

Title: Promoting Child Online Safety - A Role for Volunteers?

Facilitator and room number: Garry McGregor; 1.103

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Number of participants: 5

Starting questions:

Promoting child online safety to improve resilience – Is there a role in this for volunteers and what are you currently doing to support them in it?

Sequence of content/methods:

The session started with a quick introduction of the facilitator and the participants and then continued with a quick mindmap regarding the question: “What are the main risks for children online”?

The main part of the session was a group discussion. The facilitator gave out a handout and a fact sheet displaying his organisation’s work.

Main results/tools presented by the facilitator:

The facilitator presented an Online Trainee Programme for anyone involved in mentoring programmes or interested in a training regarding child online safety.

You can receive the training by becoming a member of “Befriending Networks”. This training involves raising awareness for the risks of being online for children and how to approach children to address these risks.

Another important idea presented by the facilitator is a “Report Button” for disturbing content online that children can use easily.

Main points of discussion:

A main point mentioned in the group discussion was related to the role of the coordinator and/or mentor: You don’t need to be an online expert. The children are being empowered by being asked by the mentors about their online world (role change in relationship between mentors/mentees).

Another important point discussed by the participants is that providing children’s safety online needs the involvement of their parents.

Results of the session:

The group identified the **main risks for children being online** as addiction: 1) sexual exploitation and 2) oversharing of personal/private information on social networks.

Furthermore, participants mentioned that also **mobile devices and the internet can be used as a positive enhancement for the mentoring relationship**.

But, **the topic of online safety has to be taken into account more seriously by mentoring programmes** in the future: a training for mentors/mentees/parents led by an experienced workshop leader or handouts about online safety should be provided to open the door for a discussion between them.

Main statements highlighting the results of the discussion:

„Society has the task to prepare kids for online problematics.“

One thing that was laughed about:

In the beginning everyone was laughing about the facilitator and some of the participants being connected on social networks.

Further questions:

- How to make up rules for the “online relationship” between mentors and mentees.
- How to deal with the age of volunteers and their (lack of) experience with social media/the online world.

- How to develop a social media guidance programme for volunteers.
- What impact has our own social media presence on children (as volunteers and mentoring coordinators)?
- How to raise awareness for risks regarding the children's social media activities without scaring them or neglecting the importance of social media?