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‘Can I tell you what it feels like?’: Exploring the harm caused by CSE films

Author: Jessica Eaton

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Executive Summary

In February 2017, a social worker from the West Midlands admitted that she had been told by her manager to make a 13-year-old sex trafficking victim watch 'My Dangerous Loverboy' eleven times and that she had realised the harm they had caused to her. A few months later, I was teaching children who had experienced sexual exploitation how to public speak in a new project, when I heard them having a conversation about CSE films that they had all been forced to watch. I stayed quiet. I was intrigued that after years of hearing practitioners and suppliers praising the films, here in front of me, were four children having an organic conversation about the harm caused to them by CSE films and resources. One of them had a panic attack, one of them had cut herself.

It was the next day that I started the #nomoreCSEfilms campaign to spread the message that these films could be causing serious harm to children. Over the months, more and more people wrote to me with their stories and experiences of children being harmed and professionals being traumatised by CSE films, drama productions and resources.

Throughout my research and academic work, I discovered that the films had never been through ethical approval, never been tested and never been evaluated. I discovered that thousands of children had seen them despite us not even knowing whether they work. The #nomoreCSEfilms campaign has already achieved widespread awareness and some change, but it is now time for action.

In this document, I have collated the letters I have received, the comments I have collected from professionals, parents and survivors of abuse and hundreds of signatures of professionals and parents who oppose the use of CSE films with children.

This document calls for the end of CSE film usage with children. There will never be a good enough reason to show a child a film of children being raped and murdered as 'awareness raising'.

I would like to thank every single person who has supported my campaign as it has developed – there are some who were the first people who took my concerns seriously and allowed me to write for your publications, get involved in your campaigns and joined forces with me. I would like to especially thank the young people and young adults who wrote to me to tell me their stories of harm caused by CSE films and resources, all of which are included in this document.

I hope that this document presents the evidence required for decision makers and senior leaders to support the withdrawal of all graphic films and productions from CSE practice in the UK.



Jessica Eaton

Victim Focus

www.victimfocus.org.uk

Introduction to this document

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) has dominated the media, social care and police priorities in the UK for several years now. Following a string of high profile cases in which children were failed by professionals and statutory services, a significant amount of CSE organisations and companies have arisen, millions of pounds have been invested in practice, service delivery and research and frontline practice has been evolving to try to protect children from sexual exploitation. One of the results of practice attempting to respond to the sheer volume and complexity of CSE has been the creation and use of films and drama as awareness raising tools and interventions.

All over the UK, tens of thousands of children are being shown films containing graphic scenes of the rape and sexual abuse, drugging, trafficking, grooming, bullying and even murder of children. In the sector, they are well known as 'CSE resources' or 'CSE films' by practitioners and the suppliers. The films are shown to children as young as 8 years old in schools, social care services, residential care and children's charities.

The underpinning assumption with these films are:

- If children are shown videos of sexual abuse and exploitation, they will know what it is for future reference
- If children know what sexual exploitation and abuse is, they will be able to protect themselves from sex offenders
- If children know what sexual exploitation and abuse is, they will 'spot the signs' and escape an abuser quicker
- If children watch the abuse and exploitation of other children, they will realise that it can happen to them
- If children who have already been abused watch the films, they will understand better what happened to them
- If children who are currently being sexually abused watch the films, they will leave the abuser

This document aims to present the first published account of harm and poor practice caused by the use of CSE films and resources with children in the UK and to start the important process of withdrawing these films from practice. There is no current evidence base or literature to draw upon and no guidance for practitioners on how to use CSE films and resources safely. While the films, resources and drama productions are used daily with children, there has never been a study or document exploring the efficacy and impact of any of the products.

This document is not empirical research, but a collection of comments and real stories from children, adults, parents and professionals who have experienced or witnessed serious harm being done to children who have been made to watch CSE films, resources and drama.

Experiences of children, adults and professionals were collected between October 2017 and January 2018 as part of the #nomoreCSEfilms campaign. This document concludes with the signatures of professionals and parents who oppose the use of CSE films with children and a recommendations section, which suggests changes to practice which reflect the gravity of this situation and the fact that as a field, it is likely that we have harmed thousands of children with an untested intervention.

Some local authorities and local safeguarding boards have already withdrawn CSE films and resources from practice, thanks to the #nomoreCSEfilms campaign. The petition and campaign continues to this day.

Use of CSE films and resources

The use of CSE films and resources is widespread across the UK. Almost every local authority in the UK has invested in films or drama productions about CSE and shown them to thousands of children each. The films are shown to children as young as 8 years old but are more commonly shown from around 11 years old. There are two main ways that children are shown CSE films:

In school

Many children who have seen CSE films, have seen them at school. The films and accompanying resources can be shown in large assemblies with hundreds of other children, or in classrooms with around 30 other children. The delivery of the films and resources varies considerably from one school to another, but most schools show the films with no prior warning, no information about content, no parental consent and with no psychological support for the children. Some schools with embedded pastoral care teams offer support after the films have been shown. Some children watch the film and are then invited to take part in a short discussion within the period at school, but most children are shown the films in assemblies and then go to normal lessons.

In this context, the films or resources have usually been instructed for use by the local authority or an NGO. In most areas, schools have been specifically instructed to roll out a film or drama production paid for by the local safeguarding board, and therefore every school in the area would have been told to show the film or production as part of the local strategy. This is a very common technique and so most schools do not operate agency in choosing and showing the film themselves. Some schools would have been directly canvassed by NGOs or private companies selling films and resources and advised that they will help the school to hit their targets for OFSTED inspection which now includes awareness and response to CSE.

The underpinning logic of showing the films in the school setting is prevention and awareness raising. Schools are led to believe that the films prevent children from being sexually abused by increasing their knowledge of abuse. Many of the creators and advocates of the films actively market their films or resources as 'preventative' or 'protective' – meaning that the films convey some benefit towards children that would mean they could then prevent or protect themselves from abusers after watching the film. There is also a wider assumption that the films are more effective than teaching, discussion, debate and peer projects. Whilst we cannot be certain how many children in an assembly hall or classroom have been sexually abused, current statistics in the UK sit between a 1 in 5 and 1 in 20. This means that a significant proportion of the children watching the films or resources in large groups would have experienced sexual abuse.

In direct work

The second way children see CSE films and resources is in direct work with social care, commissioned children's services, NGOs, private residential companies, youth offending teams and police. In this case, the children are already known to those services for concerns or knowledge that the child has been raped, assaulted or abused. Children may be shown a film or resource with a professional present, as part of an action plan devised in multi-agency meetings. It is now common practice for safety and action plans to include the use of multiple CSE films and resources as 'interventions'. Children who have recently been raped or abused are routinely shown CSE films and resources during appointments with the professional but it is also well known that professionals visit the school where the child is taken from lessons and shown the films or resources in a room in the school.

In this context, practitioners have been asked or told to use the CSE film or resource – and in discussions with practitioners such as social workers, they have reported that they are expected to reference the film they made the child watch as ‘evidence’ that the direct work has been completed. They are often unable to simply record that they had discussed or supported the child and so they are expected to use a CSE film or resource to ‘prove’ that they conducted direct work with the child. Some children who have been abused or are known to be at high risk of abuse, have also been taken to particular CSE drama productions or film showings deliberately to increase the chance of a disclosure. In one local authority, children who were known to be being sexually abused were forced to watch a CSE drama production multiple times as it toured schools.

The underpinning logic of showing CSE films or resources to children who are accessing support services or police services are myriad. Some professionals have claimed that they increase disclosure by triggering the child. Some assert that the films make the child realise that they need to change their behaviours and make better choices. Some professionals say that the films help children realise what happened to them and some do not like using the films at all but are under pressure to do so. Most therapists and psychological professionals do not use CSE films or resources, but some CSE specific practitioners report frequent use of the films.

Overall, the use of CSE films and resources is wide spread but varied. A child who attends school now, or a child/adult who attended school in the last 5 years has a high chance of being shown at least one CSE film or resource, with some children seeing multiple films repeatedly.

Evidence base for CSE films and resources

Currently, there is no evidence base for the use, efficacy or impact of CSE films and resources. There are no known studies or empirical evaluations of any of the films, drama productions or resources used in the UK.

