



# Beyond Digital Violence

Capacity Building for Relevant Professionals Working with Children and Young People Who Experienced Sexualised Violence Using Digital Media

## Publications

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## Administrative Project Information

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Project Webpage:	<a href="http://www.byedv.de">www.byedv.de</a>
Description:	ByeDV aims to implement previously developed empirical recommendations on how German counselling practices can professionally deal with sexualised violence using digital media (SVUDM) committed against children and adolescents. By means of an accompanying formative evaluation, quality criteria are to be developed, which are to be understood as a blueprint for European experts when counseling on SVUDM. Data will be collected for the purpose of qualitative analysis and evidence-based conclusions leading to the development of the quality criteria.



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## Introduction

In terms of dissemination, the project team of SRH University Heidelberg as well as selected subcontractors have published important results and insights in publications for academia and practice. The publications summarize important results obtained during the project and thus during the implementation of recommendations on how to deal professionally with sexualised violence using digital media. The following table lists the target groups addressed by the respective publication.

Publication Nr.	Title	Target Groups
1	Beyond Digital Violence	Professionals and practitioners, research & academia, public authorities
2	Das Forschungsprojekt »Beyond Digital Violence« <i>The research project »Beyond Digital Violence«</i>	Professionals and practitioners, research & academia, public authorities
3	Sexualised violence and digital media. A collection of abstracts with recommendations for professionals	Professionals and practitioners, research & academia, public authorities
4	Sexualisierte (Peer-)Gewalt im digitalen Raum: Formen, Strafbarkeit, Prävention <i>Sexualized (peer) violence in the digital space: forms, criminal liability, prevention</i>	Professionals and practitioners, research & academia, public authorities

The publications are attached in German and/or English below.



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Katharina Kärgel  
Sylvia Fein  
Sonja Kroggel  
Frederic Vobbe  
Maj Walter  
Claudia Wienand  
in Interview with  
Anja Teubert



## Beyond Digital Violence (ByeDV)

**A project for the implementation of professional standards for dealing with mediatised sexualised violence against children and adolescents in dialogue with research and practice.**

The distinguishing feature of the project "Beyond digital violence. Capacity building for relevant professionals working with children and young people who experienced sexualised violence using digital media (ByeDV)" is the close collaboration between research and practice. Colleagues from counselling centres validate the usability of the recommendations for action, which were developed during ByeDV's predecessor project „HUMAN“ by research duo Kärgel und Vobbe, and then together with representatives of the German Society for Prevention and Intervention of Child Abuse, Neglect and Sexualised Violence (DGfPI) and the researchers, they develop quality criteria to be applied throughout the EU. The discursive development of technical standards in a joint process sounds exciting and could possibly serve as an example for other projects. That's why we want to talk to the individuals involved.

The cooperating partners are five counselling centres with the mandate of crisis intervention in cases of sexualised violence against children and adolescents: Prevention Office Ronja - Women Against Violence e.V. Westerburg, Child and Youth Services Känguru, Child Protection Centre Ulm/Neu-Ulm, Men's Office of Hannover e.V., Wildwasser Marburg e.V.. They are all implementing the empirical case-based working strategies in cases of mediated sexualised violence against children and adolescents. The implementation process is being professionally and academically supported by the DGfPI as well as the SRH University Heidelberg (SRH).

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**Sonja Kroggel (Child Protection Centre Ulm/Neu-Ulm), Maj Walter (Wildwasser Marburg e.V.) and Claudia Wienand (Prevention Office Ronja, Women Against Violence e.V. Westerburg), as well as Sylvia Fein from the DGfPI and the research team Katharina Kärgel and Frederic Vobbe (SRH) spoke via Zoom about their (collaborative) work in ByeDV.**

**Anja Teubert:** I am looking forward to hearing from you about your experiences implementing the recommendations for action and working together with the two researchers from the SRH University Heidelberg and the DGfPI over the course of ByeDV. To start off, I am interested in knowing about the most important cornerstones of the project?

**Katharina Kärgel (KK):** First, one must understand that the project ByeDV came about as the follow-up project of the BMBF-supported HUMAN project<sup>1</sup>. In that project, Frederic Vobbe and I, with the involvement of experts from research and practice, empirically developed recommendations for dealing with cases of mediatised sexualised violence against children and adolescents. The result was a 200 page, sometimes demanding, Monograph with complex case structures. That gave rise to the idea to see how and under what conditions the recommendations could be made viable and applicable for specialised practices. In the framework of the follow-up project ByeDV, we are testing that with five flagship centres that specialise in counselling in cases of sexuali-

sed violence. The expertise and experience gained and expanded in ByeDV will be summarised in the form of quality criteria for implementing professional standards when dealing with mediatised sexualised violence against children and adolescents.

**Frederic Vobbe (FV):** Perhaps the term flagship centres should be replaced with the term multipliers with respect to the outlook to the future of this project. It is also about passing on the experience collected and the collective further development of professional standards.

**Anja Teubert:** Then I would be eager to hear from the multipliers; what motivated you to apply to participate in ByeDV?

**Claudia Wienand (CW):** We found the call for proposals both exciting and fitting, in that we were seeing increasing counselling requests for cases of sexualised violence using digital media. As a result of the Lockdown during the Corona pandemic, more and more parents came to us, because sexualised violence using digital media had been initiated against their children. As the schools began to reopen after the lockdown, we began to receive more requests for prevention programming. At the same time, we have found that dealing with such cases from the point of view of those affected is still quite cumbersome, which is why we would like to contribute to effecting change.

**Sonja Kroggel (SK):** Through our counselling work, it became clear that we need to and want to work more closely on the subject of digital media and

<sup>1</sup> The project „HUMAN. Entwicklung von Handlungsempfehlungen für die pädagogische Praxis zum fachlichen Umgang mit sexualisierter Gewalt mit digitalem Medieneinsatz gegen Kinder und Jugendliche“ was conducted at SRH University Heidelberg and funded by the German Federal Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF) from December 2017 to April 2021. Further information about HUMAN and the empirically developed recommendations are available on the project website [www.human-srh.de](http://www.human-srh.de).

sexualised violence. We cannot avoid the subject of digital media when talking with young people.

**Maj Walter (MW):** My colleagues and I took part in the final symposium of the HUMAN project. In listening to many of the presentations, I found myself thinking, 'Yes, that's exactly what it's all about, and we need these recommendations to be even more practice-oriented and detailed' - combined with the feeling that what we learn through prevention and intervention trainings and events is certainly still correct, but that it isn't as relevant to the lived realities of children and young people, and we therefore need something new. In this regard, I felt that the final symposium for HUMAN aligned with my feelings on the subject, which is why the call for participants for ByeDV interested me.

**Anja Teubert:** How do you implement these approaches? How do you work?

**CW:** As representatives of the counselling centres, we meet with the teams from the DGfPI and SRH University Heidelberg for five Intervention Workshops. At these workshops, we work together very intensively on various themes and issues. In between the workshops, we fill out reflection sheets to reflect on and evaluate our implementation and analysis process. In doing so, the subject of mediatised sexualised violence is also more deeply considered. The counselling centres also meet virtually at other times to share experiences from our implementation processes and support each other.

**MW:** During consultations, I refer specifically to the recommendations for action. Generally, specialists from residential homes find a case in the recommendations that roughly corresponds to the cases they have recently encountered and can then work through and orient themselves based on the recommendations. For example: Could this be a measure of intervention that makes sense for us? I have received a lot of positive feedback on this approach. The specialists find it very helpful to use the case studies and recommendations as a structure.

**SK:** I would like to refer to the most recent Intervention Workshop as an example. It was really great for me that we worked together on a case study from the recommendations for action, further summarised the recommendations and, with the support of Frederic and Katharina, developed the first quality

criteria [note: professional standards for addressing the risk of dissemination]. In our counselling centre, we have discussed at length as a team about mediatised sexualised violence. In the meantime, we are increasingly reaching out to our networks. For example, we have been presenting ByeDV in various working groups. We notice that the interest is very high. Many – especially schools – then ask what we can offer them on the subject.

**Anja Teubert:** How is your experience-based knowledge and the quality criteria derived from it anchored in your work?

**CW:** I am personally internalising the topic of digital media and sexualised violence more and more. Through sensitisation to the issue, I have become more keenly aware of it. The topic pops up everywhere, and I continue to deal with it with fascination. We have now held a number of prevention workshops on mediatised sexualised violence, mostly in schools, where we had valuable dialogues with young people, which I find very enriching. I hope that the quality criteria that are developed from our experiences and expertise will ultimately also inspire others.

**MW:** In addition, with a view to myself and the question of confidence, I can say that since becoming involved in ByeDV, I always think 'What is the basic approach in cases of mediatised sexualised violence?', 'Are there certain factors that automatically have to be taken into account?' For example, we would be more careful in the consultation when it comes to the question of criminal charges. In cases where there are existing images and an established risk of dissemination, I may have to think differently about the question of criminal charges, without implying that criminal charges should be filed immediately when digital media are used. Another example relates to trauma work. For example, let's take the question of re-traumatisation when confronted with abuse images. Does an individual then need different trauma work? Does the previous trauma work have to be adapted or is it not so different? I keep asking questions like this, even if I don't have an answer to them yet.

**SK:** When working with young people, I think about digital media and mediatised sexualised violence more and more often, even if the reason for the consultation is completely different; for example,

when young people tell me that they are often alone when they use digital media. Similar to Maj, we are concerned with the question of trauma work. Usually, the principle in trauma work is 'no perpetrator contact', but how do we deal with this when images have been shared or the same social networks are used?

**Anja Teubert:** Do you discuss such questions together in the Intervision Workshops?

**Sylvia Fein (SF):** We want to consider such questions in depth: Do we have to think about safe spaces differently? What of relevance is being discussed in specialist circles? Is the subject being considered at all, or is ByeDV an impetus for discussion? In the course of the project, gaps have become visible that we try to close or at least address.

**FV:** I find the image of gaps very fitting. We are currently experimenting a lot. The quality criteria will be the result of a communicative process. They will come about from the practical work and the daily experiences of the ByeDV practitioners. This also includes a lot of resistance, for example in the relationship between the recommendations for action and existing habits, due to the conditions under which specialised counselling takes place or in cooperation with other actors in the help networks. The most visible gaps will be filled by sharing experiences with each other. The quality criteria thus represent the positive piece of the gaps that we can point to and say 'now we know how to do it better'.

**Anja Teubert:** How do you pass on your experiences in working with the recommendations for action to signal that it is less about reading and more about reflecting on the recommendations?

**SK:** I pass on my experiences by first referencing the recommendations for action, but I also convey that it is about dealing with the topic yourself. It helped me a lot to reflect on how I use digital media and to exchange ideas about personal media use with other counsellors. There was also a discussion on the subject in our team. In addition, I have become more familiar with the social media that young people use. With this in mind, I can read the recommendations for action differently. I notice that when contacting other professionals, the first step is to draw attention to the importance of digital media in the context of sexualised violence. It's about raising awareness.

**CW:** I can say very recently that our counselling center, together with the prevention specialist group of the state working group, organised a state-wide conference on sexualised violence in schools. Katharina and Frederic were kind enough to offer workshops on mediatised sexualised violence. I was thrilled that: a) we were sensitised to the subject of digital media, because school is an important place for young people to socialise, in which sexualised violence is also an issue, and b) we were able to offer first-hand know-how.

**MW:** In concrete terms, I am currently revising all the continuing education courses that we offer, including the fundamental courses. We have added digital media to every training. Through my contact with colleagues and in working groups, I have the impression that they are all thinking about the role of digital media but don't necessarily know how to incorporate digital media into their work. And, it's really helpful to be able to point to the recommendations for action as a framework.

**KK:** The nice thing is that the counselling centres involved in ByeDV are already going into their networks to raise awareness of the importance of the mediatisation of sexualised violence. As a result, we can achieve greater multiplier effects through the publication of the quality criteria - which also serves as a safeguard.

**Anja Teubert:** How do you see your respective roles in the context of the implementation and the development of quality criteria?

**MW:** I solidified that at the most recent Intervision Workshop. We all contributed our points of view and perspectives from practice. These were framed by the colleagues from the DGfPI. Despite our different assessments and priorities, Katharina and Frederic then picked out the common thread from this hodgepodge. That's the academic perspective that I haven't internalised; to look at it on a different level and say, 'ok, that's the most important point for this counselling centre, and that's the most important for another centre, then we'll summarise everything and see where the common thread is'. I noticed that very clearly at the last workshop, and I found it really impressive.

**KK:** In my opinion, the essential thing is that through academic support we are trying to create a frame-

work for practitioners to generate quality criteria on the basis of their own practical knowledge. Maj said it so beautifully; through analysis, we are able to moderate the discussions in a focused manner towards developing the quality criteria. In doing so, we make the existing expertise as visible as the open questions and dissent. In this way, we are jointly developing quality criteria for the implementation of professional standards in dealing with mediatised sexualised violence.

**FV:** I would like to frame our role on the question of how we can remain scientific if, on the one hand, we put our recommendations for action into practice in the field and, at the same time, we are evaluating the implementation formatively as a process. First of all, this is based on an understanding of implementation in the sense of 'can the recommendations for action be made useful?'. This is something we cannot find out at all without cooperating with practitioners. This may mean transforming the recommendations for action where there are concerns about usefulness. Because the implementation process is meant to include criticism, sometimes the critique is: 'that doesn't work.' Our evaluation approach is not a conclusive judgement on the recommendations for action or the practices in specialised counselling centres. We try to derive something new from challenges in a solution-oriented manner. This allows us to take part in discussions in a way that is somewhat different from what often takes place in academia and still work out in the end what the core of the debate is. The topics for the next Intervision Workshop always come from practice. They feed on the experiences that come from practice and that are transmitted to us via the reflection sheets. At the beginning of every workshop, we ask whether we are implementing the concerns of the counselling centres in the way they had imagined or whether something has to be thrown out. With a view to the quality criteria, a consensus should ultimately be reached, even if we have different tasks in the interim phases: the counselling centres implement and we make sure that we formulate proposals for quality criteria from this mass of data that is generated.

**SF:** We at the DGfPI e.V. focus on getting into conversation within the counselling community, so that the knowledge gained through ByeDV does not remain only within the five multiplier organisations, but rather that the circle keeps growing. For

example, we have planned digital specialist forums to discuss the technical questions that arise in ByeDV in an interdisciplinary manner. That's one. The other is the European level, where we are trying to establish contacts and enter into cooperation. I find it interesting that, for example, images of abuse are really a European problem. They are located on European servers, even if they were not necessarily generated in Europe. I think it's very good that there are many initiatives at the European level that control and limit the digital space, which seems to us less controllable, to the extent that at least children's and young people's rights are relevant.

**SK:** I have nothing more to add. The most recent Intervision Workshop was really excellent. Despite different perspectives, a common outcome came about.

**Anja Teubert:** *How much influence do the two researchers have; how is that perceived?*

**SK:** I have never had the feeling that Katharina and Frederic are influencing the process, but rather that they are bringing together and sorting ideas. They help us keep an overall view of the project. I also feel like we could speak up if something didn't suit us.

**MW:** I perceive the discussions as totally equal. Maybe also because one sometimes notices negotiations between Katharina and Frederic. So, it is not the case that the research team is in charge and we can't question what is being said. I think that issue resolved itself relatively quickly.

**Anja Teubert:** *Who will decide at the end what will be published as quality criteria?*

**KK:** So according to the project structure, Frederic and I evaluate the feedback from the reflection sheets of the counselling centres and the discussions in the Intervision Workshops in order to work out proposals for the quality criteria. Through regular dialogue with the counselling centres about our insights, we ensure that the ByeDV practitioners set the content guidelines and, if necessary, put us back on the right path. Ultimately, we only publish quality criteria on which consensus has been reached with the counselling centres.

**Anja Teubert:** *Thank you for the fascinating insights. I am interested to learn how the project progresses.*



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## Beyond Digital Violence (ByeDV)

**Ein Projekt zur Implementierung fachlicher Standards zum Umgang  
mit mediatisierter sexualisierter Gewalt gegen Kinder und Jugendliche  
im Dialog zwischen Praxis und Wissenschaft**

### Die Projektpartner:innen im Interview mit Anja Teubert

Das Besondere am Projekt „Beyond Digital Violence. Capacity Building for Relevant Professionals Working with Children and Young People Who Experienced Sexualized Violence Using Digital Media (ByeDV)“<sup>1</sup> ist die enge Zusammenarbeit zwischen Wissenschaft und Praxis. Kolleg:innen aus der Fachpraxis überprüfen die im Vorgängerprojekt „HUMAN“ entwickelten Handlungsempfehlungen des Forscher:innenduos Kärgel und Vobbe auf deren Praxistauglichkeit und entwickeln in diesem Zuge gemeinsam mit Vertreter:innen der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Prävention und Intervention bei Kindesmisshandlung, -vernachlässigung und sexualisierter Gewalt (DGfPI) e.V. und den Forschenden Qualitätskriterien, die EU-weit zur Geltung kommen sollen. Das diskursive Entwickeln fachlicher Standards in einem gemeinsamen Prozess klingt spannend und könnte gegebenenfalls beispielgebend für andere Projekte sein. Deshalb wollen wir mit diesem Interview mit den Beteiligten ins Gespräch kommen.

Kooperationspartner:innen sind fünf Beratungsstellen mit einem Auftrag der Krisenintervention bei sexualisierter Gewalt gegen Kinder und Jugendliche: Präventionsbüro Ronja – Frauen gegen Gewalt e.V. Westerburg, Kinder- und Jugendschutzdienst Känguru, Kinderschutzzentrum Ulm/Neu-Ulm, Männerbüro Hannover e.V., Wildwasser Marburg e.V. Sie alle implementieren die empirisch-fallbasierten Handlungsstrategien in Fällen mediatisierter sexualisierter Gewalt gegen Kinder und Jugendliche. Fachlich und wissenschaftlich wird der Implementierungsprozess durch die DGfPI sowie die SRH Hochschule Heidelberg begleitet.

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Dieses Projekt wird kofinanziert durch das Programm  
Rechte, Gleichstellung und Unionsbürgerschaft (2014–2020)  
der Europäischen Union.

<sup>1</sup> ByeDV wird unter der Fördernummer 101005221 kofinanziert durch das Programm Rechte, Gleichstellung und Unionsbürgerschaft (2014–2020) der Europäischen Union. Näheres unter [www.byedv.de](http://www.byedv.de).



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**Via** Zoom haben, stellvertretend für die aus der Fachpraxis Beteiligten, Sonja Kroggel (Kinderschutzzentrum Ulm/Neu-Ulm), Maj Walther (Wildwasser Marburg e.V.) und Claudia Wienand (Präventionsbüro Ronja – Frauen gegen Gewalt e.V. Westerburg), sowie Sylvia Fein als Vertreterin der DGfPI und das Forschendenteam Katharina Kärgel und Frederic Vobbe (SRH Hochschule Heidelberg) über ihre (Zusammen-)Arbeit in ByeDV gesprochen.

**Anja Teubert (AT):** Ich freue mich auf das Interview und darauf, von euch zu hören, welche Erfahrungen ihr a) mit der Implementierung der Handlungsempfehlungen und b) in der Zusammenarbeit mit den beiden Wissenschaftler:innen der SRH Hochschule Heidelberg und der DGfPI e.V. im Rahmen von ByeDV macht. Zu Beginn interessiert mich jedoch, was die wichtigsten Eckpunkte des Projekts sind.

