



The
safeguarding
of children

Handbook

*Is there help? A short
animated film handbook*

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Project: *The safeguarding of children and vulnerable people*

**Is there help?
A short animated film handbook.**

Let us never forget that it is adults who are responsible for the safety of children!

INTRODUCTION

In your hands, you have a handbook to the short animated film named *Is there help?* This film is a part of the safeguarding of children and vulnerable people project and deals with issues such as cyberbullying, bullying, domestic violence and non-substance addictions (mobile phones).

It shows the story of a young girl named Agatha, which takes place mainly in a school setting, where the issues above are depicted. In the story, Agatha is accompanied by a classmate who can eventually become a key figure in changing her life.

This handbook was created to serve as a guide after viewing the short animated film. It contains definitions of the key issues with references to the *Safeguarding Children – A Salesian Volunteer Handbook (Handbook)* document. References to individual pages of this document found in this handbook are written in blue.

The handbook is divided into seven sections in accordance with the short animated film and corresponding also with the issues at hand. Each section contains three things: a text describing the story, a short description and reference to the theoretical links to the Handbook, possible discussion questions with a couple highlighted ones, which are recommended. It is, however, up to the animator, preventionist or teacher to choose any further questions, depending on the amount of time available during the viewing session. The suggestions are not definitive, nor should they be; they simply serve as an impulse for discussion. The important thing is: no scene should remain unexplained, untouched or undebated.

The target audience are children between the ages of 13 and 17.

The purpose of this handbook is to clarify the situations depicted in the short animated film, identify their informative value, explain the use of colour, give suggestions and inspiration for discussion or provide an explanation for individual scenes.

We believe that this handbook will help to get an easier understanding of the short animated film named *Is there help?* and the issues it depicts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The handbook gives recommendations for group sessions after viewing the short animated film. The recommended length of the session is either 45 minutes in a lesson setting or 90 minutes for a youth meeting.

Instructions for the session leader before the viewing of the film with young people.

1. Watch the film yourself first, as a preventionist/ animator/ teacher/ session leader,
2. read this handbook,
3. after reading the handbook, watch the whole film again without pausing,
4. watch it again one more time with pauses according the sections in the second chapter. (in the handbook you will find the STOP ANIMATION instruction with exact pause times for the short animated film)
5. Now that you have a clear overview of the animation, sections and instructions, you can watch the short animated film with young people.

Instruction for viewing the short animated film with young people

1. first, watch the whole film without pausing,
2. then, watch the short animated film one more time with the instructed pauses,
3. each section offers you possible discussion questions, which you can choose from during your preparation, according to the type of group you are about to work with.
4. answer all the children's questions and impulses.

DESCRIPTIVE NOTE – COLOURS IN THE TEXT, COLOURS IN THE ANIMATION, SYMBOLS

COLOURS in the text

You will come across a number of colours in the text below. **Blue text** represents a short theoretical description of a specific issue. It also references a specific page in the *Handbook*. **(blue circle with the letter T)**

Red text provides discussion suggestions, which are, however not final but serve mainly as an impulse for discussion. The important thing is: no scene should remain unexplained, untouched or undebated. **(red circle with the letter D)**

Issues pictured in the animation are written or marked with **green text** (cyberbullying, bullying, domestic violence, non-substance addictions – mobile phone addiction).

COLOURS in the animation

The yellow colour of Adam's hair is a symbol of light and warmth. It is a light of hope for Agatha, who finds herself in a very difficult situation.

Green colour (forest green) evokes peace and acceptance.

Jacob's hair is a **bright green colour** representing toxicity which is linked to cyberbullying. Toxic words and actions are highlighted by this colour, standing out in the otherwise less bright colour palette.

Shades of grey/black colour used to depict Agatha, show her status. A sad girl with a difficult fate who is like a grey little mouse and wishes to be invisible. However, deep inside, she wants to be noticed by someone.

The utilized **colour palette** is deliberately less bright in order for the issues with their respective rich colours to catch the viewers eye more easily.

SYMBOLS

The keyhole symbol points out that all of us, who notice what is happening, look through that keyhole and could be the key to opening the door that needs to be found and opened.

The eye symbol can be seen throughout the story on posters. Its aim is to encourage the viewer to be sensitive, look around more, stay watchful. The last depiction of the eye carries a sign: *Stay watchful*.