Ideally, products such as these would have undergone thorough testing, psychological research, expert review, peer-reviewed data and analysis and then publication for scrutiny. When an individual or organisation develops a new intervention or approach to child trauma, there is a responsibility and requirement to explore current evidence and literature, develop the intervention based on the existing evidence, pilot the intervention safely and ethically, and then continue to test, refine and evaluate the intervention until outcomes are reliable or consistent. None of the films, productions or resources have been put through this rigorous process.

Developers of the films and resources tend to cite small (but unpublished) pilot tests of their products, and all their ‘findings’ are overwhelmingly positive. When requested, data or proof of evaluations and pilots are never supplied. Independent empirical evaluation of the impact of the films have never been conducted.

The issue of evidence base becomes a paradox, however. Many ethics boards at universities or regulatory bodies such as the British Psychological Society or British Association of Social Work would not approve an application to test films and resources containing sexually abusive materials on children, to observe the impact on them. Arguably, an evidence base would be difficult to obtain for those who claim that they are useful. However, the counter argument is that if the initial pilot studies would not pass human ethics boards, its probably unethical to use them at all.

In terms of the limited evidence available, this means that the 'evidence' of harm being caused by CSE films has also been limited. There are no studies which present the experiences of using or watching CSE films and therefore this document is the first to present real accounts of harm caused by them.

However, there are some other sources to draw from. In 2016, the women and equalities committee report on sexual harassment in schools contained a section which raised concerns that CSE resources about sexting were being used to teach children to blame victims. They observed practice in which children were shown films and then asked what the child should have done differently to stop them from being a victim of sexual abuse. In 2017, Eaton and Holmes published a peer-reviewed revised evidence scope in CSE which contained a section advising practitioners not to use CSE films or resources with children who had been abused due to the significant risk of harm.

A related study by Dr Pam Ramsden in 2015 explored the impact of the general public watching traumatising and violent videos on social media and news outlets. Almost a quarter of those who had seen graphic images had lasting effects such as flashbacks, anxiety, insomnia and nightmares. 22% of the sample who had watched graphic short clips scored highly on clinical psychometric measures of PTSD, despite not scoring at all before watching the clips.

If we were to acknowledge the findings from studies such as these, it would be sensible to assume that a similar result would be found for CSE films. However, there is an important difference. Ramsden (2015) was conducted with adults with no reported trauma histories, watching traumatising clips for the first time. CSE films are shown to children with either a known recent experience of rape or abuse, or to groups of children in which a significant proportion would be experiencing or had experienced sexual abuse. This means that the harm done by CSE films, if tested, may be more likely and more severe than in Ramsden (2015) study.

Trauma informed practice

This document presents a catalogue of evidence that CSE films and resources traumatise children (and professionals) who see them. They are being used in local authorities and councils all over the UK. However, at the same time, many local authorities, councils and organisations are moving towards trauma-informed approaches to practice. This section will discuss how CSE films sit in opposition to trauma-informed approaches to practice with children, and what we already know about trauma responses in children.

The films, resources and drama productions discussed in this document are by no means an exhaustive list, but include the following traumatic scenes:

- A child is given drugs and alcohol and sexually assaulted on a bench
- A child is drugged until unconscious, trafficked, imprisoned in a dirty room and raped in different positions by multiple men
- A child is carried unconscious to a bedroom where men pay to rape her
- A child is raped, chased into a field and murdered with a brick to the head, the child's parents identify her body in a morgue
- A child is taken to a party, drugged and then raped by multiple people
- A small child who is sexually abused by a man she met online ends the video by looking into the camera and saying 'I thought I knew. I should have known.'

- A child is given large quantities of alcohol and sexually assaulted on a sofa whilst limply trying to bat the man away
- A small child being sexually abused and then taken to the police to give statements

Understanding of trauma, and how diverse trauma is, is increasing in frontline practice in the UK. More and more practitioners are beginning to link trauma histories to behaviours and outcomes for children and adults. A number of local authorities in the UK are currently piloting trauma-informed services for adults and children to explore whether this would improve outcomes and reduce repeat referrals. It is now becoming more widely accepted that mental health issues are strongly correlated with trauma events and cumulative trauma.

An interesting result of the increase in the understanding of trauma, is the sharp rise in materials, films, presentations, talks, TV shows and blogs containing ‘trigger warnings’ or ‘content warnings’. It is now commonplace to find a warning that a piece of media shows particular triggering material for trauma victims and survivors. These trigger/content warnings are regularly given before professionals start CSE/A training and even before professionals are shown CSE films that they will then use with children. However, the same trigger/content warnings are not given to children before they watch CSE films and drama productions. In many cases, children are shown the films or resources without any prior warning of the content. Children are then led into rooms where they begin to watch a film that quickly develops into a scene where a child is being raped or harmed – and they have no way out. From the accounts collected for this report, children have watched CSE films or used CSE resources, whilst experiencing shock, horror, panic attacks, anxiety symptoms, flashbacks and physiological trauma responses but have remained quiet. They did not get up to leave. They did not run away or hide. They did not tell an adult. They did not disclose their abuse. They report experiencing prolonged and severe trauma responses whilst surrounded by potentially hundreds of students, in an environment that they cannot leave.

A trigger is something that reminds the child of what happened. It ‘triggers’ an association or memory, which causes a range of different stress responses. Trauma memories can be stored at a conscious level, where a child can recall what happened to them or they can be repressed. Some traumas are affected by amnesia, in which the child may only remember parts of what happened, or report having a ‘blank spot’ where they do not remember anything about what happened to them. What we know about triggers, is that they come in all shapes, sizes and senses. A child who was sexually abused could be triggered by a familiar smell of aftershave, the feeling of leather sofas, a model and make of a car, the noise of a train pulling into the station or the feeling of being scared. Triggers are all unique. However, it is widely accepted that the most obvious trauma triggers are those that replicate the abuse – therefore, being touched in the same way, watching it happen to someone else, hearing someone cry or scream, being abused again or watching films or scenes that show sexual violence – are very likely to trigger survivors of abuse.

One study explored the different ways children disclose child sexual abuse and found five common types of disclosure: accidental, purposeful, elicited, behavioural and triggered (Alaggia, 2004). Accidental, purposeful and elicited disclosures only made up 50% of the disclosures of child sexual abuse made by children. The rest were triggered and behavioural disclosures, with triggered disclosures occurring when children had been exposed to a triggering experience. This finding is important because CSE films are often marketed or used by professionals who claim that the films cause disclosures. Leicestershire Police publicly announced in 2017 that after showing their film containing the rape and murder of Kayleigh Heywood to 55,000 children, 50 children disclosed abuse to a professional. This means that at least 50 children experienced trauma triggers whilst watching

the film and then told someone. However, statistically, we would expect a minimum of 2750 children out of 55,000 to have been sexually abused if we based the calculation on the conservative 1 in 20 ratio from NSPCC (2015) – and a minimum of 11,000 out of 55,000 if we based the calculation on the latest CSEW (2017) which found that 1 in 5 British adults reported being abused in childhood. However, only 50 children made disclosures out of 55,000, which suggests that whilst children may be highly traumatised by the film (as reported in the evidence collected for this report), the majority of triggered or traumatised children still did not tell anyone what had happened to them.

Most services and individual practitioners would agree that the first principle of working with humans is ‘do no harm’ – a principle that means whatever we do, we must not cause further harm to children and adults we work with. This document presents evidence that children have been seriously harmed by the use of CSE films and that professionals from a variety of different backgrounds oppose the use of the CSE films and other resources due to the risk of harming or retraumatising children.

There is no evidence that showing children films of rape, abuse and murder are safe – which is one of the reasons why the British Board of Film Classification exists. The BBFC rates films based on offensive, mature, frightening, sexual or abusive content and rates them U, PG, 12, 15 and 18 in the UK. Most CSE films contain the abuse, rape, grooming and intoxication of children, with one showing the murder of a child. This would quite rightly mean that the films are at least a 15 rating, with some achieving an 18 rating – but the films and resources are being used with children as young as 11 years old. Leicestershire police announced that children from 11 years and up were shown ‘Kayleigh’s Love Story’ despite the film opening with a trigger warning and a recommended 15 age rating.