**Katharina Kärgel (KK):** Zunächst muss man wissen, dass das Projekt ByeDV als Anschlussprojekt des BMBF-geförderten HUMAN-Projekts<sup>2</sup> entstanden ist. Dort haben wir, Frederic Vobbe und ich, unter Beteiligung von Expert:innen aus Wissenschaft und Praxis partizipativ Handlungsempfehlungen zum Umgang mit Fällen mediatisierter sexualisierter

Gewalt gegen Kinder und Jugendliche empirisch entwickelt. Das Ergebnis hiervon ist eine 200-seitige, teils anspruchsvolle Monografie mit recht komplexen Fallstrukturen. So entstand die Idee zu schauen, wie und unter welchen Voraussetzungen die Handlungsempfehlungen für Praxisstellen mit einer Spezialisierung implementiert, also gang- und anwendbar gemacht werden können. Im Rahmen des Anschlussprojekts ByeDV probieren wir das mit fünf Leuchtturmstellen der spezialisierten Fachberatung gegen sexualisierte Gewalt aus. Die in ByeDV erworbene bzw. ausgebauten Erfahrungsexpertise soll letztlich in Qualitätskriterien zur Implementierung fachlicher Standards im Umgang mit mediatisierter sexualisierter Gewalt gegen Kinder und Jugendliche zusammengefasst werden.

**Frederic Vobbe (FV):** Vielleicht sollte der Begriff Leuchtturmstellen im Sinne einer Zukunftsperspektive durch Multiplikator:innenstellen ersetzt werden. Es geht ja auch um die Weitergabe gesammelter Erfahrungen, gewonnener Expertise und die gemeinsame Weiterentwicklung fachlicher Standards.

**AT:** Dann würde ich gerne von den Multiplikator:innen hören, mit welcher Motivation ihr euch für eine Teilnahme an ByeDV beworben habt?

**Claudia Wienand (CW):** Wir fanden die Ausschreibung total spannend und passend, da zum damaligen Zeitpunkt die Beratungsanfragen für Fälle

<sup>2</sup> Das an der SRH Hochschule durchgeführte Projekt „HUMAN. Entwicklung von Handlungsempfehlungen für die pädagogische Praxis zum fachlichen Umgang mit sexualisierter Gewalt mit digitalem Medieneinsatz gegen Kinder und Jugendliche“ wurde durch das Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung unter dem Förderkennzeichen 01SR1711 von Dezember 2017 bis April 2021 gefördert. Näheres unter [www.human-srh.de](http://www.human-srh.de).

sexualisierter Gewalt mit digitalem Medieneinsatz gestiegen sind. Infolge des Lockdowns während der Corona-Pandemie kamen vermehrt Eltern bei uns an, deren Kinder von Anbahnung sexualisierter Gewalt über digitale Medien betroffen waren. Als die Schulen nach dem Lockdown wieder öffneten, erreichten uns auch von dieser Seite vermehrt Anfragen für Präventionsveranstaltungen. Gleichzeitig haben wir festgestellt, dass der Umgang mit solchen Fällen aus Betroffenensicht ein noch immer recht sperriger ist, weshalb wir dazu beitragen möchten, hieran etwas zu verändern.

**Sonja Kroggel (SK):** Durch unsere Beratungsarbeit wurde uns klar, dass wir uns mit digitalen Medien und sexualisierter Gewalt mehr beschäftigen müssen und auch wollen. Im Kontakt mit Jugendlichen kommen wir nicht umhin, über digitale Medien zu sprechen.

**Maj Walter (MW):** Ich habe mit meinen Kolleg:innen am Abschluss symposium des HUMAN-Projekts teilgenommen. Bei vielen Vorträgen und Inhalten habe ich gedacht ‚Ja, genau darum geht es doch, und diese Handlungsempfehlungen brauchen wir noch etwas praxisorientierter und detaillierter‘ – verbunden mit dem Gefühl, dass alles, was bisher zu Prävention und Intervention in Fortbildungs- oder Informationsveranstaltungen weitergegeben wurde, zwar sicherlich weiterhin stimmt, dass es aber nicht mehr so richtig an der Lebenswelt von Kindern und Jugendlichen dran ist und ich entsprechend etwas Neues brauche. Diesbezüglich fühlte ich mich im Rahmen des Abschluss symposiums von HUMAN ziemlich gut abgeholt, weshalb die Ausschreibung zur Beteiligung an ByeDV für mich gut gepasst hat.

**AT:** Wie implementiert ihr diese Handlungsansätze? Wie arbeitet ihr?

**CW:** Wir treffen uns als Vertreter\*innen der Fachberatungsstellen mit den Teams der DGfPI e. V. und SRH Hochschule Heidelberg zu fünf Intervisionsworkshops. Dort arbeiten wir sehr intensiv zu unterschiedlichen Themen- und Fragestellungen zusammen. Zwischen den Workshops füllen wir Reflexionsbögen aus, um unseren Implementierungs- und Auseinandersetzungsprozess zu reflektieren und zu evaluieren. Dabei wird das Thema mediatisierte sexualisierte Gewalt auch weitergedacht. Wir Fachstellen treffen uns außerdem digital, um uns über

unseren Implementierungsprozess auszutauschen und uns gegenseitig zu unterstützen.

**MW:** In der Beratung verweise ich ganz konkret auf die Handlungsempfehlungen. Gerade Fachkräfte aus Wohngruppen finden dort in der Regel einen Fall, der ungefähr den Fällen entspricht, die sie gerade in der Wohngruppe haben, und können sich sodann an den Handlungsempfehlungen abarbeiten und orientieren: Könnte dies beispielsweise eine Intervention sein, die für uns sinnvoll ist? – Hierzu habe ich ganz viele positive Rückmeldungen bekommen. Die Fachkräfte erleben es als sehr hilfreich, durch die Fallbeispiele und Handlungsempfehlungen eine Struktur zu haben.

**SK:** Ich möchte den letzten gemeinsamen Intervisions workshop beispielhaft erwähnen. Es war für mich ganz toll, dass wir zusammen an einem Fallbeispiel der Handlungsempfehlungen gearbeitet haben, die Handlungsempfehlungen immer weiter zusammengefasst haben und dabei, begleitet durch Frederic und Katharina, die ersten Qualitätskriterien [Anm.: fachliche Standards zum Thematisieren des Verbreitungsrisikos] entwickelt haben. In unserer Beratungsstelle haben wir uns viel im Team über mediatisierte sexualisierte Gewalt ausgetauscht. Mittlerweile gehen wir zunehmend in die Netzwerke. Wir stellen ByeDV beispielsweise in verschiedenen Arbeitskreisen vor. Wir merken, dass das Interesse sehr groß ist. Viele – gerade auch Schulen – fragen anschließend an, was wir ihnen zum Thema anbieten können.

**AT:** Wie werden euer Erfahrungswissen und die daraus abgeleiteten Qualitätskriterien in eurer Arbeit gesichert und verankert?

**CW:** Ich persönlich verinnerliche das Thema digitale Medien und sexualisierte Gewalt immer mehr. Durch die Sensibilisierung ist der Blick noch mal geschärft. Das Thema ploppt überall auf, und mit Begeisterung setze ich mich weiter damit auseinander. Wir haben mittlerweile einige Präventionsworkshops zu mediatisierter sexualisierter Gewalt durchgeführt, überwiegend an Schulen. Dort haben wir mit Jugendlichen wertvolle Dialoge geführt, was ich als sehr bereichernd erlebe. Ich hoffe, dass die Qualitätskriterien, die aus unserer Erfahrungsexpertise heraus entwickelt werden, letztlich auch andere inspirieren.

# Muss man den sicheren Ort noch mal anders denken?

**MW:** Ergänzend kann ich mit Blick auf meine Person und die Frage nach der Sicherung sagen, dass ich seit ByeDV immer überlege ‚Wie ist die grund-sätzliche Herangehensweise in Fällen mediatisierter sexualisierter Gewalt?‘, ‚Gibt es bestimmte Faktoren, die automatisch mitgedacht werden müssen?‘ Bei-spielsweise wären wir in der Beratung eher vorsich-tig, wenn es um die Frage nach einer Strafanzeige geht. Vielleicht muss ich im Falle existierender Ab-bildungen und eines bestehenden Verbreitungsrisi-kos die Frage nach der Strafanzeige anders denken, ohne dass es gleich bedeutet, dass bei digitalem Medieneinsatz unbedingt sofort Strafanzeige erstat-tet werden sollte. Ein weiteres Beispiel betrifft die Traumaarbeit. Nehmen wir zum Beispiel die Frage einer Retraumatisierung, wenn ich mit Bildmaterial konfrontiert werde. Braucht es dann andere Trauma-arbeit, muss die bisherige Traumaarbeit angepasst werden, oder unterscheidet sich das nicht so sehr? Solche Fragen laufen bei mir mit, auch wenn ich darauf noch keine Antwort habe.

**SK:** Im Kontakt mit Jugendlichen denke ich digitale Medien und mediatisierte sexualisierte Gewalt im-mer häufiger mit, auch wenn der Beratungsanlass ein völlig anderer ist; beispielsweise, wenn mir Ju-gendliche erzählen, dass sie oft alleine und dann in den digitalen Medien unterwegs sind. Ähnlich wie Maj beschäftigt uns die Frage der Traumaarbeit. Üblicherweise lautet der Grundsatz in der Trauma-arbeit: kein Täter:innenkontakt. Aber wie gehen wir damit um, wenn Bilder verbreitet wurden oder dieselben sozialen Netzwerke genutzt werden?

**AT:** Besprecht ihr solche Fragen gemeinsam in den Intervisionsworkshops?

**Sylvia Fein (SF):** Wir wollen solche Fragen vertiefen: Muss man den sicheren Ort noch mal anders den-ken? Was wird diesbezüglich in den entsprechen-den Fachkreisen schon gedacht, wird es überhaupt mitgedacht, oder ist ByeDV ein Anstoß hierfür? Im Projektverlauf werden Lücken sichtbar, die wir ver suchen zu schließen oder zumindest anzugehen.

**FV:** Ich finde das Bild von den Lücken total pas-send. Wir experimentieren im Moment viel. Die Qualitätskriterien werden das Ergebnis eines Aus-tauschprozesses sein. Sie ergeben sich aus der prakti-schen Arbeit und der tagtäglichen Erfahrung der

ByeDV-Fachkräfte. Dazu gehören auch jede Menge Widerstände, beispielsweise im Verhältnis zwischen den Handlungsempfehlungen und Handlungsgewohnheiten, durch die Rahmenbedingungen, unter denen spezialisierte Fachberatung stattfindet oder in der Zusammenarbeit mit anderen Akteur:innen der Hilfennetzwerke. Die so sichtbaren Lücken werden durch den gemeinsamen Erfahrungsaustausch gefüllt. Die Qualitätskriterien stellen somit das Positivstück der Lücken dar, auf das wir verweisen können und sagen können: „Jetzt wissen wir, wie es besser funktioniert.“

**AT:** Wie gebt ihr eure Erfahrungen in der Arbeit mit den Handlungsempfehlungen weiter, um zu signalisieren, dass es weniger um ein Ablesen als vielmehr um ein Reflektieren der Handlungsempfehlungen geht?

**SK:** Meine Erfahrungen gebe ich so weiter, dass ich zunächst auf die Handlungsempfehlungen hinweise, aber auch vermittele, dass es um die eigene Auseinandersetzung mit dem Thema geht. Mir hat sehr geholfen zu reflektieren, wie ich selbst digitale Medien nutze, und darüber auch mit Fachkräften in den Austausch zu gehen. Auch in unserem Team fand dazu ein Austausch statt. Darüber hinaus habe ich mich selbst mit den Social Media, die die Jugendlichen nutzen, mehr beschäftigt. Mit dieser eigenen Auseinandersetzung kann ich die Handlungsempfehlungen anders lesen. Ich merke, dass es im Kontakt mit anderen Fachkräften der erste Schritt ist, auf die Bedeutung digitaler Medien im Kontext sexualisierter Gewalt aufmerksam zu machen. Es geht darum, zu sensibilisieren.

**CW:** Ich kann ganz aktuell sagen, dass unsere Fachstelle mit der Fachgruppe Prävention der Landesarbeitsgemeinschaft einen landesweiten Fachtag zu sexualisierter Gewalt an Schulen veranstaltet hat. Katharina und Frederic waren so nett, dort Workshops zu mediatisierter sexualisierter Gewalt anzubieten. Ich war begeistert, dass wir a) für digitale Medien sensibilisiert waren, weil Schule ein wichtiger Sozialisationsort für Jugendliche ist, an dem sexualisierte Gewalt aber auch ein Thema ist, und b) das Know-how aus erster Hand anbieten konnten.

**MW:** Ganz konkret überarbeite ich gerade alle Fortbildungen, die wir im Angebot haben; auch Grundlagenfortbildungen. Wir haben jede Fortbildung um

den Bereich digitale Medien ergänzt. Im Kontakt mit Fachkräften oder in Arbeitskreisen habe ich eher den Eindruck, dass alle digitale Medien mitdenken, nur nicht so richtig wissen, wie sie handlungsfähig werden. Und da ist es total hilfreich, auf die Handlungsempfehlungen hinweisen zu können und das auf diese Weise zu rahmen.

**KK:** Das Schöne ist ja, dass die an ByeDV beteiligten Fachstellen bereits heute in ihre Netzwerke gehen, um für die Mediatisierung sexualisierter Gewalt in ihrem Bedeutungsgehalt zu sensibilisieren. Dadurch können wir mit der Veröffentlichung der Qualitätskriterien in Schriftform – was ja auch noch mal eine Form der Sicherung ist – größere Multiplikator:inneneffekte erzielen.

**AT:** Wie seht ihr im Rahmen der Implementierung und der Entwicklung von Qualitätskriterien eure jeweiligen Rollen?

**MW:** Ich mache das mal am letzten Intervisionsworkshop fest. Dort war es so, dass wir alle unsere Blickwinkel und Perspektiven aus der Praxis eingebracht haben. Diese wurden durch die Kolleg:innen von der DGfPI e.V. gerahmt. Aus diesem Sammelsurium haben Katharina und Frederic trotz unserer unterschiedlichen Einschätzungen und Schwerpunkte den roten Faden rausgelesen. Das ist die wissenschaftliche Perspektive, die ich so nicht verinnerlicht habe; auf einer anderen Ebene draufzuschauen und zu sagen, „okay, das ist der wichtigste Punkt für diese Fachberatungsstelle, das für diese, das fassen wir alles zusammen und dann gucken wir mal, wo der rote Faden ist“. Das habe ich gerade beim letzten Workshop ganz deutlich wahrgenommen, und das fand ich total beeindruckend.

**KK:** Das Wesentliche ist meines Erachtens, dass wir durch die wissenschaftliche Begleitung versuchen, für Praxis den Rahmen zu schaffen, Qualitätskriterien auf der Grundlage ihres eigenen Erfahrungswissens zu generieren. Maj hat es so schön gesagt – durch das analytische Moment moderieren wir die Diskussionen fokussiert in Richtung Qualitätskriterien. Dabei machen wir die vorhandene Expertise ebenso sichtbar wie offene Fragen und Dissens. Auf diese Weise entwickeln wir gemeinsam im Dialog Qualitätskriterien zur Implementierung fachlicher Standards im Umgang mit mediatisierter sexualisierter Gewalt.

**FV:** Ich würde unsere Rolle auf die Frage hin zuspielen wollen, wie wir wissenschaftlich bleiben können, wenn wir auf der einen Seite unsere Handlungsempfehlungen ins Feld geben und wir gleichzeitig die Implementierung formativ als Prozess evaluieren. Dem liegt erst einmal ein Implementierungsverständnis im Sinne von: „Können die Handlungsempfehlungen nützlich gemacht werden?“, zugrunde. Das ist etwas, was wir ohne eine Kooperation mit Praxis überhaupt nicht herausfinden können. Das bedeutet im Zweifelsfall eine Transformation der Handlungsempfehlungen. Denn der Implementierungsprozess kann Kritik umfassen, es kann heißen: „Das funktioniert nicht.“ Unser Evaluationsansatz ist kein abschließendes Urteil über die Handlungsempfehlungen oder die Praxen in spezialisierten Fachberatungsstellen. Wir versuchen, lösungsorientiert aus Herausforderungen etwas Neues abzuleiten. Das erlaubt es uns in einer etwas anderen als der sonst für Wissenschaft bekannten Form, an Diskussionen teilzunehmen und dennoch am Ende herauszuarbeiten, was der Gegenstand der Auseinandersetzung war. Die Themen für den nächsten Interventionsworkshop kommen immer aus der Praxis. Sie speisen sich aus den Erfahrungen, die Praxis macht und die uns über die Reflexionsbögen übermittelt werden. Zu Beginn aller Workshops erkundigen wir uns, ob wir die Anliegen der Fachberatungsstellen so umsetzen, wie sie sich das vorgestellt haben oder ob etwas umgeschmissen werden muss. So soll mit Blick auf die Qualitätskriterien am Ende ein Konsens hergestellt werden, auch wenn wir in den Interimsphasen unterschiedliche Aufgaben haben: Die Fachstellen implementieren, und wir sehen zu, dass wir aus diesem Wust an Daten Vorschläge für Qualitätskriterien formulieren.

**SF:** Wir von der DGfPI e.V. richten das Augenmerk darauf, dass wir innerhalb der Beratungslandschaft ins Gespräch kommen, sodass das Wissen von ByeDV nicht in den fünf Multiplikator:innenstellen bleibt, sondern dass die Kreise immer größer werden. Wir haben zum Beispiel digitale Fachforen geplant, um die fachlichen Fragen, die in ByeDV auftreten, interdisziplinär zu besprechen. Das ist das eine. Das andere ist die europäische Ebene, auf der wir versuchen, Kontakte herzustellen und Kooperationen einzugehen. Ich finde es interessant, dass zum Beispiel Missbrauchsabbildungen wirklich ein europäisches Problem sind. Sie liegen auf euro-

päischen Servern, auch wenn sie nicht unbedingt in Europa generiert wurden. Ich finde es sehr gut, dass es auf der europäischen Ebene viele Aktionen gibt, die den digitalen Raum, der für uns wenig steuerbar erscheint, doch insoweit steuern und begrenzen, als zumindest Kinder- und Jugendrechte Relevanz bekommen.

**SK:** Ich kann nichts ergänzen. Der letzte Interventionsworkshop war wirklich toll. Trotz unterschiedlicher Sichtweisen ist etwas Gemeinsames entstanden.

**AT:** Wie viel dürfen die beiden Wissenschaftler:innen beeinflussen; wie nehmt ihr das wahr?

**SK:** Ich habe in keinem Moment das Gefühl, dass Katharina und Frederic beeinflussend sind, sondern eher zusammenbringend und sortierend. Sie behalten den Gesamtüberblick. Ich habe auch das Gefühl, dass wir es sagen könnten, wenn etwas für uns nicht passen würde.

**MW:** Ich nehme die Diskussionen total gleichberechtigt wahr. Vielleicht auch, weil man manchmal dieses Aushandeln zwischen Katharina und Frederic mitbekommt. Also es ist nicht so, dass das Wissenschaftler:innen-Team den Hut aufhat und nicht angezweifelt werden darf, was gesprochen wird. Das hat sich, finde ich, relativ schnell aufgelöst.

