



STIR

Safeguarding Teenage Intimate Relationships

Connecting online and offline contexts and risks

***Executive Summary and Briefing Paper 5
on Violence in Teenage Intimate Relationships***

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Safeguarding Teenage Intimate Relationships (STIR)

Connecting online and offline contexts and risks

***Briefing Paper 5:
Young People's Perspectives on Interpersonal
Violence and Abuse in Intimate Relationships***

Funded by DAPHNE III European Commission

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BACKGROUND

European domestic violence (DV) research, prevention and legislation (for example the Istanbul Convention) have predominantly focused on adult women's experiences of intimate forms of violence, and the impact of adult DV on children and young people.

However, in comparison, we know very little about *young people's own* experiences of intimate partner violence and abuse (IPVA) in their own relationships. In addition, many current European (EU) child welfare policies on safeguarding children insufficiently recognise IPVA in young people's relationships as constituting a child welfare concern.

Current research on IPVA in young people's relationships has primarily focused on face-to-face forms of violence and abuse. Few national or international research findings have addressed the incidence and impact of new technologies, including social networking sites, on young people's IPVA experiences. New technologies may compound incidence and impact of IPVA in young people's relationships. UK Interview findings (Barter et al 2009, Marsh et al 2010) have highlighted the role that online spaces, including social networking sites, can play in underpinning face-to-face (offline) forms of IPVA. New technologies may therefor intensify offline experiences of violence as well as constituting a discrete form of abuse in its own right. Nevertheless, how technological innovation, and young people's integrated use of new technologies in their everyday lives, impact on their experiences of IPVA remains largely unexplored both within European and international research.

The rapidity with which EU children and young people are gaining access to online, convergent, mobile and networked media is unprecedented in the history of the technical innovation (Livingstone and Haddon 2008). What seems clear is that online concerns for children and young people are not necessarily the same as adults (Livingstone et al 2011), and this applies to the issue of IPVA. Research has clearly demonstrated that, for young people, online and offline spaces are in fact mutually constituted requiring an empirical investigation of the complex ways in which new technologies are used and made sense of in everyday life (Holloway and Valentine 2001; Livingstone and Bober 2004). Our research continues this tradition.

The EU Kids Online programme provided ground breaking findings on European children's, and their parents', perspectives concerning internet risks and safety (Livingstone et al 2011). The online risks addressed included: pornography, bullying, receiving sexual messages and misuse of personal data. However, the role of new technologies and social media networking sites in instigating and maintaining IPVA in young people's relationships was not explored.

We also need to be cautious in transferring adult IPVA understandings and prevention models onto young people's own experiences. Although the structural inequalities underpinning IPVA as a form of gender-based violence may be similar, the position of young people within the construction of childhood also brings structural, as well as social, inequalities and limitations, not experienced by adults. In addition, different European states exhibit disparate structural and cultural dynamics which may influence both the degree and nature of IPVA in young people's relationships, the impact of IPVA on young people's welfare and their help-seeking and resistance strategies.

Consequently, a greater recognition of the problem of IPVA in young people's relationships across Europe is required. Awareness of the issues faced by young people experiencing IPVA, and a greater understanding of the role of new technologies, needs to be fully integrated into the development of prevention and intervention programmes. The lack of comparable data on IPVA victimisation, and its impact on young people's welfare, hampers this process in a range of EU states. Thus project aimed to begin to address this gap in EU understanding and prevention development.

PARTNERS

Partners were selected to provide a wide geographical and policy spread and to offer diversity in gender equality as well as variations in young people's use of new technologies. We included a spread of countries based on the European Gender Equality Index to explore how specific country gender dynamics impacted on IPVA experiences. Within our sample England and Norway were calculated as having greater gender equality than Bulgaria, Cyprus and Italy. The countries chosen also needed to reflect the distinctions identified by the EU Kids Online survey on children's and young people's differential use of new technologies and associated risks. We purposely selected EU states identified as having low (Bulgaria and Cyprus), medium (Italy) and high (England and Norway) levels of internet use.

