

# MANAGING UNWANTED ATTENTION



# GROUND RULES



- Listen to and respect each other
- One person speaking at a time
- Openness but no personal stories
- No such thing as a silly question
- During discussions we have the right to pass
- We won't laugh at, judge, or make assumptions about anyone else in the group

# LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Define the terms stalking and harassment
- Identify the behaviours associated with stalking
- Explain what to do if someone feels they or someone they know is the target or perpetrator of stalking or harassment

# CONCEPT MAP

**Definitions of stalking  
and harassment:**

**Differences between  
stalking and  
harassment:**

**Examples of stalking  
behaviours:**

**Likely feelings of  
someone  
being stalked:**

# HARASSMENT & STALKING

**Harassment:** Harassment is repeated unwanted behaviour that offends someone or makes them feel distressed.

**Stalking:** Stalking is a pattern of unwanted and persistent behaviour, motivated by a fixation or obsession towards a person, that causes them to feel distressed or fearful.

# WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Acceptable ☒

It depends ?

Unacceptable ☒



# Scenarios – twelve possible (see next slide)



1. Getting upset when a person says they don't want to see them again
2. Telling an ex they miss them when they next meet up as part of a friendship group
3. Sending abusive messages if someone is 'ghosted' after two dates
4. Looking at an ex's social media profiles to find out if there is any chance of getting back together
5. Looking at a crush's social media profiles to find out where they are and going along hoping to 'bump into them'
6. Sending abusive messages to an ex's new partner

**Students should put a tick by behaviours they think are acceptable, a cross next to unacceptable behaviours, and a question mark next to those where they need more information.**

7. Hacking a workmate's computer to get more information about them

8. Turning up at work with flowers every day for a week in the hope of changing someone's mind about dating them

9. Going to an ex's home to talk and then switching between compliments and insults when they don't agree to try again

10. Threatening to post compromising photos in revenge for ending a relationship unless they meet for coffee

11. Ringing an ex three times using friends' phones after their ex said they did not want to hear from them and blocked their number

12. Trying to apologise/win someone back by ringing them once or twice

**Students should put a tick by behaviours they think are acceptable, a cross next to unacceptable behaviours, and a question mark next to those where they need more information.**



1. Getting upset when a person says they don't want to see them again  
It is common for people to have strong feelings about relationships so crying would be considered within the range of appropriate responses.
2. Telling an ex they miss them and want to date again when they next meet up as part of a friendship group  
A one-off incident is unlikely to be considered stalking but if this continues or is part of a wider pattern of repeated contact, this would be stalking.
3. Sending abusive messages if someone is 'ghosted' after two dates  
Abusive messages are never okay and are harassment. If repeated, this shows a fixation and is likely to be considered stalking.
4. Looking at an ex's social media profiles to find out if there is any chance of getting back together  
It is common for people to be curious about an ex-partner, and to consider reconciliation in some circumstances, but consider whether this behaviour is helpful.

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|---|
| 5. Looking at a crush's social media profiles to find out where they are and going along hoping to 'bump into them'<br>If the object of their affections feels uncomfortable and/or the behaviour is becoming obsessional, this is cause for concern. |
| 6. Sending abusive messages to an ex's new partner<br>Abusive messages are never okay and this is likely to be considered stalking.   |
| 7. Hacking a workmate's computer to get more information about them<br>This behaviour is illegal (under the Computer Misuse Act 1990) and can be an element of cyber-enabled stalking.  |
| 8. Turning up at work with flowers every day for a week in the hope of changing someone's mind about dating them<br>This behaviour would be considered stalking.  |

9. Going to an ex's home to talk and then switching between compliments and insults when they don't agree to try again

This behaviour is illegal and would be considered stalking.

# WHAT COULD THEY DO?

Jayden and Soraya are part of a big friendship group. Soraya agreed to go with Jayden to the cinema as she thought he was cute, even though he had a reputation for getting angry over small things. On the date Soraya felt uncomfortable as Jayden expected to go back to his house together afterwards but she didn't want to and wasn't interested in seeing him again.

Soraya rang a friend to meet her at the end of the date so she felt safe getting home. He shouted at her that she was a tease then slammed the door on his way out. A few days later, she started receiving flowers and chocolates from Jayden saying that he was sorry for the way he acted and that it was only because he liked her so much. He asked her for another chance.

Soraya was worried about his reaction if she said no so said she was busy but said they'd hang out when they were out with friends. Jayden turned up every time she went out as lots of plans were made in their group chat. She did her best to avoid him and make her feelings clear but this wasn't working so she started saying 'no' to nights out in order to avoid him. He started to come into the coffee shop where she worked and tried to flirt with her. This has all been making Soraya feel really uncomfortable.

## IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER..

*None of this is Soraya's fault and Jayden is wholly responsible for his behaviour.*

*However, these are some things that can help us learn from Soraya's story.*

It is **never** a person's fault if someone is behaving in an unhealthy way towards them but there were times when Soraya could have made different choices.

