



Up4Diversity

Empowering Young People and
Youth Workers to Become
Active Upstanders in the
Prevention of Violence Towards
LGBTIQ+ People in the
Digital Era





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Module 4.

Preventive socialization of gender-based violence



Prevention of violence against LGBT+ youth needs of deep and constant work. This work implies:

- Deep, to get to the roots of this problematic. This will help us identify more problematic situations, understand that we are not aware of most of the conflicts; and mostly, to promote preventive attitudes and interactions.
- Constant, as isolated practices like a one-time violence prevention workshop do not have long-term impacts, they are not enough to counteract *socialisation*¹ processes that youth have internalised by thousands of interactions during their lives.

Ending violence can only be achieved by going into the deep causes of it. Interpersonal conflicts that we make visible and upon which we act are **the tip of the iceberg, and at the base is a system or power-relations, gender-based violence and sexual-affective socialisation processes***.

Violence, risk, and trouble are massively linked through social media with attraction.** Many books, movies, advertisement, etc., connect such attitudes, especially in men, with desire (for instance, the perfume commercial “Bad Boy” or the movie sagas “After” or “50 shades of Grey”).

Nevertheless, we cannot forget that the **coercive discourse**² is not only created and reinforced by the media: the educational institutions and professionals themselves, along with the families, the groups of friends or leisure spaces such as sports teams often leave space for those traditional roles and dynamics to be valued and reinforced.

*Socialisation is the continuous process by which we learn and internalise behaviours through interactions with the people and society.

**A discourse is a social idea that spreads through interactions between people, which comes from a specific understanding of a reality. For instance, the coercive discourse is this idea that risk is fun and stability is boring, which people pass on and end up believing it. Berger, P. L., Berger, P. L., & Luckmann, T. (1966). The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge. Anchor

Socialization starts at 0 years, with every interaction in all the environments. It continues, in youth, being not only developed through teachers and parents, but mostly on what they attach desire and attraction to, which is their friends, social media, idols, etc. **All interactions in educational settings socialize our future choices, desires, and relationships.** The dominant socialization discourse influences that youth often times don't choose their friends, hook-ups, and couples mainly for their egalitarian values; and, actually, for some people those values can make the other person less attractive. Even if they may like them, sometimes they will prefer, and specially for occasional encounters or "fun and crazy" experiences, those people with toughest and most risky character.

The traditional model of relationships is power based, you can either be over or below others. This model does not link good values, feelings and attitudes with desire and excitement, and considers them boring. **This traditional model sees excitement in risk, trouble, problems.** Against to what some people think, **people who treat others badly are not alone, and they almost always have a social circle that reinforces their attitudes.** Conflictive people sometimes play a leading role within their group. They have the ability to have people's attention, as they take advantage of the dominant discourse that links violence to attraction; this also explains why those are egalitarian, peaceful, and cooperative are usually unnoticed.

To know more:

Valls, R., Puigvert, L., & Duque, E. (2008). *Gender violence among teenagers' socialization and prevention.* *Violence Against Women*, 14(7) 759-785

The preventive socialisation of gender-based violence³ is the study of social interactions (media, peer groups, family, educational institutions...) which generate a socialization and learning of love and attraction models that are linked with gender-based violence.

Ideal love and ideal relationships protect from violence

"Attraction as a synonym, at once, of excitement and tenderness, friendship and desire, stability and madness, passion and sweetness" (Jesús Gómez, 2015)

Ideal romantic partners, in their diverse forms, protect from violence⁴ and negative episodes in interpersonal relationships. The key is who youth choose as a friend, as a one-night stand, as a boyfriend/girlfriend because depending on that they will develop a free or coerced relationship. Scientific research has demonstrated that real friends and romantic love do not generate violence: they actually protect from conflictive relationships. **Love is social**, therefore, **having an ideal of romantic love leads people to have more passionate and healthy relationships.**

Language of desire: key in violence prevention

According to recent research, **it is ineffective to promote egalitarian relationships only from a language of ethics⁵** and values (what is convenient, what is good and bad). **We need to combine that with a language of desire**, to empty of attraction conflictive behaviours, people, and relationships, and to direct attraction towards more egalitarian models. This switch in attraction does not happen in youth by external trainings or educator or family talks, but through the **transformative dialogue among all the educational agents**, and especially enga-

ging this **link between values and desire** coming from youth to their peers. In other words, it is much more powerful if youth talk to each other.