Project Teams:

England: Christine Barter, Nadia Aghtaie, Cath Larkins, Marsha Wood, Nicky Stanley

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Cyprus: Susana Pavlou, Stalo Lesta

Italy: Noemi De Luca, Gianna Cappello

Norway: Carolina Øverlien and Per Hellevik

Alba Lanau (University of Bristol) provided statistical support to the project team.

FUNDING

The research was funded under the DAPHNE III Programme of the European Commission. The NSPCC was a partner.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The project overall aim was to contribute to:

- raising awareness through the provision of robust evidence;
- enable young people's experiences and views to inform policy and practice;
- enhance the development of appropriate prevention and intervention programmes;
- provide a resource which young people can access directly.

The specific research objectives were to:

- 1) Map relevant policy, practice and knowledge on IPVA in young people's relationships within each partner country and the degree to which these address the association between new technologies and IPVA in young people's relationship.
- 2) Create the first European comparative evidence-base on the incidence, impact, and the risk and protective factors associated with online and offline IPVA in young people's relationships.
- 3) Include young people's IPVA experiences and views, including the role of new technologies, to enhance and inform the development of European prevention and intervention responses.
- 4) Develop a virtual resource in each partner language which is directly accessible through the STIR website and also via a downloadable app. The resource will be developed with young people for young people and will provide awareness raising, research findings and signposts for appropriate sources of help in each country.

METHODOLOGY

STIR was based on a four stage mixed-method approach:

- **Stage 1:** Expert workshops: Respectively partners, on two occasions, convened a group of national experts to identify what is known about IPVA in young people's intimate relationships in each country, and to identify relevant policy and practice developments
- **Stage 2:** A School-based confidential survey of approximately 4,500 young people aged 14-17 year-olds was completed in 45 schools.
- **Stage 3:** Semi-structured interviews with 100 young people, using an interview schedule and vignettes
- **Stage 4:** Development of an online resource and a downloadable app for young people (www.stiritapp.eu)

A young people's advisory group was convened in each country to comment on all aspects of the study. The groups helped to develop the survey, interview schedule and vignettes, and the online resources.

Sample

Survey: 4564 young people, approximately equal numbers of young women and young men took part in the survey (lower proportion of young women in the Italian sample), see table 1. All countries aimed to collect 1000 participants except Cyprus where, due to the smaller population size, half this amount was required, which was subsequently exceeded. All participants were aged between 14 and 17 years-old (see Table 2), the spread of ages were quite similar across the four country samples, however in England all young people were aged 14 or 15. The majority of young people (72%) reported having a boyfriend or girlfriend (see table 3). This was highest in Italy and lowest in Norway. Most young people (96%) had a partner of the opposite-sex and 4% had a same-sex partner. We were unable to systematically record ethnicity or religion due to sensitivity of recording this data in some countries (e.g. in Italy, the categorization of ethnicity is different as are the religions). All the survey findings are based on the 3277 young people who said they had been in a relationship.

