

IT'S ~~NOT~~ VIOLENT

# ANIMATION GUIDE



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# ABOUT THE AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

The «It's not violent» awareness campaign is primarily aimed at youth aged 15 to 25 and lends itself to a variety of educational interventions. By placing participants in the perspective of a victim of intimate partner violence, the experience helps to:

- Promote recognition of different, more subtle forms of violence;
- Increase sensitivity to the reality of victims of intimate partner violence;
- Encourage personal reflection on intimate partner violence.

The platform presents (itsnotviolent.com) 5 distinct vignettes, each exploring different forms of non-physical violence.



## CAN'T TOUCH THIS SHARING OF INTIMATE IMAGES / SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Synopsis: The abuser tries to convince the victim to sell intimate pictures in order to make money.



## BREATHING SPACE HARASSMENT

Synopsis: The abuser is irritated that the victim has not responded to their text messages. The abuser doubts the victim's explanations and demands proof of their whereabouts.



## HUNGRY LIKE THE WOLF SEXUAL VIOLENCE / PRESSURE TO CONSENT

Synopsis: Using manipulation and gaslighting, the abuser is pressuring the victim to have sex.



## MY WAY OR THE HIGHWAY ISOLATION, MANIPULATION AND VEILED THREATS

Synopsis: The abuser uses psychological violence and manipulation to convince the victim to cancel an outing with friends.



## EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE CYBER-VIOLENCE AND GEOLOCATION

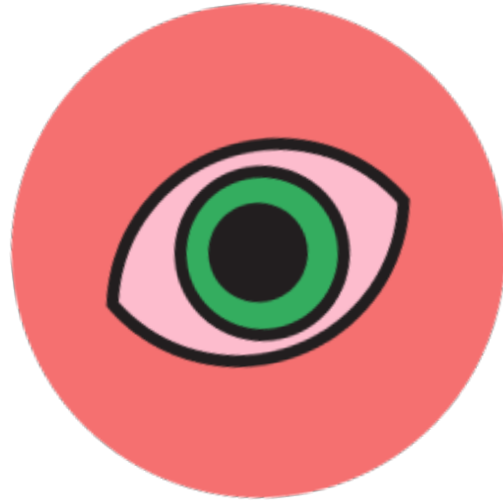
Synopsis: The abuser uses geolocation to track the victim without their knowledge, makes threats and demands photographic evidence of their whereabouts.

\*This vignette is written in a gender neutral manner. The victim can be male as well as female, as can the person using the violence.

## STRUCTURE OF THE VIGNETTES

Each vignette begins with an interactive section in which participants take part in a text message exchange between two protagonists, an abuser and a victim. In each discussion, participants are asked to choose the victim's response to the abuser from among three possibilities, five different times. There are therefore 243 possible combinations for each vignette and 1215 different experiences on the platform across the five vignettes.

The interactive experience ends with the question «was this conversation violent?» which serves as an introduction to a short educational section. This section explains why the vignette is violent and quickly discusses statistics and legal concepts related to the content of the vignette.



## WARNINGS

All interventions related to intimate partner violence imply issues needing consideration.



### **PARTICIPANTS SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO BE SENSITIVE IN THEIR INTERACTIONS**

Before any group intervention on the topic of intimate partner violence, it is important to remind the participants that the topic may affect many people personally, either because they themselves have been a victim or because someone they love has been victimized (a friend, their mother, etc.). They should be encouraged to be sensitive in their reactions and comments. A good way to do this, in a constructive way, is to suggest that they ask themselves, «If I were being abused, would it hurt me to hear this? What if my mother was the victim?».

If you find that some participants are not able to follow this instruction, it is best to stop the activity to prevent other participants from being hurt.



### **BE PREPARED TO RECEIVE CONFIDENCES AND GIVE RESOURCES**

The vignettes presented in this experience are very realistic. Since intimate partner violence is common, during the exercise one must assume that some participants will become aware of their own situation as a victim, a friend, an exposed child, etc. It is therefore possible that some participants will need support following the experience.

It is important to give access to resources by sharing the contact information for SOS violence conjugale (1 800 363-9010 and [www.sosviolenceconjugale.ca](http://www.sosviolenceconjugale.ca)). We are available throughout Quebec 24/7, and offer services by phone, chat and text. A list of other Canadian and international resources is also available in the get help tab on the main page of this website.

Ideally, another adult is also present and readily available if some participants need to confide.

# ANIMATION MODES

At the beginning of the animation, tell the group that they will witness an exchange between two people of their own age, and that during the course of the story they will have to choose how one of the characters responds to the other. In order not to create expectations or reveal the outcome of the exercise, avoid talking about victims and abusers during the introduction. It is important to tell the group that in each situation they must take into account the fact that both members of the couple want to stay in the relationship, at least for the time being.

After the online experience is over, different facilitation questions can be used (see next section) in order to promote discussion amongst the group.

