

FALSE FREEDOM

DVD AND RESOURCE PACK



FALSE FREEDOM

The Background

The purpose of the False Freedom DVD and resource is to share awareness from Northern Ireland based research on Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).¹ The DVD has been created by young people who volunteered with Barnardo's NI Safe Choices to raise awareness, amongst their peer group, of the issues associated with CSE.² The film is in the form of a drama about a girl who found herself in an exploitative relationship. The story illustrates, in just one scenario, how the stages of grooming for sexual exploitation might be played out in the lives of young people.

The purpose of the DVD is to alert young people to the dangers of CSE and generate discussion about the issues highlighted in the film with the aim of empowering them. The content of the DVD has been piloted with others, male and female, aged between 15 and 24, resulting in positive responses.

Some of the quotations as to what was important/good about the DVD included:

“Gets to the point – raises awareness of CSE”

“Showing how easy it is to be manipulated”

“Liked the local accents”

“The focus wasn't on the faces – it made you listen”

“Showing it through her eyes was very well done”

**“It's important to show it happens to boys
– boys need to learn they're not invincible”**

The accompanying resource pack has been produced to enable you, as the facilitator, to use with the DVD to prompt discussion and aid learning.

¹ Beckett, H. (2011) Not a World Away: The Sexual Exploitation of Children and Young People in Northern Ireland: Barnardo's NI.

² The production of this DVD was funded by the Public Health Agency as part of the CSE Knowledge Transfer Partnership NI

CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

A Definition

'Child Sexual Exploitation is a form of sexual abuse in which a person(s) exploits, coerces and/or manipulates a child or young person into engaging in some form of sexual activity **in return for something** the child needs or desires and/or for the gain of the person(s) perpetrating or facilitating the abuse.

The key factor that distinguishes cases of CSE from other forms of abuse is the concept of exchange – the fact that someone coerces or manipulates a child into engaging in sexual activity in return for something they need or desire and/or for the gain of those perpetrating or facilitating the abuse. The something received by the child can include both tangible items and/or more intangible 'rewards' OR 'benefits' such as perceived affection, protection or a sense of value or belonging.

Just because a young person receives something they need or desire does not mean they are not being abused. Taking advantage of this need or desire, and making the young person think they are in control because they are getting something in return, is part of the abusive process. Fear of what might happen if they do not comply can also be a significant influencing factor in a child or young person not disclosing abuse'.³

FALSE FREEDOM

Summary of the Story

The main character in the story is Natalie who is aged 15. She is in the company of female friends when Davy, aged 26 comes on the scene. The girls go to Davy's apartment with him. Alcohol and entertainment are available and all, except Natalie, seem to be having a good time.

It becomes clear that Davy has other sexually motivated intentions for Natalie and the situation leads to one where, over a period of time, she is exploited by him.

Target Audience Age 12+.

³ SBNI 2014, adopted from the CSE Knowledge Transfer Partnership NI

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

It is intended that the False Freedom film be shown to young people in its entirety in the first instance.

The DVD should then be shown with the freeze frames using the questions on pages 9-13.

Questions are provided for each scene in order to prompt discussion but these are not exhaustive. It is important that young people have the opportunity to explore the issues that they see as relevant within the context of the subject matter.

The facilitators' notes can also be downloaded on any PC or Mac by opening the DVD like a CD ROM, accessing the files and simply clicking on the relevant documents to download, save and print the resources.

Learning Objectives

For young people to develop a greater understanding of:

- what constitutes a 'Healthy Relationship' and what is 'Unhealthy';
- the often subtle nature of grooming and how Natalie's story is only one example of how this can happen;
- the meaning of consent and Natalie's inability to do this given her age, alcohol use and level of coercion involved;
- the importance of equal power within a relationship;
- 'keep safe strategies' and the importance of developing these for situations in which they might feel uncomfortable;
- the need and ability to identify someone to speak to should this situation, or something similar, happen to them or a friend.

Safeguarding and Confidentiality

Child Sexual Exploitation is a sensitive issue which has the potential to cause upset or distress. Safeguards should be put in place to minimise the likelihood of this happening and to detect and respond to any distress experienced by a young person.