Table 1 Sample and Gender

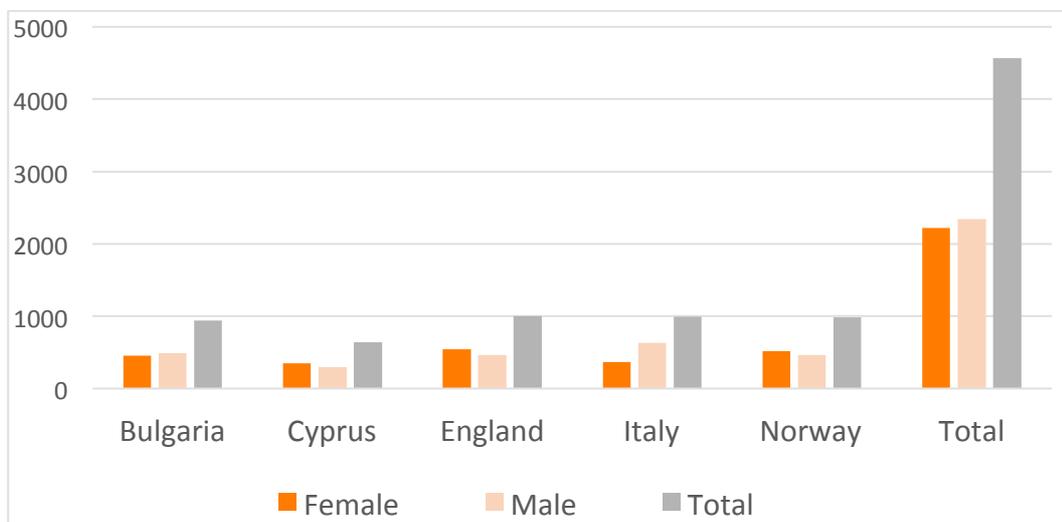


Table 2 Sample and Age

	Mean age	Number	Std Deviation
Bulgaria	15.27	950	1.07974
Cyprus	15.62	642	1.09834
England	14.73	1005	.59950
Italy	15.29	991	.89191
Norway	15.10	991	.85630
Total	15.17	4579*	.94749

*15 did not provide gender and were excluded from the overall analysis

Table 3 Ever had a Relationship by Gender

	Gender	Yes	No
Bulgaria	Female	69% (n=313)	31% (n=140)
	Male	69% (n=335)	31% (n=148)
	Total	69% (n= 648)	31% (n=288)
Cyprus	Female	79% (n=272)	21% (n=74)
	Male	79% (n=233)	21% (n=63)
	Total	79% (n=505)	21% (n= 137)
England	Female	74% (n= 401)	26% (n=139)
	Male	70% (n=323)	30% (n=138)
	Total	72% (n=724)	28% (n=277)
Italy	Female	82% (n= 293)	18% (n=66)
	Male	89% (n=565)	11% (n=67)
	Total	87% (n=858)	13% (n=133)
Norway	Female	53% (n=272)	47% (n=242)
	Male	58% (n=270)	42% (n=197)
	Total	55% (n=439)	45% (n=981)

*48 did not answer this question

Interviews: For the qualitative arm of the study, a total of 100 in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with young people: 91 of these interviews were included in the analysis as not all young people recruited had direct experiences of intimate violence. Interviews included in the analysis were completed with 67 young women and 24 young men. Participants were aged between 13 and 19 years-old; the majorities were 15 to 17. The interview respondents were recruited from schools via pastoral services, settings such as youth camps and workshops for young people or specialist services such as those working with IPVVA.

Analysis

Survey: Descriptive statistics including cross-tabulations were run for each form of violence across each country. Chi-squared analysis was undertaken to determine statistically significant differences *within* each country data set. As it was not possible in the confines of this study to collect a randomly stratified sample we are therefore unable to statistically compare *cross* country differences, however we can observe general patterns in the comparative data.

Running logistic regressions separately for each country confirmed that, with a few exceptions, predictive factors were largely consistent across all five countries. This indicated the use of a single model for each type of violence. Additionally, separate regressions were run for males and females. Key variables were identified on the basis of existing theory, and progressively added into the model, testing for stability of the associations identified at each step. The initial model contained age and country variables to which other block variables were added including participant characteristics, wider attitudes and childhood violence. Associations were found to be generally stable. For this summary, the Odds Ratios (OR) are provided. As with any cross-sectional survey, we cannot identify causal relationships and are therefore unable to determine if the predictive factors are a cause or effect of violence. Only effects that were significant at 0.05 are reported.

Interviews were fully transcribed and analysed using a Framework approach, to ensure that comparable issues were identified and understood in context.

Ethics

The STIR research team had all worked on a range of sensitive research projects with children and young people and were fully aware of the ethical issues involved in undertaking such work. The project received ethical approval from the University of Bristol, School for Policy Studies, Ethics Committee (2013).

Stage 1: Questionnaire

Introduction and information distribution

Initially a researcher from each team introduced the study to school pupils and distributed information leaflets for young people and their parents/carers. Young people were able to ask questions at this time or individually with the researcher/s afterwards. The information leaflets explained: who the researchers were; how to contact them; the aims of the project; what was involved in participation; guarantees that the survey was completely confidential and anonymity; voluntary nature of the project; and consent. Both young people and parents/carers were provided with contact details of the research team if they had any further questions or concerns.