The risk of causing harm, traumatising and retraumatising children is apparent. Trauma informed practice cannot include the use of films that may cause harm to children. Despite the risk, many organisations, schools and individual practitioners show the films to children without any psychological support and with little knowledge of trauma responses. Indeed, one account collected for this report was a child who had recently been raped who got so upset whilst watching ‘Sick Party’ that the practitioner kept pausing the film, telling her to calm down and then starting the film again until she had watched it all. The film should have been stopped, or ideally, never shown at all.

Victim blaming in CSE films and resources

The field of CSE developed from the concerns about so-called ‘child prostitution’. As the definition of CSE became more sophisticated and services moved away from the phrase ‘child prostitution’, it never really became synonymous with child sexual abuse. It led to CSA and CSE being responded to in different ways. CSE has increasingly been seen as a teen issue – an issue of teenagers ‘exchanging’ things for sex and ‘putting themselves at risk’. In this climate, showing CSE films to children to ‘shock’ them, or to ‘make them realise what risks they are taking’ became routine and acceptable practice. The children were not seen as innocent victims of child rape and abuse committed by adults who drugged and trafficked them, but as troubled teenagers who needed educating on how to stay safe and reduce their own risks. This is how the use of CSE films became a form of victim blaming.

Children who were already being abused and exploited were being shown films containing the abuse and rape of children as an ‘intervention’ and told it will reduce their risk. In many local authorities,

practitioners are told that children who have been abused and raped need to see a CSE film and need to be educated about consent and healthy relationships rather than focussing on the trauma and wellbeing of the child.

Children are still routinely shown CSE films or productions before being asked ‘what could the character have done differently?’ or ‘what signs should they have spotted?’ or ‘what can you do to make sure this doesn’t happen to you?’ – victim blaming approaches that were reported in the accounts submitted for this report.

The practice of using films of rape and abuse with victims is not replicated in other services or types of abuse. Victims of domestic abuse are not shown films of partners abusing a victim as part of an intervention. Victims of rape are not shown films of men and women being raped as part of an intervention. Victims of ritual abuse are not shown films and images of ritual abuse as part of an intervention. Victims of sexual harassment at work are not shown films of women being sexually harassed in the workplace as an intervention. This practice is specific to CSE and is based on the assumption that educating children can improve their ‘risk’ of CSE happening to them, which completely ignores the agency, power and choice of the sex offender who targets and abuses children.

A number of CSE films by CEOP contain strong victim blaming language such as the closing line ‘You see, I thought I knew. I should have known’ narrated by a small child who had been sexually abused by an adult. A line from ‘Sick Party’ says ‘Everyone has regrets, but if I could go back, I would have a word with myself!’ which is narrated by a teenage girl who had been drugged and repeatedly raped. In a CEOP film about ‘sexting’ called ‘Exposed’, the main character is arguing that it is her boyfriend’s fault that her private images were shared all over the school and uploaded on the internet but then says to herself ‘oh, stop blaming everyone else for this happening to you, you were the one who took the photos and you chose to send them!’ In Jigsaw, another CEOP film aimed at 8-10 year old children, the main character (a small girl) says to the camera ‘Simon (the sex offender) would not be here if I hadn’t have done all of this.’ Some films are sold with accompanying resources, worksheets and exercises that ask children to think about the ‘risks’ taken by the victims in the films, the ‘choices’ they made and the ‘signs’ they should have known.

Even the films and resources that do not directly blame the child, are shown for reasons that place responsibility and blame on the child to change their behaviours or choices to stop an adult from sexually abusing them. Children are shown films of other children taking pictures of themselves and then told by professionals that being abused is the ‘consequence’ of their poor choices or risk taking.

One professional reported showing ‘My Dangerous Loverboy’ (a film which depicts the repeated rape of a teenage girl whilst her face is shoved into a dirty bed) eleven times to a 13-year-old sex trafficking victim in the West Midlands ‘until she understood the risks she was taking’. The professional in this case had realised that this practice was oppressive and a form of victim blaming because rather than protecting and supporting the child who had been trafficked for sexual exploitation, she had shown the film to the child under the belief that the child would realise what was happening to her and exit abuse herself.

It is important to state that education and information about sex, grooming and relationships can be delivered to children without the assumption that once children have this information, they can protect themselves from sexually abusive adults.

Corporate gain and institutionalised practice

The final issue to consider is the way CSE films and resources have contributed to institutionalised practice and have become one of the major ways NGOs and organisations raise self-generated income.

Some CSE films and resources, despite having no evidence base or testing, are sold for between £70-£294 each plus VAT. Some films even come with recommended 'training' or launch conferences about how to deliver them, which can also cost up to £200 per person. Drama productions in CSE can cost local authorities tens of thousands of pounds, that would be better spent on service delivery or support services for children who have been abused. A significant amount of money can be made from these untested films and resources.

In a climate where CSE cases, serious case reviews and inquiries occur in the public eye, local authorities and organisations feel under pressure to provide 'the answer' to CSE. Some creators and suppliers of CSE films have taken advantage of this pressure and sold resources, films and drama productions all over the UK to local authorities and organisations who have spent tens of thousands of pounds investing in them in an attempt to address CSE in their areas.

Once local authority children's services and local NGOs began collecting CSE films to use as interventions, they quickly became embedded into local CSE strategies, LSCB plans, disruption plans, safety and risk planning, CSE action plans and guidance for professionals.

Professionals from all over the UK report using films and some complain that a reliance on them has developed. Many organisations routinely use the films with children and then record the use of them as if it were a 'prescribed' intervention.

'Child recently disclosed rape at a party. Shown them CSE film and discussed how to keep herself safe in future.'

Statements like these are now common in social work CSE practice and case records, in which the film is used as the intervention. The child does not receive work on their trauma, experiences or responses to being raped or abused by adults – the direct work is focussed on showing them resources and films and discussing with the child how to stay safe, what consent is or how to spot the signs of grooming. Often, very little is done about the offender, especially when social care is not made aware or are not sure who the offender is. Instead, the focus becomes the child – changing the child and improving the knowledge of the child. Psychological support is rare and there are long waiting lists for therapies. For some children, the only input they get after being sexually exploited or abused is to be shown multiple CSE films or resources and sent to watch a drama production about CSE whilst the support worker or carer talks to them about 'risk taking' and 'better choices'. This is very different from the support a child or adult victim of sexual violence should expect, in which they should be supported, offered practical and psychological support for trauma, protected from sexually abusive adults or peers and access to longitudinal support as they process different elements of the trauma experiences.

Despite CSE films, resources and drama productions not reflecting any of the guidance around best practice, they are used routinely every day in the UK with children who have been sexually abused.

Part 2 – Evidence of harm

Real stories of harm caused by CSE films and resources

My name is Kate, and I recently turned 22 years old. When I was 13 years old I was shown CSE videos like the ones detailed in Jessica Eaton's letter, and I would like you to know how that did and still does affect me.

Up until 12 years old I was a very happy child. Then one evening I was walking home down a quiet side alley when some older boys I recognised stopped me and offered me money in exchange for sex. They started grabbing at me, and I only remember flashes of what happened next. After that I would often 'zone out' and lose chunks of time, which is when my school began to notice something wasn't right. It took a lot for me to talk to them but ultimately, nothing happened. Shortly after, I started getting harassed by other boys at my school. They would follow me, wait outside my house, throw things at me and touch me in ways I knew they shouldn't. At first I reported them to my school, and in some cases they were dealt with, but over time I stopped. One teacher had called me annoying, and another had asked out right if I had been raped by 'a man', as I was over reacting for it to be anything else. I felt like I had become 'a problem'.

I always thought it was a coincidence that I was shown the CSE resources, but having read about the same thing happening to so many other children I now think perhaps it wasn't.

Can I tell you what it feels like to sit in a class full of children and be shown videos depicting the most traumatic experience of your life? It feels like your heart is going to thump out of your chest and that you will tremble until you cease to exist. It feels like the world could collapse in on you and that you could explode all at the same time. You're panicking, and you want to scream and cry but you can't because then everyone would know what you are. What happened to you.

Afterwards you made me stand up and read a poem to the class about how I could stop it happening to me, when I knew it already had. At 13 years old I stood up and recited from your videos how I could have stopped my own assaults, if only I had thought. Or not walked alone. Or not been so god damn inviting with my female body. I was so sure everyone in that room would see the guilt written on my skin. I felt utterly humiliated.

