



With financial support from the Daphne Programme of the European Union

# **Daphne project- LOG-IN: Laboratories On Gender violence In New media**

## **Guide lines for practical exercises for young people**

By Centro documentazione donna- Modena

### **1. Introduction**

The educational potential of young people's interactions with their peers has not yet been fully exploited by European schools. This project is an opportunity for introducing and developing this potential. The research and experience of recent years testifies to the fact that peer groups are an essential factor in the development of a young person's identity. Peers act as agents of socialisation and enable young people to test their limits in a non-authoritarian context.

The purpose of these guidelines is to promote the culture of peer education (and hence active citizenship) and above all to develop awareness of gender violence issues, with the aim of preventing and combating gender violence by encouraging responsible use of social networks and new media among adolescents.

The project will create a series of workshops for young people in a variety of European countries, as a primary form of prevention of gender violence.

The material presented in the workshops is not to be taken as a rigid model, since one of the presuppositions of the project itself is the need for contextualisation. In other words, each local reality should be able to take ideas and methods from the guide and adapt them to local conditions.



## **2. General objectives**

For many years, European authorities have been giving priority to gender equality and the prevention of violence, and have also set up and financed specific programmes on the theme of gender violence for young people. In order to achieve this aim, the LOG-IN project (Laboratories On Gender violence In New media) will run a series of workshops in formal and informal educational settings.

The project has the following general objectives:

- to prevent damaging and violent behaviour among young people in their use of social networks and new media;
- to create awareness among young people of the issue of gender violence and the role that new technologies and social networks can have in promoting and diffusing gender stereotypes;
- to inform young people about the legal aspects of the publication of information, images and data in social networks, and promote a legitimate and correct use of these new means of communication;
- to propose new models of gender relationships based on mutual respect;
- to propose positive ways of using new technologies, and to demonstrate how social networks and new media can be used to communicate, learn, exchange opinions and participate in social and political life;
- to exploit social networks and new media to produce positive messages not only in the private sphere, but also in launching communications campaigns aimed at contrasting gender violence.

The underlying method is that of peer education and, more generally, employs interaction and involvement of the participants. It is well known that issues like gender stereotypes, sexism and the various forms of violence, which are strongly linked to their cultural context, rather than being explained in theoretical terms to a passive audience, benefit best from activities which enable the participants to develop their own positions and compare them with those of others. Learning is an active process, of which the participants themselves are part and in which they are able to exchange ideas and discuss issues as they affect their lives.

For young people, being part of the process enables them to understand that they can be active citizens and hence are responsible for the issue and the enactment of change.

The decision to insert such activities in schools recognises that schools play a fundamental role in the growth of young people and valorises their socialising potential, especially during adolescence, the period of their lives in which young people start to establish their own values within their social relationships. The focus on gender violence consists in a series of interventions aimed at preventing and avoiding violence. The participants must reflect if they are to develop positive attitudes to their interpersonal relationships, with the objective of recognising and rejecting the attitudes and values underlying violent behaviours.

### **3. What is peer education?**

The current focus on peer education largely derives from the EU's support for a project launched in 1997, which involved numerous European countries. This project - which was a considerable success - involved many young people from secondary schools. Peer education is an approach to education in which members of a group are trained to act as educators and tutors for their peer group. In this way it promotes improved relations within the group and mutual education. In general, peer education has been used in educational programmes and school activities as a way to promote health issues (such as prevention of at risk behaviours). Peer education is a set of methods whose objective is prevention and training, based on participation as equals within a group, and promotes education for citizenship by means of free and constructive dialogue.

This is of fundamental importance not only as a way of encouraging the full development of the person's identity and life skills, but also as a way of reinforcing the social fabric of the communities in which we live.

In the peer group, communications and relationships are fully participatory and equally shared among its members.

Clearly, even within the group there are difference between individuals, but the status accorded to the voice of each member remains profoundly egalitarian.

