- x They show **fear** of someone they know.
- x They start to **wet** themselves again.
- x They have **injuries or burns** all over their bodies.
- x They refuse **medical** examination.
- x They develop **self-destructive** tendencies.
- x They find it hard to have **personal** relationships.

SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse – Students read the definitions (paedophilia and molestation) and look up any vocabulary if necessary.



LOOK IT UP ON THE WEB!

Here students do some research on an infamous paedophile: Marc Dutroux. Have students complete the **Fact File** as follows:

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| Name: Marc Dutroux |
| Nationality: Belgium |
| Occupation/ job: Electrician, although unemployed. He had a long criminal record as a thief and drug dealer. |
| Victims names and ages: Julie Lejeune and Melissa Russo (both 8 years old) 17-year-old An Marchal and 19-year-old Eefje Lambrecks Sabine Dardenne (12 years of age) and Laetitia Delhez (14 years of age) |
| Accomplices names: Michel Lelievre and Bernard Weinstein |
| Trial facts: Trial took place in Arlon. It was a trial by jury. Up to 450 |

people were called upon to testify. On June 14 2004 the Jury reached a verdict: Dutroux was found guilty of all charges. He received the sentence shortly afterwards: life imprisonment.

Possible explanations for his behaviour:

Parents separated when he was 15. Worked as a gigolo serving older men. Married his first wife when he was 19. They had two children. He divorced her in 1983. He had an affair with Michelle Martin, with whom he would have three children. They married in 1989 while both were in prison. They divorced in 2003.

TASK

Students match questions and answers in the bubbles:

1. How do you think paedophiles trick children into trusting them? **They offer to buy them toys, teach them how to play an instrument, give them money, etc.**
2. How do they locate their victims? **They hang around places children frequent: parks, schools, arcades, playgrounds, etc.**
3. Can paedophiles be known to the victim? **Yes, actually in over 60% of the cases, paedophiles were either relatives or acquaintances of the victims.**
4. Who are the most vulnerable targets of paedophiles? **Usually poor children who spent a lot of time in the street or single-parent families**

Optional activity : Child “sexual predators”

(view on <http://www.videojug.com/interview/sexual-predators-2>)

Show students the video interview. Ask them to answer the following questions to the maximum extent possible.

- What is a "child sexual predator"?
- How common is sexual abuse against children?
- How does sexual abuse affect children?
- Who are the most common perpetrators of child sexual abuse?
- How do I know if there are sexual predators near my home?
- How do I know if there are sexual predators near my home who have not been previously arrested?
- Can sex offenders be reformed?
- What are warning signs that my child may be the target of a sexual predator?

Transcript

Sexual Predators

What is a "child sexual predator"?

A child sexual predator is an individual with predilections towards having sex with children; it's as simple as that. Anybody that would sexually exploit a child is somebody that needs to be taken very seriously, and is somebody that really needs to be taken out of the system, because we know that that's one thing that we just don't tolerate in our society.

How common is sexual abuse against children?

Statistics say that one out of every six boys under 18 and one out of every four girls under 18 has been sexually abused. I think that the internet has completely changed that paradigm though. I believe that we're seeing many more instances of it now than we ever have in the past, for a variety of reasons. Number one, the proliferation of child pornography on the internet and the ability of individuals who would sexually exploit children to be able to network now has been greater than it ever has been. And it's all because of the internet. That kind of activity then emboldens individuals who otherwise may not even have given a lot of consideration to that kind of activity. So we find that because of the anonymity of the internet, and because of its ability to put populations together that children are probably much more sexually threatened now than they ever have been in the past. And it's unfortunate because society's not really paying a lot of attention to that yet. The perverts are. But as far as the rest of us, it's only since Dateline has been publicizing the information on internet predators that people are really starting to realize that there's a whole new 21st century crime wave crashing upon us, that had been on the radar screen for the first couple years of this century.

How does sexual abuse affect children?

It depends on the age of the child. I mean, if a child is at a very tender age, they may not even remember something like that. But it certainly doesn't mean that anybody should have a license to do those kinds of things. This sexual abuse can be physical, emotional, psychological, or even spiritual. There are a lot of affects of the sexual abuse of a child. There is also the how, and what kind of sexual abuse it was, and over what period of time did it occur? But the reality is, that in many instances, it takes a lifetime for children to recover from that kind of abuse.

Who are the most common perpetrators of child sexual abuse?

One of the things that we see, is that certain individuals will spend their lifetime putting themselves in positions that give them unsupervised access to children. It can run the gamut, and we've seen this. I mean it can run the gamut from your neighborhood priest, to your neighborhood pediatrician, to your Little League coach, to your schoolteacher, to Dad, to Uncle Billy, and it tends to be men, but there's no real consistent profile of what to look for.

How do I know if there are sexual predators near my home?

Since 1996, there's been policy in this country called "Megan's law", that does two things. It mandates that government register sex offenders and then give that information to the

public so the public can use that information to protect their children. The most effective means of community notification has proven to be the internet. Every state now has a Megan's Law website where you can look at the pictures, the addresses, the names of the sexual offenders within your community. And most of them allow you to categorize via physical characteristics, race, zip code, address, even crime and in some instances things like vehicle registration. It's an absolutely wonderful tool because there are well over half a million people now on the various state registries. And people have used it for a variety of reasons, to be able to protect children.

