Digital Defence Lessons

What's the problem we want to address?

Young people no longer conduct their relationships, build their identities and learn about their sexuality through face-to-face interactions alone. We live in an age of increasing digital connectivity, where young people's online lives play an ever more significant part in their learning, personal interactions and well-being.

But, this change has taken place at such a rate that older generations have been unable to equip young people with the critical skills to navigate the digital world in the way that teaching traditionally would - before they plunge straight in.

The result is that young people are facing a huge range of digitally-facilitated issues and have little or no support for dealing with them. These include online misogyny, digital sexual harassment, such as being sent unsolicited dick pics, or seeing harmful, body-shaming advertisements on your newsfeed.

Young people are having to be incredibly resourceful at dealing with this, showing enormous resilience, independence and creativity in their methods of managing some of these issues, often with no adult input or knowledge.

Why is digital literacy for digital defense needed?

Blocking or reducing social media is not a long term or viable solution; Increased media literacy and education around different social media platforms, young people's digital rights and responsibilities is urgently needed (Livingstone and Third, 2017).

Policies, curriculum and resources need to consider how to address **diversity and equity** including gender, sexuality, race, economic inequalities, ability and more all together in digital literacy strategies.
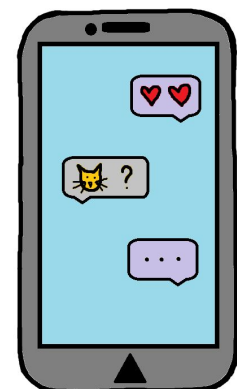
So what are we going to do?

We have designed a series of **8 lessons,** listed below, to support young people to manage some of the issues they face online. The sessions have a dual focus on educating on risk and harms, as well as teaching youth activism strategies in coping with digital sexual culture.

Crucially, the initial programme design is informed by t**he work young people are already doing to deal with digital issues**. The lessons also include time for students to share their own ideas, which will be captured throughout, for other young people to learn from. The 8 sessions could be delivered in series or as stand-alone lessons.

1. Introduction: self care, keeping a digital diary, what digital issues are you facing?

2. What is gender, LGBT, queer and Feminism

3. Technologically facilitated sexual violence at school: dick pics & nudes

4. Disinformation post-truth & toxic masculinity

5. Digital Defence on Social Media: Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Tumblr: blocking, reporting, muting

6. Feminism, Antifeminist, Digital Feminist Activism: anonymity & use of different platforms

7. Body Image and Media – sexy selfies, harmful ads Advertising, targeted advertising, collaging

8. Digital activist skills – becoming a campaigner, designing digital responses.
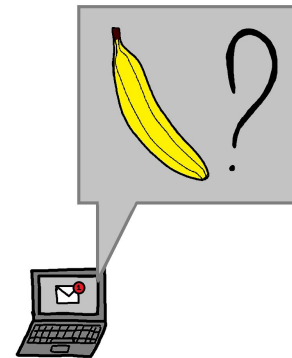
Themes addressed during the sessions:

Image-based abuse and Technology Facilitated Sexual Violence Education
- Sharing, or threatening (including blackmail) to send nudes without permission is <u>image based abuse</u>.
- Sharing images of someone's genitals without consent = more image-based abuse.
- Pestering or pressuring someone to send nudes is <u>technology facilitated sexual harassment or violence.</u>
- <u>The law</u>: ensuring students understand the age at which can people legally take, store, send, explicit images.

Consent Education
- <u>It's the responsibility of the person *seeking* consent to make sure they've 100% got it</u> - not the responsibility of the person *giving* consent to say "No"/"Stop"
- Consent in law: 'freedom' and 'capacity' to consent
- Understanding the age at which you can consent to sex, versus age at which you can legally send nudes
- All of this applies to both offline & online interactions!

Creative responses and using humour...

For more information, please contact:

- Professor Jessica Ringrose, UCL Institute of Education

- Dr Kaity Mendes, University of Leicester

- Amelia Jenkinson, Director, Sexplain UK.