

**JERICH** 



# What if I'm not as safe as I think I am?

A guide to taking care of your body  
and feelings in your relationships



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# **What if I'm not as safe as I think I am?**

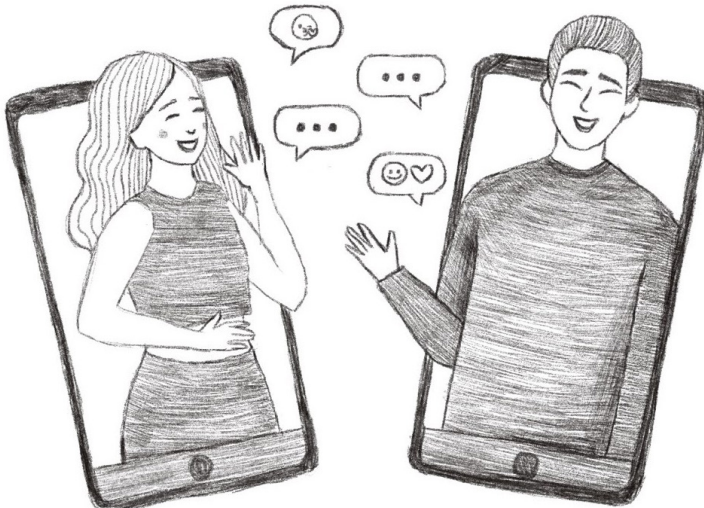
A guide to taking care of your body  
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## INTRODUCTION

You might not have talked much about something called “**sexual exploitation in prostitution**”, and that’s totally ok.

It’s not something people always discuss and it is very taboo.

But the truth is, some young folks your age might find themselves in situations like this.

*It’s important to understand what it means so that you can stay safe and know how you can help yourself or your friends if needed.*

In this guide we will explain what sexual exploitation in prostitution is, and offer some information on how to spot and prevent it, some tips on relationships and consent to avoid finding yourself in situations of vulnerability, and some useful contacts if you ever need support.



# WHAT IS SEXUAL EXPLOITATION IN PROSTITUTION?

Did you know that sexual exploitation in prostitution exists?




Did you know that  
exploitation of teenagers  
in prostitution exists?



Sexual exploitation of teenagers in prostitution is the ***“use of a teenager in sexual activities for remuneration or any other form or consideration”*** - Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography.

Sexual exploitation of minors in prostitution primarily involves teenage girls - boys also are concerned - between the ages of 14 and 17. Yet, there still is very little information on prostitution in general. More data is available on teenagers trafficking.



## **Why do we use the term “sexual exploitation in prostitution” instead of just “teenager prostitution”?**

We use the term “Sexual exploitation in prostitution” in order to underline that prostitution is a form of exploitation and abuse. So, the person who forces someone into prostitution is the one who should be held responsible. It’s never the victims’ fault.



## **What can be considered as sexual exploitation of minors in prostitution?**

Money is not the only remuneration in sexual exploitation for prostitution, it can be gifts or other kinds of favours. This is also why sometimes it’s hard to recognize such events as prostitution.

Also, any sexual act counts, including masturbation and exchange of intimate photos. It doesn’t have to be a complete sexual intercourse.

Here are some examples that can help you recognise specific situations:

- » Offering gifts, dinners, hotels, transportation or any other valuable good, in exchange of sexual acts
- » Demanding that a partner engages in sexual acts with other people, including friends, in exchange for money or other goods
- » Offering to launch one’s career in exchange of sexual acts
- » Offering advice or concrete help to people in order to allow them to engage into prostitution
- » Participating in prostitutions for example by taking photos or writing announcements, or organizing meetings, or introducing someone who is engaging in prostitution



Look at some real-life case in our animated webseries in French, Italian and Greek, to have a clearer idea of how many forms this kind of exploitation can take!