Everyone in the class read their poems, and it felt like a chorus amplifying my wrongness. It was a competition. I didn't win.

Your videos taught me that the thoughts inside my head were true. That somehow I'd invited it because of the way I looked or acted or was. That the people around me, my friends, my family and my mum, would be disgusted by and disappointed in me. That they'd whisper and point and think about all the ways I could have prevented it. If only I had known. If only I had told someone sooner. All I had to do was realise what was happening and tell someone. But you see I had realised, and I had told someone. And those videos were what I got. I went into that class feeling dirty and ashamed and left convinced I was right to.

Those videos didn't make me aware that what happened to me was wrong. I already knew that. Those videos didn't make the harassment and assaults stop. If anything, they helped them continue.

So you see, there is no logic in your CSE videos. And I guess I'll never know why you showed me those films. Maybe you didn't know what else to do. Maybe you thought I would find a way to make sure it

didn't happen again. If you wanted to shut me up, it worked. Instead of talking I scratched at my skin, trying to stop the aching, bursting feeling inside my chest. Sometimes I would lie powerless on my bed, overwhelmed by the gnawing feeling that I was worthless because I let it happen to me. Sometimes I still do. Every time I wanted to tell someone memories of those videos convinced me otherwise. It took me 9 years to tell someone after you.

Please stop showing children those videos. They hurt more than you can know, and they stop us asking for the help that we so desperately need. It was your job to make it stop, that responsibility never should have sat with me. I needed you to tell me that it wasn't my fault, to give me the space to be angry and in pain but still be safe and protected.

Please stop using those CSE videos. You're better than that. I know you are.

Kate

I have recently seen your campaign on Twitter #nomoreCSEfilms and would like to share my personal experience of this.

As a child I worked with an organisation in (area name) and was shown the film 'Sick Party.' I remember the worker coming to my home, she brought her laptop and set it up on the dining room table.

We began to watch the DVD. I remember it being approx. half an hour long, during this time I became very upset and panicky. She paused the film several times so I could 'compose myself until we could continue.' At the end of the film I was extremely upset and the worker seemed shocked how upset I was. She ended my visit earlier to 'leave me to calm down' and said she'd come see me next week, then she left.

I vividly remember feeling so confused, embarrassed and ashamed. At that time what I had just seen made me feel so angry at myself that I'd not kept myself 'safe.' I felt stupid that I hadn't 'seen the signs.' I know I self harmed that night, the shame felt unbearable.

Obviously as an adult I now know I am not to blame and that film should never have been shown to me, in my own home and I certainly should not have been left so upset. I wondered if you knew about other 'tools' being used?

I specifically remember being told I would see a worker for 6 weeks and each week we would have a specific 'topic' to work on. This was set in stone with no negotiation. It was a set plan they worked from with children they supported. One week, she brought some cards. Each card had a 'scenario' on it, I then had to match up whether I thought this was 'Okay' 'maybe Okay' or 'not okay'.

One scenario that I remember was along the lines of 'I'm going to take and send a nude photograph' another was 'I am going to meet an older man after school.' The point of the exercise was to look at ways of 'keeping myself safe in the future' - like it was my responsibility as a child that had already been abused to prevent it happening again.

This same organisation documented in my notes on discharge that I was 'low risk' of future CSE as I had 'built resilience in sessions'... 'I now understood the dangers and can make more informed

choices in the future.' It also states that because I came from a good family home, that my parents both had good jobs and that I didn't present as 'over sexualised' I was low risk.

Unfortunately my abuse continued. When I was 18 I was diagnosed with 'personality disorder' by the NHS - I was also referred back to the same organisation who had shown me the film for more support. They wouldn't accept me on the grounds the workers are not 'mental health qualified.' They refused to offer me any support as they weren't a 'mental health service.' I find this completely wrong - as my mental health issues ie. low confidence/self esteem were a direct result of the CSE.

If my experience can help with your campaign in anyway please let me know. I really hope no other child has to feel the upset I felt on the day I saw that film, it fills me with disgust this is allowed to happen.

It's been refreshing to share it with you, many thanks.

*Faye**

So when I was little, I was abused and trafficked. It started when I was 5, and continued until I was in my late teens. It was violent and systematic. I never told anyone, and that is partly due to the CSE resources I was shown growing up.

The first time I ever saw a CSE resource, I was eleven. It was a drama production performed by a travelling company that came into schools. A young teenage girl was depicted as being groomed and eventually raped by an older man. I was so confused. We had never had a lesson on sex education, much less consent, and while I knew what was happening to me was wrong, I had no idea how to explain it.

The atmosphere in the school hall we were shoved into could've been cut with a knife. They hadn't singled any of us out as being 'at risk', but it definitely felt like it. I don't think I breathed the whole time I was sat there. My eyes didn't move from my lap, and my hands were red raw from wringing them so tightly, trying anything I could to distract from the scene unfolding in front of me. And I wasn't the only one. Across the hall were other girls having the same trauma response. From those staring at the ground wanting it to swallow them up to others glancing from door to door looking for the closest exit. I didn't meet anyone's eye for fear that my dirty secret was about to be uncovered in front of my whole year.

That was the first time I had a panic attack. I wasn't sure why at the time but I felt the need to run as far and as fast as possible. Things that I'd tried so hard to forget were flashing in front of my eyes.

Towards the end of the assembly, a well meaning teacher stood up and told us we now knew the signs to look out for, and with that, we'd been officially 'educated'. She sent us off to our respective classes with a smile, but it felt like she was looking right into my soul.

The girls story in the play was different to mine, she had been given gifts and money where I only knew threats and violence, yet somehow it still felt like through her acting she was telling my story, and revealing it in front of everyone.

No one picked up on it though. A group of terrified little girls in a middle school hall, the ones who ran to the bathrooms and threw up straight after, who didn't look anyone in the eye for the rest of

the day. The ones who showered in scalding hot water trying to wash away shame and the ones who covered their bodies at every opportunity, hiding away deep wounds and old scars reading 'whore' that littered their skin.

I was eleven and this was already my life. No support was offered then, or any year thereafter, when we were sat down and made to watch a film of the same ilk. Some protested that we already knew it, and some of us hung our heads in shame, believing more and more with each viewing that we did know the signs, and consequently everything we were living and breathing and surviving each day was all our own fault.

Everything those films and productions and other resources told me, was not that I was brave or strong or clever for protecting a tiny spark of light, but that I was dirty and tarnished, that every one would think badly of me, and that it was all my fault. Those films may seek to educate on warning signs, but for someone already stuck in a cycle, they only ensured that I would never find a way out.

*Josie**

My daughter has been shown several films in school. After one of them, which I now know was "Kayleigh's Love story", she came home visibly upset and anxious. I asked her what was wrong and she asked to talk to me in private (I have a younger daughter, and she didn't want her to hear).

She asked me what rape meant.

I was a bit shocked, and explained. She said "I thought that was what it meant but I wasn't sure". I asked her how she'd heard the word. She then told me that she'd been shown a film where a "Girl was raped and killed". She said it was in assembly, and it was shown as a warning, to "keep us safe online".

She was also worried as the film had stated at the beginning that it would have a 15 rating in the cinema. (I am pretty careful about ratings, and watch things through if in doubt about content). She was 11 at the time.

She's gone up to school a year ahead, so her peers are a year older, but still well under 15 when they were shown the film. Other pupils commented to my daughter that they felt it was too harrowing. I don't understand how schools can show children films rated 15 without consulting parents.

I don't understand how anyone thinks that this is OK to show to a large group of children, some of whom will have surely experienced abuse, and I don't understand how terrifying young girls is considered helpful. Surely there are other ways of teaching sensible behaviour online? If I'd been asked for my permission beforehand, and seen the film, there is absolutely no way I would have agreed to my sensitive, nightmare prone, deep thinking daughter being shown this film at 11 years old.

She has also seen other films. One of which she can't remember much about, as she was so distressed she didn't look at the screen and tried to zone out and not listen. She said it was about a woman

considering suicide. Even talking about it now, a year later, she is still upset about the films. I showed her the beginning of Kayleigh's Love Story, just the black screen with the opening text, to confirm that was what she'd seen, and she immediately confirmed it, and very much didn't want to even glimpse any actual scenes (obviously I'd stopped the video anyway).