It is important that these issues are explored in a safe and secure learning environment and young people are made aware that personal disclosure in the group setting is not expected nor encouraged. Young people should be reminded of the process for disclosure should they wish to report a concern and a designated person should be named and made available for this purpose following the session. All facilitators should familiarise themselves with their organisation's policies and procedures for reporting on disclosures.

Contracting

A contract is the means by which a safe learning environment can be created and maintained. It defines the purpose of the session and an acceptable code of behaviour. It also helps ensure a sense of shared responsibility between the facilitator and the participants.

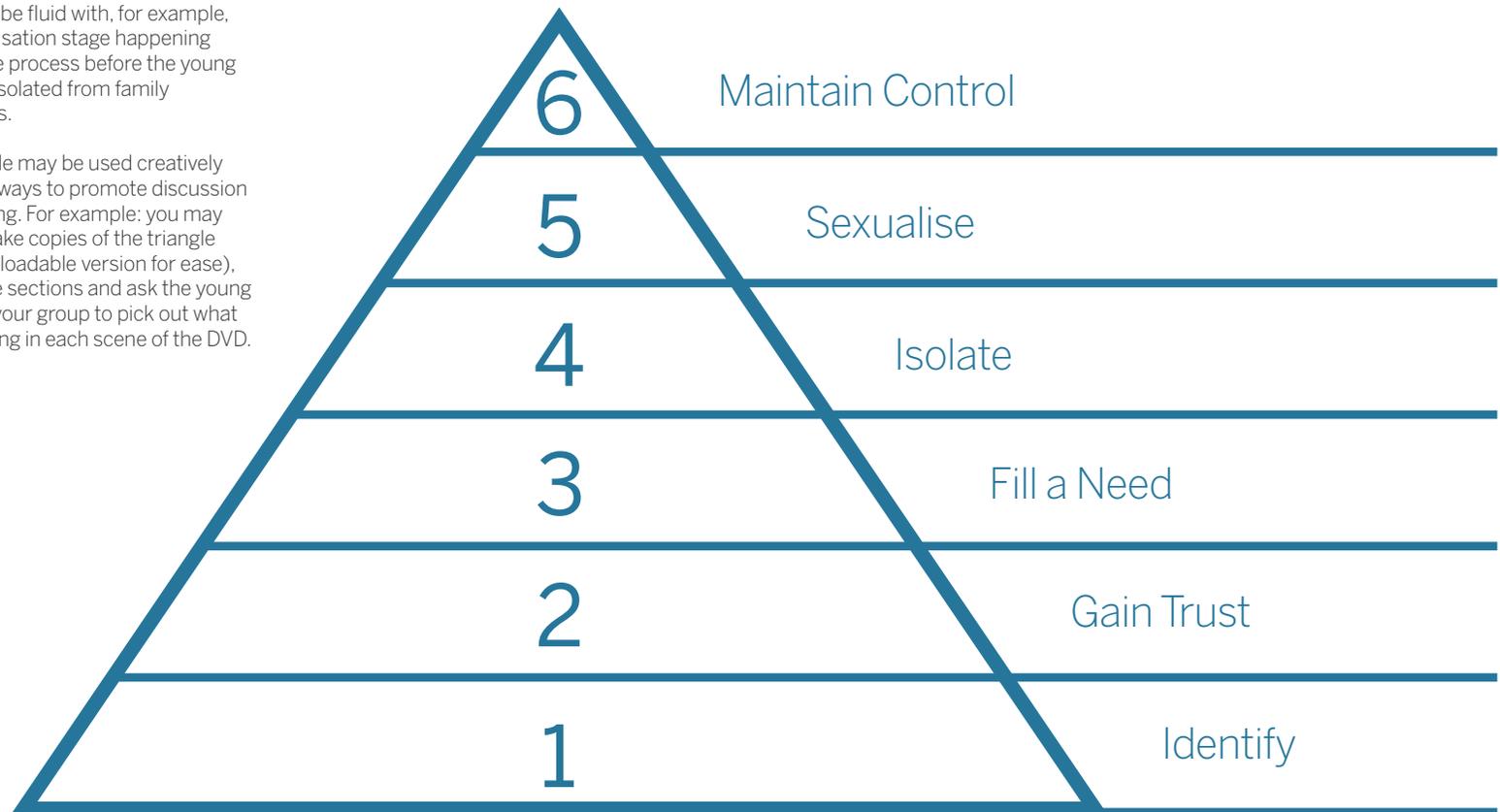
A contract should include:

- Defining the purpose, duration, time and any breaks.
- Defining acceptable behaviour, such as, care and consideration for self and others; confidentiality – being responsible for what participants share; mobile phones off/on silent.

'THE GROOMING PROCESS'

The DVD relates to the different components of the grooming process. This process is not linear or always clear cut, with some stages happening separately or in common with another. It can also be fluid with, for example, the sexualisation stage happening early in the process before the young person is isolated from family and friends.

The triangle may be used creatively in various ways to promote discussion and learning. For example: you may wish to make copies of the triangle (use downloadable version for ease), cut out the sections and ask the young people in your group to pick out what is happening in each scene of the DVD.



Adapted from Dr Michael Welner.

EXPLANATION OF 'THE GROOMING PROCESS'

Stage 1: Identify

The groomer targets a child/young person by sizing up their vulnerability and how easy it might be to groom them for abuse. These vulnerabilities might include: emotional need, a degree of isolation from others, low self-confidence or practical needs such as somewhere to stay.

Stage 2: Gain Trust

The groomer gains trust by watching and gathering information about the child/young person, getting to know what they need and how to fill those needs. They may also use others around the child/young person to make them appear 'safe' and does anything that helps portray them in a positive light.

Stage 3: Fill a Need

The groomer begins to fill the child/young person's needs and, as a result, may assume more importance in the child/young person's life. This could be through the provision of tangible items such as gifts, substances, somewhere to stay, a mobile phone, or more intangible things such as extra attention, affection, a sense of being loved or status.

Stage 4: Isolate

The groomer uses the special relationship with the child/young person to create situations in which they are alone together which reinforces a special connection. Increased attempts are made, by the groomer, to isolate the child/young person from any other meaningful relationships the child/young person has, e.g. with their family or friends. This can happen to the extent where the child/young person becomes totally dependent on their groomer.

Stage 5: Sexualise the Relationship

When sufficient emotional dependence and trust is built the groomer sexualises the relationship. Desensitization to this may have been part of the grooming process up to this stage, therefore, elements of it may be seen in the earlier stages of the grooming process.

Stage 6: Maintain Control

Once the sexual abuse has started, the groomer/abuser uses various tactics to maintain the silence and on-going co-operation of the victim. This can include: ensuring secrecy; blaming the child/young person for the situation so that they feel complicit in it and therefore less likely to seek help; threats to withdraw their emotional and material needs; threats of what will happen if they leave or tell anyone.

FACILITATORS' NOTES

Downloadable Resources

The following can be downloaded from your DVD on your computer. The scenes outlined below follow the 6 stages of grooming shown in the short film.

Please play the freeze frame version of the film to your group and pause at each black screen. Then use the notes to prompt your discussions and aid learning.

SCENE 1

Identify

This is the first stage of grooming when the groomer identifies their victim. This scene sets the background to the events that unfold for Natalie. When Davy enters the scene he appears non-threatening and doesn't appear to single out anyone. He keeps it all very relaxed.

How do you think Natalie was feeling in relation to the location, her friends, what they were doing? Did the girls really know Davy? What might the dangers have been?

Natalie is not happy; she is fed up; pressured; disappointed with her friends; she tried to protect some of the friends from having more alcohol; she tried to leave but her friends told her to stay. Natalie's friends thought Davy was a friend of her mum's which led the girls to have misplaced trust.

Why might Davy have bought alcohol for the girls? Do you think he just wanted to be nice to the girls or do you think he had another intention? What might he have thought about them sitting outside in the cold and drinking?