- What actions helped to diffuse the situation and/or keep Soraya safe?
- How could Soraya have acted differently to try to stop the stalking behaviour earlier?
- What could she do now to help keep safe and try to stop the unhealthy behaviour?
- What could Jayden do to change his behaviour?
- How could the friendship group help the situation, in particular what could Jayden's best friend say/do?

*What actions helped to diffuse the situation and/or keep Soraya safe?*

*How could Soraya have acted differently to try to stop the stalking behaviour earlier?*

- *Anger management issues are a potential sign that it may be best not to start a relationship unless/until you are sure it will be a safe and respectful one.*
- *A firmer 'no' to another date might have helped Jayden see there was no chance of a reunion.*
- *Getting early help from friends may have reduced the risk of things spiralling.*
- *Soraya could have spoken to the police or a helpline once it became clear she was feeling scared and was having to change her life due to Jayden's behaviour.*

What could she do now to help keep safe and try to stop the unhealthy behaviour?

- *Seek help from friends, specialist advice services, and the police. Be clear that stalking is illegal.*
- *Switch to a new group chat with close friends only for a while – these friends should be told about the situation so they don't pass on information to Jaydon without realising the risks. [N.B. Point out that the onus should not be on the victim to change their behaviour and it is hoped her behaviour patterns could revert to normal soon.]*
- *Change her patterns of behaviour e.g. switch exercise classes, choose a different route home. Again, note that it is not right that she needs to change her life due to his behaviour but it may help promote her safety in the short term.*
- *Soraya should temporarily try to avoid going out alone and keep to busy public places.*
- *Inform supervisors at work of the issue so they can take appropriate action if he visits the café.*
- *Have a support plan for what to do if Jayden visits her again.*
- *Soraya should not under any circumstances agree to meet Jayden to talk about things or respond to any messages. Stalkers are often encouraged by any contact – even if it is negative.*
- *Keep a note of contact received from Jayden to help the police understand the situation.*



How could the friendship group help the situation?

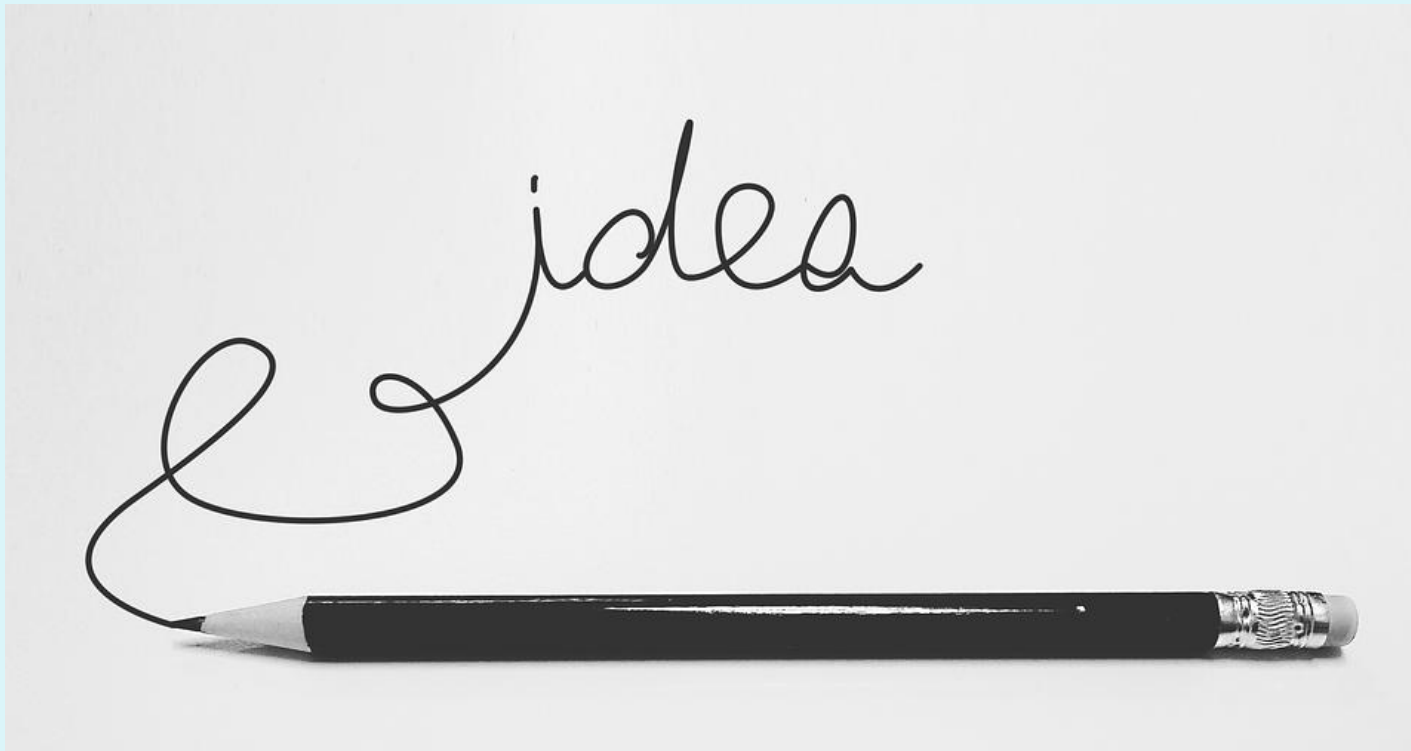
- *Jayden's friends can explain that this is not appropriate behaviour and encourage him to seek help. They should only do this if they feel they can remain safe themselves.*
- *They can ring the police if they are worried about their friends.*
- *They can find out information to support their friends, for example from organisations like the Alice Ruggles Trust or by contacting the National Stalking Helpline.*
- *They can provide support for Soraya and keep her plans and personal details safe.*
- *Jayden needs support to understand why he is engaging in such behaviours and to develop strategies to break obsessive patterns of behaviour. Even if he stops stalking Soraya, Jayden is unlikely to be able to have fulfilling long-term relationships without addressing any underlying mental wellbeing needs. His friends should therefore be mindful of the potential risks for any future partners Jayden has if he does not choose to get help to manage his feelings and behaviour.*