I am so glad that you are trying to get these films stopped. My younger daughter will be starting secondary in September and I don't want her to see anything like this.

*Marie**

I became aware of your '#NoMoreCSEFilms' campaign through social media, and I want to add my opinion as a former professional in the child protection arena.

I previously worked as a Police Officer on a Child Abuse Investigation Unit, and later as a Police Trainer for Detectives specialising in child abuse investigation and rape investigation. As part of my own training (and the training I later delivered) we used a selection of these films – the two most popular being 'My Dangerous Loverboy' and 'Sick Party'. These films are notably graphic, and would sometimes result in adults (yes, even supposedly unemotional, robotic Police officers!) turning away or walking out. To have to watch a realistic film of a young girl being repeatedly raped in a dirty shed by numerous men isn't easy viewing for anyone. This was several years ago when these films were fairly new, given the content I would never have considered showing them to a child – to find out that they are I find, quite frankly, horrific.

I have worked with victims of rape and sexual abuse. I have interviewed numerous children who have been subjected to horrific crimes and can say that the Criminal Justice process, the constant questioning, the things that we HAVE to ask to make it 'clear' for a jury that the child knows what they are talking about, the way we MAKE them spell out every little detail so that there can be no ambiguity is traumatic enough. Add to that the inevitable questioning by parents, peers, associated victim-blaming...the thought that one of these films would be shown to a victim who has been through all of this on top of the original offence is beyond belief. Then, I also found that these films are being shown to children in schools...some children who probably don't even know what rape is, and some who are victims we don't yet know about...for the sake of education? These films are not encouraging reporting. They are encouraging shame and embarrassment. Yes, the obligatory disclaimer could be added before the film, but what child or teenager is going to leave the room and draw attention to themselves? Of course they aren't. Even adults don't. If children are suffering in silence the point is that they are scared to come forward for fear of being blamed or not believed. So they will sit through it.

Traumatised if they do, traumatised if they don't.

I am a parent. My 11 year-old daughter is aware of what sexual assault is. However, I would never dream of thinking these films would be appropriate to show her, even in the safety of our living room. In fact, if I did show her such a film and then she went to school and spoke about it, I wouldn't be surprised to get a knock on the door from children's services. They are THAT graphic.

Showing these films is not educational. It is not therapeutic. It goes against everything we know about the treatment of trauma. So lets' stop, think about it, and find another way.

#NoMoreCSEFilms

Tamara Brabazon-Taylor

Former Child Abuse Investigation Detective

This is a conversation I watched between four young people of different sexes and ages, in a CSE service who were taking part in group work when their conversation shifted to CSE films:

YP1: *You know what I hated? Those stupid films about girls being exploited that they made me watch over and over again. One social worker said to me that it would inform me about abuse and make me realise that my rapes weren't as serious as the girl in the film. Felt like punching her. She kept saying it would inform me. So patronising.*

YP2: *Oh god yeah I remember them. Like that one where that girl goes to that party and they drug her up and rape her? I kept saying to them 'why do I need to watch this? It's already happened to me?'*

YP3: *Did you lot see that drama thing that came round all the schools where the girl is convinced she's gonna be a model but they rape her and sell her and lock her in a flat? I BEGGED them not to make me watch that. No one listened to me. I was terrified I was gonna have like a massive mental breakdown in a row in assembly sat on the floor with hundreds of people around me and I wouldn't be able to get out. They made me watch it like 3 times and one time I was so upset they let me sit at the side of the hall in case I had another panic attack and then loads of people kept asking me why I was sitting there and whether it had happened to me and I was mortified.*

YP4: *One time, when I was really down, yeah, I was sat down at school and told I had to watch three films about self harm and suicide and I really didn't wanna watch them but they told me I had to so I did. Two of the films were about self harming cos the school knew I cut right, but the last one was about a girl who hanged herself after abuse and then it was like interviews with her family about the impact it had on them. It was so upsetting. Not gonna lie to you, I went home and cut really bad.*

Jessica Eaton

When I deliver training to adults on the subject of internet sexual grooming, I wrestle with adding content where actors talk explicitly about being abused even when the content is very relevant and pertinent to the audience. I wrestle with it because I know that, in all likelihood, at least one adult I am speaking to will have experienced some form of sexual violence.

It is beyond reasonable comprehension that such graphic films and content would be aimed at children. I know many will have shared about the triggering nature and whilst I agree, I really wanted to underline the way they try to take those videos and use to educate. It is often from a victim blaming point of view. Discussion questions will be "how could you have responded differently?" They may as well ask children directly, how could you stop yourself from getting raped or murdered?

Another issue, of which I personally experienced, is that the victims are rarely relatable. This could be because it is framed under that victim blaming attitude or because no teen is really going to relate to being described as gullible, stupid and attention seeking. But, more than likely, these films cant penetrate the dissociative coping mechanisms that victims build in order to keep the abuse secret from those who might intervene. This is exactly what I experienced. I was abused online from the age of 12 and by the time this was building in the consciousness of the media and my awareness of that consciousness, I was 13/14 and being solicited online daily by men and women. I felt in control of myself and what was happening. All the advice was a repackaging of stranger danger which didn't apply to how I viewed these online relationships.

I didn't have anyone to talk to at home. besides, who should i tell and how could i possibly tell a police officer that I was performing degrading sexual acts for adults who contacted me online or spoke to me on my phone each night? This was prior to smart phones but it still felt constant. I was being contacted at school on IM chat or via my phone and then at home. When I met an abuser at his home and raped for hours...it never occurred to me to admit that I had been the gullible, stupid girl. The police didn't speak to me privately and I definitely couldn't admit in front of parents. CSE films shouldn't be focusing on scaring and shaming vulnerable children. They should be teaching children that it isn't something to feel ashamed of. That even though it is uncomfortable to share, you can tell a police officer about the sexual acts an abuser makes you do on yourself. That is still abuse; even when they are not in the same room or country as you. Otherwise there are going to be many more children whose experience doesn't differ from mine and mine began before it was even a sexual offence to groom children online. It's been 15 years; enough is enough.

*Tanya**

Comments from professionals

I don't work with children but once looked at resources for a piece of work being conducted with a vulnerable adult. What I found shocked me - graphic, frightening videos that were absolutely unsuitable for my purposes, let alone appropriate for use with children. Surely the aim is to educate, not traumatise the audience. Also, the implicit messages were 'you can prevent sexual abuse/ you are responsible if this happens to you' which is absolutely wrong and can contribute to lifelong psychological damage if viewed by a victim /colludes with the distorted thinking of some offenders. There MUST be a better way - resources should be designed by those with expert knowledge in addition to plain old sensitivity and common sense (it should go without saying but obviously not). The effectiveness of these resources must be independently and empirically tested. I absolutely support Jessica Eatons campaign - children deserve better. – **Dr Kerry Daynes, Forensic Psychologist**

I absolutely agree with this & thank her for highlighting this. It is wrong, in my honest opinion. How did it happen? Who is behind it? It does in no way put the children first. I hope others will listen & share this succinct & powerful message, it really matters, and it is urgent – **Sheva Burton, Sexual Violence Campaigner**

I work in an acute adult setting and the idea of showing videos like this to the adults I work with is unimaginable, let alone to children. I am concerned by the idea that watching this material has some benefit for children whereas in adult services, we would advise people to avoid information that is triggering for them. I am most concerned with the “victim blaming” narrative that also seems present. The idea that children (or adults) can be led to believe that they can “do something” to

prevent these things happening from them seems ridiculous and at odds with adult therapy when we are often working with the individual to accept that as a child they were powerless to prevent what happened to them, by a more powerful adult – **Dr Kirsty Harris, Senior Clinical Psychologist**

These and other videos used to victim blame and perpetuate negative rape myths for corporate gain rather than survivor best interest – **Lisa Brooks Lewis, MHST Manager/Psychologist**

Such an important campaign, its certainly informed my practice. Thank you – **Sofie Whee, Child Health Programme**