The training of the peer educators should bear in mind the development of their emotional intelligence and life skills. In the early Nineties, the WHO introduced the term "Life Skills", "all those skills which enable a person to effectively face the requirements and challenges of daily life" to indicate the skills required to interrelate with other people and to handle the problems, pressures and stresses of daily life, as follows:

- › decision making
- › problem solving
- › creativity
- › critical sense
- › effective communications
- › interpersonal relations
- › self-awareness
- › empathy
- › management of emotions
- › stress management

In a first phase, then, peer education recognises the importance of the role of adults, although the adult-adolescent relationship is viewed in terms of interaction and active and constructive participation. The adult must develop the life skills of young people as the basis for their ability to play an active role in social life, as well as imparting basic information about the

subject matter of the intervention (in our case, gender violence). In this phase too, the activities are an opportunity for the participants to discuss the subject matter, and aim to valorise the egalitarian nature and potential of the peer group itself. The peer group is essential to secondary socialisation; there are differences in experience which permit transfer of knowledge, but horizontally, between peers, in a context of cooperation and solidarity.

In the second phase of the workshop, those young people who have volunteered to act as peer educators are able to experience for themselves what it is to transmit experiences and knowledge to others and process their contents in discussions, confrontations and exchanges with their peers.

Peer education is a particularly valuable experience for those who agree to become peer educators. In playing the role of educators, the participants have an exceptional opportunity to set aside their usual role as passive students, and to take on a proactive, responsible position, in which they can put their communicative skills to the test and, in the response of their peers, verify the concrete value of their contribution.

The educational work of the expert with the young people in the initial phase consists not only in providing information to be transferred to the class, but also in reinforcing their ability to relate to themselves and with each other: one could say that the key is *how* to communicate, rather than *what* to communicate.

In our project, the experts must also be trained in the communicative mechanisms employed by new media in general and Facebook in particular.

#### **4. Expert's qualifications**

The expert responsible for running the workshops must have deep familiarity with the following issues:

- Gender difference, gender roles (understand culturally rooted gender differences, recognise sexual stereotypes, recognise their consequences including discrimination and violence)
- Various types of gender violence (understand the various types of gender violence: psychological, physical and sexual, and their impact on young people and adults)
- Young people and new media (familiarity with the major channels used by adolescents –social networks, video streaming, etc.)

If possible, it would be preferable to have a couple (man/woman; different generations, etc.) of experts to conduct the workshops, to testify to the potential for mutual enrichment in concrete terms.

The expert should also have experience in running group workshops, using dialogue and interactions. The workshops must be run in such a way as to involve the entire class, and it is thus important to underline the attitudes required of the expert.

## **Balance**

Awareness of self, balanced with awareness of the group. Tasks and activities of the group, balanced with the wellbeing of the group.

The role of the facilitator is a complex balance between awareness of self and consideration for the interests of the group. If the emphasis is too much on self, then the needs of the group will suffer.

The facilitator's role is complex and at times lonely, so it could be a very good idea to share the facilitation with another person (co-facilitator). You can support each other during and after sessions.

Debriefing (reviewing processes or events) and getting things off your chest are also very important for maintaining balance. Where possible this is best done with a professional, such as a social worker or psychologist. Facilitation is also enhanced with regular reflection—thinking about what is working well and building on that, as well as taking on board the feedback that others have given you and finding new and better ways to work with the group.

## **Empathy**

Listen more than speak. Aim to understand each perspective and hold each person in positive regard. Be willing to let old assumptions go on the basis of new information.

Empathy is attempting to understand the perspective of another, for which the main tool is listening. Carefully prompting the speaker with questions may help to explore the territory.

Facilitators are allowed to make mistakes and get things wrong. They are human after all. Because they are not 'leaders' in the traditional sense, maintaining the perception of strength and invincibility is not essential. The facilitator, not being perfect, can often provide reassurance for the group.

## **Flexibility**

The group is more important than the agenda. Some days things work, vsome days they don't. Use the suggestions others make.

Flexibility is one of the most important skills a facilitator will need. Flexibility extends to just about every aspect of the facilitation role—preparing and operating in the physical (or virtual) environment, organising events and speakers, making decisions and solving problems.

A good facilitator responds to change with a positive outlook and creativity.