Consent – young people

All young people who wished to take part in the study were required to sign a consent form before participation. The consent form clearly stated what they had consented too and reminded the young person that the survey was completely confidential and that participation was voluntary.

Consent – parents/carers

Two forms of parental/carer consent was used in the study reflecting the different ethical frameworks in each country. In England, if parents/carers did not wish their child to participate they were required to sign an opt-out consent form which accompanied the parental/carer information leaflet and return this to the research team in a pre-paid envelope or email the named researcher to withdraw their child from the study. In Italy, parents/carers were required to provide opt-in consent where they were required to sign and return the consent form to allow their child to participate.

Survey Administration

Researcher/s administered the survey in each school. The survey process took between 20 and 30 minutes to complete. A small general quiz was included at the end for participants who finished early or who did not wish to continue with the survey itself.

Confidentiality

The questionnaires were confidential and anonymous. It was made clear to all participants that they could stop at any time and that they did not have to answer any questions they didn't feel comfortable with. Due to the sensitive nature of the research after completion of the survey a hand-out was given to all young people containing the names and contact details of relevant local and national support organisations. The researchers were also available afterwards if young people wished to discuss anything.

Stage 2: Semi- Structured Interviews

The Interviews with young people lasted between 25 and 40 minutes. The team negotiated with each school or agency the most appropriate procedure to select the interview sample which ensured this was not stigmatising or placed pressure on young people to participate. Interviews were undertaken at a time and location most convenient to the young person.

Information Leaflet

An information leaflets for young people and their parents/carers outlined the project, the interview process, and limits of confidentiality.

Young People's Consent

As with the survey all young people who wanted to participate were required to sign a consent form. The consent form clearly stated the participant's rights within the interview process and what they were consenting to.

Parental Consent

As the interviews were not completely confidential opt-in parental consent was required. Parents/carers or legal guardians of young people aged 16 or under were required to sign

and return a consent form. Parents could contact the research team to discuss their child's participation. Parents/carers of young people aged 17 and 18 years-old followed the opt-out consent procedure.

Confidentiality Policy

Conditional confidentiality was offered to interview participants. All information remained confidential to the research team unless the researcher felt that the participant was at risk of significant harm. This was stated and explained in the leaflets and consent forms for young people and parents/carers. The conditional nature of the confidentiality policy was explained again before starting the interview, and repeated periodically throughout the research interaction. The young person was informed that if they said something that indicated to the researcher that a risk of significant harm may exist (examples were provided), either to them or another child/young person, this information would not be kept confidential. At each fieldwork location a protocol for sharing information was developed in partnership with the school or agency.

FINDINGS

The main findings are:

- In all five countries, online and offline control and surveillance was accepted as normal by many young people.
- Verbal abuse was extensive and tolerated by many young people interviewed; physical violence was also normalised, especially when alcohol was involved.
- Offline sexual pressure was extensive for some young women in all five countries and was normalised to the extent that rape was sometimes not recognised.
- Young people in four countries had sent sexual images of themselves and in the England in particular this was perceived as normal behaviour. Online control and surveillance and offline abuse were closely related.
- Using social networking as a means of perpetrating abuse intensified the impact.
- Impact varied according to gender with young women reporting substantially more harmful impact than young men.

The following issues were addressed in the interviews:

1. What is a positive relationship?
2. Experiences of control and surveillance online and offline
3. Experiences of sending sexual images and sexual pressure
4. Experiences of physical and emotional violence
5. Gendered dimensions and impacts of interpersonal violence and abuse (IPVA)
6. The role of new technologies in offline abuse.

What is a good relationship?

A good relationship is a relationship where you and your partner really trust each other, feel that you can talk to each other about everything and you can be yourself with the other person... In a good relationship you can feel free to act spontaneously without thinking beforehand if you need to say something. (Smaragda,17, Cyprus).

The most important thing is the respect and after that comes trust and allowing personal space to the other. That is it! (Sophia,18, Bulgaria)

Almost all young people responded to our question about what comprises a good relationship with comprehensive descriptions of healthy relationship attributes. These included: mutual trust; honesty; effective communication; giving each other space; boosting each other's confidence; liking you for who you are; emotional support and care; feeling safe and mutual respect. Trust was the most common theme identified across the 91 interviews.