These films do not solve any problems. Children cannot usually prevent their own abuse but even the few safety behaviours they could learn like scream and run will potentially be short circuited by being exposed to this trauma. For others they may become desensitised, but I also cannot fathom the cruelty in showing this to children in the room who have already been abused. It is victim blaming and traumatising. Kids should also never BE in these sorts of high impact films. Please end the use of these films immediately – **Dr Danielle Clifford, Clinical Psychologist**

I cannot believe that psychologists have not been consulted prior to producing and using CSE films. This is a scandal – **Dr Rebecca Hornee, Educational Psychologist**

Victim blaming is both unhelpful and cruel especially to those children who have already suffered. Could Jimmy Saville's victims have stopped him? No. Could the CSE victims in Rochdale do anything to stop the abuse? No. We need to educate and support not by victim blaming but by analysing and discussing perpetrator behaviour – **Mark Bocker, Consultant Trainer**

I have had training on these videos. Its was awful. Just awful – **Rebecca Jubb-Billis, Counsellor and Support Worker**

Stop retraumatising children! – **Alisha Thomas, ISVA**

Showing these films is beyond appalling. Obviously, these people have zero understanding of why these relationships even form, because this is not the answer – **Kim Rezarch, Trauma Therapist**

As a clinician working in a Child & Adolescent Mental Health service and a parent, I am horrified that materials which have no proven efficacy and contain violent and sexually graphic material is being shown to young people in the UK. I am extremely concerned about the potential traumatizing effects of such material on all the children and young people who view it and in particular the messages that are given to those who have been exploited or abused as to their own role in this. I would urge agencies to consider alternative ways to raise awareness with young people and respectfully remind them that it is our duty as adults to protect children and keep them safe from exactly this kind of material – **Dr Penny Leeming, Clinical Psychologist**

My previous experience as a specialist child interviewer showed me how easy it is to both re-traumatise and further traumatise children through constantly going over and over what had happened to them - Police, Social Workers, Medics, Parents....it was relentless. Showing graphic videos to victims will only cause greater feelings of shame, embarrassment and pain....based on this I strongly oppose this practice – **Tamara Brabazon Taylor, Former Child Abuse Detective**

I strongly oppose showing children these films, I oppose on professional grounds as a Clinical Psychologist, and also as a mother who wouldn't want her children to see such distressing material!
Dr Julie Hare, Clinical Psychologist

It is appalling that these damaging films are being shown to children – **Dr Lynsey Kelly, Clinical Psychologist**

I'm horrified that such material are used with children anywhere, especially when such scenes in mainstream media would likely make them rated 18. Clearly viewing such material could be traumatising or re-traumatising for children and there is no evidence it is protective. There are much better ways we can protect our children. Discussing that this happens is important but watching scenes off it happening is wholly inappropriate – **Dr Fiona McFarlane, Consultant Clinical Psychologist**

This is also highly concerning from the point of view of this organisational psychologist. I am concerned about the organisational cultures and leadership in organisations that would write policies that insisted people used these technologies without any recourse to psychological specialists, psychological oversight, or scientific evidence for their efficacy – **Dr Wendy Kendall, Occupational Psychologist**

I am shocked and saddened to hear that films like this are being used In schools and that children and young people are being exposed to traumatic material in this way. Sadly there are increasing numbers of vulnerable children who may not have a responsible adult to teach them about risk but those in authority who take it upon themselves to take on that role must do so appropriately and without traumatising their audience. Where is their duty of care? These films are harrowing for an adult audience so totally inappropriate – **Dr Alison Bates, CAMHS Clinical Psychologist**

Protection and safety are not learnt through watching abuse stories. Children need protection in our education settings – **Dr Debbie Ford, Clinical Psychologist**

I am a counsellor, but I am also a survivor of sexual abuse. There is no doubt that this is judging, passing blame and retraumatizing. This practice betrays the trust anyone might have that they would be understood and supported. This whole approach is abusive, and deeply damaging. It should be illegal – **KM, Counsellor**

I oppose the use of such films because abused children don't need to be shown what happened to them happening to someone else - and then having to square with their own demons all over again – **Tim Stevenson, Nurse**

I am a practitioner in mental health specialising in trauma - showing explicit films just retraumatizes and exact opposite of perceived best practice – **Sue Penna, Trauma Specialist**

CSE film do not protect children from CSE. They can traumatise children and be a barrier to their recovery – **Tony Roberts, Trainer**

I work as a clinical psychologist in a trauma service and i believe this practice is harmful and should be stopped – **Dr Lynda Durell, Clinical Psychologist**

Films showing scenes of children being drugged and raped must not be shown in schools. Films which suggest that children are to blame must not be shown. Education must be about educating children and adolescents about their rights, power, control, NEVER YOUR FAULT, and always tell as you won't be blamed. I have worked for 15 years with adult survivors of sexual abuse and exploitation and the main reason they didn't tell- they blamed themselves. Giving children a message that they should have stopped the exploitation and abuse will not increase the ability of children to tell an adult – **Dr Nicola Hartigan, Clinical Psychologist**

I completely oppose the creation and use of these films. They cause further harm to already traumatised children, young people and adults. They have no value or place in healing and recovery.
– **Christine Roche, Retired Counsellor**

This is child abuse. It has to stop! **Liane Jacobson, Registered Nurse**

It's surprising how this idea was not thought out in great detail. How would someone react who is being abused, has experienced abused watching this film? It seems a very basic psychology. The way this conversation is happening needs to change and presented in a safe manner not to traumatise someone who is experiencing/ experienced the abuse further – **Anna Vtorova, Media Producer**

The use of CSE films as described here demonstrates ignorance about the adverse consequences of exposure of vulnerable minds to sexual trauma. The audience members are at risk of identifying with the victim in the CSE film and being inhibited, rather than encouraged and supported, to express their own fears, guilt, and fantasies to a supportive, responsible, appropriate adult. What is the point of showing such films? Is the intent to educate or to traumatize? Where is the discussion by responsible educators to explain normal sexuality? Have any educators showing such films consulted child mental health professionals about the impact of such films and content on pre-adolescent and early adolescent minds? Were the students' parents aware of the film content before it was shown?
– **Dr Johnathon Kelly, Psychiatrist**

I work with children who are vulnerable migrants and asylum seekers. Some have been sexually or physically abused. It deeply concerns me that some children like them might see these films at school. They are new to this country and have been through living hell - see this type of material will probably retraumatise and confuse them. It has to stop – **Caroline Wilson Brown, Solicitor**

It's important we educate children around CSE. It needs to be done in an age appropriate way and not done through fear. Let's educate children, not mentally scar them further – **Sammy Woodhouse, Public Speaker, Activist, Author, CSE Survivor, Fundraiser**

I was involved in a road traffic accident once - this is not less likely to happen again because I've seen the Fast & Furious movies... - **Chris Cody, Day Services Officer**

I have worked with youths during grooming and been responsible for putting effective support in place. In doing so we went to a number of training, one of which involved a CSE video and in that room sat a number of professionals with lived experience and were working with the youth. We didn't show the films to that youth as professionals felt that it was contradictory to the intervention we were facilitating which was to cause as much disruption to those grooming the youth and to show unconditional positive regard throughout to the youth and working together to intervene as much as possible – **Sile Walsh, Coach**

Spoke at length with former colleague regarding this as a team I managed a number of years ago delivered CEOPS sessions and incorporated additional material / plays and video clips convinced we were doing the right thing. My former colleague has told me that she is traumatised by even hearing the sound track that was used on one of the films as triggers her and makes her feel uneasy and anxious. I would no longer instruct the use of such CSE films or support their use within any organisation or setting with children and young people. If only I had known 11 years ago what I know now. Time to accept that no child or staff member should be traumatised further or vicariously as it is unethical and damaging – **Joanne Felvus, Child Services Leadership**

Urgent conversations are needed with CSE workers and LST workers amongst Staffordshire County Council in their sometimes over usage and reliance on CSE videos – **Programme Manager**

I don't use films whilst training. I speak about my personal experiences, I feel films can be very one sided and often victim blaming. Every session I do I always send the message that abuse is never the victims fault and they should never have shame or guilt – **Rachel Williams, Trainer and Speaker**

As a VAWG organisation we oppose the re-traumatising of all victims and work hard to educate/influence others – **Elaine Yates, CEO**