## **Impartiality**

The facilitator is doing the group's work, not the other way around. The goals and outcomes are determined by the group, not the facilitator. The facilitator guides the group, but doesn't control it. Impartiality means not favoring any individual or group. This is one of the hardest skills for a facilitator to apply consistently. The difference between a leader and a facilitator is that the facilitator knows they must not use their power and influence on the group and, hopefully, they are self-aware enough to notice if this is starting to happen.

## **Focus on process**

How things are done is as important as what is done. If it's not working, do it another way. Maintaining a balance between what is done and how it is done is another skill an effective facilitator needs to develop. Another way of thinking about it is the difference between the task of the group (what it is there to do) and the maintenance of the group (how it looks after the people in the group). Groups work best when the 'what' and the 'how' are evenly balanced. If the group has some hard work to do, it should be followed by some 'down' time, or by presenting the work in such a way that it is enjoyable rather than a chore.

In thinking about process, the facilitator needs to be constantly aware of what would engage most group members, what would be the most effective way of presenting information and how each person's needs can be balanced with the overall need of the group. This must be done while always bearing in mind that the processes must be appropriate in a cancer support setting. Processes are not tricks or games—they are well planned ways of working with the group to advance the goals of the group, and to engage the people in it.

## **Inclusion**

Everyone's input is important. Everyone can learn something from others.

Everyone has something valuable to offer and everyone has a story to tell. The facilitator's role is to make sure a safe space is created in every group for people to contribute. Many people are uncomfortable talking in front of a big group. In some cultures people are less likely to put their individual ideas forward. If the group includes people from other cultures, find out as much as possible about their culture. The best source of this information is the person themselves. Participation is not compulsory. Some people may just want to be with the group and are happy to listen to what others are saying. The facilitator can periodically check with the quieter members to see if they want to contribute something, but this should always be done tentatively rather than directly. Move on quickly if the quieter ones do not want to say anything to avoid embarrassing them. Everyone in the group can learn something from everyone else. A good facilitator encourages each person to contribute to the best of their ability and to the fullest extent possible.

## **Creativity**

Try new ways. Experiment with new ideas. Look at things from different perspectives. Facilitators are often going to be confronted by uncertainty. Being creative works alongside being flexible as a quality that is essential to develop as a facilitator. Creative facilitation involves finding new ways to do old things, to give people variety and to create interest. It means taking risks and looking at things from a different perspective.

Because facilitation skills are constantly developing, effective facilitators should be constantly finding out from others how to do things differently, or seeking information in books and on the internet. They are experimenting with new processes and learning on the job, and are picking up new ideas and rethinking old ones based on the reactions and feedback of participants.

## **Humour**

Appropriately lighten the mood when the work is hard. Laugh at yourself. Laugh WITH the group but never OF anyone.

## **5. Structure, duration and frequency of the workshops**

We propose below a schedule for the workshops, consisting of four **weekly** or fortnightly sessions, to enable the participants to maintain their level of learning and enthusiasm. The sessions have been designed to be consecutive, each session exploits the knowledge and skills acquired in the preceding one.

Each session lasts for around two hours (or two scholar hours).

At the end of these first four sessions, aimed at the entire group, the participants will be prompted to volunteer as peer educators.

They will be the protagonists of the fifth session, which also lasts two hours.

Over the next 15 days, the peer educators will develop their activities.

This is followed by the sixth session, attended by the expert, which will present the results of the peer education and discuss the experience.

### **Age**

Boys and girls from 14 to 18 years of age. This age group is already part of school and sufficiently mature to have had their first relationships, and thus able to understand the issues discussed in the workshops.

Furthermore, the 15-17 age group will still be at school for a few more years, and will thus have the opportunity to continue in their work as peer educators, after the conclusion of the project itself.

### **Numbers**

The workshops should be attended by classes of 20- 25 students.

Due to the interactive nature of the workshops, smaller groups promote better participation and involvement.

Mixed groups of boys and girls are preferable, but single-sex groups can also work.

### **Proposed programme**

The following proposal covers the activities for each session, with the approximate duration of each activity. This is a proposal, each expert will adapt the time and activities in a flexible manner, also in consideration of the degree of participation and discussion of each group.