Is there help? a short animated film: BASIC STORY OUTLINE

The story begins with a view of a little town with a school. Agatha, wishing to be invisible, but also wanting someone to care, is walking to school. Someone throws a banana peel into her head but it is obviously not the first time, because she doesn't even bother turning to look.

She arrives into school where all the students' faces are buried in their phones. The focus shifts to one student – Jacob – who also has a phone in his hand.

The bell rings but there is no hustle in the corridor and students just lazily move to their classrooms and their desks, faces still buried in their phones.

In the classroom, the teacher's voice is heard, reminding the students to turn off their phones, with no visible effect. Jacob can't resist texting Agatha how horrible she looks.

Adam enters the classroom and greets everyone cheerfully. He sits next to Jacob who waves, but then pays no further attention to him, returning quickly to his precious phone.

We move into the dining room, where everyone sits, watching their phones. Adam is trying to explain to Jacob, why he wasn't at school for some time, but Jacob pays no attention so Adam snatches his phone from his hand. Jacob, losing his temper, hits Adam who ends up on the floor, shocked. Jacob, taken aback by his reaction, runs away.

We return to the classroom, where Adam sits next to Agatha and responds to a bruise on her face. Agatha's "flashback" depicts a situation at home where Agatha faces domestic violence at the hands of her father.

Agatha and Adam sit by the river and Adam is trying to encourage her, which is not initially accepted by Agatha. The final scene takes us to the entrance to an education counsellor's office, which could start forming a way out of Agatha's situation.

SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION, DESCRIPTION OF THE STORY AND DEFINITIONS

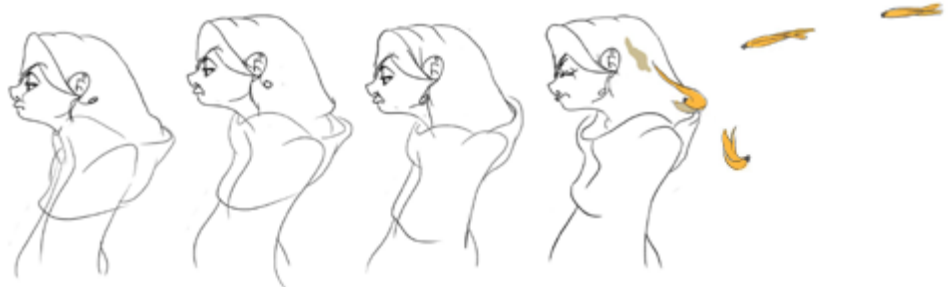
The name *'Is there help?'* is deliberately a question to make us wonder whether there really is help in a situation when someone's life is so difficult even they don't see a way out.

The short animated film *'Is there help?'* is based on the project handbook *'The safeguarding of children and vulnerable people'*, where resources for individual issues within the safeguarding of children can be found.

The story takes place in a setting where children and young people spend most of their time during the day – the school environment (school yard, school corridor, classroom, dining room and not least the spot outside of school, where the heroine of our story can feel safe and not threatened – the bench by the river).



Section 1



The story begins with a view of a little town with a school, where our heroine is heading. Agatha, wishing to be invisible, but also wanting someone to care, is walking to school. Someone throws a banana peel into her head but it is obviously not the first time, because she doesn't even bother turning to look.

BULLYING

0:28 • **STOP ANIMATION**

T

Bullying

- is a form of violence which can take all forms from physical, mental or even economical violence /*Handbook, page 19/*
- How can a volunteer tell bullying from a simple tussle?

The main signs are:

- it is repeated,
- there is a growing tendency.

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Discussion:

- **What happened? Is throwing a banana peel at someone OK?**
- **Do you think this is the first time this has happened to Agatha? Why do you think so?**
- Is there a single word which can be used to describe hurting others?
- **Why do you think she is walking alone?**
- Why is this particular girl the target of **bullying**?

• **PLAY**

Section 2:



She arrives into school where all the students' faces are buried in their phones. The focus shifts to one student – Jacob – who also has a phone in his hand. The bell rings but there is no hustle in the corridor and students just lazily move to their classrooms and their desks, faces still buried in their phones. (socio-pathological phenomenon - non-substance addiction – communication addiction disorder)

SOCIO-PATHOLOGICAL PHENOMENON - NON-SUBSTANCE ADDICTION – COMMUNICATION ADDICTION DISORDER

0:41 • **STOP ANIMATION**

T

The ten commandments when the phone and social networks take up too much of our time