How do I know if there are sexual predators near my home who have not been previously arrested?

You don't and that's part of the problem. I mean you want to keep your ears open and listen to what's going on in your community obviously. And if rumors start arising about an individual then it obviously warrants looking into. Or if your children are seemingly lured or brought into the environment of an adult that doesn't make any sense, it certainly is something that's worth consideration as well. But the reality is that since there is no obvious profile and since twenty percent of those that are registered are absconders anyway, it becomes problematic sometimes. You don't know who the predators are in your community oftentimes which is why so many other things have to be done to protect kids. They have to be given good information; we have to have our neighborhood watch programs; we have to utilize the Megan's Law website. There are so many things that have to be done to protect them against, unfortunately, these types of individuals.

Can sex offenders be reformed?

I don't know that you can change anybody's sexual preferences. What you can do when you have somebody who's a serial molester, is you can hope that some combination of chemical and psychological therapy will tamp down their preferences for some period of time. But the reality is that state hospitals all over this country have been looking for cures for these kinds of aberrations, for these kinds of afflictions, for decades now. And nothing really seems to work very well. That's why when you have somebody who is a predator, somebody who is a pedophile, somebody who is a psychopath, the best thing for society as a whole is to take these people out and to keep them out.

What are warning signs that my child may be the target of a sexual predator?

I think if somebody takes an inordinate interest in a child that really doesn't make sense on any level, then that's somebody that absolutely needs watching. If it's a teacher that is spending too much time alone with your child, then that should be a red flag. If it's any adult that is forcing themselves into your child's universe on a regular basis with too much intensity, then absolutely, these all are red flags that have to be dealt with.



GROUP WORK. DEBATE; MEGAN'S LAW

Let students read the text on this polemic law. Students should know that this law has created a lot of controversy in the US, where it is enforced. There are a lot of people who oppose it on the grounds of *intimacy*, *retroactiveness* (it has been implemented, with retroactivity, on individuals who were sentenced before the law existed), *excessive punishment* (it is regarded as a second punishment on individuals who already

paid for their acts in prison or doing community services, the Constitution prohibits such practices) or on claims that such law makes *reintegration into society* impossible as such individuals will always be looked down on by the members of the communities in which they will end up living.

DEBATE: Separate the class into two groups and ask them to debate on the topic. The teacher should use strategies that cater for participation (grading every student that takes a participative turn, for example).



READING: UN TROOPS CAUTIONED ON SEX ABUSE

Students read the text and answer the questions.

- According to the article, what are the consequences faced by soldiers engaging in sex with minors? **They will be sacked, deported or face a court martial.**
- Which are the countries where such practices have been reported? **Such African countries as Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone or the Ivory Coast.**
- What are the main goals of peacekeeping troops stationed in Africa? To uphold democracy and peace.
- What do certain soldiers exchange sex for? **Aid or favours.**
- Do you think such behaviour is justifiable? Why? (*students' own answers*)



Slide presentation – Students watch the presentation while they take notes about the information contained throughout the slide presentation. Ask them to reveal to the rest of the class the facts they consider the most remarkable.



LOOK IT UP ON THE WEB!

Students do some research on the internet. The teacher should warn them that they might be reading some quite disheartening, painful stories. They are all true in any event. In pairs, students decide on a story to write a summary for.

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Ask students to read the following introductory story:

One Survivor's Story

<http://www.findcounseling.com/journal/child-abuse/child-abuse.html>

Ask students how they would feel if they were in the narrator's place.

Ask students to read the texts on child labour and write the sentences immediately below. They are to use the information contained within the bubbles for extra help.

(answers)

They have to work full-time at a very early age.

They work in dangerous places.

They have to work excessive time for the same wages.

They are continuously subjected to abuse.

They are forced to work hard.

They earn low wages.

They carry their work out in very bad conditions.

They have no access to education.

Think about it

The difference between *child work* and *child labour* lies, essentially, in the fact that the former is work that does not interfere in any way with the development of children or their education. Children perform this work usually on a voluntary basis (to earn some money for such extra expense as music, going to the cinema, etc.) and in the latter case the work the child is forced to do is mentally, physically, socially or morally, dangerous and harmful to the child and it interferes with his/her education.

Questions

Can you think of possible definitions for these two terms?

Child work is a remunerated activity performed by children, usually, to pay for their extra expenses. There is no abuse implied herein.

Child labour refers to the abusive tasks some children are subjected to by some ruthless individuals or companies.

Why do you think there is no Child Labour in your country? Or, is there? (students' answers)

Disturbing data

Tell students to go over the data and, next, they express their opinion on this subject. Ask them such questions as:

- Why are girls in particular demand for domestic work?
- Do you think these are acceptable numbers?
- What countries do you think such activities are common in? Cite a few.

CHILD TRAFFICKING

Students read the definition of this expression with the help of a dictionary. Next they read the case study.