For each subject we propose a number of activities (some of which are enclosed at the end of the guidelines) to be taken as examples; each expert could choose to use some of them or to adapt some other to the local context.

For certain sessions, we have included optional activities intended not only to promote awareness, but to motivate the young people and make them responsible for taking action against gender violence and discrimination in general.

Note finally that the programme also specifies the monitoring work to be done, both pre- and post-test.

In this way, the duration of the course is 12 hours, to which must be added the peer education activities (on line or face-to-face), the duration of which is at the discretion of the peer educators themselves.

| <b>WEEK</b>        | <b>Session</b>                   | <b>Activity</b>                   | <b>Duration</b> |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>1</b>           | 1st                              | Workshop with expert              | 2 h             |
| <b>2</b>           | 2nd                              | Workshop with expert              | 2 h             |
| <b>3</b>           | 3rd                              | Workshop with expert              | 2 h             |
| <b>4</b>           | 4th                              | Workshop with expert              | 2 h             |
| <b>5</b>           | 5th                              | Training for the peer educators   | 2 h             |
| <b>6-7</b>         | <b>PEER EDUCATION ACTIVITIES</b> |                                   |                 |
| <b>8</b>           | 6th                              | Review and discussion with expert | 2 h             |
| <b>TOTAL HOURS</b> |                                  |                                   | <b>12</b>       |



## **FIRST SESSION**

| General theme   | Objectives  | Activity / materials   | Duration |
|---|---|--|----------|
| <b>Expert introduces himself and the project</b><br><br><b>Participants fill out the pre-test</b>   | Agree aims and methods<br>To find out whether and how much participants use FB and internet | <i>Power point presentation with photos and project website</i>  | 15 min.  |
| <b>Definition of “gender violence” by participants</b>  | To start dialogue – determine level of awareness and opinions                               | <i>Post-it, marker pens, whiteboard</i><br><i>Question: “What does violence mean to you?”</i>  | 15 min.  |
| <b>Under the historical, cultural and legislative roots of gender violence as a manifestation of the disparity in power between men and women</b> | To start the learning process intended to lead to a correct definition of gender violence   | <i>Activity:</i><br><i>Y4Y*- 3.1 “Gender violence in relationships”</i><br><i>or</i><br><i>“Locked in at home”</i><br><i>Taught lesson</i>     | 20 min.  |
| <b>Stereotypes and prejudice</b>  | To unmask preconceived ideas  | <i>Activity: project a short section of a film highlighting frequent stereotypes (e.g.: “Welcome to the Ch’tis” or “Welcome to the South”)</i> | 15 min.  |
| <b>The ABC theory: how we perceive reality</b>  | To understand how stereotypes and prejudices arise  | <i>Taught lesson with Power point presentation</i>   | 10 min.  |
| <b>Nature and culture</b>   | To focus on what is natural and what is culturally determined                               | <i>Exercise “Sex and gender”; images of toy catalogues for boys and girls</i><br><i>Y4Y: 1.1 - Hand-out of statements on gender &amp; sex</i>  | 15 min.  |
| <b>Sexual stereotypes: Cinderella</b>   | To unmask the sexist culture transmitted by stereotypes                                     | <i>Taught lesson; slides with images taken from Facebook profiles</i><br><i>Y4Y: Gender box</i>  | 20 min.  |
| <b>Negative emancipation (OPTIONAL)</b>   | To deconstruct apparently positive behaviours which rather express a sexist culture         | <i>Images taken from Facebook</i>  | 10 min.  |

\*The acronym Y4Y is for Youth 4 Youth and refers to the book “A manual for Empowering young people in preventing gender-based violence through peer education” realize in 2012 by The Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (MIGS), European Anti-Violence Network (EAVN), Greece; Casa delle Donne per non Subire Violenza, Italy, • Women’s Issues Information Centre (WIIC), Lithuania, Centre of Research in Theories and Practices that Overcome Inequalities (CREA), University of Barcelona, Spain.  
 Available on Web site [www.medinstgenderstudies.org](http://www.medinstgenderstudies.org)

