

# Chapter 5:

## Internet Dynamics and Grooming

### EDUCATOR FACILITATION GUIDE

#### PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

To provide practical tips and instructions for engaging students and handling difficult discussions on the topic of the internet and online grooming.

#### MAIN OBJECTIVES

- ▶ To teach students about the warning signs of an online account engaging in luring and grooming into sexual exploitation.
- ▶ To engage students in critical thinking about using social media platforms safely.

#### CREATING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

- ▶ Emphasize respectful communication and confidentiality. It is important to listen and value each other's perspectives even if we don't agree with them.
- ▶ If your students have lots of questions or seem restless, take breaks in between the videos to debrief.
- ▶ Offer emotional outlets such as doodling or colouring sheets during the videos.
- ▶ Let your students know that if they feel triggered, they can leave the room and/or go speak with the counsellor.
- ▶ Identify any local support resources and organizations on the issue ahead of time, so that you can readily refer students who may need additional support.

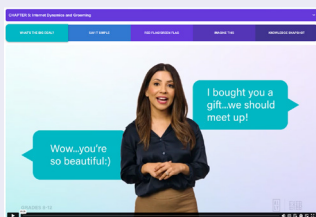
#### MODERATING DISCUSSIONS

- ▶ Ensure that all students have the opportunity to speak.
- ▶ Maintain a non-judgmental tone.
- ▶ If a question is inappropriate or derails the discussion, gently redirect it back to the main topic.
- ▶ If you don't know the answer, it's okay to admit it! Provide additional resources or take note to look into the question later.

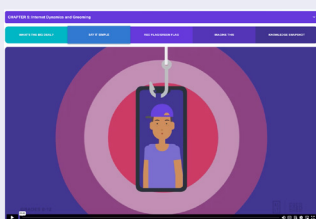
## IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW

- ▶ At any moment, there are 750,000 predatory people online looking to lure minors. (<https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/02/1084262>)
- ▶ The large majority (84%) of victims of police-reported online sexual offences against children were youth aged 12 to 17. (<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2022001/article/00008-eng.htm>)
- ▶ Online Luring is the act of using the internet to communicate with a minor for the purpose of facilitating or the intent to facilitate a sexual offense against them. [Section 172.1]
- ▶ Over the last five years, [Cypertip.ca](https://www.cybertip.ca/en/campaigns-and-media/news-releases/2023/safer-internet-day-2023/#:~:text=Over%20the%20last%20five%20years,representing%20an%20815%20percent%20increase) has received an 815% increase in online luring reports. (<https://www.cybertip.ca/en/campaigns-and-media/news-releases/2023/safer-internet-day-2023/#:~:text=Over%20the%20last%20five%20years,representing%20an%20815%20percent%20increase>)
- ▶ Grooming is the process of trust and relationship building with a minor that results in a sexual offence.
- ▶ The standard stages of online grooming include:
  - Targeting a victim by identifying their needs online. As discussed in Chapter 2: Sexual Exploitation, exploitative individuals often create sexually exploitative situations by offering to fulfill a need. On the internet, these needs may include fame, financial gain, gifts, connection, belonging, self-esteem, or romance.
  - Gaining trust by posing as a peer, romantic interest, or employer
  - Providing affection or gifts, isolating the minor emotionally and/or physically
  - Sexualizing the relationship early on.
- ▶ One way of identifying online grooming is with the code SUSS:
  - **Stuff:** Someone is offering you stuff online such as modeling opportunities, money for your photos, gifts, or gaming/social media rewards.
  - **Unhealthy age gap:** When deception is not involved, someone who is more than 4 years older.
  - **Sexual:** Someone is asking you for nudes or sexual livestream within 48 hours.
  - **Switch:** Someone is asking you to add them on a different platform.
- ▶ There have been instances of group grooming where predatory people will engage in sexual interactions, conversations, or avatar activities with one another on a gaming platform or Discord in order to normalize these behaviours for the minors that are interactive with them.
- ▶ AI has become a powerful tool for predators to target victims through baiting. Baiting involves using deepfake technology to create AI-generated images, videos, or audio recordings that appear genuine. Oftentimes this is to present as someone younger, a romantic interest, or a celebrity. They can use this technology to send photos, facilitate live video calls, create pornography to normalize sexual behaviours or create pornographic content of someone else in order to blackmail them.

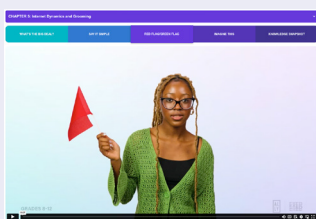
## FACILITATION TIPS FOR CHAPTER 5

**What's the Big Deal?**

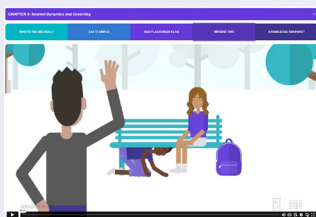
Start a discussion with students about their perceptions of online interactions and the concept of grooming. Encourage them to share their thoughts on how they perceive trust-building online and any experiences they've had that felt uncomfortable. Use open-ended questions like: What do you think grooming means in an online context? Have you ever felt uneasy during an online interaction? How do you differentiate between genuine connections and potential grooming attempts?