## LARGE GROUP FACILITATION

The animation is done by using one vignette at a time. The facilitator may choose the vignette depending on their goal, or the group can choose the vignette by voting for one of the available titles. For greater impact, the experiment can be repeated a few times (over a few weeks or months, for example), using a different vignette each time.

You can ask two participants to play the part of the protagonists of the story, taking care to distribute the roles randomly, without necessarily assigning the role of the victim to a girl or that of the aggressor to a boy. You may also choose to have participants read the lines silently, or to read the exchanges yourself, giving free rein to your interpretation skills. The important thing is that the interpretation must remain realistic.

**When faced with a choice, the group votes by a show of hands** about which answer to select. The beauty of this form of animation is that participants will be able to see that when faced with violence, no one is sure or really certain about having the «right» answer, and that opinions differ greatly amongst them.

## SUB-GROUP DISCUSSIONS

The animation is based on several vignettes. The group is divided into teams, each of which is randomly assigned a different vignette.

**Participants are asked to start by doing the experiment for themselves, on their own cell phone, computer or tablet. When they are done, they discuss their experience in their team for about 20 minutes.** The interest of this form of animation is that each participant will have had a different experience from the others because there are 243 possible combinations to each vignette.

After the small group discussions, **each team can be asked to share the content of their vignette as well as their reflections with the larger group.**

## FIXED KIOSK... OR ON THE MOVE!

The It's not violent experience can be used as an awareness kiosk. This involves projecting the online platform on a wall or large screen and then allowing passers-by to stop, experience the platform live and then discuss it.

Facilitators can also walk around public places such as a cafeteria or an agora, offering to do the experiment on a tablet, which they have in their possession. Once the participants have finished the exercise, they are asked to discuss it and their experience.



## TALKING POINTS

The *It's not violent* experience allows for a wide range of animation questions. In this section, you will find different questions and the reflections they hope to elicit from the participants. You can choose to use one question in order to explore it in depth or several questions to promote a broader understanding of the experience.

### ICE BREAKERS

- How did you find the experience?
- Is it realistic?
- Do things like this happen?
- Are you surprised?

### QUESTIONS TO HELP IDENTIFY AND UNDERSTAND VIOLENT BEHAVIOR

#### WHAT DOES IT MEAN WHEN WE SAY THAT A BEHAVIOR IS VIOLENT?

- Put forth the idea that a violent behavior is a behavior that aims to influence a person against their will.
- Discuss examples from the vignette.
- Help participants realize that some behaviors are very subtle and can easily go under the radar, while other behaviors are more striking.
- Ask for synonyms of violent behavior and write them on the board: behaviors that aim to control, restrict, prevent, manipulate, threaten, blackmail, finesse, take over, circumvent, force, coerce, etc.

#### DO YOU HAVE OTHER EXAMPLES OF BEHAVIORS THAT CAN BE ABUSIVE WITHIN AN INTIMATE PARTNER RELATIONSHIP?

- Highlight the wide variety of behaviors that can be violent.
- Violent behaviours can be physical : hitting, shoving, pinching, holding, spitting, hitting with an object, sexual assault, etc.
- Violent behaviors can be non-physical : cursing, shouting, insulting, devaluing, guilt-tripping, denigrating, humiliating, forbidding, forcing, ridiculing, blaming, threatening children, animals or loved ones, preventing one from seeing one's family or friends, breaking objects, etc.

- It is important to talk about sexual violence including rape, sharing intimate photos or videos, pressuring the victim to have sex, forcing the person to certain sexual practices, etc.
- Violence can target loved ones by lying to or manipulating friends, parents, teachers or caregivers.
- Violence can target one's finances when criticizing financial management, creating debts in the victim's name, stealing money, limiting access to financial resources, preventing the person from studying or working, etc.
- Violence can target one's spirit or identity by ridiculing spiritual beliefs, forcing or preventing the practice of a religion, using religion or values to justify violence, attacking deep-seated values or aspirations, etc.
- Violence can use the judicial system by filing a complaint against the victim, lying to counsellors, threatening to reveal criminal behaviour to authorities or to parents as a means of maintaining a hold on the victim, etc.
- Many forms of intimate partner violence are criminal, such as assault, threats, theft, kidnapping but many are not like psychological or emotional abuse. However, they hurt the victims just as much.

#### IN YOUR OPINION, IS IT LESS SERIOUS WHEN THE VIOLENCE IS NOT PHYSICAL?

- Explore the idea that non-physical violence can be just as hurtful and harmful to the victim as physical violence. Apart from the physical pain and injury associated with physical violence, non-physical violence has the same repercussions by instilling fear, confusion, guilt, outrage, anger, pain, suffering, feeling trapped, etc.

