


# Targeted session: It's so hard to tell someone what happened and to talk

## Session overview

This session provides the opportunity for the young person to develop an understanding as to why it can be so difficult to tell when someone causes us harm. By identifying these barriers it is possible to find ways to break them down.

## Information for practitioner

Practitioner needs to be aware of how the harm the young person experienced came to be known, whether it was discovered or whether it was disclosed. Both will have an impact on the young person, see the Marie Collins Foundation resource "Discovery vs Disclosure" for more information (available at [mariecollinsfoundation.org.uk](http://mariecollinsfoundation.org.uk)).

 Practitioner must inform the child that there is no expectation during this session to make a disclosure of any kind or talk about the harm they have experienced. The activity has been depersonalised so the young person is thinking of someone else and not themselves although they may choose to apply it to their own situation.

Practitioner to note additional guidance within the session information.

## Pre-session action

Select a "Looking after yourself" exercise in advance for the close of the session.

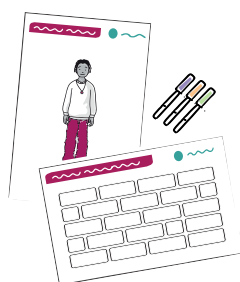
### Resources needed for this session

- Pens
- Brick wall worksheet
- Illustrations of young people

## Session

Check in with the young person as to how they have been since your last session together. Are there any thoughts or feelings that you may need to reflect on and address before you begin this session?

Inform the young person what we are going to do in this session, sharing the overview.




Worksheets

### Activity

Cut up the brick wall sheet of paper so you have individual bricks.

Writing on one brick at a time both practitioner and young person to consider **what might prevent a young person from telling someone about the harm they have experienced through technology.**

As each brick is written place it over the image of the young person.

 Before being written onto the brick, practitioner must support the young person to break down the examples to be able to understand what the barrier truly is.

The following shows how we would break down an example the young person might give into a number of bricks.


Young person says "scared of what might happen."


This could be broken down into places e.g. at home, school, online.

Each of these could be broken down to include different people e.g. at home being mum or grandad.

The people could be broken down into what they might say or do e.g. mum thinks it is my fault and has taken my phone away.

Other examples to consider and break down may include: worried about getting into trouble (parents, family, school, police, with groomer/offender); feeling to blame; not being believed; don't know how someone will respond; trusting someone; finding the right time, place, person; embarrassed; being unable to find the right words; shame; don't know how to say; didn't know who would help; thought I could handle it myself; thought I would be taken away from home; told that I would not be believed; it would cause arguments; it would be dismissed.

 Practitioner to be aware that groomers manipulate young people to believe they are making choices and will blame them. They may hear things such as: no one will believe you, you started this, everyone does it, I didn't make you, it was just a joke, people will be disgusted with you. This will compound any feelings of self-blame. These would also be barriers.

 Practitioner must consider that practitioners and services can also be a barrier even in ordinary conversations whether about harm or not. What we say and do and how we behave will affect the strength of the connection that is built. The unconditional positive connection we have with a young person – without distraction – is what enables them to trust us.




### Reflection

The activity will provide a visual representation of the barriers in front of the young person that keep them from talking to others. Be mindful that this is very isolating.

However, as much as a wall can be built it can also be destroyed. That can be a daunting prospect and may take time.

- **How might we take the wall down? What can destroy the bricks?**

This may have been discussed as the bricks built up, if so, reflect back on those discussions or begin a new discussion.

 Practitioner needs to demonstrate the deconstruction of the wall to ensure the visual aid is understood by the young person as this represents the notion of recovery.

Some bricks we can take away in one go for example: "I don't know who to talk to" – discussion on identifying a trusted adult. This could be written on the back of the brick and referred back to if necessary.

Other bricks we may not be able to remove in one go. We may need to chip away part of the brick. For example: "It's my fault." Bring told it is not your fault won't

remove the brick but hearing this will start to chip away at it. Practitioner to tear a piece of the brick away to demonstrate this can still have an impact. The more we hear this the more we believe it and the more the brick will erode.

- **What else could be done to make holes in the wall and make it easier for us to tell someone what happened?**

- ✓ Include what the young person as well as others can say or do. This can also include the "Looking after yourself" exercises within these sessions.



### **Reflection**

By breaking down our fears we take some control back and those fears may not seem as powerful.

We may find ways to be able to access support having thought more about what stops us.

We all have barriers to communicating about different situations and while we may not remove every brick being able to identify them can help us to connect better.



### **Looking after yourself exercise to close**