Experiences of control and surveillance online and offline

The trouble happened when I told him I had to go to church or do some activities with my friends from the parish... shouting and fighting was the rule... (Gaia, 17, Italy).

In all five countries, some young people we interviewed had experienced control and surveillance, and in four countries (not Norway) a few reported using these behaviours themselves. Online control included: being instructed not to chat with specific people or to delete contacts; being pressured or forced to give passwords for online accounts; having their text conversations monitored or receiving constant phone calls to check on their whereabouts. Offline control included: limiting contact with friends; telling their partners what to wear; turning up uninvited and getting upset, annoyed and angry if their partner wanted to take part in activities without them.

Normalisation of online and offline control and surveillance was apparent in some of the accounts. Although most of those interviewed considered that decision making was shared equally in their relationships it became apparent in the course of the interviews that some young people were in controlling relationships. This contradiction may be explained by the fact that some young people accept controlling behaviour and see it as a normal part of a 'caring' relationship. Sharing passwords appeared to be accepted as standard by many young people; control and surveillance was seen as a sign of care, love or protection:

Initially I thought it [him calling to ask where I was and wanting details of who I met and what I was doing] was ok... I even kind of liked it, you know... I thought it was a sign he really cared for me. (Claudia, 15, Italy)

To have your girlfriend 'like' photos of people she doesn't know isn't such a nice thing to see in Facebook...when she does that it's as if she is saying she doesn't want me. (Chrysanthos, 16, Cyprus)

Where controlling behaviour was not normalised, it was still accepted by a few young people who were willing to be controlled in order to make their partner happy or to avoid confrontation: *'it's like you'll do anything to make them happy'*. However, some young people were starting to question their acceptance of controlling behaviour *'If he trusts me why is he doing so? Does he want to control me? Isn't this blackmailing?'*

Those young people who had put an end to control and surveillance in their relationships had achieved this by either ignoring it - *'I can do what I want [no matter what they say]'* - by ending the relationship or by making joint decisions to give each other equal freedom: *'He realised that if he wanted to have friends that were like girls he had to like lay off'*.

Sending sexual images and sexual pressure

In four countries, some young people we interviewed had sent sexual images of themselves to their partners. In Cyprus, no-one had sent an image but a few young people knew of people who had. Being asked for a sexual image by partners was accepted as normal by young people in England (almost all had been asked at one time or another). Sending sexual images was sometimes mutual and freely chosen but normalisation of this in some peer cultures (all but Cyprus) led to expectations that sometimes caused pressure and anxiety for those young women who were afraid that their refusal might end the relationship: *'I do not want to put a barrier between us [by refusing to send nude pictures of myself], but at the same time I do not want to get hurt'*. In Bulgaria, those interviewed felt that they had a choice whether to send such pictures, but some considered that this was normal practice for younger girls:

'The Internet is full of girls as young as 12-13 with naked photos or clips. For example, they dance and strip. One was only 8 and had such a clip.... Young girls just don't understand. For them, this is something normal'. (Lois, 17, Bulgaria)

Most young people refused to send images because they did not trust their partners and were afraid of the possibility of the photos being shared with others after the break once the relationship ended:

I have never shared pictures with guys I have been going out with, one tried, but I thought it was unnecessary, he called when he was drunk and asked why I wouldn't...I didn't trust him, he could have used that picture, it has consequences, if I would break up he could have used that picture against me. (Julia, 16, Norway)

Creating and sharing sexual images and text was occasionally described as a 'regular mutual exchange' (Italy, female 16), in which images might be sent without pressure. One young woman also described initial hesitation that turned into enjoyment 'after a while I liked it too ...I didn't get completely naked but almost. I liked it... I thought it was going to be our little secret'. But when such images were shared with other people it caused a lot of distress especially for participants from religious families or small communities.

Even when images and intimate texts had not been shared, knowing that their partner or ex-partner had them in their possession caused anxiety for some young people, especially young women:

He walks along with her 'whole life', in his mobile phone, ready to share it with anyone at any time.