**AT:** Wer entscheidet denn am Ende, was als Qualitätskriterien veröffentlicht wird?

**KK:** Also die Projektstruktur sieht vor, dass Frederic und ich das Feedback aus den Reflexionsbögen der Fachstellen und der Diskussionen in den Interventionsworkshops auswerten, um Vorschläge für die Qualitätskriterien auszuarbeiten. Durch den regelmäßigen Dialog mit den Fachstellen zu unseren Einsichten sichern wir ab, dass die ByeDV-Fachkräfte die inhaltlichen Leitplanken setzen und uns gegebenenfalls wieder auf den rechten Weg bringen. Letztlich veröffentlichen wir nur Qualitätskriterien, über die mit den Fachstellen Konsens hergestellt wurde.

**AT:** Vielen Dank für die spannenden Einblicke. Ich bin gespannt, wie es bei euch weitergeht.

# Das Forschungsprojekt »Beyond Digital Violence«

Katharina Kärgel, Frederic Vobbe

**Das Projekt »Beyond Digital Violence. Capacity building for relevant professionals working with children and young people who experienced sexualized violence using digital media (ByeDV)« hat zum Ziel, Qualitätskriterien zur Implementierung von Handlungsempfehlungen zum Umgang mit mediatisierter sexualisierter Gewalt gegen Kinder und Jugendliche zu entwickeln.**

## Hintergrund von »ByeDV«

Unter dem Sammelbegriff »mediatisierte sexualisierte Gewalt« sind sämtliche Übergriffe zusammengefasst, die durch digitale Medien oder Endgeräte angebahnt, verübt, begleitet oder aufrechterhalten werden (KÄRGEL & VOBBE, 2019). Digitale Medien stellen folglich das Instrument (z. B. Anbahnung über Messaging-Dienste) zur Verübung und/oder den Kontext (z. B. Tatort im Falle kursierender Nacktaufnahmen) der Gewalthandlungen dar (VOBBE & KÄRGEL, 2022). Der Begriff »mediatisiert« geht dabei im Gegensatz zu dem Begriff »digitalisiert« über die quantitative Zunahme digitaler Medien(nutzung) hinaus und nimmt in den Blick, wie sich digitale Medien, Kultur und Gesellschaft wechselseitig beeinflussen (KROTZ, 2007). Zwar wirken digitale Medien etwa auf kommunikative Praktiken, Haltungen und Einstellungen ein, gleichzeitig wirkt aber auch das individuelle Mediennutzungsverhalten auf die Gestaltung und Weiterentwicklung digitaler Medien ein (WOLF et al., 2021).

Gewaltausübende instrumentalisieren zunehmend die Mediennutzungsgewohnheiten von Kindern und Jugendlichen. Gewissermaßen ziehen sie hieraus insoweit einen Vorteil, »als sie ihre Absichten und Motivationen weder offenlegen noch rechtfertigen müssen« (VOBBE & KÄRGEL, 2022, S. 12). So sind beispielsweise selbstsexualisierende Foto- und Videoaufnahmen nunmehr Teil der sexuellen Sozialisation (MATTHIESEN & DEKKER, 2018). Wenn Gewaltausübende die eigenen Absichten – etwa durch Vortäuschen von Interesse an einer Liebesbeziehung – vorenthalten, wird es für Kinder und Jugendliche umso schwerer, zwischen einer grenzachtenden und einer sexualisiert grenzverletzenden Beziehungsgestaltung zu unterscheiden. Ungeachtet dessen werden intimitätsverletzende Foto- und Videoaufnahmen täterstrategisch genutzt, um durch das Androhen ihrer Veröffentlichung Gewalthandlungen geheim zu halten und/oder fortzusetzen (BROOME et al., 2018; VOBBE & KÄRGEL, 2022).

Fachkräfte erleben Fälle sexualisierter Gewalt mit digitalem Medieneinsatz als komplex. Für sie bestehen die Herausforderungen oftmals darin, mediatisierte sexualisierte Gewalt zu erkennen und ihre Folgebelaustungen zu begrenzen. Sonja Kroggel, Kinderschutzzentrum Ulm/Neu Ulm e. V., stellt im Kontakt mit anderen Fachkräften fest, dass es der erste Schritt sei, »auf die Bedeutung digitaler Medien im Kontext sexualisierter Gewalt aufmerksam zu machen.« (KÄRGEL et al., im Druck). Die Prävention und Intervention sexualisierter Gewalt muss schließlich stets berücksichtigen, dass digitale Medien das subjektive Wirklichkeitserleben (von Kindern und

Jugendlichen) beeinflussen. Maj Walter, Wildwasser Marburg e. V., verweist in diesem Zusammenhang darauf, dass Fachkräfte »[...] nicht so richtig wissen, wie sie handlungsfähig werden.« (KÄRGEL et al., im Druck). Das verwundert insoweit wenig, als FREDERIC VOBBE (2019) bereits vor einigen Jahren feststellte, dass »jenseits des Verweises auf die Wichtigkeit von Medienkompetenzen oder das Recht am eigenen Bild [...] Orientierungshilfen für die Intervention [gänzlich fehlen].« (ebd., S. 31).

## Empirisch entwickelte Handlungsempfehlungen als Ausgangspunkt von »ByeDV«

Mit der Veröffentlichung der Projektergebnisse des Forschungsprojekts »Human. Entwicklung von Handlungsempfehlungen für die pädagogische Praxis zum fachlichen Umgang mit sexualisierter Gewalt mit digitalem Medieneinsatz«, die im Januar dieses Jahres unter dem Titel »Sexualisierte Gewalt und digitale Medien. Reflexive Handlungsempfehlungen für die Fachpraxis« zum kostenfreien Download bei der Verlagsgruppe Springer veröffentlicht wurden, liegen im deutschsprachigen Raum erstmals empirisch-fallbasierte Handlungsempfehlungen zum Umgang mit mediatisierter sexualisierter Gewalt vor. Diese stellen den Ausgangspunkt des im Projekt »ByeDV« angestrebten Implementierungsprozesses dar.

Die im Projekt »Human« entwickelten Handlungsempfehlungen sind in Zusammenarbeit mit Gewaltbetroffenen und deren Angehörigen, Fachkräften der spezialisierten Fachberatung sowie interdisziplinären Expertinnen und Experten aus Wissenschaft und Praxis entstanden (VOBBE & KÄRGEL, 2022). Auf der Grundlage ihrer Erfahrungsexpertise hat das Projektteam der SRH Hochschule Heidelberg, gefördert durch das Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung (Förderkennzeichen: 01SR1711), typische Fallstrukturen sexualisierter Gewalt mit digitalem Medieneinsatz einschließlich damit verbundener Ambivalenzen und Unsicherheiten, Dilemmata und Spannungsfelder sowie Herausforderungen und Überforderungen herausgearbeitet. Im Dialog mit den Partizipierenden wurden sodann entsprechende Handlungsstrategien identifiziert. Diese berücksichtigen die Interessen von Helfenden, Betroffenen und Angehörigen insoweit, als sie die Perspektivität aller im Hilfeprozess beteiligten a) qua Reflexion eines prototypischen Fallbeispiels offenlegen und b) in Handlungsoptionen integrieren. Schließlich beeinflussen die Aufträge, Rechte und Pflichten aller in den Un-

terstützungs- und Hilfeprozess involvierten Personen (z. B. Schule, Jugendamt, Polizei, Beratungsstelle) gleichermaßen die eigene Arbeit wie auch die Zusammenarbeit.

Die Handlungsempfehlungen stellen somit weder allgemeingültige Handlungsanweisungen, Handlungsleitfäden noch Checklisten dar. Sie zeigen vielmehr Möglichkeiten auf, um innerhalb gegebener Strukturen und Systeme betroffenen Kindern und Jugendlichen bestmöglich zu helfen (KÄRGEL et al., 2021). Das setzt allerdings das Übertragen der Handlungsempfehlungen auf die eigene Arbeit, genauer den Einzelfall, voraus.

## Projektziele

Hier setzt das von der Europäischen Union im Rahmen des Programms »Rechte, Gleichstellung und Unionsbürgerschaft« (2014 bis 2020) kofinanzierte Projekt »ByeDV« (Fördernummer: 101005221, Förderzeitraum: Mai 2021 bis April 2023) an. Im Rahmen von »ByeDV« werden die im »Human«-Projekt entwickelten Handlungsempfehlungen in der Fachpraxis implementiert. Implementierung sei dabei als Transferprozess verstanden, der darauf fokussiert, empirisch entwickelte Handlungsempfehlungen zum Umgang mit mediatisierter sexualisierter Gewalt gegen Kinder und Jugendliche in bzw. für Fachpraxen nützlich und anwendbar zu machen. Eine Transformation und (fachliche) Weiterentwicklung der Handlungsempfehlungen ist dabei insoweit unabdingbar, als ihre Anwendbarkeit und Nützlichkeit – systemisch betrachtet – von unterschiedlichen (System-)Faktoren (z. B. Profession, Institution, Auftrag, Rahmenbedingungen, Rechtslage) abhängen. Die Implementierung der Handlungsempfehlungen macht somit sichtbar, a) in welchen Strukturen und Prozessen die Unterstützung von betroffenen Kindern und Jugendlichen stattfindet, b) welchen fachlichen Standards die Arbeit zu mediatisierter sexualisierter Gewalt gegen Kinder und Jugendliche folgen sollte und c) wie eine Implementierung Letzterer gelingen kann.

Das Projekt »ByeDV« hat daher zum Ziel, Qualitätskriterien zur Implementierung von fachlichen Standards im Umgang mit mediatisierter sexualisierter Gewalt gegen Kinder und Jugendliche zu entwickeln. Die Grundlage hierfür bildet die im Rahmen des Implementierungsprozesses gewonnene bzw. ausgebauten Erfahrungsexpertise von Fachpraxis.

Übergeordnet geht es »ByeDV« auf nationaler wie EU-Ebene um die Kompetenzentwicklung all jener Fachkräfte, die zu sexualisierter Gewalt gegen Kinder und Jugendliche arbeiten oder in ihrem Tätigkeitsfeld damit in Berührung kommen können. Im Sinne eines weitreichenden Implementierungsprozesses ist »ByeDV« infogedessen auch darum bemüht, die Qualitätskriterien über Multiplikatorinnen und Multiplikatoren innerhalb der Mitgliedsstaaten der Europäischen Union zu streuen und zu verbreiten.

## Rahmen und Umsetzung von »ByeDV«

Dieses Vorhabens nehmen sich seit Mai 2021 die Verbundpartnerinnen Deutsche Gesellschaft für Prävention und Intervention bei Kindesmisshandlung und -vernachlässigung und sexualisierter Gewalt (DGfPI) e. V. und SRH Hochschule Heidelberg an, in Kooperation mit den folgenden Praxisstellen mit einem Auftrag der Krisenintervention bei sexuali-

sierter Gewalt: Frauen gegen Gewalt e. V. Westerburg, Kinder- und Jugendschutzdienst Känguru, Kinderschutzzentrum Ulm/Neu Ulm e. V., Männerbüro Hannover e. V., Wildwasser Marburg e. V. Beratend werden die Projektpartnerinnen durch einen Fachbeirat unterstützt. Dieser konstituiert sich wie folgt: Professur für Sexualwissenschaften der Hochschule Merseburg, Jugendamt der Landeshauptstadt Stuttgart, Arbeitsstab der Unabhängigen Beauftragten für Fragen des sexuellen Kindesmissbrauchs, Landesarbeitsgemeinschaft für Erziehungs-, Jugend- und Familienberatung e. V.

Die Implementierung der Handlungsempfehlungen findet in den fünf kooperierenden Praxisstellen statt. Dieser Prozess umfasst unter anderem eine kritisch-(selbst)reflexive Auseinandersetzung mit Widerständen, Spannungsfeldern und Herausforderungen mit Blick auf die Anwendbarkeit der Handlungsempfehlungen. Sie schließt neben den an »ByeDV« beteiligten Fachkräften ebenso deren Teams, Institutionen und Netzwerke ein. Um den Implementierungsprozess fachlich wie wissenschaftlich zu begleiten und unterstützen, treffen sich die Projektteams von DGfPI und SRH mit ein bis zwei Vertreterinnen und Vertretern pro kooperierender Praxisstelle zu insgesamt fünf Intervisions-Workshops. Dort wird gemeinsam der Status quo der Implementierung reflektiert. Gegenstand dieser Prozess-reflexion sind unter anderem bestärkende (z. B. Sicherheit und Handlungsmacht, Zuspruch und Befähigung, Weiterentwicklung und Erfolg) und konfliktbehaftete (z. B. Ambivalenzen und Unsicherheiten, Dilemmata und Widerstände, Herausforderungen und Überforderungen) Faktoren der Implementierung respektive Anwendung/Anwendbarkeit der Handlungsempfehlungen. Dies ermöglicht es Forschung und Praxis, gemeinsam in den Dialog zu fachlichen Standards einschließlich Voraussetzungen ihrer Implementierung zu treten.

Der Implementierungsprozess wird darüber hinaus bedarfshängig fachlich wie wissenschaftlich einrichtungsspezifisch und -übergreifend unterstützt. Beispielsweise werden teaminterne Klausurtage zu mediatisierter sexualisierter Gewalt angeboten, regionale Fachtagungen zum Thema gemeinsam geplant und durchgeführt oder aber offene fachliche Fragen in verschiedener Weise in einem größeren Kreis nationaler und internationaler Expertinnen und Experten diskutiert.

Um auf der Grundlage der in den Intervisions-Workshops und während des Implementierungsprozesses gesammelten Erfahrungsexpertise Qualitätskriterien zur Implementierung fachlicher Standards im Umgang mit mediatisierter sexualisierter Gewalt fruchtbar zu entwickeln, werden a) die Intervisions-Workshops durch das Projektteam SRH wissenschaftlich protokolliert und b) der Implementierungsprozess formativ, also prozessbegleitend, evaluiert. Dies geschieht auf der Grundlage sogenannter Reflexionsbögen. Es handelt sich hierbei um einen Katalog an Fragen, der den Fachkräften in einer etwa 10- bis 12-wöchigen Rückschau eine umfassende und mehrdimensionale Reflexion ihres Implementierungsprozesses ermöglicht, z. B. »Was ist mein Schlüsselerlebnis der zurückliegenden Implementierungsphase?«, »Welche Weiterentwicklung beobachte ich in meinem beruflichen Umfeld?«, »Für den zukünftigen Implementierungsprozess wünsche ich mir ....«. Die Evaluationsergebnisse – die im Übrigen auch die Themen- und Fragestellungen der Intervisions-Workshops definieren – werden vom Projektteam SRH in prototypische Qualitätskriterien übersetzt. Praxisnähe wird dabei durch den regelmäßigen Dialog mit den koope-

rierenden Praxisstellen und den punktuellen Einbezug des Fachbeirats gewährleistet. Die inhaltlichen Schwerpunkte werden somit durch Vertreterinnen und Vertreter der Praxis zu sexualisierter Gewalt gegen Kinder und Jugendliche mit einem Auftrag der Krisenintervention gesetzt.

Nähere Informationen zu den Forschungsprojekten »Human« ([www.human-srh.de](http://www.human-srh.de)) und »ByeDV« ([www.byedv.de](http://www.byedv.de)) finden Sie einschließlich jüngster Projektaktivitäten und Publikationen auf den jeweiligen Projekt-Websites. Die Qualitätskriterien werden anlässlich des Projektabschlusses am 6. März 2023 vorgestellt. Auch hierzu werden zu gegebener Zeit nähere Informationen bekanntgegeben.

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# The Research Project »Beyond Digital Violence« Capacity building for relevant professionals working with children and young people who experienced sexualized violence using digital media

*Katharina Kärgel, Frederic Vobbe*

## 1. Outline of the Research Project

The Project »Beyond digital violence. Capacity building for relevant professionals working with children and young people who experienced sexualised violence using digital media (ByeDV)« strives to develop *Quality Criteria for the implementation of recommendations for dealing with mediatised sexualised violence against children and adolescents.*

### 1.1 Background of ByeDV

The general term »mediatised sexualised violence« encompasses all forms of violence that are initiated, carried out, accompanied by or maintained through digital media or devices (Kärgel & Vobbe, 2019). Digital media, therefore, represent the

instrument(s) for perpetrating violence (e.g. initiation via messaging services) and/or the context in which the acts of violence take place (e.g. crime scene in the case of circulating nude photos) (Vobbe & Kärgel, 2022). In contrast to the term “digitalised”, the term “mediatised” goes beyond the quantitative increase in digital media (use) and takes a look at how digital media, culture and society mutually influence each other (Krotz, 2007). While digital media can have an effect on an individual’s communicative practices, attitude and behaviour, the way in which individuals use digital media also affect the design and further development of digital media (Wolf et al., 2021).

Perpetrators of violence are increasingly exploiting the media habits of children and adolescents, deriving the advantage that, “they do not have to disclose or justify their intentions and motivations” (Vobbe & Kärgel, 2022, p. 12). For example, self-sexualising photos and videos are now part of sexual socialisation (Matthiesen & Dekker, 2018). If the perpetrators withhold their own intentions - for example by feigning interest in a romantic relationship - it becomes all the more difficult for children and adolescents to distinguish between a relationship that respects boundaries and one that violates sexual boundaries. Irrespective of this distinction, photos and videos that violate intimacy are strategically used by perpetrators to keep violent acts secret and/or to continue them under threat of dissemination (Broome et al., 2018; Vobbe & Kärgel, 2022).

Professionals dealing with sexualised violence using digital media experience these cases as complex. The challenge often lies in recognising mediatised sexualised violence and intervening to limit the consequences. Sonja Kroggel of the Child Protection Center Ulm/Neu Ulm e.V., determined through contact with other professionals that “[the first step] is to raise awareness of the importance of digital media in the context of sexualised violence.” (Kärgel et al., in press ). The prevention of and intervention in sexualised violence must always take into account that digital media influence the subjective experience of reality (of children and adolescents). In this context, Maj Walter of Wildwasser Marburg e.V. points out that specialists [...] do not always know how to best prepare themselves.” (Kärgel et al., in press). As Frederic Vobbe (2019) stated a few years ago: “beyond the reference to the importance of media skills or the right to one's own image [...] guidance for intervention [is completely absent].” (ibid., p. 31).

## 1.2 Empirically Developed Recommendations as Starting Point for ByeDV

The results of the research project »Human. Development of recommendations for action for pedagogical practice on the professional handling of sexualised violence with the use of digital media”, were published in January of this year for free download by Springer publishing group under the title “Sexualised violence and digital media. Reflexive recommendations for action for professional practice«. This publication forms the basis for the ByeDV implementation process.

The recommendations for action developed in the »HUMAN« project were created in cooperation with individuals affected by violence and their relatives, counselling specialists and interdisciplinary experts from academia and practice (Vobbe & Kärgel, 2022). On the basis of their experiences and expertise, the project team at the SRH University Heidelberg, funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (funding code: 01SR1711), identified and developed typical case structures of sexualised violence using digital media, including the associated ambivalences and uncertainties, dilemmas and areas of tension as well as challenges and excessive demands. Appropriate action strategies were then identified through dialogue with the participants. These take into account the interests of helpers, affected individuals and their relatives insofar as they reveal the perspectives of all those involved in the help process by a) reflecting on a prototypical case study and b) integrating them into options for action. Finally, the missions, rights and duties of all parties involved in the support and help process (e.g. school, youth welfare office, police, counselling centre) influence both their own work and their cooperative work in equal measure.