I was absolutely gobsmacked and appalled when I read about CSE films. How can any professional working in the field of child care, education, or protection think this is beneficial to a child? – **Suzanne Desire, Scientist**

I cannot imagine a mindset that seriously thinks that showing already traumatised children films about the thing that caused that trauma reaction is a positive step forward for those children. You'd have to be insane or getting something out of it. – **Nina Gadson, Psychology Scholar**

Comments from parents

The more I think about this, the more I agree that this practice must be stopped – J

Traumatic for both victims of sexual violence and other children to watch films like this. How can it possibly help children in any way to see these images? It can't prevent abuse, or help to process the aftermath of abuse, all it will do is cause distress, fear, and possibly guilt – H

I am shocked that children are shown CSE films, apparently attempting to show how to avoid being a victim. These films can only be distressing both for those who have experienced CSE, and for those who haven't – S

Vivid and sensational images, can either upset or even worse generate an unhealthy interest where none existed before. Children are keen to sample everything sometimes more so if they know it is wrong. They need dispassionate advice on how to spot false relationships and pull out of them before they become hooked sensational footage does not do this – R

I cannot believe that this campaign is necessary. Has the world gone mad? Thank you for trying to protect our children! – M

These films are atrocious and should not be shown to children – C

I can't believe that anybody thinks it's ok to show children films containing sexual abuse. I actually thought you could get put into prison for showing children porn but apparently not. I'm absolutely shocked and I'm not easily shocked! – E

I am very disturbed by this as an adult. I think it is horrific to show these films to children – E

Evidence and compassion are everything. What works and does least harm is what we need. – P

Come on, this is basic common sense. It is not necessary to show graphic images to get a point across. I'm concerned these videos could be exacerbating the whole issue – P

This is totally unnecessary and should be stopped. – K

Comments from survivors of sexual abuse

I watched a video made to teach young people about consent. It contained a rape scene which alarmed me. Whilst there was some "safeguarding" (I use the term loosely), there was little regard for their history...or mine for that matter! I was rooted to the spot but had to remain professional! – S

When I was in care as a child I was subjected to similar programs that promoted the idea that changing my behaviour would prevent abuse. It made me feel like I should have stopped the abuse I suffered. But I did everything I was meant to- I told, I fled- nothing I did stopped the abuse. It has led to a lifetime of blaming myself, suicidal feelings and mistrust of helping professionals. It has made it hard to get support, because I expect helping professionals to blame me like they did when I was a child. I am waiting for them to say I should have done something different. I cant overstate the amount of shame and hopelessness these kinds of films, and the message in them, caused me as a child – N

I am a rape victim, also had to sit at work and watch several of these CSE films be shown to a group of children, I found it triggering as an adult and i hate to think how it would have affected a child in my situation -H

I survived physical and psychological abuse as a child in the 1960's; I still find explicit abuse-related material hard to cope with now. It must be far worse for a child survivor who will inevitably have been abused much more recently – R

As someone who was exploited as a child, victim blaming caused me harm. I would like to help prevent children from experiencing the same harm as I did. Victim-blaming videos are not the way to help child victims recover from their experience. Please stop using CSE films – D

I still find these films trigger me and its now 50 years since I was abused – M

Signatures of people supporting the removal of CSE films from practice in the UK

| | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Nick Champion | Angela Howard | Dr Katie Mc | Dr Lisa Shaverin |
| Sammy Wood | Jonathan Kelly | Stacey mason | Monya |
| Andy Groves | Anna | Sue Whitmore | Sue penna |
| Alex Eaton | Chloe Marr | Jan Cruickshank | Michelle freeman |
| Gillian Demurtas | Laura Livingstone | Katie G | J N-J |
| Sammantha Cave | Lucinda Wade | Julie hare | Guenevere Weatherley |
| Chris Cody | Isobel Griffiths | Rosemary Broome | Robert Brenchley |
| Heather | Victoria Avila | Dr Susanne Robbins | Paul Hodgkinson |
| Suzanne Baylis | Tina Quail | Dr Kat Alcock | Louise Booth |
| Kiera Lambe | Patricia Bermingham | Dr Lynsey Kelly | E Wicks |
| Sile Walsh | Peter Cl | Fiona McFarlane | Dr. Bethan Roberts |
| Lee cam | Tara Shennan | Dr Rachel Newton | Petra Firman |
| Joanne Felvus | Caroline Wilson-Brown | Emma Hart | Tony Roberts |
| Alice | Catherine Henaghan | Wendy Kendall | Sarah Pagdin |
| Mandy Griffin | Kate | Dr Alison Bates | Lynda Durell |
| Rachel Butcher | Kathryn | Rachel Smyth | Dr Nicola Hartigan |
| Rachel Williams | Julie Layden | Debbie for | Dr Verity Lawrence |
| Charlotte Hatton | Sharon O'Brien | Rita | Kelly Scott |
| Debbie | Alexandra Goldstein | Hannah Green | Amy Morr |
| Deirdre Hughes | Emma Dalrymple | Luna Centifanti | Julia Lamb |
| Elaine yates | Josephine Sirotkin | Dr Deborah A. Lee | D Austin |
| Sian Henry | Christine Renwick | Dr Sari Saatsi | Christine Roche |
| Claudia Conway | Dr Alec Grant | Kelly Oliver Dougall | Liz Orr |
| Kim Down | Joanna Williams | katherine mccourt | Aubrey Stark-Toller |
| Sarah Firth | Gary Heydon | Gemma | A Bindoff |
| Vicki Bra | Emily | Eloise Cummins | Arwen Webb |
| Amy Morr | Jennifer O'Beirne | Katie McDonell | Emma Hartley |
| Rodney Snook | Helen Ryan | Dr Bray | Liane Jacobson |
| Michelle Charlesworth | Danielle Clifford | Dr Charlotte Ingham | Anna Vtorova |
| Joanne Ellison Adams | Rebecca Hornee | Elizabeth Pink | Rob Hill |
| Emma Dineen | Marta Sikora | Bet Myers | Susan Stuart |
| Carolyn | Becky Wille | Katie Potts | Bob Balfour |
| Cindy douglas | Katie Grammer | Layla Meade | Dr Kirsty Harris |
| Merin Mathew | Sahar | Tim Stevenson | Diane Thomason |
| TJ Austin | Amy Lyon - Taylor | Emma Wallace | Catherine Drury |
| Elaine Weir | Stephanie Foster | Cath Knibbs | Sue Ma |
| Nell Butler | Mark Bocker | Dr Alec Grant | Jane MoncktonnSmith |
| Sarah Russell | Helen Saxby | Dr Nina Burrowes | Sam keith |
| Lindsey miller | Rebecca Jubb-Billis | Chris Taylor | Claire |
| Emma Williams | Angela Moy | Maggie Siv | Sheena Best |
| Kim Rezarch | Anne Marchant | Catherine Doyle | Lisa Brooks-Lewis |
| Annie sollom | Neil Walsh | Sheva Burton | Geraldine Lee |
| Emma Magee | alisha thomas | Chris Cody | Rachel Williams |
| Carol Reid | Claire connor | Shirley Bailey | Donna Booth |
| Gráinne Turley | Jon Irwin | | Emily |