(Erika, 17, Norway)

None of the young people interviewed said that they had put anyone under any sexual pressure. Experience of being pressured online was evident among young people in England, Italy and Norway. Offline sexual pressure and abuse was more extensive and experienced mainly by young women in all five countries. This included forced touching, kissing, oral sex and rape. Sexual pressure was normalised: 'When you are going out with someone when you are 15, you have sex', and rape within relationships was not sometimes recognised: 'I know I didn't want it, but regardless, it happened, but I don't see it as that [rape]'.

Young female participants sometimes were forced to send more explicit sexual images against their wishes. In some instances they continued to do so because their partner applied pressure or threats if more photos were not sent:

This other guy said that if I did not send him a picture of 'down there', he would post it [the photo he already had] (Mia, 15, Norway)

Most young people had talked to a close friend about such incidents, but had not contacted the police due to fear of their parents' reactions. Other young people reported abuse and sharing of images if they felt confident of support from family or teachers but one young English woman who had done so noted that the police '*didn't really do anything, they just spoke to me about it and they spoke to him about it*'.

Experiences of physical and emotional violence

I beat them with words. This is most hurtful.

(Stefan, 18, Bulgaria)

The vast majority of young people interviewed in all five countries had experienced behaviours that can be described as emotionally abusive. In four countries (not Norway) a few or even a large minority described perpetrating these behaviours. Emotional violence included: deceit; derogatory comments; being humiliated; betraying privacy; violent outbursts; and extremes of rejection followed by devotion.

In many instances, verbal insults came from both partners and were generally not viewed as abusive behaviour. But emotional abuse could also be one sided and normalised as '*just the way he was. He would tell me how good I was for putting up with him*'. However, the significance of emotional violence was highlighted both by those who had experienced it and those who perpetrated it:

I'd rather, to be honest I'd rather be beaten than have emotional pain because I don't deal with things like that very well. (Bethany, 15, England)

Physical violence had been experienced by at least one person interviewed in each country, and by nearly half of the young people interviewed in Italy. In Bulgaria and Italy, a

few young people also described perpetrating physical violence. Perpetration of physical violence appeared to be normalised, especially where alcohol was involved. Again, this was both by those who perpetrated it and those who experienced it:

It was stupid to beat her, though it does not count when you are drunk...She didn't feel bad because she [had refused to dance with me] out of stubbornness.

(Peter, 18, Bulgaria)

...you know, he was a bit drunk because we were coming back from a party and – true – maybe I shouldn't have looked at messages without telling him.

(Marta, 16, Italy)

Young people almost always described physical violence as a form of retaliation. Some saw physical violence as an understandable reaction to disobeying their partner's wishes, invading their privacy, or just when it was part of someone's personality: *'I would tell myself, it's his anger talking'*. Young women also blamed themselves for their partner's violence: *'I felt like I annoyed him and kind of led him to do it'*. Others, like this young man from Italy, made a clear distinction between emotional and physical violence: *'fighting and arguing verbally is ok but never, never use physical violence!'*

These issues were rarely discussed with adults, who were often seen as dismissive of young people's relationship concerns and were described as making comments like: *'you are too young to be depressed ... your problems are not real'*.

The role of new technologies in offline abuse

He had asked me never to speak to a particular boy who had made a comment on one of the pictures I posted on Facebook. Once when he saw me talk to this boy he was so angry he almost slapped me

(Tatiana, 16, Cyprus).

It is perhaps more useful to identify new technologies of abuse than to consistently distinguish between online and offline abuse as the line between online and offline worlds

is blurred for young people. Monitoring of messages could lead to actual physical violence. One young woman from Italy described being repeatedly slapped for having looked at her partner's phone.

Phones could be used to report offline activities, as when an 18 year-old young women discovered by chance an SMS sent to her partner by his friend which reported details of her activities at a party her partner had not attended. She described feeling '*controlled as not even my parents had ever done!*' The SMS then became the cause of a face to face argument as *he 'convinced me that I was the one to blame because I had looked at his private messages'*.

Sexual pressure tended to be applied offline.