The recommendations do not serve as an instruction manual, guideline or checklist. Rather, they show the best possible ways to help affected children and adolescents within the given structures and systems (Kärgel et al., 2021). However, this necessitates practitioners to adapt the recommendations to their own work, and more precisely, to each individual case.

## 1.3 Goal(s) of ByeDV

The recommendations serve as the starting point for the "ByeDV" project (funding number: 101005221, funding period: May 2021 to April 2023), co-financed by the European Union as part of the "Rights, Equality and Union Citizenship (2014-2020)" program. As part of "ByeDV", the recommendations developed in the HUMAN project are being implemented in professional practice via a transfer process that focusses on making the empirically developed recommendations for dealing with mediatised sexualised violence against children and adolescents useful and applicable in and for counselling practices. Additional transformation and (professional) development of the recommendations will be necessary in order to ensure they are applicable and useful according to different (system) factors (e.g. profession, institution, mandate, framework conditions, legal situation). The implementation of the recommendations thus makes visible a) the structures and processes in which support for affected children and adolescents takes place; b) which professional standards the work on mediatised sexualised violence against children and adolescents should follow; and c) how the latter can be implemented successfully.

The "ByeDV" project therefore aims to develop quality criteria for the implementation of professional standards when dealing with mediatised sexualised violence against children and adolescents. The basis for the quality criteria is the experience gained within the framework of the implementation process.

At the national and EU levels, "ByeDV" strives to develop the skills of all professionals who work with or may come into contact with the subject of sexualised violence

against children and adolescents. With the goal of a far-reaching implementation process, "ByeDV" will try to disseminate the quality criteria via multipliers within the member states of the European Union.

## 1.4 Framework and Implementation of ByeDV

The network partners "German Society for Prevention and Intervention in Child Abuse, Neglect and Sexualised Violence (DGfPI) e.V." and "SRH Hochschule Heidelberg" began this project in May 2021 in cooperation with the following counselling centres with a mandate for crisis intervention in the event of sexualised violence: Women against Violence e.V. Westerburg, Child and Youth Protection Service Kangaroo, Child Protection Centre Ulm/Neu Ulm e.V., Men's Office Hanover e.V., Wildwasser Marburg e.V. The project partners are supported by an advisory board that includes the Chair of Sexology at the University of Merseburg, the youth welfare office of Stuttgart, the working group of the independent commissioner for questions of sexual child abuse, and the state working group for educational, youth and family counseling e.V.

The implementation of the recommendations will take place in the five cooperating counselling centres. This process includes, among other things, a critical (self-)reflective examination of resistance, areas of tension and challenges with a view to the applicability of the recommendations. In addition to the practitioners involved in ByeDV, the implementation also includes their teams, institutions and networks. In order to accompany and support the implementation process both professionally and academically, the "DGfPI" and "SRH" project teams will meet with one to two representatives from each participating practice for a total of five interview workshops throughout the life of the project to reflect on the progress of the implementation process. The goals of this reflection process are to discuss opportunities (e.g. security and agency, encouragement and empowerment, further development and successes) and challenges (e.g. ambivalences and uncertainties, dilemmas and resistance, challenges and excessive demands) of the implementation with regard to the application/applicability of the recommendations. This will enable research and practice to enter into a dialogue on the development of professional standards, including the requirements for their implementation.

The implementation process will also be supported as needed, both professionally and academically, in a facility-specific and cross-institutional manner. For example, internal team retreats on mediated sexualised violence will be available, regional professional conferences on the subject will be jointly planned and carried out, and professional questions will be discussed in various ways in a larger circle of national and international experts.

In order to fruitfully develop quality criteria for the implementation of professional standards in dealing with mediated sexualised violence on the basis of the knowledge gained through the interview workshops and the experience gained during the implementation process a) the "SRH" project team will take academic protocols of the interview workshops and b) the implementation process will be evaluated in a formative, i.e. process-accompanying, manner on the basis of so-called

reflection sheets. These reflection sheets pose questions to the participating counselling centres that allows them to reflect comprehensively and multidimensionally on their implementation process every 10 to 12 weeks, e.g. 'What was my key experience during the past implementation phase?', 'What further developments am I observing in my professional environment?', 'For the future implementation process I wish...'. The evaluation results – which incidentally help define the topics and questions covered during the next interview workshop – will be adapted into prototypical quality criteria by the "SRH" project team. Practical relevance will be guaranteed through regular dialogue with the participating counselling centres and the occasional involvement of the advisory board. The priorities are thus set by practitioners working on sexualised violence against children and adolescents at centres with a mandate for crisis intervention.

More information on the research projects HUMAN ([www.human-srh.de](http://www.human-srh.de)) and ByeDV ([www.byedv.de](http://www.byedv.de)), including recent project activities and publications, can be found on their respective project websites. The quality criteria will be presented at the end of the project at a final symposium on March 6th, 2023. More information on this will also be provided in due course.

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*take action  
against cyber  
sexual* | **beyond  
digital  
violence**

# SEXUALISED VIOLENCE AND DIGITAL MEDIA.

A collection of abstracts  
with recommendations  
for professionals



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# Introduction

The following English-language abstracts aim to provide snapshots of the individual case studies portrayed in the empirically developed German-language recommendations for action when dealing with sexualised violence using digital media (SVUDM)<sup>1</sup> that originated from SRH University Heidelberg's project HUMAN. Development of recommendations for pedagogical practice in dealing with sexualised violence using digital media. As a project supported by the German Federal Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF), in an effort to determine the features of a professional approach to SVUDM and to develop case-based recommendations for practitioners in Germany, the recommendations have thus far only been published in German. With the start of the EU-funded follow-up project, Beyond Digital Violence (ByeDV), which focuses on application, implementation, discussion and analysis of the recommendations for action, it is important to provide broader insight and access to an international, and especially a European, community of practitioners and researchers. In doing so, the teams from SRH University Heidelberg and DGfPI<sup>2</sup> are working together, not only with the five German counselling centres currently implementing the recommendations, but also with international colleagues, to reflect on the applicability of the recommendations and considerations or modifications that may be necessary to adapt them

for use by professionals across the EU. This is key in accomplishing ByeDV's stated goal of disseminating an EU Blueprint that adapts the project's quality criteria for broader use. Already, in describing the recommendations for action to international colleagues and peers, we have been able to engage in useful dialogues about national differences in the legal classification and consequences of various types of online behaviours, terminology, as well as the perceived need for distinguishing between online as opposed to offline sexualised violence when developing counselling approaches. The very nature of the virtual interactions inherent in SVUDM underscore the importance of approaching the subject from an international perspective. Perpetrators of Sexual Online Grooming (SOG) can be previously known or unknown to their victims, living down the street or in another country, and likewise, concerns about dissemination of exploitative abuse materials know no borders. It is our hope that this first step in making aspects of the recommendations for action available to a broader audience will not only initiate a conversation to consider the nuances that online digital media can play in sexualized violence against children and adolescents, but also harmonise European approaches to prevention and intervention.



<sup>1</sup> Sexualised violence using digital media (SVUDM) is a broad term that includes forms of sexualised violence that are initiated, committed, accompanied by or maintained through the use of online activity. The term is not intended to imply a distinction between on- or offline interactions. Rather, it expresses that digital media can play a role in sexualised violence and violation that take place on or offline, for example to groom or blackmail victims of abuse as well as to disseminate images of abuse.

<sup>2</sup> The German Association for Prevention of and Intervention in Child Abuse, Neglect and Sexual Violence (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Prävention und Intervention bei Kindesmisshandlung, -vernachlässigung und sexualisierter Gewalt e.V.) is an interest group with over 700 members and member organizations across Germany, representing the range of professionals working in the subjects of child abuse and neglect, either with children, adolescents or parents.

# Abstracts



The following chapters from the Recommendations for Action are currently available in English abstract form.

## Abstract 1

*Parent-Child conflict resulting from presumed mediatised sexualised violence* - This is the story of Eli, whose parents find what they consider "pornographic" chat content on his computer and, after confronting him about it, turn to his school social worker for support.

## Abstract 2

*Mediatised ritual violence* - This is the story of Constantin, who was sexually abused by his mother's partner and shows signs of residual dependence and loyalty to his abuser. Constantin's possession of sexually explicit images and torture images on his own computer, as well as the ways in which he describes his relationship with his abuser could point to a pseudo ideology linked to a group of perpetrators involved in ritualised violence.

## Abstract 3

*Discussing (potential) dissemination of abuse images with victims and their families* - In this case, Amira, whose sexual abuse by her nanny was filmed, and her family have been stabilised through the support of therapy. However, the therapists notice that the family is unaware of the possibility of online dissemination of the abuse images.

## Abstract 4

*Protecting victims when abuse images and videos recirculate* - Magdalena is haunted by the naked images she and her cousin, Anna, were forced to send to their trainer, Anton. Despite switching schools and moving away, two years later the images resurface along with rumours that she is a paedophile.

## Abstract 5

*Dealing with anxieties and fears brought about by mediatised sexualised violence* - Djamal was assaulted while fleeing Syria and is now plagued by fear and shame about the dissemination and potential recirculation of his abuse images, with concerns ranging from dishonouring his family to internalised homophobia, which are fueling feelings of panic and desperate searches to find his abuse images on the internet.

## Abstract 6

*Abuse Images and an Orientation on Child Wellbeing* - Finn and Lina's father reports suspicion to the child welfare agency that Arthur M, the current partner of the children's mother, has made sexualised images of the children. The child welfare agency carries out an assessment to determine whether the children are endangered.

## Abstract 7

*Prevention* - considers approaches to broaching the subject of mediatised sexualised violence with children and adolescents while also suggesting ways in which professionals can reconsider their attitudes and mindsets towards the online worlds experienced by young people today.



## Note

The following abstracts do not include references because they are summaries from the German-language monograph with the title "Sexualisierte Gewalt und digitale Medien. Reflexive Handlungsempfehlungen für die Fachpraxis", published in January 2022 by the Springer publishing group.

## Parent-child conflict resulting from presumed mediatised sexualised violence

### The initial scenario:

Eli's parents contact his school social worker voicing concerns about interactions between Eli, a student at a special education school, and an individual known as "Lollypop", with whom Eli has been in contact via a dating app. The chats seem "pornographic" to the parents, who assume Lollypop is a pedophile. The chats indicated that phone numbers were exchanged between Eli and Lollypop and, therefore, other communication may have taken place off the app. Eli initially denies his parents' accusations and then freaks out after further confrontation. His parents are turning to his trusted school social worker for help.

## Unpacking the Situation

The discovery of sexualised violence or suspected sexualised violence is understandably extremely disturbing and upsetting for parents. Sexual online content can lead to confusion, as consensual material and abusive material can be mistaken for each other. These ambiguities can make parents and guardians feel powerless. On top of this, parents tend to be more sceptical of digital media than their children, viewing any romantic and sexual interactions online as problematic. As a result of these fears, parents tend to approach scenarios like Eli's primed for conflict.

1. Parents may focus on eliminating or restricting the use of digital media or demand full access to their child's past and future online interactions.
2. By antagonising the use of digital media or identifying sexual violence where youth do not, parents may inadvertently play into the grooming tactics of predators, who appear, by contrast, understanding and supportive of a young person's sexual autonomy.

## Recommendations for Action

Professional support can help take the following into account:

- a. whether sexualised violence is or is not taking place their child's mediatised sexuality.
- b. the role that parents' fears of sexual violence play in the situation.
- c. educating parents on perpetrator strategies serves the purpose of establishing a risk assessment and alleviating feelings of guilt.
- d. indications of generational perception issues regarding the role of the digital world and relationship building.
- e. the risk of parents taking excessive actions.

## Analysing the Request

Eli's parents put the school social worker in a challenging position by asking for his help and involvement. A specialist may be able to help the social worker make a risk assessment. The social worker does not want to betray Eli's trust, nor does he want to ignore the parents' serious allegation of sexual violence against a minor. It is important to involve Eli as early as possible and to be transparent about his parents' concerns. It may be helpful to involve a second professional, so the social worker can continue to be an advocate for Eli while the other professional focuses on the concerns of his parents.

## Counselling and Stabilisation for Parents

It is also important to address the needs of parents who have discovered or suspect that their child is the victim of mediatised sexualised violence and take into account the following:

1. Parents also need to discuss their fears and worries, but in a solution-oriented way that also involves accepting their child's mediatised sexuality.
2. Some parents may feel a sense of shared responsibility or guilt for the situation that has befallen their child.
3. Educating parents on perpetrator strategies serves the purpose of establishing a risk assessment and alleviating feelings of guilt.
4. Parents may use stricter rules around the use of media as an attempt to regain control, however, this can have the opposite effect.

## Another prerequisite for help and support is a risk assessment that takes into account

Consider the concerns of the parents, potential evidence of power imbalance in an online relationship or grooming strategies and the reaction of the child to confrontation.

It is extremely important to consider the child's autonomy and identity. Eli, for example, has experienced violations of his personal sphere by his parents, which can result in feelings of rejection, stress and embarrassment.

The legitimate needs of the child form the baseline for the recommendations for action. The professional may see a link between the incident of mediatised sexualised violence and the needs of the victim - in this case seeking acceptance of his own sexuality and feelings of marginalisation. Helping parents through the challenging process of understanding and accepting their child's sexuality is key to defusing the conflict. Thus, the risk assessment acts as the intersection between violence prevention and sex education.

## The follow up:

Eli has a private meeting with his school counsellor. From his perspective, his parents are overreacting. Lollypop understands him and has helped him in his coming out process. He has been deeply embarrassed by his parents' invasion of his private conversations.

## Unpacking the Situation

Hearing Eli's perspective further establishes the parent-child conflict. Eli describes having felt violated by his parents, whereas he confirms consensual mediatised sexualised interactions with Lollypop, which he considers unproblematic. While we do not know the nature of Eli's educational needs, only that he attends a special education school, the taboo of disabled sexuality coupled with the higher risk of victimisation of persons with physical or intellectual disabilities could play into his parents' protectiveness. Additionally, digital media can play a particularly important role in sexual development and empowerment for individuals who have been doubly marginalised as both queer and disabled youth. Nevertheless, we cannot rule out that Eli may have an intellectual disability that could call into question his ability to give consent to Lollypop and to recognise exploitative behaviour.

## Recommendation for Action

### Intervention and Mediation

Initiating short and long-term mediation of the conflict between the parents and child is essential to helping this family through a crisis. They have already shifted away from speaking to interacting through negatively interpreted actions. However, with mediation, they can still resolve the conflict in a self-determined, mutually beneficial way.

Assuming the school counsellor does not detect a power asymmetry within the family, he can act as an impartial mediator to help all participants discuss their perceptions of the conflict, their feelings and desires and discuss ideas for resolution. It is important to lay out rules that can be negotiated (e.g. privacy, self-determination of sexuality, acceptable ways to use digital media for sexual autonomy, expression of parental concerns) and those that cannot (e.g. violence and awareness of grooming strategies from potential sexual predators). It is important to give equal consideration to protecting Eli against privacy violations by his parents and assuring his parents' ability to raise him as they see fit. Parents may have to adjust their rules as children enter adolescence, however, alongside this renegotiation, it is important to strengthen children's relationships with key adults in their lives (e.g. parents and school counsellors) and their awareness of social norms and expectations.

## Sexual Empowerment

Digital media can play a formative role in the identity development and 'coming out' experience of queer youth. Unfortunately, its use does not automatically lead to empowerment; queer youth are still twice as likely as heterosexual youth to have sent nude photos to strangers online. It can help for adults to signal a willingness to talk with the adolescent about what he wants and needs for his own sexual empowerment and what he interprets as a positive sexual relationship. This may help him identify a predatory or grooming relationship more clearly.

## Reflections on the Perpetrator

Thus far the recommendation has focussed on Eli and his parents, not Lollypop, as Eli would need to be questioned more closely to determine the true nature of their interactions. One generally has the right to control how images of oneself are used, even requesting their return or deletion if they are distributed without consent or meant for use within the bounds of a romantic relationship that has reached its end. What'smore, parents generally have to consent to the release of an image of a minor child, not to mention that the possession and distribution of sexually explicit images of minors is a criminal offense. If it is determined that Lollypop behaved in an abusive way, a restraining order can be filed, however if Eli were to contact Lollypop anyway, the restraining order would be difficult to maintain.

## Implications of Criminal Charges

The usefulness of criminally charging Lollypop depends on many factors, not least of all the feelings and potential impact on Eli. The legal ramifications of Lollypop's interaction with Eli depends on the state in which the offence was committed.

## Mediatised ritual violence

### The scenario:

A social worker in a group home finds sexually explicit images of minors and images of torture saved on the phone of 15 year old Constantin and refers him to a specialist counselling centre. Constantin's file indicates that he was sexually assaulted by his mother's partner (P.) between the ages of eight and thirteen and that thousands of images, including images of Constantin, were found by police on P.'s computer. Criminal charges were filed against P. without the involvement of Constantin. He discusses his relationship with P. as having involved "real man things", such as technology and drones and appears fascinated and proud, but also concerned that P., whom he also calls Prometheus, is disappointed in him and will find out about the counselling session. The counsellor reflects that the memories of P. sometimes make Constantin anxious, to which Constantin shows him a cryptic blog post from a gaming forum.

## Unpacking the Situation

The counselling session demonstrates that Constantin exhibits dependency on the perpetrator as well as a loyalty conflict. His statements and the blog allude to images and figures from antiquity (Prometheus, Icarus, Pandora's Box), which may indicate ritualised violence - perpetrators with (pseudo) ideological or cultic justifications for violence.

*\*Ritualised violence is organised by networks of perpetrators who use an embedded "pseudo" ideology to commercially produce and distribute abusive images and sell child sexual abuse as a "service". The ideology can be used to justify violence while creating psychological hurdles that prevent victims from leaving. This grants perpetrators additional power and control. Ritualised violence can provoke dissociative identity disorders in victims, which can then be exploited to push victims to commit crimes, remain loyal to perpetrators against their better interest, or even become perpetrators themselves.*

### The reflections focus on:

- a. the abuse images in Constantin's possession
- b. Constantin's ongoing dependence on P.

We advise counsellors dealing with presumed ritualised violence to contact subject matter experts.

## Possession of Abuse and Torture Images

Despite the context of Constantin's own abuse history, his possession of abuse images is concerning. His possession and potential uses of these images need to be considered. Some abuse victims search out their own images online as a coping mechanism. Some use self-triggering as a form of self-harm, while others use the control aspect of searching out images (sometimes of themselves) to manage PTSD symptoms. The presence of these images on Constantin's personal phone could indicate that he has been searching for abuse images or they could indicate ongoing contact and content exchange with P.

## Relationships of Dependence

Young people may have feelings of dependence and fear after unresolved abusive relationships. In this case, representations of masculinity were associated with and enhanced by technology. Online activities (e.g. logging into networks, viewing violent or pornographic material) can tie into ritualism and be used as a tool by perpetrators to maintain secrecy and isolate those affected from their support networks. This isolation desensitises victims to potential further violence and suggests that they are being (or could be) monitored.