Davy wanted to appear as the 'good guy'. He identified a way that he could make contact with the girls/start talking to them and providing alcohol and a place to hang out.

What were the risks of going to Davy's apartment? Why should they not have gone?

They didn't know who he really was or anything much about him; didn't know who would be there; what his intentions were; would he hurt them?; would they get out safely?

SCENE 2

Gain Trust (and Sexualise)

This scene shows how Davy was able to gain the trust of all of the girls and how he singled Natalie out for special attention.

What did Davy do in this second scene that might have made it easy for the girls to trust him?

There was a female friend of Davy's in the apartment when the girls arrived; he gave them more alcohol and use of a play station; he said "make yourselves at home"; gave Natalie use of a phone; Natalie said "he seemed really caring".

Is there a reason he chose Natalie rather than one of her friends?

Perhaps he sees that she is more likely to go along with what other people say/do/want (she did when she wanted pizza and her friends wanted alcohol; she did when she stayed outside when she wanted to leave).

What made Natalie feel she had to stay there rather than leave?

Her friends were staying. She felt she did not have a choice as she should have been staying with one of her friends. Davy had given them 'free' alcohol and given her a phone so he had gained her trust.

Why do you think Davy took Natalie's phone?

To make sure her mum couldn't contact her; so he could take control of her; so he could offer her a phone and make himself look generous; an excuse to ask her to take "sexy pics". If she took the picture then she would be committing an offence and he would have something else to 'hold' over her.

What was the first point when Davy started to sexualise the situation with Natalie?

In the bathroom when he asked her to send "sexy pics".

How long did it take before Davy sexually abused Natalie?

By the time her friends were asleep Davy had coerced Natalie into his bedroom where he abused her. She did not consent to this.

SCENE 3

Fill a Need

Throughout this scene Natalie recounts all of the things that Davy provides for her but shows her mixed feelings about this.

Throughout this scene Natalie recounted all of the things Davy provided for her – what were these?

Davy manipulated her by making her feel special and by telling her how great she was; he provided kudos in her peer group as he was her 'boyfriend' and he supplied everything the group needed including alcohol and a place to hang out.

Why could she not tell her friends what had happened?

She was embarrassed; she felt "disgusted"; she wasn't sure what had happened herself (she had taken a lot of alcohol).

Why did she feel she needed to stay there?

She didn't want her friends to think she was a bore and she hadn't told her friends that Davy had abused her; she felt she had to keep going back as she had "no reason" not to. This meant that Natalie felt she 'owed' Davy.

What did Davy say to Natalie to make her feel special? How did this help him to control her?

Told her she was beautiful; "You're so hot"; "you could be a model"; "you're the only one". She liked hearing all the nice things he said to her as she had nobody else to give her any type of affection. Everybody needs to hear positive comments; she knew it wasn't a good relationship but she was trapped.

Natalie exhibited behaviour that was the opposite of what she was feeling – lots of mixed emotions – what were these?

Confusion, fear, embarrassment.

Do you think Natalie felt that she was able to express herself and talk about her feelings with Davy and her friends? Did Davy ask her what she wanted to do or how she was feeling at any point?

Natalie was unable to express her feelings to her friends because she felt ashamed and complicit in her abuse. Davy was not interested in how she felt. He totally disrespected her.

SCENE 4

Isolate and Maintain Control

This scene demonstrates how Davy isolated Natalie from her friends and family so that she had no-one else, only him to depend on. Her friends no longer hang out at the apartment and she is locked in. Any positive reasons about being there are now gone and she feels she has no alternative but to stay with Davy. It is the summer holidays so she can't be missed from school. (There are very similar dynamics between CSE and domestic abuse, particularly in how the perpetrator isolates and maintains control of their victim.)

How did Davy isolate Natalie? Do you think Natalie and Davy had equal power in their relationship?

Took her phone; cut her off from her family and friends; shouted at her and made her feel worthless; told her that no one else would want her.

Why did Natalie feel she could not break free from Davy, especially when he was horrible to her?

No contact with mum; kicked out of home; dependent on Davy; low self-esteem. (By now he had made her feel worthless).