Although digital technology had been used to circulate images, a few instances of sharing occurred by physically showing pictures on phones rather than through digital forwarding. For some, sexting did not lead to images being shared and being sexually intimate online could avoid the challenges of sex '*for real... well, that's another story... you could get pregnant... and you have to find the place*'.

Technology played a significant role in online insults: '*he would write different things on his wall that put me down*' and virtual rows where '*you'll soon be like, 'Oh I shouldn't have sent that!' And then you're having to apologise and then it gets even worse*'. But at the same time, some young people preferred discussions via text as this enabled them to take a break; with face to face arguments '*you do not have the luxury of a time-out*'.

Gendered Impact of IPV

If a naked picture of mine goes around the web, no problem... for a girl it is different... her reputation would be in trouble...

(Carlo, 17, Italy)

In common with the findings from the STIR survey the impact of the control and surveillance described by interviewees was gendered with young men emerging as more likely to feel angry, end contact or end the relationship:

I left her immediately because I don't accept these things. There is no reason to.

(Stefano, 16, Italy)

Some young women also resisted being controlled, but others blamed themselves: *'[I] feel guilty for having talked to [ex-boyfriend]'* and they were more likely than boys to describe a feeling sad, hurt, unconfident or isolated as a consequence of IPVA. Different standards for the two partners within a relationship were described and these were usually gendered: *'he knows the password ...but he won't let me have his'*.

The impact of sharing of sexual images and sexual pressure was much more problematic for young women as they were vulnerable to damage to their reputation whereas young men were not. Female virginity and chastity emerged as being important in Cyprus where: *'It is her only dowry'*. In every country where we conducted interviews sexual pressure was generally reported to be directed at young women.

Young women described stronger feelings of hurt and fear as a consequence of physical violence: *'he scares me,...actually I feel really overpowered and terrified.'* In contrast, young men tended to *'just laugh'* or *'got annoyed and ended the relationship'*. Verbal taunts which some young men saw as a joke, could feel crushing:

At first he was, it's obviously like jokey stuff ... I don't want to hear this all the time, ...I want to hear you say something nice for once rather than just all the time saying something horrible..

(Molly, 15, England)

IMPLICATIONS

1. Recognising coercion and violence in intimate relationships is crucial if IPVA is to be challenged and ended, yet many of those young people interviewed accepted such behaviour as normal. Raising awareness of IPVA in both its offline and offline forms among young people and their parents should be a priority for EU governments.
2. Online and offline forms of control and abuse intersect in young people's lives. Recognition of this interrelation will be key to developing appropriate strategies and interventions to prevent IPVA in young people's intimate relationships.
3. Schools can play a key role in developing young people's understandings of what constitutes a positive relationship and what kinds of behaviours are unacceptable. Any programme offered to young people needs to be aimed at both victims and perpetrators. This is particularly important as the distinction between victims and perpetrators was not always clear; some young people saw themselves as victims of some abusive behaviours whilst perpetrating other forms of violence. In order to avoid polarising positions, learning in non-judgemental environments about appropriate behaviour and boundaries is an essential first step.
4. Both schools and media campaigns could be used to deliver messages about the possible negative outcomes of sharing sexual images. These should be targeted at younger groups of children and young people as well as at older teenagers.
5. Gender inequality structures and sustains IPVA in young people's relationships and its influence should be addressed in education and campaigns. Some of the young men interviewed for this study showed an awareness of gender inequality. Involving young men in campaigns and initiatives, so that male stereotypes are challenged by young men themselves who can provide role models for alternative masculinities is one approach that may prove valuable. Measures promoting gender equality in schools should be embedded across the curriculum and in all aspects of school life.

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STIRiAPP



STIRiAPP is an app developed within the framework of the project "Safeguarding Teenage Intimate Relationships" – STIR – co-financed by the Daphne III Programme of the European Commission.

The app was designed with young people for young people who want to know more about relationships, and to explore their own attitudes and behaviours using interactive technology.

It guides you in a journey to explore different aspects of relationships, to assess your partner's and your own behaviour in a relationship, and to find out how you can ask for help if you need it.

The STIR APP is created in consultation with groups of young people in five countries, who have developed and discussed the app proposals and been involved all stages of the project on the STIR website www.stiritup.eu and with project partners.



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