The majority of youth already know what violence is and what should not be done, they have quite clear ethics. However, they haven't been provided with a language of desire towards standing up against it: whoever stands up is not seen as the greatest people in our cultures, brave and the friend that everyone would publicly want to have; rather, they are many times pointed out as informers, getting into other people's businesses. Therefore, we need to link desire towards acting with upstander and other positive values, installing a culture where it is seen as attractive to be an upstander, to act with solidarity towards other's bad behaviours and sufferings. Thus, they will be seen as inspiration and role models by their own peers, and as people everyone wants to be with. Professionals can use and promote this language of desire towards upstander behaviours.

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ACTIVITY: UPSTANDERS ON THE SPOTLIGHT

- **Goal:** to raise awareness on situations where bad behaviours are somehow socially valued, and how professionals can either reinforce that by trivializing or following the jokes, or how they can silence such attitudes and put the spotlight on upstander attitudes.
- A few **hypothetical situations** are now described. After reading them, professionals can debate how some adults react and how they would react.

Situation 1: A high-school teacher dedicated their tutoring hours to opening a dialogue among students

where they could not only report conflicts but also congratulate their peers for their upstander attitudes. One of the students said: "Wow, you should have seen this guy, he was all brave and determined to do something when he was aware of the gossip that Paul didn't have a penis. He was so smart, talking super respectfully and safely to him, and helping him report to the principal. It makes me want to do something like that if I notice something similar".

Situation 2: The facilitator of a youth leisure time group joined the informal conversation they were having. One of them was bragging about how strong he is, and joked that he was kind of concerned all gay boys would be into him if they saw him naked in the bathroom. The rest of the group was shyly leading him on. Then, the facilitator decided to intervene and said: "Real men, gay or heterosexual, don't make others feel stared at, at the gym or anywhere else. And, with that cocky attitude, you will not attract anyone".

Masculinities and their role in perpetration, reinforcement, or prevention of violence

Scientific literature has defined three models of masculinity depending on their relationship with gender-based violence. No matter what the gender expression or sexual orientation, there exist:

- 1. Dominant Traditional Masculinities (DTM)** includes boys and men that establish power relationships with others, they may be cocky, temperamental, selfish, they don't show solidarity or love. **Not all dominant men are violent, but all violent men fall on this DTM model.** Obviously, these boys and men are not only upstanders, but they are the bullies, perpetrators,

accomplices, or reinforcers of violence, humiliation, hate, despise, ridicule, or discrimination they witness. Relationships with them are not based on freedom: they tend to be problematic and submissive, and make you become little and less attractive.

2. Oppressed Traditional Masculinities (OTM) are not violent but are frequently seen as not exciting, they are convenient but perhaps perceived as boring; they are the perfect friend to drop all your problems, who will be there for you no matter what, but who **lack self-worth and confidence in himself and strength to stand up against others in difficult situations**. Therefore, people who fall on this model cannot be successful upstanders either.

3. New Alternative Masculinities (NAM), opposite to the other two models, are diverse boys and men who are, **at the same time, egalitarian and attractive, self-confident, and respectful, selfless and strong, peaceful and fun**. This is the only model that can offer male **upstanders** because they wish for free and desired relationships for themselves and others, and they have the courage to stand up against discriminations and violence, as they team up with other egalitarian people to build zero-violence, exciting and egalitarian environments.