## Recommendations for Action

Given that Constantin is experiencing ritualised violence, one must assume that if he is still endangered, he could also be endangering others. Constantin's possession of abuse videos could indicate an attempt at gaining control over and processing the situation, self-punishment, perpetrator behaviour, or ongoing control (or fear of control) by the perpetrator. He could be exhibiting signs of a dissociative identity disorder with ongoing loyalty to the perpetrator, possibly even reporting back about counselling sessions.

## Relationship Building

It is best for counsellors to focus on the victim in these situations rather than becoming preoccupied with criminal prosecution of the perpetrator(s). Trauma Pedagogy can be useful to help see the multidimensional aspects of the trauma and help the victim create "non-violent spaces".

Victims of violence experience a loss of confidence and disillusionment in relationships and will need to build stable relationships with so-called helpers in order to overcome the experience. One must consider that Constantin experienced conflicts related to dependency and loyalty which were triggered by online experiences. Counsellors need to offer Constantin support without forcing him to choose between their help and his potentially ongoing interactions with the perpetrator(s). This can be challenging for a counsellor - to what extent do they uphold the norms of the perpetrator/organised violence when they offer to be confidants of the victims, who may in turn test the trustworthiness of the counsellor. The victim should be reassured that they will choose the content of conversations with the counsellor, and they do not need to talk about anything they do not want to talk about. The goal is to build trust.

## Trauma-pedagogical Diagnostics

The goal is to assess the psychiatric well-being of the person based on environmental factors, stressors, personal strengths and resources to understand whether a dissociative personality disorder may be present.

## Creating Non-Violent Living Spaces

The danger of online contact by perpetrators is very high in cases of ritualised violence. The victim's need for secure spaces is inversely proportional to their ongoing experience of threat. Thus, the victim can best advise as to where and how they feel safe. For Constantin, one must assess how safe he feels at the group home where he lives and whether this facility has a basic understanding of organised and ritual violence in order to support him. He may also perceive the relationships with counsellors as safe spaces. It is harder to predict to what extent he can use digital media as a safe space.

## Considering Media Use

The two key things to consider in the case of Constantin's digital media use are

- a. his possession of abuse images and
- b. his reference to the blog entry.

### **The questions that a counsellor should consider are:**

- Why does Constantin own/look for/use the abuse material?
- What does he experience before, during and after a search/use?
- What connections are there between P. and the possession/use of the abuse material?
- To what extent does interacting with the videos relieve and/or burden Constantin?
- In what other situations does Constantin experience a comparable burden and/or relief?

Counsellors should talk to Constantin about their concerns about the images and videos, his criminal liability in possessing them and the harm caused to the subjects of the images.

The meaning of the blog entry can be discussed with Constantin and put into perspective, keeping in mind that he may still be in contact with perpetrators and may identify with the images and allusions in the blog. Unlike some scenarios, the possibility of eliminating digital media use is not perceived as media scepticism in cases of ritual online violence, especially if it makes the victim feel safer. But, we support self-determination rather than external prohibitions when deciding how to proceed with online presence.

## Partial Work

The goal of partial work in systemic trauma education is to create alliances between the counsellors and parts of the personalities of victims suffering from dissociative personality disorder. Note that this does mean accepting that some personalities may remain loyal to the perpetrator.

## Mental Health for Helpers

Although studies show very few helpers have been directly threatened through their work supporting victims of ritualised violence, it can awaken anxieties and fears even in trained specialists. There is a high incidence of secondary trauma. It is important that helpers are educated in self-care.

## Discussing (potential) dissemination of abuse images with victims and their families

### **Scenario:**

Amira is a 12 year old who was filmed being abused by her nanny. Following counselling, she and her family have been stabilised, and she feels safe and protected. However, the counsellors working with Amira and her parents, respectively, realise that the family is not aware of the possibility that the abuse videos could be published and disseminated online and are unsure of whether to broach the subject with the family.

## Unpacking the situation

There is always the possibility that digital evidence of sexualised violence will be published and disseminated online, even in cases where there has been police involvement. Usually, even young children are aware of these potential risks and have had concerns about dissemination of images. However, sometimes repression can cloud this sense of awareness about the potential and resulting consequences of dissemination (e.g. coming across the images of oneself or one's child online, circulation and humiliation within the peer group). The therapist is caught between upholding the family's false sense of security and destabilising them yet again, which could trigger further stress and re-traumatisation.

The fear of image dissemination can haunt victims and their families for years. However, in the case of this unaware family, the realisation could dawn on them at any time that the videos/images either have been, could be, or could be threatened to be disseminated by the perpetrator, so it may be better to confront the possibility of dissemination head on while they have the stability and support of their current therapists. Not immediately addressing the risk could result in a future, potentially worse experience of trauma and a loss of trust in the therapy process or therapist that did not properly prepare them.

## Recommendations for Action

### Working with Victims of Violence

Children and adolescents who have been affected by mediated sexualised violence may be confronted with triggering situations for the rest of their lives. Klapptstein and Kortewille take the perspective that it is therefore good to address difficult topics head on and, in doing so, integrate stressful and painful realities into the victims' new living environment. Talking to Amira about risks can teach her to cope and therefore, this option outweighs the risk that it could destabilise her and thus adheres to the overarching goal of "participation" in social work, which empowers patients to participate in making decisions about their lives and helping them to regain control. Not informing Amira about the risk of dissemination denies her the ability to work through the associated burdens and is an exercise of destructive power on the part of the therapist.

## When to Discuss Dissemination

The timing for this discussion depends on the individual case. In general, broaching the subject should not be delayed. Early confrontation with a stressful event is more effective than waiting to introduce a new stressor after the client has already been stabilised, which can promote avoidance responses in the client. However, it may be important to take small steps and move slowly. The higher the likelihood of dissemination, the sooner Amira needs to be sensitised to this issue. Conducting a risk assessment of the likelihood of dissemination and a stress assessment to evaluate the patient's current perception of stress can help determine when and how to approach the subject.

## Techniques for Supportive Conversations with the Victim

We suggest following the principles of supportive psychotherapy geared towards acute crisis situations or cases of potential destabilisation to guide empathetic and problem-oriented conversation that clarify and confront stressors. The risks should be explained in an age-appropriate way, and helpers should check what Amira has understood. Discuss fears and concerns and how she is feeling with regard to the new information she is receiving. The goal is to facilitate a safe space. It may help to discuss actions Amira can take to empower her if dissemination does occur. It is advisable to ask early on in the therapy process if there were digital interactions with perpetrators or the possibility that interactions were filmed or photographed.

## Working with Parents

It is important that Amira's parents be made aware of the risk of dissemination as well as technical and legal options that can help prevent dissemination. Amira does not necessarily need to be sensitised at the same time as her parents, but it is important that Amira does not learn about the risk of dissemination inadvertently.

## Protecting victims when abuse images and videos recirculate

### The scenario:

When she was 14, Magdalena sent her trainer, Anton, naked photos of herself under the guise of a secret relationship. She ended the relationship when he flirted with her nine year old cousin, Anna, and also requested naked photos of Anna. Anton threatened to circulate the naked photos of the two girls if she and her cousin refused to send him more naked photos of the girls together. Magdalena convinced her cousin to go along with it, against Anna's judgement, but Anton circulated the images anyway. Two years later, Magdalena now attends boarding school far away and thought the nightmare was over when the images begin to circulate in her new school. Her classmates spread rumours that she is a paedophile, and she feels a sense of hopelessness that the rumours and recirculation will continue to follow her through life, as well as guilt that people will find out her role in involving her cousin Anna in the situation with Anton. The boarding school is involved insofar as they are aware that Magdalena is being bullied and are taking steps to address this aspect of the issue.

## Unpacking the situation

The use of digital media perpetuates violence and can continually trap victims in a cycle of recurring trauma, creating a feeling of powerlessness. We consider both the dissemination and recirculation of the nude photos as well as the sexually-motivated bullying by the boarding school classmates as examples of mediatised sexualised violence. Despite the sexual images of Magdalena surfacing twice, Magdalena has never made anyone aware of the fact that the images were created under threatening circumstances for both Magdalena and Anna. Magdalena feels a sense of responsibility for her cousin's involvement and doesn't think anyone would understand her motives.

### Instrumentalisation of Digital Media by Perpetrators

Perpetrators can use digital media to misrepresent or obscure the context in which videos or images were recorded. In this case, Magdalena appears as the perpetrator of the violence committed against her and Anna. But, third parties, like the peer groups, who spread rumors and create a stressful environment for victims, are equally responsible for the negative effects on the victim through their role in continuing or restarting the humiliation.

### The Burden of recirculated Evidence of Violence

Individuals in Magdalena's situation experience powerlessness and dependency as well as feelings of stigmatisation and shame. They may be diagnosed with depression, anxiety, PTSD and suicidal tendencies. Recirculation re-activates previous stresses and reinforces feelings of guilt. Losing control on multiple occasions can make people feel hopeless, like they are re-living the previous incident of assault.

## Recommendations for Action

Important facets of the scenario include:

- a. multiple instances of Magdalena's trauma
- b. the role of media
- c. the risk and fear of another recurrence
- d. the risk and fear of uncontrollable exposure
- e. feelings of guilt
- f. insufficient protection by the boarding school
- g. the risk of renewed victimisation in the future

Magdalena needs protection from all potential dangers. She needs to be regularly consulted and involved during her counselling so that the people helping her understand what she wants and needs from her current living environment as well as what she does not want or need. In doing so, her burdens and needs can be prioritised. It seems that she is currently most burdened by the rumours of pedophilia at her boarding school and concerns about her interactions with Anton and Anna being disclosed. Counsellors face the challenge of addressing Magdalena's voiced hierarchy of needs in parallel with other aspects of her experience that may need to be processed in order to protect her and help her cope. There may be multiple helpers involved in a case like this. The boarding school, for example, is responsible for dealing with the bullying at their institution and making sure that Magdalena feels safe at school and re-integrated into her social group. Doing so does not necessitate exposing her initial sexual abuse; rather it should focus on preventing the peer-led violence that is currently taking place. This means making the perpetrators of the peer-led violence at the boarding school take responsibility by raising awareness of bullying and explaining potential legal consequences that they could face.

## Escaping Hopelessness and Creating Safe Spaces

It is challenging to protect victims of mediatised digital violence due to the constant risk of recirculation. Protection is best accomplished by helping the victim create a sense of control and self-determination alongside efforts to minimise the risks of re-traumatisation.

Emotion-oriented coping (cognitive strategies to reduce fears and stress) and instrumental coping (action-based strategies to minimise or eliminate a stressor or threat) can both be useful.

Emotion-oriented interventions can help Magdalena understand future risks and consequences and weave them into her life narrative while teaching her to feel empowered and in control again. Some question techniques that may be helpful to Magdalena are a) hypothetical questions (if-then scenarios) that help a person understand how they might react to a potential situation; b) circular questions, which present the external perspectives to situations that may occur, such as how Magdalena's parents might react to something; c) future projections, which can help Magdalena reflect on stressful situations by externalising them to another time.

Instrumental coping approaches include technical and legal options to delete images from the internet. For example, if key words linked to an image are known, it is possible to post many other images using the same keyword to minimise the chances that the problematic image will be found.

## Forgiveness

Feelings of guilt are a major hurdle to Magdalena taking action against Anton and regaining control over her life. Magdalena needs to work through forgiving herself by de-framing and re-framing or re-contextualising her role in the violence with regard to Anna. Upon reframing, if Magdalena still feels guilt for her actions, it may be helpful to have clarifying conversations with Anna. In order to do so, it will be important to understand the current state of the relationship between Magdalena and Anna and Anna's current wishes with regard to the situation with Anton, in order to protect and respect Anna's right to self-determination while also helping Magdalena work through and process her own feelings.

## Dealing with anxieties and fears brought about by mediatised sexualised violence

### The scenario:

Djamal was the victim of a group assault while fleeing Syria. He is plagued by fear that videos of him having oral sex with another boy and being raped will be disseminated and recirculated, although there has not been any evidence of dissemination in the past 13 months. He obsessively searches the internet for stories similar to his own, wakes at night in a panic, feels the need to assert his heterosexuality and tries to find all possible images of himself on the internet before other people see them and criticize him. In addition, he is worried that his family would be ashamed if they knew what happened to him. To make matters worse, his family are arch enemies of the family of one of the people who assaulted him (Ilai).

## Unpacking the Situation

Djamal's desperation to search the internet "with one click" shows his feelings of powerlessness and his need for control and security. He is worried that a recirculation of the images will lead people to believe that his assault was consensual, and in turn, he excessively asserts his heterosexuality.

The stigma of being labeled homosexual or an uncontrolled and unwanted outing of one's homosexuality make digital evidence of violence particularly challenging for queer young people, who are robbed of the opportunity to "come out" on their own terms. In addition, same-sex assault can cause young people, regardless of their identity, to question their sexuality. Hegemonic and heteronormative masculine gender norms may contribute to Djamal's fear of being branded a victim. Some men may go as far as to portray themselves as perpetrators to free themselves of the victim label. By contrast, women may experience victim-shaming due to gender norms that portray femininity as provocative.

Djamal fears that a catastrophic recirculation of his assault evidence is around the corner. His concerns are not unfounded, as some who perpetrate mediatised sexualised violence plan to shame, humiliate and misrepresent their victims to the victim's peer group and/or family, thus an experience of re-victimisation.

Djamal's fears around circulation also relate to how his family would react to his assault by a man. The extent to which a situation is perceived as subjectively threatening is dependent on factors such as the mindset of the victim as well as their socio-cultural context. In this case, homosexuality is prohibited in Syria, where queer people are excluded from social life and may be victimised or even threatened or killed by their families (even after leaving the country). Due to the negative relationship between the two families in this scenario, Djamal may fear consequences for or from his family. Severe social consequences can be a threat in many types of communities where group norms problematise sexuality due to homophobia, religious or cultural expectations, ableness, etc.

## Fear as a Stressor

Fear can manifest as an emotional, physiological and/or cognitive stress reaction to a perceived threat and its associated uncertainties. It can be experienced for years after a violent incident and can lead to pathological anxiety disorders or psychosomatic disorders. Digital evidence of violence can open a pandora's box of uncertainty related to the whereabouts and consequences of circulating assault evidence. Fear is also a subjective experience that is connected to a person's lived experiences and intersectional identities. Thus, adequate interventions to help someone work through fear must be determined on a case-by-case basis.

## Challenges of Coping with Digital Evidence of Violence

The existence of digital evidence of his assault is a constant burden on Djamal. Like many who have experienced mediatized sexualized violence, using digital media triggers memories of the assault and creates a general ambivalence around going online. Victims are caught between their fear of digital media and an awareness of its importance and pervasiveness for social participation. Abstaining from digital media can increase feelings of powerlessness. Some victims purposefully trigger themselves to regain control, for example searching for images of themselves online. This can be a sign of self harm, or, as it appears in Djamal's case, a desperate attempt at reassuring himself that his videos have not been re-circulated.

## Digital Media in the Context of Refugees

While digital media can support refugees in their flight, it can also trigger social crises, forcing them to relive experiences of violence in their country of origin or during their escape. It can be particularly challenging in cases of intersectional discrimination (i.e. people with multiple marginalised attributes), such as their nationality and their sexuality.

## Recommendations for Action

Essential aspects of Djamal's situation focus on his fears of the following:

- a. publication and dissemination of the assault video
- b. misrepresentation
- c. being discredited by his social environment
- d. social sanction from family
- e. triggering through digital media

We present several question formats that allow Djamal to test his fears and understand their origins and interconnections. Successful intervention is dependent on Djamal's risk assessment using hypothetical and circular questions. His answers can be used to orient and sort the steps for intervention.

Hypothetical Questions - fictional situations using if-then scenarios to reflect on possible reactions by oneself and others (e.g. If your parents find out about the assault, then...; If your friends or family think you are gay, then...).

Circular Questions - asking the person to suppose how he thinks other people might think or behave. This allows him to better understand the anticipated external reactions that then allow him to think through how he comes to his assessment and how he might be able to affect things. (e.g. What do you think your parents would think if they found out about your assault? What do you think your parents would think if they were sent the video of your assault? How did you arrive at that conclusion?).

## Reducing Fears trough Reassessment

Fears can be reduced by reinterpreting the likelihood of a threatening occurrence, its significance and its ultimate harmfulness. Coping strategies can be impacted by cultural context. For example, Djamal may have an internalised, learned homophobia that makes it hard to imagine acceptance of his sexuality by his family. Here, systemic question techniques can also help assess the scope of possible reinterpretations. When possible, the helper can ask questions that help the individual recognize and question contradictions between their thinking and reality to arrive at a set of "truths", which can be embedded into their everyday experience.

## Reducing Fears trough Behvaiour

This is a form of instrumental coping, which looks for concrete actions that can reduce risks and fears, such as technical and legal action. These approaches can be paired with cognitive approaches to play out scenarios in advance. Some actions prevent a fear from becoming real, while others seek to minimise consequences.

## Physical Techniques for Coping with Dear

Even with other coping mechanisms, individuals may find themselves overwhelmed at times by fear. Anxiety regulation techniques, such as mindfulness exercises, relaxation activities, meditation, etc., can help prevent fear from spiralling out of control and can help people feel more secure.

## Abuse images and an orientation on child wellbeing

### The scenario:

Mr. G., father of Finn (10 years old) and Lina (3 years old) calls social services to report that Finn saw naked, posed pictures of his sister in the possession of their mother, from whom Mr. G. is separated. Finn tells his father about the pictures and reminds him that two years ago the mother's partner, Arthur M. took naked photos of Finn, which caused Finn a lot of shame. Finn and his father are angry about the photos, and Finn is particularly agitated at the idea of people seeing his sister naked. He does not want to see his mother or Arthur anymore, but he does want to see his sister.

## Unpacking the Situation

According to notes from the phone call with Finn and Lina's father, Finn's alleged assault by his mother's partner, Arthur, violated him in two ways: through the invasion of an intimate situation and through the photographing of that situation. Finn's reaction that he did not want his sister to be seen naked could indicate a risk of dissemination, his awareness of the potential risk of dissemination or his own previous experience with the dissemination of abuse images. Regardless of whether the photographer of Lina's images requested the "poses", the choice to photograph her is problematic and indicates a sexualisation of the child. Based on Finn's personal experiences, it is clear that Arthur crossed a line in photographing the children.

It is unclear what role the children's mother played in the violation. Based on Finn's desire not to see Arthur or his mother, it appears that the boy no longer feels safe in that setting. Focus groups from the HUMAN project<sup>3</sup> hypothesised several ways to interpret the parents' relationship with one another. In the case of conflict between the parents, the father would likely be quick to accuse the mother and assert that the children are not safe in her presence. However, this would also be an understandable response from an emotional parent presented with a possible abuse scenario. A conflict-ridden parenting situation must be considered, such as a custody battle. Regardless, the call to social services represents second-hand information from Finn through his father. Finn's ability to assess the violation and express his feelings could indicate that the welfare office or a counsellor could work with him directly.

Part of the role of a child welfare agency<sup>4</sup> is to assess the increased risk of endangerment to the well-being of the child, in part by considering whether abuse images were created and whether

 <sup>3</sup>In ByeDV's predecessor project, HUMAN, prototypical case scenarios with a focus on mediated sexualised violence were developed, such as this one based on Finn and Lina. Experts from research and practice specialising in child protection, counselling in the context of sexualised violence and crisis intervention were recruited to participate in focus groups to discuss perspectives on and approaches to the case scenarios. The recommendations for action were developed based on the discussions within these focus groups.