## SECOND SESSION

| General theme  | Objectives  | Activity / materials   | Duration |
|--|---|--|----------|
| <b>Sexual stereotypes: Superman</b>  | To unmask the sexist culture transmitted by stereotypes   | <i>Taught lesson; slides with images taken from Facebook profiles</i>  | 20 min.  |
| <b>Power in relationships (hierarchical, juridical, relational)</b>  | To introduce the theme of distribution of power in society and relationships  | <i>Exercise: "Who decides?" or Question "Who holds power in society?"</i>  | 15 min.  |
| <b>Relationships between men and women (autonomy and liberty)</b>  | To focus attention on the distribution of power with the couple and the management of affection (jealousy, control) | <i>Y4Y: activity 3.2 (Role Play)</i>   | 20 min.  |
| <b>Definition of gender violence</b>   | To share the correct definition as set out in the Istanbul Convention   | <i>Power Point presentation</i>  | 5 min.   |
| <b>The delegitimation of women</b>   | To explore the continuum of delegitimation of women, from relationships to society                                  | <i>Exercise "I resigned"</i>   | 10 min.  |
| <b>General situation of women in society (glass ceiling, discrimination, absence from school books, etc.) (OPTIONAL)</b> | To understand how deeply rooted sexual stereotypes are.   | <i>Exercises: "Murder in the skyscraper"; "The women of scripture"; .</i>  | 20 min.  |
| <b>From collaboration to sharing</b>   | To understand how to break the vicious circle of stereotypes (trust, cooperation, etc.)                             | <i>Activity: view a short section of film which highlights a discussion between a couple, e.g. "The break up" or "He's just not that into you"</i> | 30 min.  |

### **THIRD SESSION**

| General theme  | Objectives  | Activity / materials   | Duration |
|--|---|--|----------|
| <b>Understand the meaning of active citizenship (“it’s my business”)</b> | To ensure that all participants are involved                    | <i>Taught lesson/dialogue</i>  | 10 min.  |
| <b>Online communications</b>   | To understand two simple rules of effective communications      | <i>Taught lesson</i>   | 20 min.  |
| <b>What to communicate?<br/>How to communicate?</b>                      | To understand the connection between the message and the medium | <i>Taught lesson/dialogue with examples</i>  | 30 min.  |
| <b>Knowing online communications tools</b>                               |   | <i>Taught lesson/dialogue with examples</i>  | 20 min.  |
| <b>Viral content</b>   | To understand the rules for making content go viral             | <i>Power point presentation for taught lesson</i><br><br><i>View the most viral videos</i> | 20 min.  |
| <b>Critical analysis of stereotyped viral videos</b>                     | To stimulate the capacity to deconstruct messages               | <i>Project videos</i>  | 20 min.  |

## **FOURTH SESSION**

| General theme                              | Objectives   | Activity / materials   | Duration |
|--|--|--|----------|
| <b>Introduction to peer education</b>      | To present peer education and its effectiveness      | <i>Activity: "Do my friends influence my life?" or Y4Y: activity 4.1</i><br><i>Unesco 2003, Peer Charter</i> | 30 min.  |
| <b>Self-selection of participants</b>      | To understand the characteristics of a peer educator | <i>Y4Y: activity 4.2</i>   | 60 min.  |
| <b>The right and obligation to privacy</b> | To reflect on how to use internet                    | <i>Documents of the Data Protection Authority, images taken from FB</i>                                      | 20 min.  |
| <b>Participants fill out the post-test</b> |  |  | 10 min.  |

## **FIFTH SESSION: TRAINING FOR PEER EDUCATORS**

| General theme   | Objectives  | Activity / materials | Duration |
|---|---|----------------------|----------|
| Qualities and skills of the peer educator   | To train pairs of peer educators (man woman)  | Y4Y: activity 4.2    | 20 min.  |
| Planning a peer education session<br>Or:<br>producing materials for online peer education | To design sessions which the peer educator will submit to their peers if they choose to do classroom activities<br><br>To design the tools which the peer educators will propose via their FB profiles if they choose to do online activities | Y4Y: activity 4.4    | 90 min.  |
| How do we face difficulties?  | Make simple suggestions (What do I do if I freeze up? What do I do if someone tells me about an incident of violence? What do I do if the refuses to participate or participates too vociferously?)   | Y4Y: activity 4.3    | 10 min.  |

The fifth session may involve other persons, such as video or multimedia artists capable of providing technical support in the creation of online content.