#### IN YOUR OPINION, CAN A LOOK BE VIOLENT?

- Help participants realize that everyone knows how to recognize a dirty look or judgemental glare, and how to give one as well. We can simulate dirty looks and demonstrate that only the person to whom it is directed at, fully receives it, and that spectators do not really see the look nor capture its emotional charge and impact upon the victim.
- Explore the idea that what is implied can be as powerful as what is openly said, sometimes even more so.

#### IN YOUR OPINION, CAN A COMPLIMENT BE VIOLENT?

- Help participants realize that a compliment can be said in a sarcastic way or with a swear word and become an insult.
- A compliment can also be a way of denigrating, for example «sometimes I don't understand how you can have opinions like that, you are usually so intelligent».

- Explore the idea that it is all a matter of tone and intention, and that we can usually recognize what someone means even when it is not clear, especially when it comes from the person we love and know inside and out.

## WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE MOTIVATION OF THE PERSON WHO IS ENGAGING IN VIOLENT BEHAVIOR? WHY DO THEY DO IT?

- Help participants realize that violent behaviors are a means used by a partner wanting to establish a position of power within the relationship, in order to control the decisions and to put their needs at the center of the couple's concerns. In concrete terms, this means that one person purposely engages in behaviors intended to impose their will on the other person, to force them to do something, and to have the upper hand, the control, the power in the relationship.
- Help participants understand the difference between taking control and losing control. In intimate partner violence, it is not at all a loss of control because it is easy to see that violent partners will stop themselves before going too far, especially if there are witnesses present. Therefore, violence is a choice.
- The aggressor's objective, for each vignette can be determined by asking the participants : "What do you think the abuser's goal was?"
  - **Hungry as the wolf:** That the partner agrees to have sex.
  - **Can't touch this:** That the partner agrees to create and sell intimate photos.
  - **Breathing space:** To force the partner to respond quickly to text messages or any other demands in the future.
  - **My way or the highway:** To make the partner give up their plans to go out.
  - **Every breath you take:** Knowing where the partner is at all times, to make the partner report back when asked, to make the partner provide proof that what they say is true.

## WHY DO YOU THINK SOS VIOLENCE CONJUGALE CHOSE TO CALL ITS SITE IT'S NOT VIOLENT?

- Help participants realize that there is often a tendency to minimize subtle manifestations of violence, to think that «it's not violent»... when in fact it is.

## QUESTIONS TO PROMOTE EMPATHY AND UNDERSTANDING FOR VICTIMS OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

### WAS THERE A «RIGHT ANSWER» AMONG THE CHOICES OFFERED THROUGH THE DISCUSSIONS? COULD THE VICTIM HAVE STOPPED THE VIOLENCE?

- Go back into the vignettes to test other responses.
- Make an inventory of the strategies the victim has tried, such as being direct, being conciliatory, being understanding, to see that the only response that appeases the abuser is when the victim complies with their request.
- If participants have alternative responses, ask the group to imagine what the abuser's plausible response would have been in that particular situation.
- Bring out the idea that victims of violence may want to react with violent behaviours in direct response to the abuser's violence. For example, by saying, «You're so stupid to say that to me!», and that although they remain violent behaviours, they do not have the same meaning or impact as that of the abuser's. The reactional violence of the victim is about regaining legitimate power over the situation, rather than taking illegitimate power against the partner.
- If participants suggest that the victim should just leave the abuser, it is important to remind them that the victim does not want to break off the relationship at this time. Issues related to a potential break-up can be explored by imagining how the partner might react if the victim was to break up at that point in time. Participants can be asked to imagine how the controlling partner's violence will continue and likely increase after the breakup.
- Help participants realize that no matter the victim's choice of behavior, the abuser is using their response to regain power over the victim and that we must stop judging victims for their reactions, for what they said or did not say.
- Explore the idea that from the victim's point of view, she fails the relationship again, and again. This is so because everything she says is used against her and that no self-esteem can resist the amount of perceived failure.

### HOW DID YOU FEEL DURING THE EXPERIENCE? HOW DO YOU THINK THE VICTIM FELT?

- Make a list of participant's reactions : confusion, helplessness, surprise, disgust, distress, how some may have felt anxiety, etc.
- Help participants realize that what they felt during the experience represents perhaps 1% of the real effect that it would have had on a real victim. Since we know that it is an exercise, ask them to imagine for a moment that the same comments came from their own partner.



## MORE INFORMATION

SOS violence conjugale's website provides access to a wealth of information on the issue as well as help for victims, loved ones and professionals.

[www.sosviolenceconjugale.ca](http://www.sosviolenceconjugale.ca)

More specifically, the SOS-INFOs are short capsules about various topics related to intimate partner violence. The following articles may also be used in order to help you prepare the animation of the «**It's not violent**» workshops:

- Unmasking intimate partner violence
- Beyond violent behaviors : Power and control
- From bad to worse : The escalation of violence
- “How did I not see it ?”: The cycle of violence
- 9 consequences of intimate partner conjugale