<sup>4</sup>German social law (section 27) provides child and youth welfare services in situations in which the parent(s) cannot ensure their child's best interest as well as intervention in cases of child endangerment, when the parent(s) are unable or unwilling to avert danger to the child. The threshold for which these services are provided is judged by the local child and youth welfare authority and where there is a

they were or could be distributed. Inducing a child to pose sexually would in and of itself constitute abuse. Distribution of images is considered a more serious crime than possession of those images without intent to distribute.

## Recommendations for Action

### Risk Assessment

Following the father's call, the case becomes the responsibility of the child welfare agency. The risk-assessment carried out by the child welfare agency is oriented around the child's well-being. The child's welfare could be deemed endangered if the mother a) is unaware of the possibility of mediatised sexualised assault; b) is not able to prevent attacks on Finn and Lina; or c) is involved in the assaults. The more children involved in a situation and the younger the children, the greater the risk of vulnerability is assessed to be.

It is important for the child(ren) and their guardian(s) to be involved in the risk assessment, as long as that does not compromise the protection of the child(ren). In this case, experts disagree on the extent to which the mother should be involved in the risk assessment. On the one hand, it could be helpful to see her response to the accusations against her partner; it could confirm suspicions she has had and motivate her to leave him. On the other hand, it could be wise to initially exclude the mother out of concern that she may feel solidarity with her partner.

It is agreed upon that the first priority is to involve Finn to understand his account of the situation and determine his needs. Speaking with Finn could also help clarify the respective parenting competencies, especially his mother's role and/or awareness of the potential violation. It is important to keep in mind, when moving forward with discussions with Finn, that he feels shame about the situation. Also, Lina must be taken into consideration. As a three year old, a conversation-based assessment may be complicated, and it may be helpful to speak with her childcare provider.

Because there are so many unknowns, it may be helpful to work with *if-then statements*.

Example 1: The child welfare agency may not be able to confirm a risk to the children, because Finn and possibly also Lina relativise the father's accusations and further evidence of abuse or neglect cannot be found. The mother may confirm that naked photos of the children were taken

disagreement, an administrative court makes the decision. If a case worker suspects any form of child endangerment, an assessment must be made, and in the event that the assessment determines that there is child endangerment, a plan has to be made to avert danger to the child (Spratt, Trevor & Nett, 2013). Child Protection Systems: An international comparison of good practice examples of five countries (Australia, Germany, Finland, Sweden, United Kingdom) with recommendations for Switzerland. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/284717579\\_Child\\_Protection\\_Systems\\_An\\_international\\_comparison\\_of\\_good\\_practice\\_examples\\_of\\_five\\_countries\\_Australia\\_Germany\\_Finland\\_Sweden\\_United\\_Kingdom\\_with\\_recommendations\\_for\\_Switzerland#pf102](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/284717579_Child_Protection_Systems_An_international_comparison_of_good_practice_examples_of_five_countries_Australia_Germany_Finland_Sweden_United_Kingdom_with_recommendations_for_Switzerland#pf102)

and understand how this could be interpreted as a violation, but she may insist that the context was not sexualised. This is a difficult situation for the child welfare agency, as it does not rule out a risk to the children. Perhaps the children were sworn to silence and the mother is trivialising the situation.

If this is the situation, then possible next steps include:

- More meetings with helpers, such as involving the children's schools and daycares.
- Outpatient child-rearing support for the parents with a focus on Finn and Lina
- Warning that taking Photographs against the children's will is considered a crime and that a report will be made should any additional photos be taken or distributed
- An Assessment of the parents' awareness of the problem and willingness/ability to cooperate
- Empowerment of Finn and Lina regarding their rights and who to contact in case of subsequent violations.

**Example 2:** If the child welfare agency can confirm a risk to the children, and the parents, particularly the mother, is cooperative, then it is possible to support the parents in protecting Finn and Lina. The agency may choose to delegate the case to a centre that specialises in sexualised violence. The agency has the responsibility to develop a help plan together with the parents, which include securing the social space of the children, both on and offline. The mother can also request a restraining order against Arthur M. on behalf of the children.

**Example 3:** If the child welfare agency can confirm a risk to the children, but the mother either does not acknowledge the risk, does not take it seriously or is suspected of contributing to this risk, then the next step is to involve family court to help determine what is in the best interest of the children. Intervention options may be available to help sensitise the mother for the situation her children are in, and it is questionable to what extent her contact to the children will be limited.

### The follow up:

According to a psychological evaluation of Arthur M., who has a previous criminal record of child abuse, his locus of control, impulsivity and victim empathy indicate a low risk of recurrence. The images of Lina that are found online are conspicuous but not considered pornographic in nature. Images of Finn cannot be found online.

### Unpacking the situation

Experts have been interested in recent years in studying the relationship between sexualised online violence and other forms of sexualised violence against children and adolescents. There has been a particular focus on people who view abuse images online. Some studies indicate that individuals who view abuse images could also engage in hands-on violence. Researchers are concerned with the question of whether and under what circumstances possession and viewing of abuse images heightens the risk of committing hands-on violence or recidivism to past hands-on violence.

## Recommendations for Action

Regardless of the criminal liability of Arthur M., the assessment report trivialises the implications of a known child sex offender possessing conspicuous images of a three year old child with whom he lives. Nor can dissemination of photos or the risk thereof be ruled out. In general, while the assessment may be useful for legal and criminal purposes, it does not help in assessing the broader risk to the Finn and Lina and would require additional consideration from experts on sexualised violence against children and adolescents.

Family court often hears from the children themselves in cases of endangerment of well-being. This requires age appropriate conversations with a qualified person, the use of recordings to avoid the burden of discussing difficult topics multiple times with a child, and the appointment of legal guardians who will look out for the well-being of the child. This means that Finn and even Lina can take part in the proceedings, and it increases the likelihood that Finn's wishes, such as those initially indicated by his father, will be taken into serious consideration.

The role of the mother remains unclear in this case, although experts in our focus groups indicated that the use of family court and the resulting psychological evaluation of Arthur M. indicate that she was not cooperative. Many of the resulting custody outcomes differ based on national laws.

Case documentation indicates that, despite their roles in early intervention, specialised counselling centres and child welfare agencies often feel powerless in the decision-making process when multiple organisations and legal agencies are involved in child welfare cases. Cases of mediated sexualised violence further aggravate the situation, as there are often methodological challenges, confusion and uncertainty that can lead to dubious decision-making. These challenges point to the urgent need for professional standards and more qualifications and expertise in the area of mediated sexualised violence in family court and related agencies.

## Prevention

In this final abstract, we discuss approaches for preventing mediatised sexualised violence while taking into consideration respect for autonomy and self-determination with regard to a child or adolescent's use of digital media. Existing prevention strategies in Germany tend to focus on the risks of sexting, uploading and sharing sexualised images, cyberbullying and grooming and take the perspective of warning young people about the associated risks. The problems with risk-based discourse are that it: a) is rarely oriented to the ways in which young people actually use digital media; b) it puts the responsibility for protection in the hands of young people; c) it can increase feelings of shame and guilt by insinuating that victims of mediatised sexualised violence did not properly protect themselves or had an unhealthy relationship with the online world; d) in creating this sense of shame, it may complicate the process of victims coming forward; and e) it decreases the role of empathy for victims by ascribing some level of shared responsibility for what happens to them.

We are in favour of a critical emancipatory attitude from adults with regard to young people's online activity, which is media positive and oriented toward the needs of young people while creating a reflective and empowering framework for considering insecurities, worries and risks.

## Empowering a Self-Directed Relationship to Digital Media

Children often benefit from a framework in order to develop a self-directed and safe relationship to digital media. For example: What does it mean to be self-directed? How can I use media in a self-directed way? How can I maintain boundaries online?

Studies show young people are often more aware of how to keep their online lives secret from adults than they are at how to protect themselves online, and likewise, adults tend to default to control and prohibitions in efforts to protect children online. By creating a controlled environment, children do not learn to regulate their own online behaviour and may see their experiences with violence as consequences of "breaking the rules" and therefore not approach trusted adults for help. In addition, experimentation and risk are important elements of growing up. As the online world becomes increasingly a part of young people's everyday experiences, it is important that they can navigate their place in that world and understand the nature of relationships that exist online to develop a sense of where their boundaries lie and who they can trust.

For professionals broaching the subject of prevention with children and adolescents, it may be helpful to pose questions, such as:

- What are the consequences if a friend posts sexualised photos and videos online and I don't? Will I be socially excluded?
- Is there something wrong with me if I don't feel comfortable sending pictures?
- How can or should I show affection online?
- How can I determine someone's intentions?
- I was posting photos and videos online, but I don't want to anymore. Can I remove them?
- How can I say no without ending contact with someone or being socially excluded?

One important element of determining one's boundaries is to understand offender strategies and what is an inappropriate way for someone to interact with you online. For example, it is wrong when someone threatens not to like you anymore, to break off contact with you or to publish or disseminate images of you without your approval. It is wrong when someone is upset with you because you refuse to post or share images of yourself. You have the right to end a conversation at any time and do not owe anyone anything. No one has the right to publish or disseminate images of you without your permission.

## Reflecting on Media Use and Boundaries

Typical victim-blaming myths:

- Victims bring violence on themselves
- You are to blame if you trust the wrong people.
- Sending naked photos is slutty, and you shouldn't be surprised when the photos are disseminated.
- Boys will be boys. Not surprising that they would share photos sent to them.

It can be useful to reflect on the truthfulness of these myths.

- In what situations are such things said?
- Which assumptions are behind these statements? How can these assumptions be formulated differently?
- Who do these statements talk about and who is left out of the narrative?
- Who benefits from these statements and who doesn't?
- What messages do those being discussed need instead?

## Careful media use by victims

Young people who have experienced mediated sexualised violence encounter a dilemma when considering future online behaviour. The internet can provide socialisation, a sense of belonging, entertainment, distraction and an opportunity to take back control, however it can also burden them with concerns of re-encountering perpetrators of violence, triggering situations, re-victimisation and re-traumatisation. It is important that people who have experienced violence online do not feel forced to withdraw from the online world. Rather, they should have a role in determining whether and in which ways they want to use digital media. One of the roles of secondary and tertiary prevention is to help empower young people who have been victims to discuss the following:

- What do you use digital media for?
- When is it fun to use digital media?
- What is your favourite thing to do online?
- How do you feel when you are online?
- Is there something that you really do not like or do not like doing when online?
  - Can you describe these uncomfortable situations? How did it make you feel?
  - What did you do in this situation?
  - How often do such situations arise?
- What do you think would change for you if you didn't use the internet for a while?
- What would happen if you only used the apps and social media platforms that you like the most? And what if you took a break from using the other apps and platforms?

In this type of trauma work, discussing the use of digital media is closely connected to psychoeducation and learning to recognise one's own stress reactions and how to control them.

## A Media-Positive Attitude and Model Media Use

Adults play an important role in modelling positive interactions with the online world. It begs the question whether young people can be expected to recognise risky or boundary-crossing behaviour online if photos and videos of them are being shared by their parents without their permission. Similar hypocrisy between parental behaviour-modelling and the expected behaviour of children has been documented, for example, in the way that parents want their children to engage with smartphones compared to the way parents engage with their own smartphones. Despite the stereotypes, there does not appear to be a difference between the ways that adults who are active online use the internet compared to youth. Online behaviour is more related to socialisation than age or generation.

## Aspects of a Media-Positive Attitude

- Acceptance and tolerance of the fact that using digital media is important for the development and inclusion of children and adolescents
- Focus on the opportunities and potential inherent in digital media without ignoring the problems
- Motivation and empowerment of young people to have self-directed use of digital media
- Demonstrated interest in how young people use digital media
- Openness to media-critical discussion without prejudice for how young people choose to use digital media
- Conveyance that young people and the ways they use digital media are fundamentally valued
- Seeking to understand why young people choose to use digital media in the ways that they do

## Dialogue with Young People that Can Help Communicate Genuine Interest in their Online Experiences

- What do you find interesting about posting photos and videos?
- What response do you want from people who see your photos and videos?
- What worries do you sometimes have?
- What uncomfortable experiences have you had online?
- Who is your favourite influencer? Why? What do you find real or fake?
- What aspects of digital media are you critical of?
- What do you find particularly exciting about meeting new people online?
- What do you like about flirting or arranging a date via social media?

## Aspects of Model Media Use by Adults

- Using digital media the way one expects young people to use it
- Awareness of the boundaries, private sphere and rights of children and adolescents
- Asking young people permission before posting or sharing images and videos of them online
- Respecting that young people can revoke this permission at any time

In general, if there are rules for how young people should appropriately use digital media, there should also be rules and transparency for how adults, especially parents, use digital media.

## Closing Thoughts

Prevention is only as effective as the structure and setting in which it takes place. We assume that specialists with the tools for intervention as well as prevention strategies will be most successful and have the most sustainable impact on the young people they work with. In addition, specialists and facilities where young people encounter open-minded attitudes will gain their trust and be able to strengthen and empower them. Regular prevention offerings for young people should include information about personal rights, including one's rights to one's own image online, awareness of boundaries, online etiquette and behaviour, etc. Prevention settings extend beyond educational and counselling settings to the digital world itself. While efforts have been made to better protect data and its use online, there is still a lot of untapped potential in working with online providers and platforms to better address the needs of young people online, learn about the strategies of offenders and financially and technologically support online and offline support for prevention and intervention measures.

**take action  
against cyber  
sexual** | **beyond  
digital  
violence**



**Hochschule  
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# Sexualisierte (Peer-)Gewalt im digitalen Raum

## Formen, Strafbarkeit, Prävention

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**Schwerpunkt!**

## Peergewalt im digitalen Raum – Reflexionen am Beispiel von Sharegewalt und Cyberbullying

Julia Hopf, Claudia Wienand

### Digitale Medien in ihrer Bedeutung für Digital Natives<sup>1</sup>

Jüngste Studien zum Mediennutzungsverhalten junger Menschen belegen, dass digitale Medien ein untrennbarer Teil ihrer Lebenswelt sind (mpfs, 2021). Sie unterscheiden nicht mehr zwischen analog und digital. Digitale Medien sind somit ein bedeutsamer Sozial- und Sozialisationsraum der jungen Generation, der maßgeblich ihre persönliche Entwicklung beeinflusst. Er ist gekennzeichnet durch eine rasante Veränderung von Informations- und Kommunikationstechnologien sowie einer Allpräsenz der Medien. Nicht zuletzt aufgrund des vielfältigen Möglichkeitspektrums (z. B. Gaming, Dating, Chatten) stellen digitale Medien den Hauptzeitvertreib dar. Dementsprechend sind Kinder und Jugendliche kontinuierlich mit Informationen, Werbung und Kommunikation konfrontiert und das bereits in frühem Alter. Sie nutzen medienbasierte Technik, um im Alltag anderen zu begegnen, zu kommunizieren, sich zu präsentieren, sich zu informieren und zu unterhalten (z. B. Musik, Videos, Filme, Shop-

ping). Sie erwerben neues Wissen, es bilden sich Werte, Meinungen und Verhaltensmuster aus.

### Entwicklungsaufgaben im Jugendalter

Aus diesem fließenden Übergang von On- und Offline-Welt folgt, dass zentrale Entwicklungsaufgaben auch digital/medial stattfinden. Das Jugendalter dient dem Infragestellen und Überprüfen anerzogener Werte, dem Austesten und – damit verbunden – Grenzen überschreiten einschließlich eines risikoreichen Verhaltens. Auf der Suche nach eigenen Werte- und Normvorstellungen bietet die digitale Welt ein zusätzliches Erfahrungsfeld. Eine Hauptaufgabe in der Entwicklung ist die Loslösung von den Erziehungsberechtigten. Ihr Ausschluss aus dem digitalen Umfeld findet durch Auswahl bestimmter Dienste (z. B. Snapchat, TikTok) und entsprechende Privatsphäre-Einstellungen fast von selbst statt (Oerter & Montada, 2008, klicksafe, 2020). Gleichzeitig werden die Beziehungen und Kontakte der

Jugendlichen auf zahlreicherem „Plattformen“ und vor einem größeren „Publikum“ koordiniert. Kontakte zum Freundeskreis/der Peergroup werden über Rückmeldungen in Form von Likes, Kommentaren etc. gestaltet. Jugendliche müssen infolgedessen beispielsweise zwischen „echten Freunden“ und „Bekannten“ unterscheiden lernen. Über das Smartphone werden Beziehungen und Familien um neue Kanäle erweitert und durch Chats oder Videotelefonie besteht die Möglichkeit, eine dauerhafte Verbindung auch über räumliche Trennung hinweg aufrechtzuerhalten. Diese vielfältigen Nutzungsmöglichkeiten machen den Reiz für Kinder und Jugendliche aus, machen sie mitunter jedoch verwundbar für übergriffige Absichten anderer.

### Risiken im digitalen Raum

Wenngleich soziale Medien als Erfahrungsraum und Medium des Austauschs sowie der Identitätsbildung positive Wirkungen haben, dürfen Risiken vonseiten Erwachsener weder übersehen noch verharmlost werden. Die Anonymität und leichte Zugänglichkeit des Internets können zur Begehung von Grenzüberschreitungen, Übergriffen und auch strafbaren Handlungen – auch von Gleichaltrigen – ausgenutzt werden. Kinder und Jugendliche geben bedenkenlos Informationen über sich, ihren Alltag und Personen ihres Umfelds preis. Aufgrund unzureichender Erfahrungswerte und eines noch zu entwickelnden Risikobewusstseins ist es besonders wichtig, junge Menschen im Erkennen von übergriffigen Inhalten und Strategien sowie Erlernen geeigneter Schutzmaßnahmen zu unterstützen. Denn die Risiken und Formen von Gefährdungen sind vielfältig.