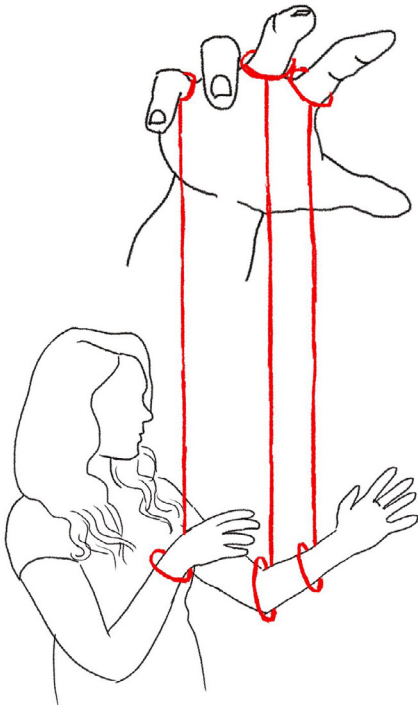


## Know your rights!

*If you are involved in prostitution as the person who is offering sexual acts in exchange for money or gifts remember that*

***it's not your fault!***

*Someone is taking advantage of you and you have a right to be protected and helped.*



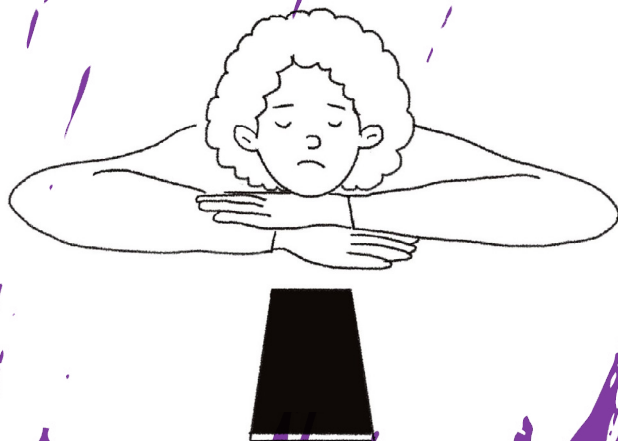
You have a right to express consent and to be surrounded by healthy and safe relationships, free of any economic compensation.

Even if you're not directly involved, it's important to pay attention to what's going on around you.

**Someone you know might be affected.** Victims may feel ashamed or afraid to speak out to their family and friends, or there may be people trying to silence them.

But remember, even if you or they initially agreed to it, exploitation is still wrong, and help is available.





## HOW CAN YOU RECOGNIZE IT AND PREVENT IT?

Let's focus on some specific cases and contexts

Sexual exploitation, as any other form of violence, is a serious offence, and there isn't always a strong enough response from the system to stop it from occurring.

It's never the victims' fault and there's always a risk of exploitation even if they're being cautious.

However, there are ways to spot potentially dangerous situations and some recommendations to follow to minimize the risks.

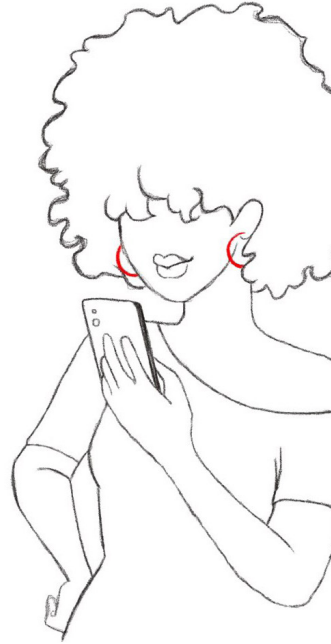
The information provided in the following pages can be helpful in preventing all types of abuse, including exploitation in prostitution.



## The online environment and social media

As you know, especially for young people like you, there are no clear lines between life online and offline. Online you can freely communicate with your friends, search for information, and express yourself through photos, videos or music. It's a great way to stay connected with your friends and make new ones. Nowadays, many people meet online, whether through dating apps and social media platforms. There's nothing wrong with that as long as there's mutual respect and consent.

At the same time the internet and social media are the most common places in which young people are approached by perpetrators, who can easily hide behind a screen. This is why it's important to be aware of the risks and do what you can to prevent them.



