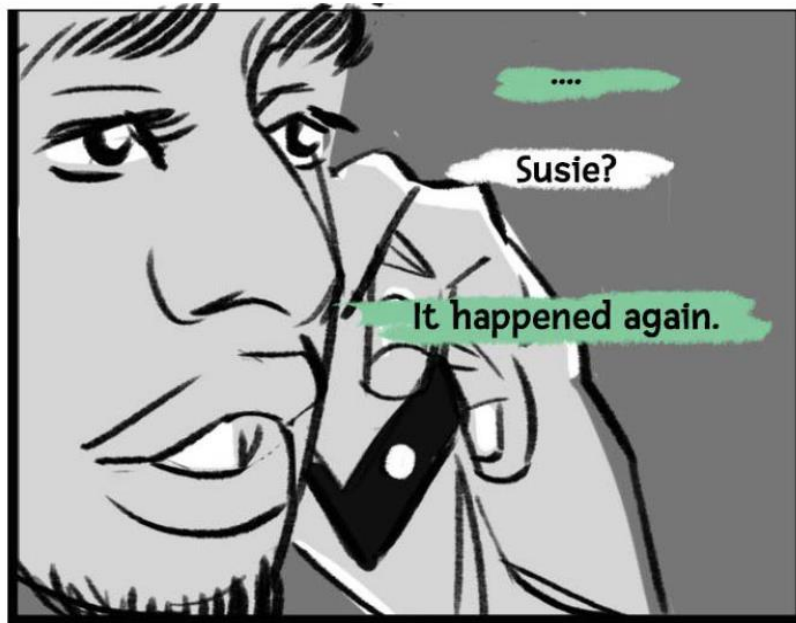


Changing Minds: The Real Impact of Street Harassment



A resource booklet for group leaders and educators

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Introduction

This booklet has been produced by a research team from the University of Nottingham and Nottingham Trent University to accompany Changing Minds: The Real Impact of Street Harassment comic. It contains a set of practical resources to assist educators and group leaders in their engagement with young people about the significant issue of dealing with street harassment.

The booklet includes key information from the team's research, suggested discussion points and activities (pages 5-6), the comic (pages 7-9), and additional materials to enhance young people's understanding of street harassment and its impact. Pages 3-4 are ready to be printed as handouts in classes and discussion groups alongside the [comic](#) (pages 7-9).

The comic highlights how street harassment deeply affects the lives of girls and women, and how peers can call it out, helping to stamp out street harassment for good, making a real difference to the lives of those who experience it.

Background to the comic

The comic was produced following the research team's project investigating street harassment in Nottinghamshire. The project considered the impact of Nottinghamshire Police's decision to start recording offences motivated by misogyny hate crimes. The team surveyed and spoke to men and women about street harassment. This comic is based on their real life experiences.



Misogyny: hostility or prejudice towards girls or women.

Hate crime: a crime committed against someone because of their disability, race, religion, sexual orientation or transgender identity – and in some areas, gender.

The research recommended that girls and women should report street harassment, especially in areas such as Nottinghamshire where the police are recording hate crime incidents motivated by misogyny.

It also recommended that educators directly engage with boys and men to challenge macho masculinities associated with this kind of behaviour, to help them understand the harm caused by street harassment and to encourage them to call it out when they see their peers behaving in negative ways, for the safety and good of society as a whole.



Research found the following*:

- 94% of respondents had either experienced or witnessed street harassment.
- 75% of people who experienced street harassment reported that it had a long-term impact on them.
- 63% of people changed their behaviour as a result.
- only 7% of victims reported the incident to the police.
- 94% of people considered street harassment to be a social problem
- 90% considered it to be a particular problem for women.
- Women from black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups often experience misogyny hate crime and racial hate crime simultaneously and feel doubly vulnerable to attack.
- Changing attitudes is crucial and education is key.