### Formen digitaler Gewalt

Abbildung 1: Formen digitaler Gewalt

<b>Diskriminierende, sexistische Ansprache/Kommunikierung</b> auf Social Media- und Gaming-Plattformen, Messengerdiensten	Konfrontation mit sexuellen Bildaufnahmen (z. B. <b>Dickpics</b> ) oder <b>pornografischen Aufnahmen</b> ohne Einwilligung
<b>Unerlaubte Bearbeitung</b> bildbasierter Posts	<b>Identitätsmissbrauch</b> im digitalen Raum
<b>Sharegewalt:</b> Androhung der Verbreitung bzw. tatsächliche nicht-konsensuelle Verbreitung intimer Nachrichten, Bild- und Videoaufnahmen, z. T. aus Rache ( <b>Revenge Porn</b> ) oder mit erpressererischer Intention ( <b>Sextortion</b> )	<b>Cybergrooming:</b> digitale Anbahnung/Planung von sexuellen Übergriffen an Kindern und Jugendlichen. Meist mit Herstellung und Verbreitung von Missbrauchsabbildungen und sog. Kinderpornografie

Quelle: Eigene Darstellung

Zu den in Abbildung 1 dargestellten vielfältigen Formen und Phänomenen von Gewalt im digitalen Raum – vornehmlich zu jenen, welche sexualisierter Art sind – findet sich folgende umgreifende Definition: „Sexualisierte Gewalt mit digitalem Medieneinsatz ist [...] als Sammelbegriff zu verstehen, der sexualisierte Grenzverletzungen, Übergriffe und strafrechtlich relevante Formen sexualisierter Gewalt umfasst, die durch digitale Bild-, Video-, und Kommunikationsmedien angebahnt, verübt, begleitet oder aufrechterhalten werden. Die Bezeichnung soll nicht der Annahme einer Trennbarkeit zwischen On- und Offline-Realitäten Vorschub leisten. Sie drückt aus, dass digitale Medien nicht notwendigerweise Träger primärer Verletzungshandlungen sein müssen. Digitale Medien und mobile Endgeräte können gleicherweise als Lockmittel, kontextualisierendes Mittel der Intimitäts- und Beziehungsgestaltung oder als Instrument zur Aufrechterhaltung von Schweigegeboten offline angebahnter sexualisierter Gewalt eingesetzt werden (Kärgel & Vobbe, 2019, S. 31).“

### Peergewalt und digitale Medien

Peergroups haben im Erwachsenwerden eine wichtige Funktion. Jugendliche stellen die Zugehörigkeit zu einer Peergroup meist aktiv her. Neben dem Finden sozialer und geschlechtlicher Identität(en) werden vor allem in der Gruppe von Gleichaltrigen Zugehörigkeit, Anerkennung und eigene Grenzen gefunden. Meist finden sich hier auch erste sexuelle Wünsche und Intimitäten. Sexuelle Erfahrungen sowie das Ausprobieren von sexuellem Verhalten und Annäherungen geschehen analog wie digital. Selbstwert und Selbstdarstellung hängen in hohem Maß vom Stand in der Peergroup ab.

Bestätigung des eigenen Seins (oder die Ablehnung) stützt sich auf die Reaktion und Rückmeldung der Freundinnen und Freunde. Nicht selten ist die Peer-group oder Teile von ihr allerdings auch ein Risikopotenzial. Konformitätszwang, Anpassung oder Wettbewerbsdynamiken oder auch Formen der Grenzüberschreitung stellen sich in gewaltvollen Mustern dar. Die Angst, ausgeschlossen und gemobbt werden zu können, belastet viele Jugendliche. Im digitalen Kontext sind beispielsweise Likes und Kommentare ein direktes Feedback mit öffentlichem Charakter. Digitalisierte Peergewalt ist öffentlich und meist von großer Reichweite gekennzeichnet, welches eine hohe Belastung für Betroffene auslöst (Schüngel, 2020). Das Kontinuum der (sexuell) grenzverletzenden und gewaltvollen Interaktionen im digitalen Kontext ist breit (Maschke & Stecher, 2017).

Folgend soll der Fokus auf zwei Phänomenen liegen, die im Alltag unserer pädagogischen Berufspraxis von Prävention und Intervention große Relevanz haben: Sharegewalt und Cyberbullying (welches mehrere der oben aufgeführten Formen umfassen kann).

### **Sharegewalt – missbräuchliches Sexting und missbräuchliche Verbreitung von Video- und Bildmaterial – in der Peergroup**

Der Erläuterung von Sharegewalt und missbräuchlichem Sexting muss vorausgehen, wie sich Sexting definiert. „Sex“ und „texten“ finden im Digitalen zu „Sexting“ zusammen – Kommunikation und Bild werden verknüpft. Das Versenden eigens erstellter „Pics“, „Nudes“ und „Selfies“ im einvernehmlichen Rahmen stellt für viele Jugendliche eine etablierte Normalität dar. Die Intentionen sind mehrheitlich sexuellen Ursprungs. So versuchen sich Jugendliche in ihrer sexuellen Selbstinszenierung und setzen sich mit ihrer eigenen Körperlichkeit und Geschlechtlichkeit auseinander. Ebenso generiert Sexting Feedback zur eigenen Person. Auf der Suche nach Bestätigung durch die Peergroup wird Sexting auch im Freundinnen- und Freundeskreis praktiziert. Das Erhalten von „Pics“ kann dem eigenen Status und der Anerkennung zuträglich sein. Aber auch das Veröffentlichen eigener Aufnahmen kann dazu dienen. Im Rahmen einer amerikanischen Onlinebefragung gaben 13 % der 13- bis 19-Jährigen an, sexualisierte Nachrichten oder Bildmaterial verschickt oder veröffentlicht zu haben, um von anderen wahrgenommen zu werden. Demzufolge ist davon auszugehen, dass Zugehörigkeit und Anerkennung in der Peergroup von hoher Relevanz im Kontext Sexting sind. Für Mädchen ist die sexualisierte Selbstdarstellung häufig mit negativer

Sichtbarkeit verbunden. Sind sie beispielsweise von ungewollter Weiterleitung ihrer Pics betroffen, wird ihnen nachweislich öfter empathiearm und schuldzuschreibend begegnet. Auch der Fakt, dass eine nicht-konsensuelle Veröffentlichung das Recht am eigenen Bild schädigt, verhindert nicht, dass vor allem Mädchen dennoch eine hohe Verantwortung für ihr Tun zugeschoben wird. Aus der Praxiserfahrung zeigt sich, dass die irrtümliche Annahme „Wer sich an die Regeln hält, der oder dem passiert nichts – wenn doch: selbst schuld!“ eine immer noch weit verbreitete, jedoch sehr überholte Annahme mancher Fachkräfte ist. Mehr noch – die Essenz der fraglichen Präventionsbotschaft ist letztlich, keine Fotos von sich zu senden und auf Sexting zu verzichten. Eine quantitative Studie aus Österreich belegt hierzu ergänzend, dass 81 % der jugendlichen Befragten angaben, dass Absenderinnen und Absender von Bildmaterial in Kauf nehmen müssten, dass die Bilder im Internet auftauchen (Saferinternet.at 2015). Bestärkt durch schuldzuweisende pädagogische Botschaften an Betroffene werden hier Dynamiken des Victim-Blamings<sup>2</sup> deutlich. Sie dienen (betroffenden) Jugendlichen dazu, die eigene missbräuchliche Weiterleitung des Bildmaterials zu legitimieren und die Verantwortung für straffatrelevantes Handeln zu vermeiden (Böhm et al., 2018, Vogelsang, 2017).

### **Der Vertrauensbruch ist das Problem – nicht das Nacktbild**

Kommunizieren junge Menschen in Beziehungen, hat on- wie offline das Vertrauen in die Freundinnen und Freunde/Partnerinnen und Partner hohen Stellenwert. Ganz gleich, in welchem Kontext: versendet eine Person im Vertrauen eine sexualisierte Aufnahme/Darstellung von sich, so hat diese meist eine klar definierte Adressatin oder einen klar definierten Adressaten. Werden Aufnahmen außerhalb eines einvernehmlichen Chats versendet, weitergeleitet/geteilt, ist dies ein klarer Vertrauensbruch mit möglichen weitreichenden Folgen. Oft bleibt verborgen, wer initial gehandelt hat, also die originale Aufnahme verbreitet hat. Das Verbreitungstempo ist unaufhaltsam hoch. Zusätzliche Verbreitungswege in andere Gruppen oder Kontexte bleiben unsicher. Wenn Bildmaterial ohne Einverständnis der abgebildeten Person weitergeleitet wird, hat es strafrechtliche Relevanz. Es handelt sich laut § 22 Kunstrechtegesetz um die Verletzung des Rechts am eigenen Bild und eventuell um eine Verletzung des höchstpersönlichen Lebensbereichs nach § 201a Strafgesetzbuch (StGB). Nach § 184 StGB könnte es sich bei ausgetauschten intimen Darstellungen um jugendpornografische Abbildungen

handeln, deren Besitz und Verbreitung strafbar ist. Dazu zählt auch die Speicherung bei dritten Personen. Ist die dargestellte Person unter 14 Jahren alt, unbekleidet oder teilweise unbekleidet in aufreizender geschlechtsbetonter Körperhaltung zu sehen oder werden unbekleidete Genitalien oder Gesäß sexuell aufreizend wiedergegeben, so ist von kinderpornografischen Inhalten auszugehen. Der Besitz, die Verbreitung und Veröffentlichung ist nach § 184b StGB strafbar.

### Cyberbullying in der Peergroup

Bei Cyberbullying handelt es sich um Mobbing, welches über bzw. mit Hilfe des Internets ausgeführt wird. Das Ansehen einer Person wird geschädigt und diese herabgesetzt, z. B. durch negative (sexualisierte) Kommentare, unangemessene oder beleidigende Nachrichten oder Aufnahmen, terrorisierende Anrufe, Diebstahl von Passwörtern oder Profilbildern.

Cyberbullying kann zeitlich und räumlich überall präsent sein – die handelnden Gewaltausübenden können wechseln und das Mobbing von einer größeren Gruppe ausgehen, die zudem kontinuierlich zunehmen kann. Diskreditierendes Verhalten wird meist über soziale Netzwerke ausgeübt mit rascher und weitreichender Verbreitung – das macht es für die Gewaltbetroffenen schwer aushaltbar. Dazu können die beleidigenden und demütigenden Inhalte über einen sehr langen Zeitraum im Netz verbleiben und wiederkehrend auftauchen und somit die Betroffenen ein Leben lang belasten. Eine komplettte Löschung ist nahezu unmöglich, da die Inhalte zuweilen auf zahlreichen Accounts geteilt/kommentiert wurden. Im digitalen Raum fehlt der direkte Kontakt zwischen der/den übergriffigen Personen und der Person, die dem Mobbing ausgesetzt ist – oft sind die Folgen nicht direkt sichtbar und für die gewaltausübende Person nicht einzuschätzen, da die „Macht“ von Worten, vermeintlichen Witzen oder bildbasierter Gewalt oft unterschätzt wird. Ebenso sind sich Gewaltunterstützende ihrer Rolle als Verstärkerinnen und Verstärker selten bewusst. Gehen wir wie oben beschrieben im Jugendalter von einer Zeit des Ausprobierens und Austestens aus, wäre es verhängnisvoll, ausschließlich von Täterinnen und Tätern und Opfern zu sprechen. Die Betrachtung bedarf einer differenzierteren Sichtweise und keiner vorschnellen Vorverurteilung. Dennoch muss grenzüberschreitendes Verhalten benannt und reguliert werden, um einen grenzwahrenden Umgang in der Arbeit mit Kindern und Jugendlichen zu etablieren.

Dennoch können Straftatbestände vorliegen, wie z. B. Beleidigung (§ 185 StGB), üble Nachrede (§ 186 StGB) oder Verleumdung (§ 187 StGB).

Gewaltausübende sind des Öfteren minderjährig und somit nicht strafrechtlich zu belangen, also vermeintlich straffrei. Dennoch kann ab dem siebten Lebensjahr eine Ahndung nach dem Zivilrecht erfolgen, z. B. eine polizeiliche Ansprache oder die Unterzeichnung einer Unterlassungserklärung.

### Digitale Gewalt in der Peergroup erkennen

Es ist der Gewaltakt an sich, der durch die Mediatisierung verschwimmt – oft als diffus erachtet wird. Spürbar wird dies beispielsweise an der unmittelbaren Reaktion und der Verantwortung von Fachkräften, die Gewalt einzuschätzen und zu bewerten, um pädagogisch der Situation angemessen intervenieren zu können, auch im Hinblick auf mögliche Risiken. Erstaunend zu bereits aufgeführten Punkten kommt hinzu, dass in der Peergroup oder in der Klasse/Verein ein entsprechender Umgang mit Medien bzw. Kommunikation Normalität zeigt. Dabei ist es Kindern und Jugendlichen durchaus bewusst, dass auf virtuellen Plattformen bloßstellende oder verletzende Vorfälle geschehen. Und ein relativ hoher Prozentsatz hat bereits negative Erfahrungen sammeln müssen. Zweifelsfrei erhalten sexuelle Grenzverletzungen in dieser Annahme eine „hingenommene“ Normalität, in der es für Jugendliche umso schwerer scheint, vorgefallene Gewalt selbst als diese zu definieren. Hier liegt die Handlungsnotwendigkeit für Fachkräfte entgegen möglicher Bagatellisierung, Schuldumkehr und Normalisierung von Gewalt aktiv zu werden. Der zunehmenden Digitalisierung der jugendlichen Welt sollte daher mit einer reflektierten opfergerechten Begleitung durch erwachsene Bezugspersonen begegnet werden. In aller Diffusion der vielschichtigen Dynamiken digitaler Gewalt obliegt es ihnen, (auch im Sinne des Schutzauftrages für junge Menschen) Handlungsnotwendigkeiten zu erkennen, fachlich einzuordnen und aktiv zu werden.

### Die Betroffenheit ist vielschichtig

Die Betroffenheit von mediatisierter sexualisierter Gewalt zeigt sich zum großen Teil darin, dass sie Zeit und Raum überschreitet und sich als omnipräsent darstellt. Zu jeder Zeit besteht die Gefahr, unkontrolliert und gewaltsam mit veröffentlichtem Material im Netz (wieder) konfrontiert zu werden. Damit kann erneut eine Gewaltspirale starten, die für Betroffene nicht nur anhal-

tende Ohnmachtserfahrungen, Folge- und Mehrfachbelastungen darstellt, sondern auch ein dauerhaftes Risiko der Revictimisierung. Folglich kann auch die alltägliche Mediennutzung nach digitaler Gewalterfahrung eine generelle Reaktivierung von Belastung auslösen. Betroffene Kinder und Jugendliche, die um digitale Gewaltzeugnisse wie Foto- oder Videoaufnahmen wissen, haben oftmals Angst, dass sie im Zuge einer Veröffentlichung/Verbreitung (neuerliche) Schuldzuweisungen erfahren, die in Stigmatisierungen, Demütigungen oder Ausgrenzungserfahrungen münden können. Gewaltausübende haben die Macht über Falschdarstellung und Deutungsrichtung des sozialen Umfeldes.

Folgen können neben verminderter Selbstachtung, Gefühlen der Hoffnungslosigkeit/Wertlosigkeit, nachlassenden (Schul-)Leistungen auch Drogenkonsum, Depression, Angstzustände, Vergeltungs- und Suizidgefahrdenken sein. Das Erleben digitaler Gewalt bedroht die physische und psychische Gesundheit von Betroffenen und hat häufig Auswirkungen auf analoge Gruppenkonstellationen in Klassen/Vereinen. Oftmals sind aufgrund der Verletzung der Persönlichkeitsrechte und Selbstbestimmung traumatisierende Auswirkungen festzustellen. Ebenso kann es trotz entsprechender Intervention erneut zu Kontakt mit der/den gewaltausübenden Person(en) oder (digitalen) Zeugnissen kommen. Hier bedarf es einer klaren Positionierung durch das begleitende Umfeld.

Im aktuellen von der Europäischen Union kofinanzierten Projekt „ByeDV“<sup>3</sup> erarbeiten wir gemeinsam mit einem Team der SRH Hochschule Heidelberg, der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Prävention und Intervention bei Kindesmisshandlung, -vernachlässigung und sexualisierter Gewalt e. V. (DGfPI) und drei weiteren Fachberatungsstellen Qualitätskriterien zum professionellen Umgang mit mediatisierter sexualisierter Gewalt gegen Kinder und Jugendliche. Diese adressieren unter anderem ein adäquates fachliches Handeln im Kontext Prävention und Intervention von mediatisierter Peergewalt.

### **Standards der Intervention bei mediatisierter Peergewalt**

Cyberbullying wird oftmals mit lösungsorientierten Ansätzen, etwa der Wiedergutmachung, begegnet, welches im Falle sexualisierter mediatisierter Peergewalt als opferschädlich zu werten ist (Vobbe, 2018). Es birgt eine Bagatellisierungsgefahr und somit ein zusätzliches Belastungsrisiko für Betroffene. Das vorhandene Machtgefälle kann nicht in der Konfrontation mit den Tatasübenden aufgelöst werden.

Ein Pfeiler der Intervention ist im akuten Fall die Krisenintervention, auch mit Blick auf Sekundär- und Tertiärprävention. Dem zugehörig sind:

- Parteilichkeit mit Betroffenen
- das Angebot einer konstant verlässlichen (professionellen) Begleitung
- größtmögliche Transparenz zum Geschehen
- Psychoedukation
- Stabilisierung

Die Entschuldung von Betroffenen sowie der Versuch, die Belastungen partizipativ so gut wie möglich einzudämmen, entspricht der Idee der Selbstwirksamkeit. Kleinst Teile im Geschehen wie z. B. das Wissen um mögliche rechtliche Schritte, können Betroffenen helfen, Schutzräume und Handlungsoptionen für sich selbst zu schaffen (Vobbe & Kärgel, 2022).

### **Standards der Prävention mediatisierter Peergewalt**

Präventionseinheiten sollen aufklären, ohne mit Verboten zu arbeiten oder Ängste zu schüren.

Erwachsene verspüren beim Themenfeld neue Medien oft Unsicherheiten. Sie sind in einer analogen Welt aufgewachsen mit weniger Berührungspunkten zu den von Kindern und Jugendlichen präferierten Plattformen. Digitale Gewalt ist in der Erwachsenenwelt noch nicht als ernstzunehmendes Problem angesehen, da es vermeintlich „nur“ die virtuelle Welt betrifft. Dies ist ein Trugschluss. Selbst analog ausgeführte Grenzüberschreitungen und Übergriffe setzen sich meist im digitalen Raum fort oder werden durch diesen begleitet und somit in Klassen/Gruppen getragen. Dies muss im pädagogischen Alltag Beachtung finden.

In Präventionsprogrammen ist Kindern und Jugendlichen schlussfolgernd zu vermitteln, dass Erwachsene kompetente Ansprechpersonen darstellen und bereit sind, sich für ihren Schutz und ihre Sicherheit einzusetzen. Die junge Generation sollte in ihrer gesamten Lebenswirklichkeit gesehen werden auf der Basis einer Auseinandersetzung mit Chancen und Risiken des virtuellen Raums. Das setzt sowohl Kenntnis über jugendliches Verhalten, Gewaltdynamiken als auch Auswirkungen auf Betroffene voraus. Wenn die jungen Menschen mit ihren Erlebnissen und Sichtweisen in die Präventionsprogramme einbezogen, sie als Expertinnen und Experten ihrer Lebenswelt ernst genommen werden, kann durch einen qualitativen Austausch eine Reflektion von risikobelastetem Verhalten ermöglicht werden – oder auch ein Denkprozess über grenzüber-

schreitende und übergriffige Verhaltensweisen in Gang gesetzt werden.

Präventionsprogramme bestenfalls als wiederkehrendes Angebot installieren und Inhalte in persönlicher Haltung und Handeln widerspiegeln. Die eigene Mediennutzung beispielsweise so gestalten, dass keine Privatsphären verletzt werden und grundsätzlich ein Einverständnis vor Veröffentlichung von Bildmaterial eingeholt wird, welches selbstverständlich jederzeit zurückgenommen werden darf. Digitale Grenzüberschreitungen und Übergriffe können ähnlich realer Verstöße angesprochen und als solche benannt werden – so wird (der Beginn der) Gewalt sichtbar und dem Kreislauf entgegengewirkt – letztendlich damit dem Recht auf (digitale) Selbstbestimmung Raum gegeben.

Ideal wäre die Etablierung einer Kultur des Thematizierens von Grenzen, Zivilcourage oder gewaltminimierenden bzw. -verstärkenden Rollen von Unterstützenden / Bystandern (also Gewaltzeugenden).