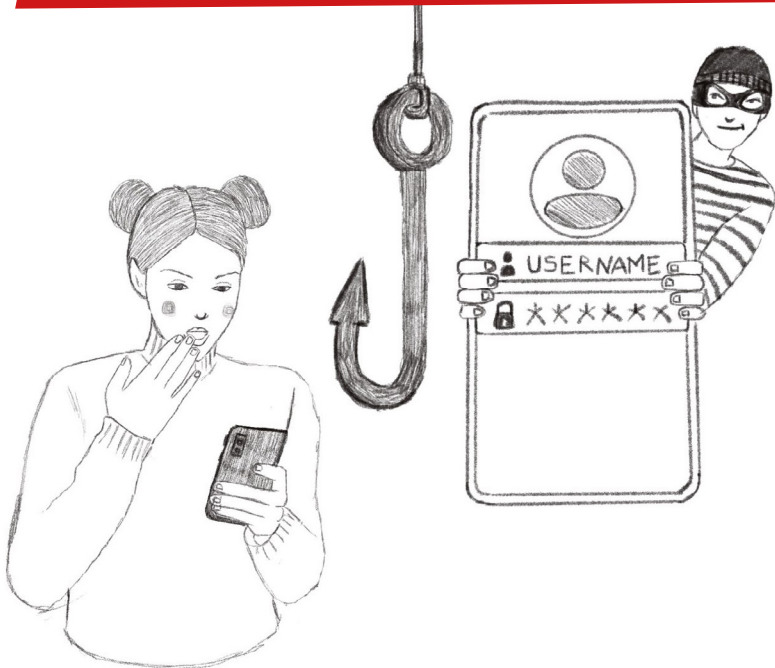
## ♥ Stay safe!

When interacting with people online, be cautious of the following:

- » Profiles without pictures or with suspicious-looking pictures that can be fake.
- » Profiles lacking information in the bio.
- » Individuals who refuse to communicate through phone or video call
- » People who quickly express intense feelings.
- » People who ask for money.
- » People asking about personal information

***Remember, never share personal information or materials with strangers or people you don't trust.***

***Be aware of your safety online!***

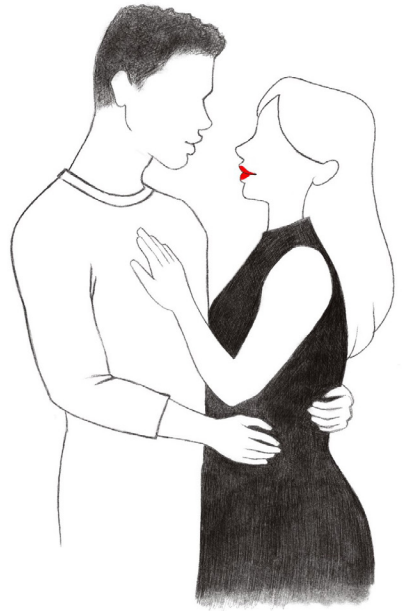




## Staying safe in a relationship

Relationships can be confusing, and sometimes it's hard to know if they're healthy or not. However, there are certain qualities that should be present in all good relationships: open communication, mutual respect, kindness, and support for each other. It's not just about what people say, but also how they treat each other.

This is important to prevent sexual exploitation in prostitution because often this kind of exploitation happens within the relationship. The perpetrators are often boyfriends and friends or other people from the close environment of those who become victims.





## ♥ Stay Safe!

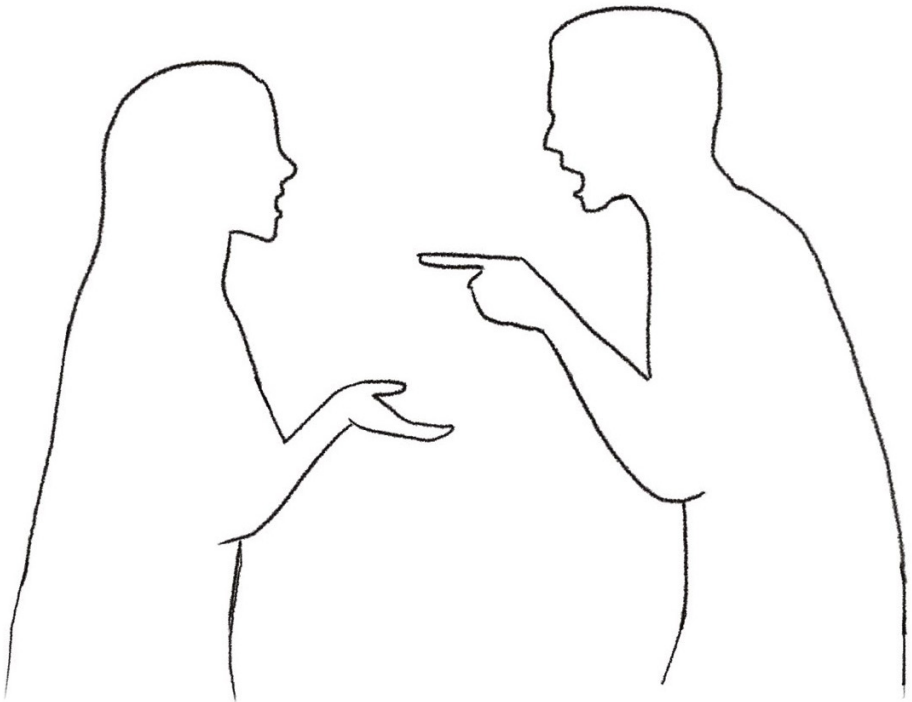
Recognizing signs of unhealthy or abusive relationships can be tricky, but here are some things to watch out for.

