



## Activity

Helping you develop the **Global Dimension** across the **curriculum**

# 14 Sexual harassment and consent

## Activity description

This activity encourages students to think of any UK soap operas where incidences of sexual harassment have been enacted and invites them to compare these storylines with the one we see in Makutano Junction, Series 4. The class will examine what constitutes sexual harassment and will identify what makes it unacceptable. They will also examine some of the risks associated with on-line chat rooms and on-line dating.

## Aims

- To help students develop an understanding of what sexual harassment is.
- To enable students to understand the concept of mutual consent in any sexual encounter.

## What you need?

- Synthesised edit, Series 4, Episode 7 Makutano Junction.

- To encourage students to talk about experiences relating to sexual harassment and where they might go to get counselling if needed.
- To enable students to assess some of the risks that might arise from on-line chat rooms and on-line dating.

## Curriculum links

- Citizenship, Rights and Responsibilities KS3
- PSHE, Personal Wellbeing KS3
- Personal Development KS3

Further details of how this activity meets requirements of the new Secondary Curriculum appear on the Curriculum Links table. For subjects outside the statutory curriculum, check your own exam board for their requirements. For general information on the Global Dimension across the curriculum, see [www.globaldimension.org.uk](http://www.globaldimension.org.uk)

## GLOBAL DIMENSION

Underlying the concept of a global dimension to the curriculum are **eight key concepts**. The following six are covered by this activity:



**Citizenship** – gaining the knowledge, skills and understanding necessary to become informed, active and responsible global citizens.



**Social Justice** – understanding the importance of social justice as an element in both sustainable development and the improved welfare of all people.



**Diversity** – understanding and respecting differences and relating these to our common humanity.



**Values and Perceptions** – developing a critical evaluation of images of the developing world and an appreciation of the effect these have on people's attitudes and values.



**Conflict Resolution** – understanding how conflicts are a barrier to development and why there is a need for their resolution and the promotion of harmony.



**Human Rights** – knowing about human rights and understanding their breadth and universality.

The other two key concepts which can be explored using other Makutano Junction activities are:

**Sustainable Development**  
**Interdependence**

## Top Tips

Sexual harassment – be it verbal, non-verbal or physical – is present in all parts of the world. It is important to stress that this is not just an African phenomenon, but very much present here at home too. It is equally unacceptable wherever it is found.

## What you do

- 1 Divide the class into small groups of 5-6 and ask them to think of any UK soap opera where there has been a storyline depicting “sexual harassment.” Invite each of them, as they do this, to write down what they understand by the term “sexual harassment”.<sup>1</sup> Give them 10 minutes or so to talk this through in their groups.
- 2 Get each of the groups to present back to the class:
  - i) their working definition of sexual harassment
  - ii) their UK soap opera storyline, in which they are invited to describe the characters involved and what happens to whom. Also, to describe how it left them, as viewers, feeling and what they learned from the storyline.
- 3 As the groups present back to class, write up on a board what the common themes are that are being enacted within the various soaps (e.g.: sexual harassment is unacceptable, sexual harassment can happen to men as well as to women, all sexual activities should involve mutual consent, sexual harassment of any kind is an abuse of power..).
- 4 Get students to look at the synthesised storyline of Kara and Bobby, beginning in Episode 7 of Series 4, where Stella and Kara are chatting, on-line, thinking they are having some fun ... (go through to end of Episode 8, before Stella's mother is raped by the same man).
- 5 Ask class in their groups to
  - i) list the tactics that Bobby uses to intimidate Kara (e.g.: if she tells anyone, he will kill her, if she tells anyone he will do the same to Stella).
  - ii) identify effects that Bobby's actions have had on Kara (e.g.: fear, stigma, loneliness, depression, inability to communicate, a feeling that it was her “fault”..).
- 6 Discuss.

## Variations/additions

- In the light of the storyline here in MJ, get the various groups to design an advisory leaflet about the dangers of on-line chat rooms and dating and how to avoid putting yourself at risk.

- Get groups to research recommended action to take if you find yourself being sexually harassed.

## Follow-up/research questions

- Find out the extent to which sexual harassment is inflicted by men on women, men on men, women on men.
- Explore and list help-lines available for people suffering from sexual harassment and also for rape.
- Find out incidents of rape reported in Kenya and compare to the UK.
- Research and suggest reasons for the differing statistics.

## Useful resources

<http://www.safeworkers.co.uk/SexualHarassmentWork.html>

Sexual Harassment at Work

[http://www.ivillage.co.uk/workcareer/culture/rights/articles/0,,695688\\_701045,00.html](http://www.ivillage.co.uk/workcareer/culture/rights/articles/0,,695688_701045,00.html)

Sexual Harassment and the Law

[http://www.worksmart.org.uk/rights/sexual\\_harassment](http://www.worksmart.org.uk/rights/sexual_harassment)

Sexual harassment and discrimination

<http://www.rapecrisis.org.uk>

[www.rapecrisis.org.uk](http://www.rapecrisis.org.uk)

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/switch/surgery/advice/body\\_mind/everyone/rape/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/switch/surgery/advice/body_mind/everyone/rape/)

The surgery (BBC): Rape

## TAKE ACTION

If you experience sexual harassment, in the first instance, you could try to confront the harasser. It may be that their perception of harassment is not the same as yours and they didn't realise you found their behaviour offensive. When you confront them you should:

- Speak clearly and slowly, maintaining direct eye contact
- Describe the behaviour, its effects on you and that you want it to stop
- Ignore any attempts to trivialise or dismiss what you have to say
- Don't smile or apologise. This will undermine your complaint
- When you have finished what you want to say, walk away - the less you say, the more powerful you will be
- However, you do need to speak up straight away. It may be that you choose a confidante, a colleague to give you moral support. They could also act as a witness to any incidents of improper behaviour.
- If you feel you can't confront the harasser face to face, you might prefer to write to them to explain that their behaviour is making you feel uncomfortable and that you want it to stop. Keep a copy of the letter and let them know that if their behaviour persists, you will take the matter further.
- If their behaviour does persist, be sure to report it.

<sup>1</sup> Sexual harassment is unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature. It is not about fun or friendship – it's about the abuse of power. Since there is no single definition, the test is how the recipient feels about the behaviour. The vast majority of complaints of sexual harassment have been by women against men - it has been estimated that 50% of women in employment are affected by such harassment. It doesn't only happen to women in offices or those employed with large groups of men, but to women in every occupation, of every age group, and from every community. Sexual harassment can take many forms.

- Verbal:
- Comments about appearance, body or clothes
  - Indecent remarks
  - Questions or comments about your sex life
  - Requests for sexual favours
  - Sexual demands made by someone of the opposite sex, or by someone of your own sex
  - Promises or threats concerning a person's employment conditions in return for sexual favours
- Non-verbal:
- Looking or staring at a person's body
  - Display of sexually explicit material such as calendars, pin-ups or magazines
  - Physical
  - Physically touching, pinching, caressing, kissing or hugging
  - Sexual assault
  - Rape