**Say It Simple**

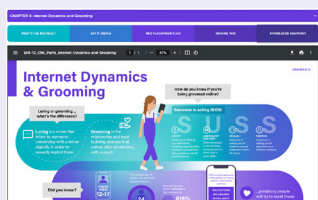
Lead a conversation with students about the information they share online and its potential consequences. Discuss the difference between harmless interactions and red flags that may indicate grooming behavior. Encourage critical thinking by asking questions like: How do you think platforms use your data to personalize your experience? Can you identify any examples of oversharing online? What precautions do you take to protect your privacy online?

**Red Flag/Green Flag**

Engage students in an interactive activity where they identify and discuss various online scenarios presented as red flags or green flags. Encourage them to share their reasoning behind their choices and facilitate a dialogue about digital safety. Prompt questions like: What signals do you look for to determine if an online interaction is safe? How can you protect yourself from potential grooming tactics? What strategies can you use to maintain boundaries online?

**Imagine This**

After watching the scenario unfold, facilitate a discussion about the risks and realities of online grooming. Encourage students to reflect on their own online experiences and share strategies for staying safe. Ask questions like: How did Ava and Sonya's online interactions differ from their real-life perceptions? What warning signs did you notice in the scenario? How can you support a friend who may be experiencing grooming or exploitation online?



### Knowledge Snapshot

Use the knowledge snapshot as a springboard for discussing the prevalence of online exploitation and the importance of digital literacy. Encourage students to critically analyze their online interactions and seek support if they encounter suspicious behaviour. Prompt discussions about strategies for staying safe online and empowering peers to recognize and report grooming attempts.

## FAQ'S AND RESPONSES TO GET YOU THINKING

### Q: How can I tell if someone online is actually who they say they are?

**R:** The short answer is that you can't— unless you were to meet them and their family in person, which is never recommended and incredibly dangerous! Some strategies that could help include: checking for consistency in their information across multiple social media platforms, looking into their contacts and follower list, confirming their employment or school of attendance, having video chats (while being mindful that anyone can easily use AI technology to change their appearance on live video). Be cautious of anyone who avoids video calls, pushes for personal information or sexual conversation within a few weeks, and doesn't respect your boundaries. Last but not least, always make sure to get a second opinion from someone you trust.

### Q: What should I do if a friend of mine is talking to someone I believe is a predatory person?

**R:** If you're worried about a friend, the best thing you can do is to look out for their safety. Talk to your friend about any concerns that you have and the reasons behind them. Share your knowledge and encourage them to get a second opinion from a trusted adult. Make sure that you talk to a trusted adult whose confidentiality you can trust.

### Q: What platforms are most predators on? In other words, which are the most dangerous?

**R:** The platforms that are most commonly linked to reports of online sexual exploitation or predatory people include: Roblox, Discord, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, Kik, Twitch, livestream websites like Omegle, and any friendship or dating app aimed at teens. However, any popular platform with a large number of teen users that includes chat functions, image-sharing options, video calls, or features like disappearing content can be a prime target for predators.

## EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Assign each student a different app or platform to review, and present its risks to the class.
- ▶ Have students write a reflective piece about what they have learned and how they can apply this knowledge to their own online behaviours.
- ▶ Facilitate a debate on the responsibilities of social media companies to address predatory people on their platforms.
- ▶ Continue learning—build on the material from the previous chapters and introduce [Chapter 6: Sextortion](#) to introduce a common form of online blackmail.

## SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS



To access the following resources, scan the QR code or [click here](#).

## More Animated Videos

- ▶ "Internet Safety Tips for Teens"
- ▶ "Social Media: Ways to Stay Healthy"

## Articles and Cases

- ▶ AI used to groom
- ▶ Online Luring Spiked in Canada
- ▶ Group Grooming
- ▶ Suing Omegle

## Other Educational Resources

- ▶ GetCyberSafe.Ca

## DISCLOSURES AND REPORTING

- ▶ By addressing these topics and opening up the space for discussion, an individual may feel safe to come forward with a disclosure
- ▶ It takes courage and a lot of trust in someone to share something like this. Thank them for sharing with you and trusting you with that information. Prove their trust right by being non-judgmental, and emotionally measured in your response. Acknowledge that it takes a lot of courage to come forward and that you are there to help in any way you can.
- ▶ Ask them if anyone else knows about this already. Find out what their needs are. Do they need an empathetic ear? Do they need assistance with reporting? Do they need to be connected with resources?
- ▶ Encourage them to report to a confidential and safe resource, or connect them with a counsellor. Have these resources prepared/ available ahead of time.
- ▶ If they are currently at risk of harm, let them know that it is your duty to report and that you can accompany them or find someone to support them during this process.
- ▶ If a minor is currently at risk of harm or is being harmed, it is your duty to report it to your local child welfare services.

CANADIAN HUMAN TRAFFICKING  
HOTLINE (24/7)

- ▶ Call 1-833-900-1010
- ▶ Live chat: <https://www.canadianhumantraffickinghotline.ca>

## CYBERTIP.CA

- ▶ National tipline for reports of online sexual exploitation of children

## NEEDHELPNOW.CA

- ▶ Help with removing sexual pictures/videos