Many egalitarian boys can quickly become NAM if they are given support and confidence by others, if they are valued by showing egalitarian attitudes from a language of desire, as people that “anyone would like for everything”, “I want to be like him” or similar expressions, not only reinforcing the egalitarian attitude but their attractiveness and how cool they are. **From educational institutions**, we have the chance of not only pointing out those people, famous or

not, who fall into the dominant or oppressed model, but of highlighting alternative men who are known for their egalitarian attitudes and also for their attractiveness. **We can help to empty of attractiveness the dominant model and promote New Alternative Masculinities (NAMs) through dialogic spaces⁷.**



ACTIVITY: MODELS OF MASCULINITY IN REAL LIFE

Duration: 20–30 minutes. **Material:** none.

We will analyse male celebrities and popular boys from our institutions and groups who are currently very socially desired. They will be briefly introduced and filtered through the 3 masculinity models.

- Can you identify popular and attractive boys and men who are dominant and alternative?

With movie characters, we may show clear cases of DTM and ask to reflect how they treat others.

- How are the most successful men, the ones that attract the most, that are considered leaders and popular?

We have to consider that the three models presented are “ideal types”, and actual boys and men may fit with more or less accuracy. However, the models help identify towards which model they relate.

To know more:

Flecha, R., Puigvert, L., & Ríos, O. (2013). The new alternative masculinities and the overcoming of gender violence. International and Multidisciplinary Journal of Social Sciences, 2(1), 88-113.

Zero-Tolerance against violence

All violent acts have negative consequences for the victim and for the culture of the group. All violent situations affect the victims, and lack of upstanding behaviours make it especially hard for them to overcome those experiences where they are left alone. We cannot trivialize and say that some are not that big of a deal: the “smaller” actions prepare the field for the most severe violence. Besides, we will not have the upstanding abilities for the most difficult situations if we do not act in any situation. **The goal is Zero-violence.**

No aggression can ever be justified or trivialized. We often hear phrases like “you have to understand what he is going through”, “that person is a brute”, “sometimes they don’t realise what they are doing”. We cannot let that stay in the collective mindset: we must work against such conceptions, because otherwise victims accept violence to happen to them and bystanders do not see the necessity to always do something, and perpetrators feel reinforced

and don’t see the graveness of their actions, making those behaviours more habitual in the future.

Zero-violence means unacceptance, non-trivialization, and non-justifications of any form of violence. Zero-violence means **in all spaces**, not only in class or with adults, but, and specially, when youth is by themselves, during leisure time, in the library, patio, gym, bathrooms, etc.

Friendship

It is key to reflect critically on what **friendship** really means: it **is linked to freedom, diversity, heterogeneity, support, zero-violence, solidarity, reciprocal growth, fun for everyone.** If peers do the opposite of those, they are not friends.

Having friends makes it much less probable to be a victim, because a person is less often alone when someone tries to pick on them, and because friends quickly defend and protect you, and reject the other person’s behaviour. We deserve the best friendships, those that are egalitarian and fun; free and exciting; loyal and desired.



Friendship is a feeling that cannot be taught, it can only be built if it is practiced. Professionals can foster friendships creating dialogic and free spaces where they can be developed in educational settings in the daily dynamics of the institutions or the groups, where egalitarian dialogue and the equality of differences are the basis for mutual and constant help, support, and interaction.

By acting proactively (with dialogic learning environments) and reactively (standing up for anyone who is ill-treated), **youth create support and solidary networks that have a huge protective impact on violence occurring in that group.** That way, a big group of people is positioned against any form of violence, building free friendships, and paying no attention to bullies and dominant people: all that makes aggressors feel discouraged and strongly rejected on their non-dialogic and violent actions. Professionals can help youth understand that people who don't make you or others feel safe and free are not friends.

ACTIVITY: DEFINING FRIENDSHIP

Duration: 20 minutes. **Material:** none.