Essmerelda's story

In groups students work their way through the story and answer the questions immediately afterwards.

How did the following parties neglect her?

- ✓ Her *family* unknowingly abandons her to her fate. They easily get deceived by strangers and she gets lured in front of her relatives.
- ✓ Traditional *society* has it that once a girl loses her virginity outside marriage she the becomes an outcast, she is despised by others.
- ✓ *Macedonian* and *Albanian* societies are deeply rooted within old traditions. This fact makes evolution within these societies really difficult. Poverty is also an important aspect. The gangsters know that they will easily lure victims away by cheating them.
- ✓ The *people in Kafe Bar Berlin* are ruthless people who are in this “business” for money only regardless of the fact that a young human life is being destroyed.
- ✓ Her “*customers*” should have seen she is too young. They should also have recognised the torture marks all over her body. They could have reported that. However, no one did.

Human trafficking

Students read the definition and visit the website for more information on this phenomenon. As they visit this site, remind them that, despite the fact that some of the examples they will learn about occur in faraway places, there have been reports of similar incidents occurring in this country. Remind them also that quite a few children have been reported missing for the past years in their own country. After all human trafficking is not far from us.

WHAT CAN YOU DO? HOW CAN ONE PUT AN END TO THIS?

First, tell students that it is paramount to know why people abuse in order to prevent any further abuse from taking place.

Ask students to work in groups and write as many reasons as they can that would “justify” (in the abuser's opinion) child exploitation. Ask a person in each group (the “speaker”) to read the list to the rest of the class. Then ask the whole class to go one by one over all the items listed and ask them to consider whether a single one item on that list is a justifiable reason for such despicable acts.

Some research establishes a number of factors as possible causes for somebody to abuse children. Financial problems, personal stress or families with children with special needs, are just some of them. However, a large number of abuse cases do not offer any clear explanation and it is important to realise that many children living in the most difficult circumstances will never be abused while some children living with “good families” will.

Students write their own ideas in the boxes.

Let students know that there are a number of resources within reach to help them in case they need support. You may want to tell them about the existence of the Protecció a la infància i l'adolescència. They can find their website in the following URL:

<http://www.gencat.net/benestar/persones/infants/dgaia/proteccio/index.htm>

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| CHILD SOLDIERS |
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Students read the text on child soldiers and then the teacher introduces the following facts. Ask students to stay alert as they will need the information given by the teacher to do the tasks below:

- Children are used in armed conflicts in different countries.
- They become involved in such conflicts when there is no clear infrastructure to protect them (be it a Government or an organization).
- They are easy to manipulate. They are easy targets for the people who enrol them.
- The long-term effects of children in such conflicts have lasting negative consequences, not only for the children themselves, but also for their respective societies.
- Being the victims at first, they eventually turn into victimizers.
- They want help.

Tasks

1. Identify the reasons why somebody may want to use children in armed conflicts. (listed above)
2. Who suffers the consequences? (*the children, their families, society, the whole world*)
3. Determine what kinds of tasks will a child soldier be asked to do. (answers should include *cooking, cleaning, fighting, engaging in sexual acts*, etc.)

CREATIVE WRITING

Students own ideas.

- **Child Abuse** criss cross puzzle

Across

1. Person involving in sexual intercourse with another person without their consent. **Rapist**
3. Forcing of undesired sexual acts by one person to another. **Sexual abuse**
4. A soldier involved in maintaining peace. **Peacekeeper**

6. Failure to provide adequate nourishment or liquid, or provide or procure basic medical attention or shelter or warmth for a child. **Neglect**
7. Employment of children under an age determined by law or custom. **Labour**
8. Being owned and worked by and for someone else. **Slavery**
9. Treatment of something (a person, item, substance, concept, or vocabulary) that is seen as harmful. **Abuse**

Down

2. Recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation. **Trafficking**
5. Psychological disorder in which an adult experiences a sexual preference for children and engages in sexual acts with them. **Paedophilia**

UNICEF

Let students get acquainted with UNICEF by reading the texts and visiting its web site (www.unicef.org).

Students can download the UNICEF Fact File, to be found in the *Additional Materials* section of the project. They will get familiar with the most remarkable facts regarding UNICEF.

Next ask them to visit the site in the **Internet research** section. Instruct them on how to proceed with the story and then pair them up. Next they are to write a short essay comparing one day in the life of the character portrayed in the story and an ordinary day of theirs.



“Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF”

Students do some research on the “Trick-or Treat for UNICEF” program. Alternatively they may want to download the file from the *Additional Materials* section.

Once they find the information, they answer the questions:

- When and how did the program start? Where did it start? It started in Philadelphia in 1950.
- What is the program's main goal? Originally it was to help kids after the II World War. Now it supports a whole lot of UNICEF programs: Afghanistan, Katrina Hurricane-affected people, etc.

GAME

There is a section on the UNICEF web site dedicated to games. UNICEF games are both entertaining and pedagogical. They are good tools to teach values and raise awareness. Let students play for a while before they complete the **KNOWLEDGE QUEST** on this unit.