/Handbook, page 53-54, the following lines mention/

1. Don't make the first step towards your phone. It is good not to carry your phone around like a puppy. Find a place for it and keep it there.
2. Go offline at night. Try going internet-free the hour before you go to sleep and the hour after you wake up. Phones don't belong to bed.
3. Don't use your phone as an alarm clock. Buy a conventional alarm clock instead.
4. People over phones. It is not OK if your first thoughts head to your phone and you take it in your hands before you wished someone a good morning or thanked God for a new day.
5. Set your online time.
6. Turn off unnecessary notifications.
7. Set daily time limits for applications.
8. Hide your most tempting apps.
9. Reduce the number of things you follow.
10. Set an extra wallpaper and ringtone on your phone – it can remind you of the things that really matter in life and can make it easier to put the phone down.

D**Discussion:**

- Does anything in the scenes strike you as unusual? Is there something that “screams”?
- How would you describe what you just witnessed? (Cold? Normal? Is personal contact missing/not missing)
- Is the picture of children looking into phones quite common, in your experience?
- What do you call the type of addiction with no substance use?
- Why is it a sensitive topic for young people to talk about phone or computer addiction?

PLAY

Section 3

In the classroom, the teacher's voice is heard, reminding the students to turn off their phones, with no visible effect. Jacob can't resist texting Agatha how horrible she looks.

CYBERBULLYING

1:04 • **STOP ANIMATION**

T

- Cyberbullying is less dangerous than real bullying (myth).
/Handbook, page 19/
- Cyberbullying can simply be defined as “an abuse of ICT (information and Communications Technology), mainly mobile phones and the internet for such activities that are aimed to unnerve someone “. Many of its forms might be qualified as a criminal offence. */Handbook, page 20/*
- The cruelty of this kind of bullying lies also in its continuity – 365 days a year, 24 hours a day. In cases of cyberbullying in children and young people, the victim often knows the aggressor also in the “real” world. There is almost always a suspicion about who might be behind these attacks.
- The effects of such communication might impact the mind in a way similar to that of traumatic experiences. The victims of hateful comments may start having low self-esteem, sleep disorder, increased anxiety levels, feelings of fear and insecurity or else might feel lonely and isolated.
/Handbook, page 51/

What every child should know about cyberbullying */Handbook, page 51/*

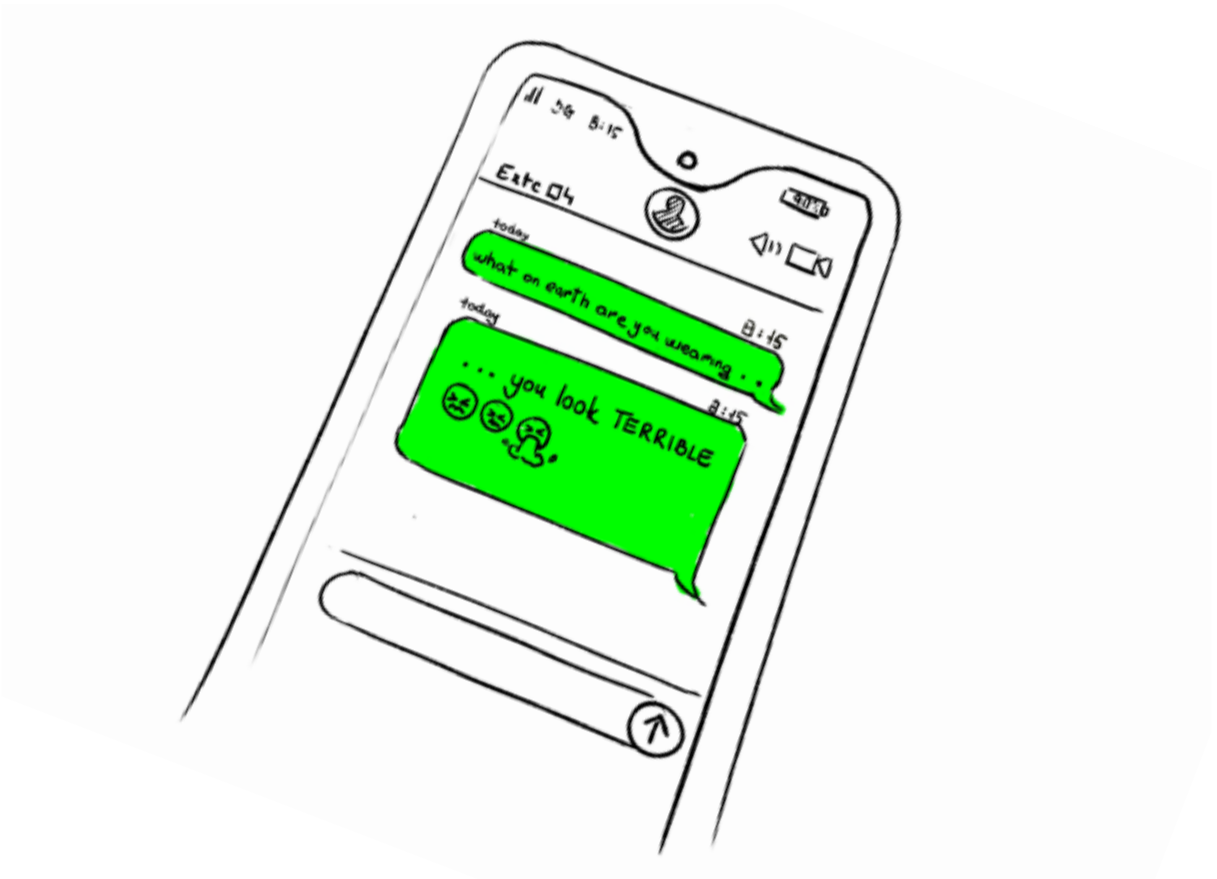
- be careful what you post about yourself online,
- if anyone taunts you, calls you names, threatens you or hurts you in any other way on the internet, be aware that they have no right to,
- if cyberbullying doesn't stop, don't keep it to yourself (keep all the evidence),
- cyberbullying is wrong and can seriously harm someone,
- if you notice anyone hurting, taunting or humiliating someone else in the online world, don't stay silent!