Ziel von Prävention ist, Kindern und Jugendlichen einen Zugang zu ihren Emotionen, Wünschen und Bedürfnissen zu ermöglichen, damit sie eine eigene Vorstellung von Freundschaft, Liebe, (Fern-)Beziehung und Intimität entwickeln können. Darüber hinaus könnten praktisch Techniken der Grenzsetzung eingeübt oder sogenannte Exit-Strategien aufgezeigt werden – was hilft mir in Situationen, in denen es mir nicht gut geht? Wie kann ich eine unangenehme Situation erkennen und diese möglichst verlassen? Darf ich meiner Intuition vertrauen? Gibt es Distanzierungsmöglichkeiten?

Ein wesentlicher Präventionsaspekt ist eine grundsätzlich offene und positive Einstellung zu jugendlichen Lebenswelten. Mögliche Fragen zum Dialog und zur kritischen Selbstreflexion:

- Welche Haltung haben wir im Team / ich persönlich zur Nutzung digitaler Medien?
- Denken wir / denke ich digitale Medien als Lebenswirklichkeit der Kinder & Jugendlichen mit?
- Wie steht es um Kinderrechte im digitalen Raum?
- Wie erleben uns Kinder und Jugendliche als Ansprechpersonen zum Thema? (Sie haben ein gutes Gespür dafür, wem sie was erzählen können.) Wie kompetent fühle ich mich als Ansprechperson? (Sollte ich eine Fortbildung zum Thema besuchen? Benötigt es weitere zeitliche Ressourcen?)

Zusammenfassend sind Präventionskonzepte um Mediatisierung (sexualisierter) Peergewalt mit den Facetten zu ergänzen und entsprechend zu handeln oder um es in den Worten von „ByeDV“ zu sagen: take action against cyber sexual, [www.byedv.de](http://www.byedv.de)

**take action | beyond  
against cyber | digital  
sexual**



Dieses Projekt wird kofinanziert durch das Programm Rechte, Gleichstellung und Unionsbürgerschaft (2014-2020) der Europäischen Union

## Anmerkungen

- 1 Das Aufwachsen und die Kindheitserfahrungen junger Erwachsener der sogenannten Generation Y oder der Millennials sind von einer selbstverständlichen Präsenz und alltäglichen Handhabung digitaler Technologien geprägt. In diesem Zusammenhang wird von „digital natives“ gesprochen (Tuider, 2019).
- 2 Aus dem Englischen für den Vorgang der „Täter-Opfer-Umkehr“. Dabei wird die Schuld und damit die Verantwortung für eine Gewalttat von Täterinnen und Täter auf Betroffenen übertragen (HateAid, 2021).
- 3 Das Projekt „ByeDV“ (Beyond Digital Violence. Capacity Building for Relevant Professionals Working with Children and Young People Who Experienced Sexualised Violence Using Digital Media) wird kofinanziert durch das Programm Rechte, Gleichstellung und Unionsbürgerschaft (2014-2020) der Europäischen Union. Näheres zum Projekt ist auf der Website unter [www.byedv.de](http://www.byedv.de) hinterlegt.

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## Zu den Personen



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# **Online Peer Violence – Reflections on the Example of Recirculating Nude Images and Cyberbullying**

*Julia Hopf, Claudia Wienand*

*Translation from German into English by Rachel Cylus*

## **The Meaning of Digital Media for Digital Natives<sup>1</sup>**

Recent studies on the online behaviours of young people indicate that digital media constitutes an inextricable part of their lived experiences (mpfs, 2021). They no longer differentiate between analog and digital. Digital media are, consequently, a meaningful social and socialising space for the younger generation, which significantly influences their personal development. This space is characterised by a rapid change in information and communication technologies and an omnipresence of media. Not least because of the wide range of possibilities (e.g. gaming, dating, chatting), digital media have become *the* primary pastime. Accordingly, from a young age, children and adolescents are constantly confronted with information, advertising and communication. They use media-based technology in everyday life to meet others, to communicate, to present themselves, to obtain information and to be entertained (e.g. music, videos, films, shopping). They acquire new knowledge and form values, opinions and behaviour patterns.

## *Developmental Stages in Adolescence*

From this fluid transition between the online and offline world, it follows that central developmental stages also take place digitally/medially. Adolescence is a time for questioning and examining values, for testing and - associated with this - for crossing boundaries, including with risky behaviours. The digital world offers an additional domain in which a young person can explore their own values and norms. One of the main stages in development is the separation from one's legal guardians. The exclusion of one's guardians from the digital environment takes place almost automatically by selecting certain platforms (e.g. Snapchat, TikTok) and corresponding privacy settings (Oerter & Montada, 2008, klicksafe, 2020). At

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<sup>1</sup> The coming of age and the childhood experiences of young adults of the so-called Generation Y or Millennials are shaped by the implicit presence and everyday use of digital technologies. It is in this context that one speaks of "digital natives" (Tuider, 2019).

the same time, young people's relationships and contacts are coordinated on more platforms and in front of a larger "audience". Contacts within a circle of friends/peer group are made through feedback in the form of likes, comments, etc. As a result, young people have to learn to distinguish between "real friends" and "acquaintances". New dimensions are added to relationships and families via smartphones, and chats or video make it possible to maintain a permanent connection, even when people are physically separated. This diverse range of possible uses appeals to children and adolescents, but it sometimes makes them vulnerable to the intrusive intentions of others.

## Risks in Digital Spaces

Although social media have positive effects as spaces for experiences and as media for exchange and identity formation, the risks must neither be overlooked nor downplayed. The anonymity and easy accessibility of the internet can be used to commit boundary violations, assaults and also criminal acts - even by peers. Children and adolescents give information about themselves, their lives and people in their social circles without hesitation. Due to insufficient experience and underdeveloped risk awareness, as well as the many risks and types of dangers, it is particularly important to support young people in recognising threatening content and strategies and in learning suitable protective measures.

## Forms of digital violence

<b>Discriminatory, sexist speech/commentary</b> on social media and gaming platforms, messenger services	Confrontation with sexual images (e.g. <b>Dickpics</b> ) or <b>pornographic recordings</b> without permission
<b>Unauthorised editing</b> of photographic posts	<b>Identity misuse</b> in digital spaces
<b>Recirculating Nudes:</b> Threatening the non-consensual dissemination of intimate messages, images and video recordings, for example as revenge	<b>Cyber grooming:</b> planning and preparation for sexual advances towards children and adolescents. Usually with the production and dissemination of

( <b>Revenge Porn</b> ) or with extortive intentions ( <b>Sextortion</b> )	abuse images and so-called child pornography.
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The following comprehensive definition encompasses the diverse forms and phenomena of violence in the digital space – primarily those of a sexualised nature: “Sexualised violence with the use of digital media is [...] to be understood as a collective term that encompasses sexualised boundary violations, assaults and criminally relevant forms of sexualised violence that are initiated, perpetrated, accompanied or maintained by digital image, video and communication media. The term is not intended to perpetuate the assumption that online and offline realities can be separated. It expresses the idea that digital media do not necessarily have to be the primary vehicle of infringing acts. Digital media and mobile devices can also be used as a lure, a contextualising means of shaping intimacy and relationships or as an instrument to enforce silence about sexualised violence that has been initiated offline (Kärgel & Vobbe, 2019, p. 31).”

## Peer Violence and Digital Media

Peer groups play an important role in adolescence. Young people usually actively establish membership in a peer group. In addition to determining social and gender identity(s), peer groups are important for belonging, recognition and establishing personal boundaries. Most of the time, peer groups are also where first sexual desires and intimacy take place. Sexual experiences, as well as experimenting with sexual behaviour, happen online and offline. Self-esteem and self-expression depend to a large extent on peer group status. Acceptance or rejection of one's own identity relies on friends' reactions and feedback. Not infrequently, however, the peer group, or parts of it, also pose a potential risk. Pressure to conform, adapt or participate in competitive dynamics as well as forms of testing limits present themselves in violent patterns. Many young people are burdened by fears of being left out and potentially bullied. In the digital context, for example, likes and comments offer direct and public feedback. Online peer violence is public and usually has a wide reach, which causes a high level of stress for those affected (Schüngel, 2020). The continuum of (sexual) boundary violation and violent interactions in the digital context is broad (Maschke & Stecher, 2017).

In the following section, the focus will be on two phenomena that are of great relevance in our everyday pedagogical practice of prevention and intervention: recirculating nudes and cyberbullying (which can include several of the forms listed above).

## **Recirculating nudes – abusive sexting and dissemination of videos and images – in the peer group**

To explain the phenomena of recirculating nudes and abusive sexting, one must first define sexting. "Sex" and "texting" come together in the digital context to form "sexting"; thus, communication and image are linked. Sending specially created "pics", "nudes" and "selfies" in a consensual framework is an established norm for many young people. The intentions are mostly of a sexual nature. In this way, young people can experiment with sexual self-portrayal and grapple with their own physicality and sexuality. Sexting also generates feedback about oneself. In the search for affirmation from the peer group, sexting is also practised among friends. Getting "pics" can increase one's status and recognition. But, publishing your own images can also help. In an American online survey, 13% of 13 to 19 year olds stated that they had sent or published sexualised messages or images in order to be noticed by others. As a result, it can be assumed that belonging and recognition in the peer group are highly relevant in the context of sexting. For girls, sexualised self-portrayal often carries negative consequences. If, for example, their pictures are forwarded against their consent, they are more often met with a lack of empathy and blame. Even the fact that non-consensual publication conflicts with the right to one's own image does not prevent girls in particular from being held responsible for their actions. Practical experience has shown that the erroneous assumption, "If you follow the rules, nothing will happen to you - if you don't, it's your own fault!" is still a widespread but very outdated assumption held by some professionals. What's more, the essence of the prevention message tends to warn young people not to send photos of themselves and to refrain from sexting. A quantitative study from Austria also shows that 81% of the young people surveyed stated that individuals who share their own image have to accept that it will appear on the Internet (Saferinternet.at 2015). These messages strengthen the dynamics of victim blaming<sup>2</sup>. They serve to legitimise young people's decisions to abusively forward other people's images and to avoid responsibility for criminal activities (Böhm et al. 2018, Vogelsang, 2017).

*The breach of trust is the problem - not the nude picture.*

When young people communicate in relationships, trust in their friends/partners is paramount, both online and offline. Regardless of the context, if a person sends a sexualised

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<sup>2</sup> The guilt and thus the responsibility for a violent act is transferred from the perpetrator to the person affected (HaiteAid, 2021).

image/representation of themselves in confidence, this usually has a clearly defined recipient. If content is sent, forwarded/shared outside of a consensual chat, this is a clear breach of trust with possibly far-reaching consequences. The identity of the person who disseminated the original content often remains concealed, yet the pace of dissemination is unstoppably high. Additional routes of dissemination to other groups or contexts remain uncertain. If image material is forwarded without the consent of the person depicted, it has criminal relevance. According to Section 22 of the German Art Copyright Act, this is a violation of the right to one's own image and possibly a violation of the most personal area of life, according to Section 201a of the German Criminal Code. According to §184 (StGB), shared intimate images could be child pornographic images, the possession and distribution of which is punishable, as is storage of images by third parties. If the depicted person is under the age of 14, undressed or partially undressed in a provocative, sex-oriented posture, or if undressed genitals or buttocks are depicted in a sexually provocative manner, child pornographic content must be assumed. Possession, distribution and publication are punishable under Section 184b (StGB).

### **Cyberbullying in the peer group**

Cyberbullying is bullying that is carried out via or with the help of the Internet. A person's reputation is damaged and demeaned, e.g. through negative (sexualised) comments, inappropriate or offensive messages or recordings, terrorising calls, theft of passwords or profile pictures.

Cyberbullying can take place at any time and anywhere - the violent perpetrators can change, and the bullying can come from a larger group, which can also continue to grow. Discrediting behaviour mostly takes place via social networks with rapid and far-reaching dissemination making it difficult for those affected to bear. In addition, the insulting and humiliating content can remain on the Internet for a very long time and periodically reappear, thus burdening those affected for the rest of their lives. A complete deletion is practically impossible, since the content may be shared/commented upon on numerous accounts. In the digital space, there is no direct contact between the person(s) who are bullying and the person who is being bullied - the consequences are often not directly visible and cannot be assessed by the aggressor, since the "power" of words, supposed jokes or image-based violence is often underestimated. Likewise, those who support violence are rarely aware of their role as reinforcers. If, as described above, we assume that adolescence is a time of trying and testing,

it would be disastrous to speak exclusively of perpetrators and victims. The consideration requires a more differentiated perspective rather than hasty prejudice. Nevertheless, boundary-violating behaviour must be identified and regulated in order to establish a boundary-preserving approach to working with children and adolescents.

However, criminal offences may exist, e.g. insult (§185 StGB), slander (§186 StGB) or defamation (§187 StGB).

Perpetrators of such violence are often minors and therefore cannot be prosecuted, i.e. supposedly go unpunished. Nevertheless, punishment under civil law can be imposed from the age of seven, e.g., a conversation with the police or the signing of a cease and desist declaration.

### **Recognising digital violence in the peer group**

It is the act of violence itself that is blurred or made vague by mediatisation. This becomes noticeable, for example, in the immediate reaction and the responsibility of professionals to assess and evaluate violence in order to be able to intervene in a situation appropriately and assess possible risks. The aforementioned points are made more difficult by the fact that in peer groups or in a class, interacting with online media or communication is normal. Children and adolescents are well aware that embarrassing or hurtful incidents happen on virtual platforms, and a relatively high percentage have personally had negative experiences. There is no doubt that violations of sexual boundaries have become "tolerated", which makes it all the more difficult for young people to identify experiences of violence as such. This is where the need for action lies with professionals to protect against possible trivialisation, victim-blaming and normalisation of violence. The increasing digitalisation of young people's worlds should therefore be countered with reflective, victim-friendly support from adult caregivers. In all the diffusion of the multi-layered dynamics of digital violence, it is up to professionals (also in the sense of the protective order for young people) to recognise the need for action, to classify them professionally and to become active.

#### *The issue is multifaceted*

Mediatised sexualised violence causes concern in large part because it transcends time and space and presents as omnipresent. There is constant danger of being confronted (again), in an uncontrolled and violent manner, with material published on the Internet. This can start a new

spiral of violence, which not only represents ongoing experiences of powerlessness, episodic and repeated stress for those affected, but also a permanent risk of re-victimisation. Consequently, everyday media use after experiencing digital violence can also trigger a general reactivation of stress. Affected children and adolescents, who know of existing digital evidence of violence, such as photos or videos, are often afraid that in the course of publication/distribution they will be (repeatedly) blamed, which can lead to stigmatisation, humiliation and experiences of exclusion. Perpetrators of violence have the power to misrepresent and distort a situation within an affected person's social environment.

In addition to reduced self-esteem, feelings of hopelessness/worthlessness and declining (school) performance, affected persons are at risk of drug use, depression, anxiety, and thoughts of revenge and suicide. Experiencing digital violence threatens the individual's physical as well as mental health and often has an impact on in-person social constellations in classes/clubs. These traumatising effects result from the violation of one's personal rights and autonomy. Likewise, even in cases where appropriate intervention occurs, contact with the aggressor(s) and/or (digital) evidence of the violence can recur. Thus, the affected person requires clear positioning from their support system.

In the current EU co-financed project "ByeDV", we are working with a team from the SRH Hochschule Heidelberg, the DGfPI and three other specialist counselling centres to develop quality criteria for professionally dealing with mediatised sexualised violence against children and adolescents. These quality criteria address, among other things, adequate professional involvement in the context of prevention and intervention of mediatised peer violence.

### **Standards for intervention in mediatised peer violence**

Instances of cyberbullying are often met with solution-oriented approaches, such as making amends, which in the case of sexualised mediatised peer violence can be interpreted as harmful to the victim (Vobbe, 2018). Such a response risks trivialising the situation, which can contribute additional stress to those affected. The existing power imbalance cannot be resolved by confronting the perpetrators of the crime.

One pillar of intervention practice, used in acute cases, is crisis intervention, alongside secondary and tertiary prevention. This includes the following:

- prioritisation of the needs and interests of those affected
- the offer of consistent and reliable (professional) support
- the greatest possible transparency of what is happening
- psychoeducation
- stabilisation

In accordance with the idea of self-efficacy, this involves supporting affected persons deal with feelings of guilt and efforts to manage their burdens as much as possible in a participatory manner. Keeping them informed of even the smallest aspects of what is happening, such as transparency around possible legal steps, can help those affected to create protective spaces for themselves and consider options for action (Vobbe & Kärgel, 2022).

### **Standards in the prevention of mediatised peer violence**

*Prevention units should provide information without presenting prohibitions or stirring up fears*

Adults often feel insecure when it comes to new media. They grew up in an analogue world and have fewer touchpoints with the online platforms preferred by children and adolescents. Digital violence is not yet perceived as a serious problem in the adult world, as it supposedly "only" affects the virtual world. This is a fallacy. Even analogous boundary violations and assaults usually continue or are accompanied in the digital space and thus sustained in classrooms/social groups. This must be taken into account in everyday teaching.

Prevention programs must ultimately convey to children and adolescents that adults are competent confidants who are prepared to advocate for their protection and safety. The everyday reality of the younger generation should be understood in terms of a critical evaluation of the opportunities and risks present in the virtual space. This requires knowledge of young people's behaviours, dynamics of violence as well as the consequences to those affected. If young people's experiences and perspectives are taken into consideration to involve them in prevention programs, if they are taken seriously as experts in their own living environments, the resulting qualitative exchange can spur reflection on risky behaviour or initiate thinking about boundary violation and intrusive behaviour.

The best scenario is to offer recurring prevention programs and reflect their content in personal attitudes and actions. For example, they can encourage people to design their own

media use in such a way that their privacy is not violated and consent is obtained before the publication of images, which of course can be withdrawn at any time. Online boundary violations and attacks can be addressed similarly to offline violations and called out as such - in doing so (the initiation of) violence becomes visible and the cycle can be thwarted - ultimately acknowledging the right to (digital) self-determination.

Ideally a culture would be established which addresses boundaries, moral courage and the roles of supporters / bystanders (witnesses to violence) who minimise or increase violence.

The aim of prevention is to give children and adolescents access to their emotions, wishes and needs so that they can develop their own concepts of friendship, love, (long-distance) relationships and intimacy. In addition, they can practise techniques for setting limits or learn so-called exit strategies, and consider questions such as, what helps me through situations in which I'm not thriving? How can I recognise an uncomfortable situation and leave it if possible? Can I trust my intuition? Are there options to distance myself from a situation?

An essential aspect of prevention is a fundamentally open and positive attitude towards young people's living environments. Possible questions about dialogue and critical self-reflection are as follows:

- What is my/my team's attitude toward the use of digital media?
- Do I/we think about digital media as a reality of life for children and adolescents?
- What are my/our thoughts about children's rights in digital spaces?
- How do children and adolescents experience us as resources or confidants on the topic? (They have a good sense of who they can tell what to.) How competent do I feel as a resource or confidant? (Should I attend a training course on the topic? Does it require additional time from me?)

In summary, prevention concepts should be supplemented with the facets of mediatisation (sexualised) peer violence and applied accordingly, or to put it in the words of ByeDV:

**take action  
against cyber  
sexual** | **beyond  
digital  
violence**



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