What was he like towards her now? How did Davy's behaviour towards Natalie change at this point in their relationship? Why do you think he did this?

He mixed violence and being horrible towards her with compliments. Forced himself into the room even when she said no. She is now dependent on alcohol and he provided this. This is a way of him controlling her. Told her what to drink; told her what to wear; she was afraid of him.

How did Natalie describe how she was feeling at this stage?

Worthless, no confidence.

How might she have felt about telling her friends what was happening now?

Ashamed; foolish; guilty; they won't want to know; they might want to help; they might want to tell her mum.

Who or what groups, helplines, charities etc. are available that would have been able to help Natalie?

Natalie's mum, Childline, the police, Barnardo's, someone who has proven to her they are trustworthy.

SCENE 5

Breaking Free

This scene shows Natalie having broken free from the situation and reflecting on how Davy came to exploit her.

The film doesn't show exactly how Natalie managed to get out of the situation, but how do you think she might have got out?

Perhaps she found the strength to walk out and get help, for example, talking to her mum, or a friend who then told her mum; calling a helpline for support and appropriate help.

What did Natalie say when reflecting on what happened?

It is important to listen to your instinct and not be pressured by friends or acquaintances. It is important to know who you can trust and who you can't.

General Questions and Possible Responses

This story was about a female. Do you think this can happen to boys and young men too?

Yes, it can happen to any child/young person, male or female.

Who is to blame for this situation?

Davy. He is the one who groomed and abused Natalie. (Facilitator – make it clear that Natalie is in no way to blame). Perhaps Natalie and her friends could have made better choices but ultimately ONLY Davy is guilty.

Do you think Natalie was consenting to sexual activity at any stage?

No. She cannot consent in law because she is under the age of consent (16 years). Also consent can only be given where a person 'agrees by choice' and has freedom and capacity to make that choice. This would, therefore, not include situations where the person has been asleep, intoxicated through alcohol or drugs, coerced, threatened or exploited.

She is clearly showing at times that she doesn't want this to happen.

FINISHING POINT

Healthy Relationships

It is important that young people feel empowered after this session, therefore, they should be aware of strategies for avoiding or know how to get out of such situations.

Remember, everybody deserves a healthy relationship. There are a number of signs that can help you tell if you are in a healthy relationship.

1. Good Communication:

- It is important is to ask if you're unsure about something.
- Speak honestly and openly so that miscommunication is avoided.
- Never keep a feeling bottled up because you're afraid it's not what your boyfriend/girlfriend or friend wants to hear or because you worry about sounding silly.

2. Mutual Respect:

- No one who you are in a relationship with should make you do something that makes you feel uncomfortable or humiliated.

3. Trust:

- Learn to understand the difference between sincerity and manipulation.
- Trust takes time to earn and to be given.

4. Honesty:

- Always remember you have the right to say how you feel and act in a way that is true to yourself.

5. Equality

- No one you are in a relationship with should have power over you. It is important that power in a relationship is shared equally. There are occasions when people may have authority over you such as a parent or a teacher but they cannot abuse that authority.

6. Separate Identities

- It is good to have similar interests with friends and family but it is also important to hold on to what makes you an individual. Keep up your hobbies and interests even if they are different to your friends. Be proud to have your own interests and also those which you can share.



If you, or someone you know, would like more information, support or help about the issues in this film you can contact:

Childline
0800 1111 (24 hour helpline)

Police on 101
(or 999 in an emergency)

Barnardo's NI Safe Choices
028 9065 8511
(open Mon-Fri 9am-5pm)
Domestic & Sexual Violence
0808 8021414 (24 hour helpline)

Social Services Gateway Teams

Belfast HSC Trust028 9050 7000
South Eastern HSC Trust0300 1000 300
Northern HSC Trust0300 1234 333
Southern HSC Trust0800 7837 745
Western HSC Trust028 7131 4090
Sexual Assault Referral Centre – The Rowan0800 389 4424

For further information and sources of help visit:

www.safertoknow.info

www.therowan.net (Sexual Assault Referral Centre)

www.barnardos.org.uk/nisafechoices