*[Mullany and Trickett \(2018\) Misogyny Hate Crime Evaluation Report](#)

Street harassment: FAQs

1. What is street harassment?

Street harassment faced by girls/women can take lots of different forms including whistling, leering, groping, sexual assault, being followed home, taking unwanted photos on mobiles, upskirting (taking photos up skirts without consent), sexually explicit language, threatening, aggressive or intimidating behaviour, indecent exposure or unwanted sexual advances. It can be based on gender, race, disability, transgender identity or any other aspect(s) of social identities. These things often intersect (overlap).

2. What kinds of language and behaviour are considered to be harassment?

Women reported that harassment involved being threatened and physically assaulted, sexual assault, sexual harassment, comments about their looks, sexualised language, being asked or told to smile, being followed, being subject to indecent exposure from men.

3. Where does harassment happen?

In many different public spaces. Women reported experiencing harassment on the street, in nightclubs and bars, on public transport, in parks, schools, colleges, universities, workplaces, shops, car parks, restaurants, gyms, petrol stations, cinemas and many other settings outside the home.

4. What impact does it have on girls/women?

Many women have reported feeling anxious, extra-vigilant or suspicious of strangers after experiencing street harassment. Street harassment is not harmless. 63% of women said they changed their behaviour afterwards, including avoiding the area where it happened, not going out alone, taking a different route or staying inside their homes. Some felt they had to change the way they dress.

5. Do boys/men experience street harassment?

Men and boys do experience harassment in the street, including threatening behaviour and assaults. These occurrences are also serious and harmful. Women and girls report that the type of street harassment they experience is often sexualised and related to their gender. Men and boys did not report experiencing harassment in this way.

6. Is street harassment a crime?

Many instances of street harassment are criminal offences including sexual assault, threatening behaviour and 'upskirting'. In an increasing number of areas of the UK, police forces are recording criminal offences motivated by prejudice or hostility towards women as 'misogyny hate crime' or 'gender hate crime'. The Law Commission is currently considering whether to roll out this policy nationally – watch this space!

7. What can people do if they experience street harassment?

They can report it to the police by calling 101 (or 999 in an emergency, where there is a threat to life). In areas where misogyny is also being recorded as a hate crime, women can report harassment motivated by gender-based hostility or prejudice.

8. What should I do if I see somebody being harassed?

It depends on the circumstances. If your mates are harassing somebody, call them out! Tell them it's not okay and remind them to show respect for others. Otherwise, if you judge it to be safe, you can: ask the victim if she's okay, ask the harasser to stop, monitor the situation to make sure it doesn't escalate, call the police to report the incident using 999 if it's an emergency or 101 to report the incident.

Why do some men engage in street harassment?

The Nottingham research team asked men taking part in the research why they thought some men harass women. Their reasons including the following:

- (i) a type of macho masculinity emerges when men are in groups of peers, especially if they're drinking alcohol, which can result in a 'mob mentality';
- (ii) some men don't consider their behaviour to be unacceptable; they think they're entitled to do it, and could be trying to attract or compliment women.

These are some men's answers, in their own words, to the question, 'Why do some men engage in street harassment?':

It's that peer pressure isn't it? You're with a group of people, you're of an age where, rightly or wrongly, the people around you influence you more than you influence yourself and it's that pressure of fitting in that maybe allows that to happen.

If men are drunk they're more likely to do it ... probably a bit of an ego thing. Guys think they can do that, think they're above the law, or above moral reasons, and that moral things don't apply to them oh, I can do that, 'cause I'm a guy.

I think a lot of it is lad culture. When a group of lads get together they do it a lot more. If they were on their own they wouldn't do it I don't think. It's just that when you've got a group of lads, that happens. To be honest, I think that a lot of it, they're not really even doing it to speak to the girl. They're just doing it as a laugh between themselves, they're not doing it thinking that it's going to affect them, the victim. It's more, just, how guys banter.

I think of a time when I may have acted in a group in ways which if I was on my own and I look back on some of those behaviours and think, 'No, I went against my own ethics there somehow.' I feel quite uncomfortable about, yeah I was sort of going along with the group... I don't think that's just groups of men, but groups of anybody.

There's male fragility at the moment so I think there's over-masculine behaviour because I think men feel threatened by their position in society.