## ANOTHER EXAMPLE.

Shamus really enjoys his job at a radio station – he knows how hard it can be to get jobs in the media industry so he's trying his best to impress in this role. However, recently his boss has started flirting with him and it's making him feel really uncomfortable. This recently included resting a hand on his knee and suggesting they have some fun together at the staff Christmas party. He is worried that he has been leading his boss on somehow, and that he might lose his job or get bad performance reviews if he speaks up.

- How could a friend respond to Shamus' worries?
- What could Shamus do to try to stop the harassment?
- How can he protect his role at the radio station?

# SUPPORTING A FRIEND



**How could you help if a friend is being harassed or stalked?**

**Come up with 3 clear suggestions as individuals and then share these to create 5 key ideas as a class.**

## SAFETY TIPS

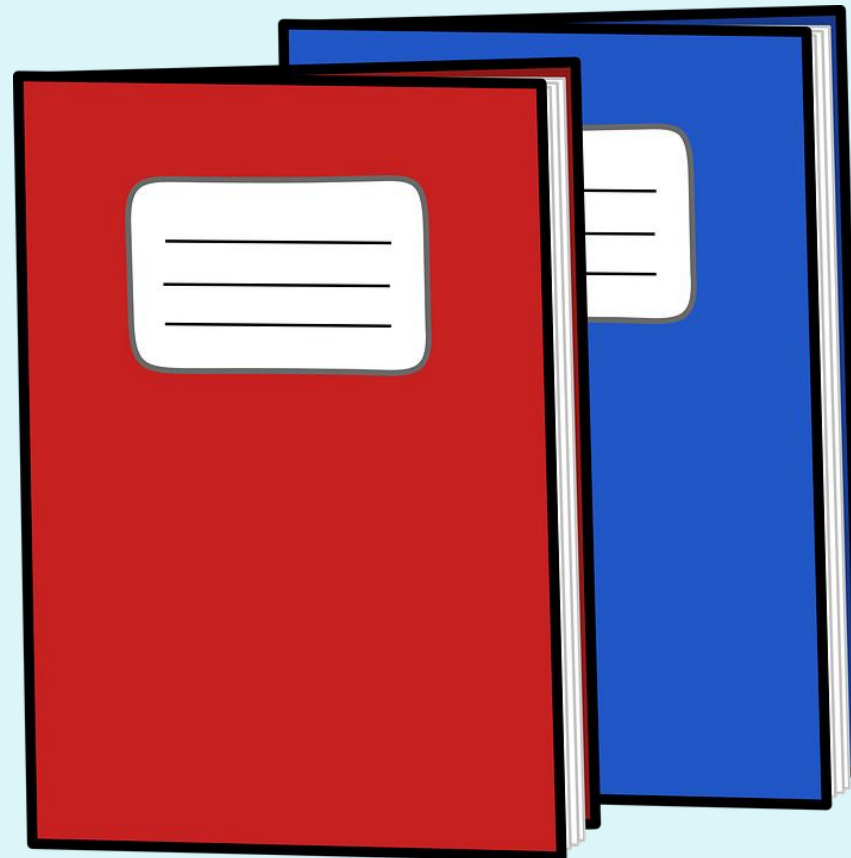
- When breaking up, or turning a person down, be clear about the decision
- Do not try to be gentle with someone who makes you feel uncomfortable – this could be misinterpreted as giving mixed signals
- It is important to take uncomfortable behaviour seriously early on
- Cut off all contact if you feel you do not want to see them again

- Call the police
- Seek support
- Tell trusted people
  
- Be cyber secure:
  - change passwords
  - check privacy settings
  - scan for spyware
  - visit [getsafeonline.org](https://getsafeonline.org)
  
- Avoid contact
- Vary routines
- Record all contact



**IF BEING  
STALKED**

# WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?



**At school - tutors, school nurse, counsellor**

**Police - 999 or 101**

**National Stalking Helpline - 0808 802 0300 &  
email support and online tools**

**[www.stalkinghelpline.org](http://www.stalkinghelpline.org)**

**The Mix - [crime and safety section](#)**



## **SOURCES OF SUPPORT**