- » **Control:** When one person tries to control the other's actions, like telling them who they can hang out with or what they should wear.
- » **Dependence:** Feeling like you can't live without the other person and worrying about what might happen if you break up.
- » **Digital control:** Constantly checking up on each other through social media or constantly demanding attention through messages.
- » **Dishonesty:** Keeping secrets or manipulating the other person.
- » **Disrespect:** Making fun of or talking badly about the other person.
- » **Hostility:** Starting fights or avoiding resolving conflicts in a respectful way.
- » **Harassment:** Making someone feel uncomfortable or unsafe through things like inappropriate comments or behaviors. This can also happen through social media and online.
- » **Bullying at school:** harming, intimidating or coercing someone who is perceived as more vulnerable.
- » **Intimidation:** Making the other person feel small or scared, maybe by threatening violence or isolating them from friends and family.
- » **Physical violence:** Using physical force against the other person.
- » **Sexual violence:** Doing sexual things to someone without their consent.

*These behaviors can happen in any kind of relationship, not just romantic ones.*

***It could be with friends, family, or even at school or work.***

It's important to know that unhealthy behaviors can sometimes occur, but what's really concerning is when they happen often and the people involved don't try to change or learn from them. That's when things can turn from just unhealthy to outright abusive.





## The importance of consent

Consent means getting permission before doing something. Whether it's touching someone, sharing their info, or making decisions that affect them, it's crucial to ensure they're comfortable with it. The best way to do this is by asking directly! Doing something without the other person's consent is not okay and is considered a form of harm against the other person. While compromise is normal in relationships, you should never compromise your values or personal boundaries. There may be times when you and your partner(s) want different things, and it's essential to only engage in activities that feels right for you.

While consent applies to any action, **sexual consent** is the one the we focus on in this guide, because it's strictly connected to sexual exploitation in prostitution.

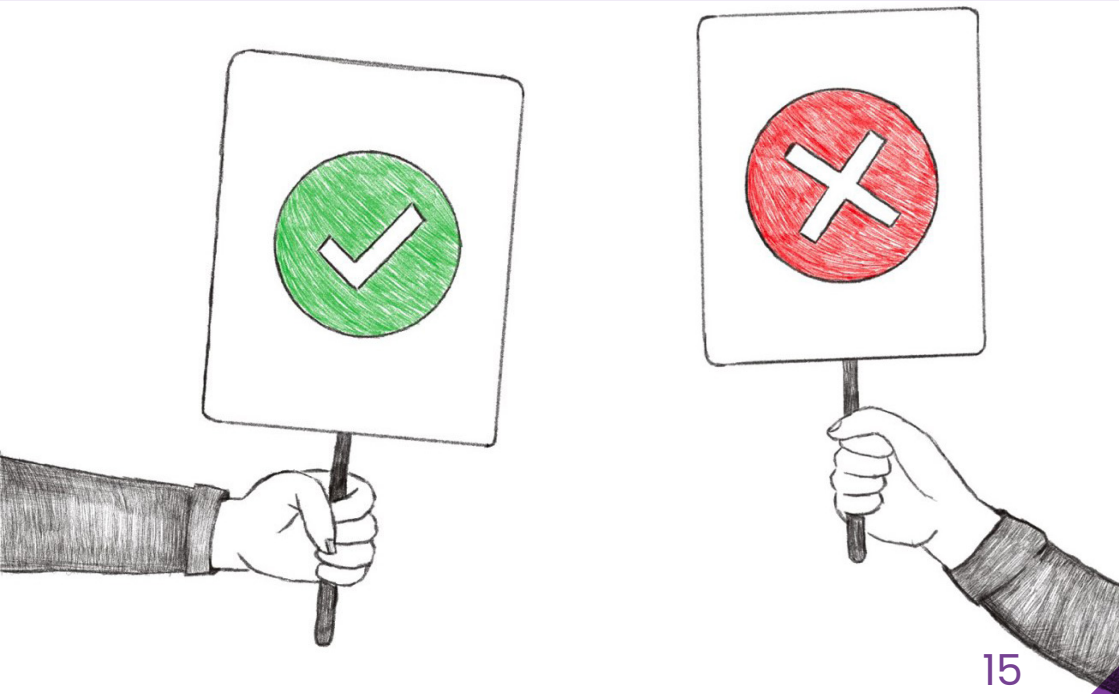
Let's explore some examples in this video.