Guys probably think they can just go up to girls, 'cause... I don't know, they think they're gonna attract these girls, one day get in a relationship with these girls? ... I think there's probably loads of reasons, isn't there? But that's probably one, maybe guys just want short-term relationships.

Session plans

These session plans are intended to give educators and group leaders ideas about how to use the comic book to engage with young people about street harassment and to encourage them to think about its impact.

The objectives for each session are broadly linked to the [Programme of Study for PSHE](#), published by the PSHE Association, for Key Stages 3, 4 and 5. However, the resources in this booklet are designed for use by any groups of young people including youth clubs, Girl Guiding and Scouts, universities and sports clubs etc. Copies of the comic can be downloaded [here](#). Pages 3-4 of this booklet have been designed as handouts.

Feel free to pick any activities you consider appropriate for your group, or to use the resources as a jumping-off point for your own ideas. At the back of this booklet you will also find additional resources including videos, campaigns and further reading that you might want to use to develop your own understanding, or the understanding of the young people you work with.

1: Recognising street harassment

Objective:

Recognise and understand the unacceptability of prejudice-based language and behaviour, including sexism.

1. Ask the group to read page 1 of the comic and then start a discussion around these questions:
 - What happens when the woman is on the tram? Which of these things is harassment? Have you ever witnessed similar behaviour?
 - Can you think of other forms of street harassment?
 - Where else do you think street harassment happens?
2. Watch this [video produced by Plan UK](#) and start a discussion around these questions:
 - What forms of harassment did you see?
 - How do you think the girls and women in the video feel? What impact do you think harassment might have on them?
 - Watch this YouTube [video produced by Cosmopolitan.com](#) in the US about men's responses to seeing their partners being harassed in the street. (Warning: mild swearing)
 - Were you surprised to see what happened to the women as they walked down the street?
 - If your mum/sister/girlfriend told you this had happened to her, how would you feel? What would you say to her?

2: Women's right not to experience harassment

Objective:

To understand women's rights in relation to harassment, how to respond and how to access support.

1. Thinking about page 2 of the comic, start a discussion around these questions:
 - Were you surprised by some of the statistics on this page?
 - In some areas in the UK, these types of incident are recorded as hate crimes and there are campaigns underway to expand this across England and Wales. How do you feel about that?
2. Organise a short debate about street harassment.
 - Split into two groups: one side must argue that all street harassment should be illegal, the other must argue that it shouldn't be against the law.
 - Ask participants to use pages 3-4 of this booklet, as well as the comic, to inform their points and arguments.
 - At the end, hold a vote to decide which team was most convincing.
3. How could girls and women respond if they experience street harassment? What would you advise girls and women to do after experiencing it? Who could they tell?

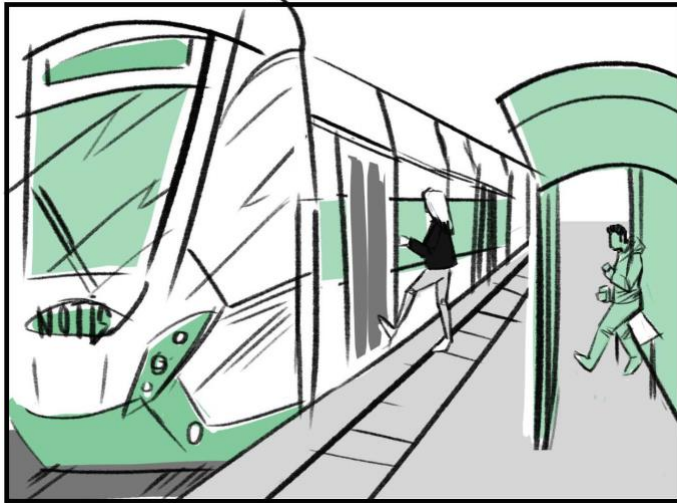
3: Challenging peers' behaviour

Objective:

Recognise peer influence and develop strategies for managing it. Recognise the role peers can play in supporting one another to challenge harmful social norms.