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| <p>Claire Husb Gunhild Mewes Dr Penny Leeming Tamara Brabazon-Taylor Hannah Oldfield Dr Nicola Gillisepie Leah Wilcox Dr Ella Stadnick Dr Helen Rodwell Dr Liz Utting Roya Afsharzagdegan Dr Sue Gerrard Gary Tanner Danielle Gordon Louise Brown Hannah Dornin Rebekah Taylor Alex Eaton Suzanne Baylis Karen Shaw Stacey Stewart Emma Steele Vicki Bra Amy Morr Esther Baker Jane Galloway Caitlin Spencer Suzanne Desire Helen Gray Nina Gadsdon John Stainton Philippa Saddington</p> | <p>Shauna Devlin Julia Royce Sarah Atkinson Bianca Thompson Stefan Davis Michael Carroll-Owen Lisa Brooks-Lewis Jaimi Shrive Danielle Cooper Barbara Laphorn Emma Wilkes Carolyn Moody Kate Beaumont Jennifer Burnett Emily Thomas Kathryn Deeming Anita Bentata Janet Woollands Laura Sanders Emma Salmon Stephanie Law Rhonda Thompson David Parker J. Burnside Alex Robertshaw-Seery Hazel Lindsay Linda Hailstone Angela Smith Isabella Semple Kerry Daynes Darleen Jones Caz Joanne Dobbie R Mackenzie Beth Price</p> | <p>HMJarvis Lewis Helen Elster Jones Dr Gareth Morgan Philip Winterbottom Paul Watson Min Grob Fazila Patel Professor Erica Bowen Professor Esther Cohen Claire Paterson Dr Elizabeth Utting Anne McCormack Lisa Etherson Sarah Morgan Gary Hibberd James Long Jessica Eaton Sarah Eva Traci Tracy Sarah Wilson Pamela Smith Warren Larkin Krithika Anil Jaye Rob Charlotte Commons Hilda Palmer Carol Gillian Leno Claire Paterson-Young E Frater Stephanie Davies-Arai</p> | <p>Stephanie Davies-Arai Sofie Whee Melissa Mallows Rebecca Pillay Sarah Angus Tania Rodrigues Nicky Hill Christine Toft Abdul Hafeez Siddique Dr Ruth Tully Tracy Taylor Dr Keri Nixon Dr Emma-Jayne Williams Danielle McLeod Fiona Dwyer Colm Dempsey Liz Brownlees Mel Riley Jess van der hoech Dr Nicola Sutton Jo Spender Nathan Gould Margaret Glover Hollie venn Michael Murphy Sarah Aspin Rebekah Taylor Claire Heuchan Jacqueline Edgerton Juliette Ward Jodie Keens Alison Thorpe</p> |
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Content guide for CSE films and resources

| Basic information | | | Traumatic content | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Name of film or resource | Supplier or Publisher | Age of audience used with | Empirically tested | Evidence of efficacy | Contains physical violence | Contains rape or assault scene | Contains drugged or unconscious child | Contains victim blaming language | Contains child trafficking | Contains bullying |
| My Dangerous Loverboy | UKHTC | 13+ | N | N | Y | Y | Y | N | Y | N |
| Sick Party | Basis | 13+ | N | N | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | N |
| Kayleigh's Love Story | Leicestershire Police | 11+ | N | N | Y | Y | N | N | N | N |
| Chelsea's Choice | AlterEgo Theatre | 11+ | N | N | Y | Implied and discussed | Y | Y – title 'choice' | Y | Y |
| Cruel Kindness | Safe and Sound | 13+ | N | N | N | Y | Y | N | Y | Y |
| Exposed | CEOP | 13+ | N | N | N | N | N | Y – overt victim blaming | N | Y |
| Exploited | CEOP | 13+ | N | N | N | Y | N | N | N | Y |
| ThinkUKnow: Claire | CEOP | 8+ | N | N | N | Implied and discussed | N | Y – overt victim blaming | N | N |
| ThinkUKnow: Matt | CEOP | 8+ | N | N | N | Implied and discussed | N | Y – overt victim blaming | N | N |
| ThinkUKnow: Tom | CEOP | 8+ | N | N | N | Implied and discussed | Y | Y – overt victim blaming | N | N |
| Alright Charlie | Blast Project | 9-11 | N | N | N | Implied but not discussed | N | N | N | N |

Recommendations for practice

- Stop the use of CSE films with all children as soon as possible
- Do not commission or allow organisations to work with children if they plan to use CSE films with the child at any stage
- Education is vital, but it will not protect children from sex offenders. Educate children with age-appropriate knowledge, but do not expect the education to stop abusers or reduce their risk of abuse.
- Education of sex, relationships, grooming and abuse does not need imagery or films that depict harm to children
- Stop the requirement for social workers to evidence direct work by making them use CSE films and resources as 'proof' that the direct work has been done
- Do not embed CSE films and products into CSE strategies and CSE response plans
- When a child has been sexually abused, direct work should be focussed on their wellbeing, trauma and recovery
- Challenge victim blaming practices in your workplace, which include practices that tell children that their actions lead to them being sexually abused

Advice for professionals who use or make CSE films and productions

Some organisations and practitioners have reported that they are determined to continue using CSE films and resources, despite all of the evidence of harm. For those, the following actions are recommended:

- Do not ask children what they could have done differently (where the answers are a modification of the child's behaviour or actions that would have 'led' to not being abused, which has no evidence base and is a form of victim blaming)
- Any teaching or resources should be focussed on the actions, decisions or issues of the sex offender – not the child. Teach children that people who harm them do so because that person wanted to, not because there is anything wrong with the child
- Steer clear of depicting 'vulnerable' children - many resources show a child who is having some sort of 'problem' which makes them 'vulnerable' to a sex offender. There is no evidence at present that vulnerabilities lead to being sexually exploited - and vulnerabilities are not a pre-requisite to being sexually abused. If you would like a thorough argument, please read the new CSE Evidence Review (Eaton and Holmes, 2017)
- Also, steer clear of depicting stereotypical rape victims (white, female, teenage, socially confident, parties, hotels, boyfriends, taxis etc) – it alienates children who don't see themselves in the resource
- Don't show just one type of sex offender using one type of method – think outside of the box. Try to show the diversity of abusers and the techniques. Some sex offenders are just violent and threaten children. Some offenders will be very careful and charming and nice. Some mix it up. Some have completely different approaches. We are guilty of only ever showing one type of sex offender in CSE films and resources.
- Don't show online abuse as a fat old ugly man posing as a teenager online to groom children, the research does not support this at all - and it is causing a narrative in professionals all

over the UK who think that online abuse is a sex offender who poses as children and then 'tricks' them into meeting them.

- Do not sell, roll out or deliver a resource or film that has not been tested empirically and independently
- Only make a resource or film if you have sought an expert panel which includes child, clinical or forensic psychologists at a bare minimum. Go to your local universities and ask for a reviewing panel. Ask for ethical review.
- Don't release anything until you have the data and empirical evidence that it (a) does no harm to children (b) is inclusive to as many children as possible with different versions for children with disabilities, language differences, cultural differences and so on and (c) actually helps children. If you can't prove these things, it's not good enough for our children and young people. Apply the standards you would to something being used on your own children or family members.
- Once you have developed and validated something with expert teams and you are sure it is ethical - now it's time to evaluate the effectiveness with larger samples of children. What is the effect of your resource? How does it work? How do you know? Does it work the same for all children? Does it work better for some over others? Why? Do children benefit from this? How? How long for? How do you know? Is there any difference between the children who have never seen your film/resource and the children you used it with? How do you know? How will you test this?
- Only market your resource if you can prove what you say it does.
- Publish your data and proof for other professionals to explore and feel reassured that it was ethical, valid and empirical.
- Finally, ask yourselves this question: Why are you making this resource? Is it to make money? Is it to boost your reputation? Is it to launch it at an expensive conference? Is it to position yourselves as leaders in the field of CSE? Is it to sell to schools and local authorities for £200 each?

Further reading on #nomoreCSEfilms

| # | Information | Link |
|----|---|---|
| 1 | Former Child Abuse Detective writes a letter to support #nomoreCSEfilms | https://wp.me/p7npin-df |
| 2 | "My 11-year-old daughter was shown a CSE film where a girl is raped and murdered..." #nomoreCSEfilms | https://wp.me/p7npin-dj |
| 3 | 'I had my first ever panic attack watching a CSE film at school' - another letter for #nomoreCSEfilms | https://wp.me/p7npin-df |
| 4 | How to protect children from chicken nugget related sex offences | https://wp.me/p7npin-cN |
| 5 | 'You showed me a CSE film when I was 13 years old... this is how it affected me' - A letter for #nomoreCSEfilms | https://wp.me/p7npin-cs |
| 6 | So, you're making a CSE resource? Tips on ethics, science, safety and agenda | https://wp.me/p7npin-bo |
| 7 | A letter to UK Psychologists: You have an urgent role to play in CSE | https://wp.me/p7npin-aY |
| 8 | Critical thinking and parsimony will improve the field of CSE - here's how... | https://wp.me/p7npin-7G |
| 9 | Please, stop using all CSE resources. Here's why... | https://wp.me/p7npin-7k |
| 10 | Why 'CSE awareness' will never prevent CSE | https://wp.me/p7npin-4K |