## **PEER EDUCATION**

At this point one must give the peer educators the opportunity to put theory into practice and propose their activities.

There are two possibilities:

- **TAUGHT LESSONS**

To select the participants in the Peer Education Sessions, the simplest approach from an organisational point of view is to have the schools and teachers themselves identify groups or classes of young people. In general, such groups should be composed of people of the same age as or not much younger than the peer educators themselves, and should be able to commit at least two hours to the activity.

Another way of selecting the participants is to help the peer educators themselves to recruit them. One could draw up posters or make five minute presentations in class to encourage the students to take part in the Sessions.

## **EXAMPLES OF PEER EDUCATION**

| General theme   | Activity / materials                       | Duration |
|---|--|----------|
| Introduction, division into small groups of 8-10 boys and girls                 | Brief presentation                         | 5 min.   |
| Proposal of one of the activities, introduction to the theme of gender violence |  | 60 min.  |
| Creation of a slogan or poster  |  | 45 min.  |
| Brief evaluation of participants  | Distribution of an anonymous questionnaire | 10 min.  |

- **VIA THE PEER EDUCATORS' FACEBOOK PROFILES**

The peer educators will be asked to post one of the messages or videos created during the fifth session, to sustain a positive discussion among their contacts and monitor the results.

To help the peer educators to monitor the activities, they will be asked to fill out a form like the following:

### **PROPOSAL FORM**

1. When did I post the message or video? Enter the date
2. What message did I post?

#### **FOR VIDEOS**

- How many contacts did I have after a day?
- How many contacts did I have after 3 days?
- How many contacts did I have a week?
- How many contacts did I have after 15 days?

#### **FOR FACEBOOK**

- How many comments did I have after a day?
- How many comments did I have after 3 days?
- How many comments did I have after a week?
- How many comments did I have after 15 days?
  
- How many "likes/not likes" did I get after a day?
- How many "likes/not likes" did I get after 3 days?
- How many "likes/not likes" did I get after a week?
- How many "likes/not likes" did I get after 15 days?

3. How many people agreed with my content?
4. What types of comments did I get? (positive/negative)
5. How did I deal with negative comments? What did I answer?

## **SIXTH SESSION**

| General theme  | Objectives  | Activity / materials                            | Duration |
|--|---|---|----------|
| <b>Classroom presentation of their work in classroom groups or on their profiles by the peer educators</b>                         | To launch autonomous peer education activities to make the messages go viral.<br>To review the experience | Present the materials or discussions on the web | n/a      |
| <b>Gender representations on the internet: male and female stereotypes, sexist language, negative emancipation.<br/>(OPTIONAL)</b> | Final reflections on the issues   | Moderated discussion                            | n/a      |

## **EXAMPLE OF EXERCICES**

These exercises are taken from the book “A tavola con Platone” (Exercises and role-plays on cultural, sexual and gender differences), Serena Ballista and Judith Pinnock, 2012

### **1- Locked in at home**

**Objectives:** To reflect on the phenomenon of gender violence in relationships.

**Materials:** Pen and paper.

**Time:** 30 minutes.

#### **Instructions**

We tell this story:

*Today is Monica's 30<sup>th</sup> birthday.*

*Monica is proud of her achievements: she has a degree in ancient history, teaches at the University, has bought a house together with her partner and has adopted a child at a distance.*

*To inaugurate a new phase in her life, she decides to go with a dear friend to a medium and have her future told. She is curious to know what is awaiting her.*

*However, the old woman tells her that she will be stabbed to death by the end of the day.*

*The friend takes Monica home immediately.*

*Monica is shocked by what she has been told and decides to lock herself into her home and not let anyone in.*

*During the day, the postman rings to have her sign for a registered letter, a courier tries to deliver a pack of books she bought online, and her neighbour calls to ask for some salt. But Monica refuses to answer the door and pretends not to be at home.*

*However, before her thirtieth birthday is out, Monica fulfils the destiny foretold by the old woman and dies.*

What's the explanation?