1. Watch this advertisement: ['We Believe: The Best Men Can Be | Gillette \(Short Film\)'](#)
 - What do members of the group think about the video? About the masculinities on display? About the interventions made at the end of the film?
2. Split into small groups and role play the situation in the final two frames of the comic.
 - Each group will need someone to play the woman on public transport, the harasser and his mates. How could they call out street harassment? What could they say or do to end it?
 - The groups can perform their role plays for each other and come up with potential responses.
3. Organise a campaign to end street harassment. How could the group mobilise itself to gain support?
Some ideas might include: making a poster, writing a short story or play, giving a presentation to a sports team, starting a conversation with other men and boys, talking to girls and women to find out about their experiences. What other ideas could the group come up with?

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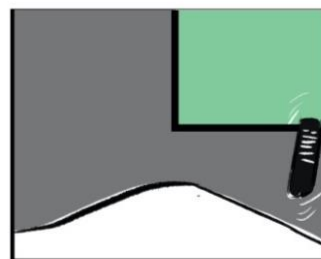
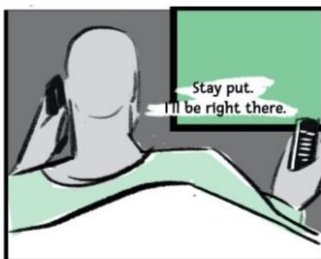


A survey in Nottingham between 2016 -18 found that 37.6% of misogyny hate crimes happen on public transport.

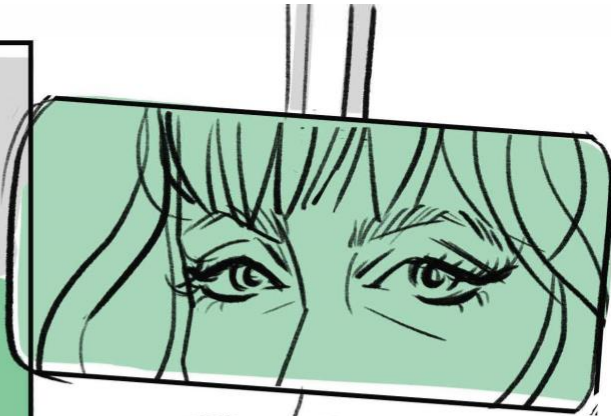




OMG!



A survey in Nottingham between 2016 -18 found that in terms of threatening behaviour or language, 35.9% of women experienced sexual assault and 28.9% were told or asked to smile.



Over 300 women have reported misogyny hate crimes since Nottinghamshire Police brought in the policy. Help change the everyday lives of women and girls by calling out such behaviour and reporting gender-based hate crime to the Police.

Additional resources

Videos

TEDxExeter Talk by Jess Leigh on YouTube [‘Street harassment – it’s not ok’](#)

Hollaback and Rob Bliss Creative YouTube video [‘10 hours walking in NYC as a woman’](#)

CNN Report on YouTube [‘Male actor dresses as woman to experience sexual harassment’](#)
(Egypt)

Iris YouTube video [‘Sons React to Their Moms Getting Catcalled’](#)

Snickers Australian advertisement. Construction workers and street harassment
[‘Hungry Workers’](#)

Campaigns and charities

Plan International UK – [street harassment of girls](#).

UN – [Safe Spaces Now](#)

Girl Scouts (US) – [advice for parents](#)

Hollaback – [responding to street harassment](#)

Further reading

Jordan Stephens (Rizzle Kicks) in *The Guardian* October 2017 [‘Toxic masculinity is everywhere. It’s up to us men to fix this’](#)

Alexandra Topping, Kate Lyons and Matthew Weaver in *The Guardian* January 2019
[‘Gillette #MeToo razors ad on ‘toxic masculinity’ gets praise – and abuse’](#)

BBC News report 11 June 2020 [‘Domestic Abuse Bill: Misogyny should be treated as a hate crime, say MPs’](#)

Prof. Louise Mullany and Dr. Loretta Trickett (2018). [‘Misogyny Hate Crime Evaluation Report’](#)

UN Women report by Purna Sen, Eunice Borges, Estafania Guallar and Jade Cochran
[‘Towards an end to sexual harassment: The urgency and nature of change in the era of #MeToo’](#)