We will debate around some invented interactions between friends. It is key to highlight what the values and actions that friends show with each other, to have a strong and clear concept so that youth can know when someone is not being a friend. Then, we will try to **fill out this table with what it means in action to be or not to be a friend**, trying to think in situations of youth we work with.

• FRIENDS...

Respect and celebrate your interests and personal taste in dressing, music...

• FRIENDS DON'T...

Pressure to make out with someone you don't want to.

"No means no": learning consent

There is social consensus that "no means no". However, sometimes people say: "only yes means yes", and that is not always true. When we are not free to say what we really think, we may say a yes that is not actually true, so that yes is still a *no*.

It is important for professionals to have a clear attitude that reinforces the importance of consent. We can have dialogues with youth around consent and "no means no", with the aim that they provide arguments that reinforce consent and reject attitudes that don't respect it. **It is essential that arguments that justify non-consent** (such as "Dressing like that, that person is looking for trouble", "they say no but deep down they mean yes", "it's not bothering them if they say nothing") **are critically discussed and socially denied.**

Second-order violence – Protecting the upstanders

Second-Order Violence (SOS) is the harassment suffered by the upstanders. This is a common phenomenon in situations of violence: brave people who stand up for and with the victims suffer **different forms of reprimands:** they can be personal attacks, the spreading of fake rumours about them, physical violence. This second-order violence is also perpetrated by the bullies and their reinforcers, but it can also be strengthened by passive bystanders who pass on rumours about the upstanders' personal lives. The reason why this second-order violence is done is to discourage upstander attitudes and leave the victims

alone so that bullies can continue doing their discriminatory and violent behaviours. They do this by sending the message that anyone daring to stand up to them will suffer a bad experience.

This has very negative consequences for the initial victims, for the upstanders and for the whole community, because the law of silence is imposed along with the law of the bullies. The concept of second-order violence **helps us understand the difficulties many people have in theory and in practice to be upstanders:** all in all, they fear the possible reprimands they will suffer which will lead them to become victims. The only way to avoid this from happening is to **create solidarity networks** that are more powerful and stronger than violent actions, so that direct and second-order victims are supported, and so that the whole community has a common commitment that does not tolerate violence at all.

It is important to **open up frequent dialogue spaces** with youth so that they can speak up and report situations, to ensure, also, the protection of the upstanders as a group. This can also reinforce the defenders and foster more skills to later defend them against any type of reprimands they may face. This way, more people are involved in the support networks that are informally created but which have a great impact on violence prevention.



ACTIVITY: PROTECTING THOSE WHO DEFEND

Duration: 20 minutes. **Material:** none.

Identify specific situations where there was Second-order violence towards upstanders. Think of ways your institution can promote help towards them.

To know more:

Flecha, R. (2021). Second-order sexual harassment: Violence against the silence breakers who support the victims. *Violence against women*, 1077801220975495.

Puigvert, L., Vidu, A., Melgar, P., & Salceda, M. (2021). BraveNet Upstander Social Network against Second Order of Sexual Harassment. *Sustainability*, 13(8), 4135.

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5. Torras-Gómez, E.; Puigvert, L.; Aiello, E.; Khalfaoui, A. (2020). Our Right to the Pleasure of Falling in Love. *Frontiers in Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.03068>
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7. Ríos-González, O.; Ramis-Salas, M.; Peña-Axt, J.C.; Racionero-Plaza, S. (2021). Alternative Friendships to Improve Men's Health Status. The Impact of the New Alternative Masculinities' Approach. *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health* 18, 2188. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18042188>
8. Racionero, S., Ugalde, L., Puigvert, L. & Aiello, E. (2018). Reconstruction of Autobiographical Memories of Violent Sexual-Affective Relationships through Scientific Reading on Love. A Psycho-Educational Intervention to Prevent Gender Violence. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9(1996). doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01996
9. Flecha, R.; Tomás, G.; Vidu, A. (2020). Contributions from psychology to effective use and achievement of sexual consents. *Frontiers in Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.00092>