## ♥ Stay safe!

Consent can be remembered with the acronym FRIES:

- » **Freely given:** It's important to make choices without feeling pressured, manipulated, or influenced by drugs or alcohol.
- » **Reversible:** Anyone can change their mind about what they want to do at any time, even if they've done it before or are already in a situation.
- » **Informed:** You can only agree to something if you know all the details. For example, agreeing to use a condom and then not using one means there wasn't full consent.
- » **Enthusiastic:** When it comes to sex, only engage in activities you genuinely want to do, not things you feel obligated to do.
- » **Specific:** Saying yes to one thing doesn't mean saying yes to everything else. Each activity requires its own consent.





## HOW CAN YOU HANDLE AND REPORT CASES?

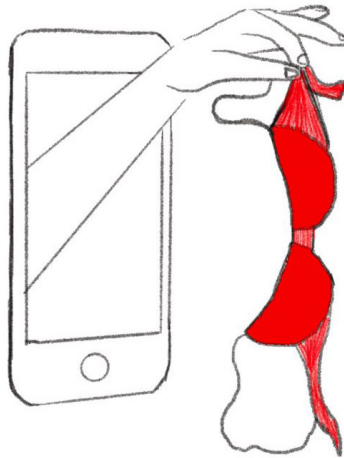
As we saw there are many things that you can do to stay safe by recognizing risks and taking prevention measures. Nonetheless sexual exploitation in prostitution can happen to you or to people around you. So it's also important that you are prepared to handle and report cases.

*What should you do in case you become a victim of sexual exploitation in prostitution?*

## ***Here are some suggestions:***

- » First and foremost, it's crucial to recognize and admit when something doesn't feel right.
- » Keep a record of what's happening. Write down details of what happens, when and where it occurs. This information can be really important if you decide to tell someone about it later. If it's happening online, save any messages or pictures that make you feel uncomfortable.
- » It's okay to stand up for yourself. Clearly communicate to the other person that their behavior is unacceptable and you want it to stop. If it's online, consider blocking them.
- » Know your rights. Laws are there to protect you.
- » Consider speaking to a lawyer. They can provide legal guidance and help you understand your options.
- » Taking care of yourself is super important. Dealing with this stuff can be really tough, so remember to do things that make you feel good, like confiding in someone you trust or doing something you enjoy.
- » Don't give up. Keep pushing for things to get better because you deserve to feel safe and respected.
- » If you need help, there are people you can turn to. You can confide in your family, friends, or teachers. There are also organizations and hotlines you can reach out to, and you can report it to the police.

If a friend confides in you they're going through something similar, listen to them and believe them. Allow them to share as much as they're comfortable with without pressuring them. Respect their decisions and reassure them that you're there to support them. The suggestions above can also be useful as advices that you can give to your friends.



If you notice these signs on one of your friends it might be worth it to check in with them:

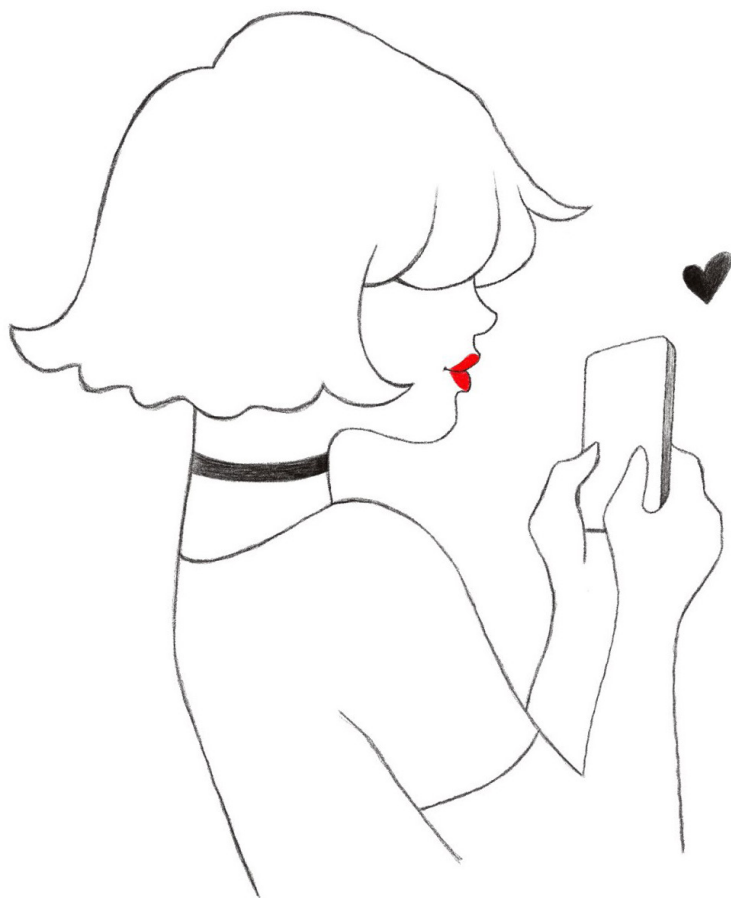
- If they have many new things and expensive objects or clothes
- If you notice that they were physically harmed
- If they cut themselves off from their normal circle of friends
- If they are meeting people that look suspicious
- If they are being bullied at school
- If you suspect that they have addictions
- If their behavior and emotions are changing

Of course, facing these situations doesn't mean that they are victims of sexual exploitation but it might still be worth it to be careful.



## Learn more!

Listen to the podcast JERICHO to learn more about your rights as a teenager , love, consent, abuse in relationships and sexual exploitation in prostitution, from the voice of some experts!





## SELF-CHECK – WHAT’S MY EXPERIENCE LIKE?

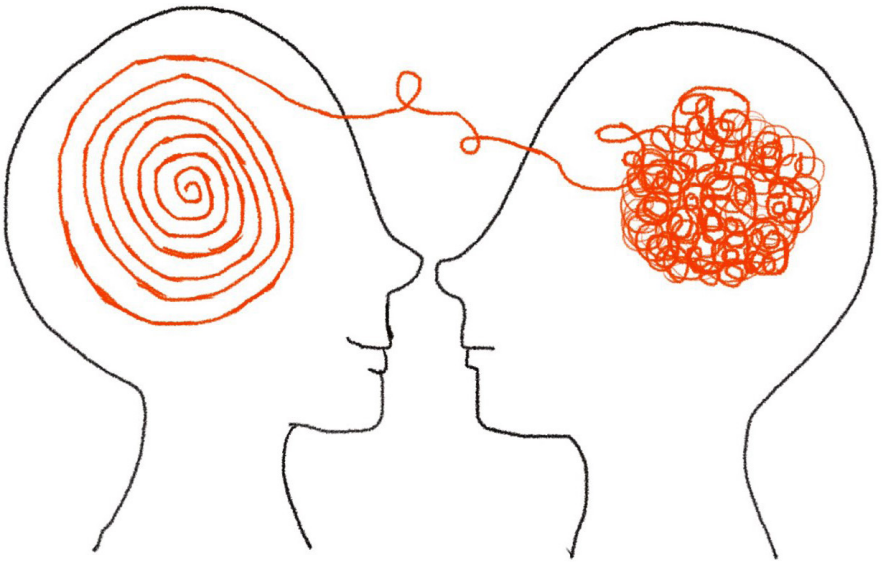
Here are some reflection questions for you to reflect on, which might help you connect the issues that we’ve discussed with your own experiences.

- A. Do I sometimes agree to do something I don’t like in order to please my boyfriend? Agree to do something I don’t like in order to please my boyfriend?  
 Yes     No
- B. Do I ever agree to a sexual act in exchange for a favour or gift?  
 Yes     No
- C. Am I sometimes afraid that my boyfriend will leave me if I don’t do what he asks?  
 Yes     No
- D. Does my boyfriend take or ask for naked photos of me and I don’t know what he does with them?  
 Yes     No
- E. Do I ever think that my body can help my career or give me advantages?  
 Yes     No

If you have answered Yes to the questions from 1 to 5 you may want to seek help in your community, from friends, family, teachers or some services in your communities.

Keep in mind that the questions marked with the letter A help you realize whether you have been a victim of exploitation or abuse. The questions marked with a letter B help you realize whether you have been engaging in abusive behaviors.

***In any case, the people around you and the services in your community may be able to give you some useful guidance!***







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