# “ONLINE CHAT”

## SESSION PLAN

**Preparation needed**

- **Projector/PC if needed**
- **Flipchart/whiteboard and marker pens if needed**
- **Use relevant PowerPoint slides**

## Reflection

- Consider the last session and spend a short period of time covering any learning points and observations since the last session.
- If relevant **ask** – has anyone done anything that was influenced by this session?
- Reference any relevant news/information to update on previous session.
- Re-do/remind group of the GROUP AGREEMENT

## Setting the Scene

**Learning Outcomes**

- To explore the impact of making hurtful/nasty comments about someone online.
- To consider the role of bystanders and ways in which bystanders can intervene.

- **Introduce the session** – Inform the group that this session will explore the issue of behaviours whilst online.
- Remind group that for the session they are bystanders to a scenario.
- **Hands up** if you have been aware of this happening in your school? – Have group discuss their thoughts.

## The Scene

Have a volunteer read aloud the scenario? Thereafter read the scenario yourself.

**You are part of a large group chat with friends from school. Someone in the group starts to make fun of another friend. Their comments are really nasty. Some of the others are laughing and making similar remarks. Your friend doesn't respond although you can see that they have read the comments.**

**Ask** the group whether this is a realistic and relevant scenario. **Could this happen?**

**Ask** the group to identify the red flags from the scenario. Clarify you are looking for the words phrases that appear wrong or unhealthy.
After few minutes get the red flags.

**Ask** the group to raise their hands if they feel there is something wrong / hurtful in this scenario. Have group look around room at the responses from their peers.

## My Challenges

**Ask** the group to discuss with a partner or within their group what they are thinking when they read this scenario?

After allowing time for discussion get same feedback and then read aloud or show the following **train of thought.**

**Why are they doing this? … I feel bad about what is happening … Why isn't anyone challenging it? We're all meant to be friends ... And why didn't my friend respond? … Is it my place to get involved? … If I say something will I be next? … But I feel really uncomfortable when I see someone treated like this … Is this any of my business? … What should I do?**

**Ask** – What reasons might someone give for not getting involved? Fear, don't know what to do, might lose a friend etc

## Discussion Time

**Agree/Disagree/Unsure (ADU )Activity & Discussion**

**Statement <u>"Insulting a person online isn't as bad as doing it to their face".</u>**

After the group have moved ask some members why they have made their decision.

**Follow up questions**

Give a short amount of time for group to make their choice then ask 2-3 people in each group: Why did you agree/disagree/why are you unsure?

- **Ask** the group "Why might a person choose to be abusive to a person online?"
- **Ask** "Do you think it is easier for people to join in when abuse take place online?"
- **Ask** "How might a person feel who is treated like this?" Write down responses to this on a flipchart.

**DISCUSSION STARTERS**: Ask the group:

1. It says in the train of thought "We're all meant to be friends?" **Ask**, what do friends do for each other? – facilitate responses and suggest that friends should both support and even challenge one another if required.

2. It says in the train of thought "Why isn't anyone challenging it?" **Ask** Why do you think people aren't saying anything to stop this behaviour.

3. What do you think the impact of this behaviour could have on the person being talked about? **Prompt** the group to think wider than the impact on their emotional/physical health. Include issues such as not going to school, making it harder to concentrate at school etc.

## My Leadership

- **Ask** the group to discuss with partners/in groups what is their role in this scenario?
- **Ask** them to think who they should be thinking about in this scenario.
- **Ask** the group to identify who they have a responsibility to help in the situation? Their friends? Themselves?

## My Plan

Provide the group with a short period of time to discuss in their groups their plan.

**Say** - We have discussed the 'scene' and your 'challenges' lets now think what we can do. **Ask** the group to make sure that they think of any consequences that could occur. Thereafter discuss the range of options available

**Option 1: Do nothing. It's none of my business**.
**Ask the group**

1. Is this an option that some might consider using? We have already identified some of the reasons people might give for not getting involved. What might happen if you do nothing? Responses may include it may get worse, my friend will feel upset.
2. What does doing nothing say to your friend? That you don't think there's anything wrong with this scenario. What does doing nothing say to the person who is being abusive? That it is okay for them to behave in this way.

**Option 2: Try to change the subject in the group chat.**

**Ask the group:**

1. What would be achieved by choosing this option? You may distract the group and they will move onto another subject. What won't be challenged if you choose this option? The original behaviour will not be discussed. It may continue later.
2. What could you say to change the subject? You could ask a question for the group to consider, plan a meeting the next day etc.

**Option 3: Remove myself from the group and contact my friend to let them know I don't agree with what was being said.**

**Ask the group:**

1. Why might this be a good option? It may send out a message to others that you don't agree. Others might follow.
2. Would telling your friend help them to deal with this situation? It may help them to see that they still have friends who are there to support them.
3. What hasn't been done if you chose this option? The behaviour has not been challenged. It may continue and be directed at others.

**Option 4: Post on the chat that you think what they're saying and doing is wrong.**

**Ask the group:**

1. What message does this give to the group and the person who is acting in this way? Your friends will know you do not agree with this behaviour and that you won't be part of it. Others might do the same.
2. How might your friend react if you did this? Suggestions might include: Your friend might laugh, fall out with you, be angry with you, make you the subject of the insults.

**Option 5: Out with the group chat, speak to some of your friends who didn't comment, and ask whether they think what's happening is fair. Discuss together what you should do.**

**Ask the group:**

1. Why might this be a good option? Remind the group that as most/all have already agreed that they see something wrong in this situation (when they raised their hands earlier), chances are their friends would agree to.
2. Would knowing that your friends agree that this isn't right make it easier to help here? Why? Suggestions might include: safety in numbers, knowing you won't be isolated from the group for challenging the behaviour etc.

**Option 6: Talk about your concerns with a parent/carer, a teacher/adult you trust or an MVP mentor, and ask their advice on what to do.**

**Ask the group:**

1. What might stop people from choosing this option? Suggestions might include: don't want to be a telltale / a 'grass', don't want to get my friend into trouble etc.
2. Is telling an adult or mentor what has happened to stop your friend getting into trouble being a grass or a good friend?

**Option 7: Personal Option** Ask the group: Is there anything else you could do? Remember to explore any possible consequences.

## Final Words

**Reinforce key messages**

Reinforce the key messages from discussion to include:

- Being abusive to another whether on line or face to face is not right and can be hurtful.
- There are many reasons why a person might choose to be abusive. Whatever the reason given, there is never an excuse to do this.
- A person who is being abused can be impacted in a variety of ways that will be harmful to their mental and physical health.
- There are a number of options we can choose from, to challenge behaviour when we don't agree with it.
- We have a responsibility to help our friends and keep ourselves safe.