**Solution:** her partner killed her.

The great majority of violence against women happens in the home and at the hands of family members, friends or persons known to the victim. In this case, Monica's partner is convinced that she's seeing someone else in secret.



## 2- I resigned!

**Objectives:** To reflect on the barriers which prevent men and women from enjoying an effectively equal social dignity as established by Article 3 of the Italian Constitution.

**Materials:** Pen and paper

**Time:** 15 minutes

### Instructions

We tell the following story:

*“Rita is a talented 28 year old engineer. She has been living for several years with her partner, Matteo, who she met at University. Six months ago, they decided to take a big step: to take out a mortgage and buy the apartment they are renting.*

*They know that it will be difficult, because the mortgage is a heavy burden, even though they can pay it off over many years, and their parents will not be able to help them. However, Rita and Matteo are optimistic: they both have good, well paid and satisfying jobs. They sign the contract.*

*A week ago, Matteo was laid off by his employer. In the meantime, Rita has discovered that she is pregnant with twins. Rita and Matteo are very worried: they don’t know how they’ll manage to pay the mortgage, especially since their expenses will only increase when the twins are born.*

*Rita knows that it is essential that she keep her job. This morning, however, Rita came back early from work and finding Matteo in the kitchen preparing lunch, she said:*

*I resigned!*

What is the explanation?

### The answer:

When he took her on, Rita’s employer made it a condition that she sign a blank letter of resignation, which he could use if she were to get pregnant. The employer knows that it is illegal to fire a woman because she is pregnant (Italian Law 1971/30), so he decided to deal with the problem in advance in this humiliating and illegal manner, by exploiting her need, as a young graduate, to find work.

The INPS (National Statistics Institute) has determined that 13% of employed women born after 1973 are forced to resign when they get pregnant (a total of around 800,000 women).

This is why women are increasingly demanding the restoration of Law 188/2007, approved by the second Prodi government with an overwhelming majority and cancelled by ex-minister Sacconi, which provided for the use of numbered forms, valid for no more than 15 days, for handing in voluntary resignations.

### 3-Murder in the skyscraper

**Objectives:** To recognise the dominating ideas (sexual stereotypes) which polarise our perception of a problem.

**Materials:** Pen and paper

**Time:** 30 minutes

#### Instructions

This game is taken from The book of psychological games – vol. 1 (Penati et al., 2012).

We tell this story:

*The detective was walking along the dark and silent corridor of the hotel. All of a sudden, he heard a woman's voice screaming "For God's sake, don't shoot, Davide!".*

*This was immediately followed by a shot. The detective burst into the room: a dead woman was lying in the corner, with a bullet in her heart. Lying next to her was the pistol used to kill her. At the other end of the room were three people. The detective showed them his badge and asked:*

- *What is your job?*

- *I'm a butcher.*

- *And yours?*

- *A judge.*

- *And you?*

- *I'm a teacher.*

*The detective looked at them for a moment, then approached the butcher, grabbed him by the arm and said:*

- *I arrest you for the murder of this woman!*

*It turns out that the butcher really was the murderer.*

*The detective had never seen any of them before – so how did he know which one was guilty?*

We ask the participants to find the solution to the riddle separately, and write down their theories. Then we start a discussion by comparing the hypotheses and any new ones arising from the discussion. In our experience, the answers are generally of an investigative type, such as: the butcher had blood on his clothes, the butcher had his initials embroidered on his shirt, or the butcher is agitated and there are marks of a fight, etc..

The **correct answer**, which we reveal after a ten minute discussion (depending on how creative our participants are) is:

The butcher is a man, while the judge and teacher are both women – which of them could possibly be called Davide?

The game, as is the case in Road Accident in this same chapter, confronts the theme of sexist language and the imbalance of job positions in men's favour.