D

Discussion:

- Did you know that the bullying we have just discussed doesn't need to involve direct contact? Do you know what this form of bullying is called?
- **What do you think of Agatha, who Jacob has chosen as a target for bullying?**
- Have you ever written a not so nice/appropriate text/email to someone on the phone/computer/internet?
- Have others ever written a text/e-mail with something not so nice/appropriate to you on the phone/computer/internet?
- Do you think it is easy to slip into an inappropriate conversation while using communication technology? Why/why not?

PLAY



Section 4

Adam enters the classroom and greets everyone cheerfully. Adam is purposely more **colourful** than others in the picture. He is spontaneous and friendly, and we can hear it in his voice. The **yellow colour** of his hair symbolizes light and warmth. It is a light of hope for Agatha, who finds herself in a very difficult situation. **Green colour** (forest green) evokes peace and acceptance. He sits next to Jacob who waves, but then pays no further attention to him, returning quickly to his precious phone. Jacob's hair, on the other hand, is a **bright green colour**, representing toxicity and is linked to cyberbullying, shown in the previous scene. Toxic words and actions are highlighted by this colour, standing out in the otherwise desaturated colour palette.

1:21 • **STOP ANIMATION**

D

Discussion:

- Did you notice the colours? What might the richer colours represent and why?



• **PLAY**



Section 5

We move into the dining room, where everyone sits, watching their phones. Adam is trying to explain to Jacob, why he wasn't at school for some time, but Jacob pays no attention, so Adam snatches his phone from his hand. Jacob, losing his temper, hits Adam who ends up on the floor, shocked. Jacob, taken aback by his reaction, runs away. This action represents his state. He is so addicted to his phone, he does not realize the resultant reaction, when it was removed from his hand.

NON-SUBSTANCE ADDICTION- MOBILE PHONE ADDICTION

2:40 • STOP ANIMATION

D

Discussion:

- We recommend looking at **The ten commandments – when the phone and social networks take up too much of our time, which can be found on pages 53-54 in the Handbook** (brief description in section 2 of this manual)
- When do you think the right time is, for an early intervention from technology taking over our minds? Is it like when Jacob realized after hitting Adam or are there some other signals before that?
- How would you react in Jacob's situation if someone snatched your phone while you were scrolling through a feed on facebook?

• PLAY



Section 6

We return to the classroom, where Adam sits next to Agatha and responds to a bruise on her face. Agatha's "flashback" depicts a situation at home where Agatha faces domestic violence at the hands of her father. The situation with Agatha and her father is metaphorically depicted by a virus and red colour, which represents violence, depression. Agatha, while not being popular at school, doesn't have it easy at home either. She doesn't tell Adam about the situation, we only see flashbacks.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

3:32 • **STOP ANIMATION**

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- Domestic violence /*Handbook, page 21/* (physical, psychological, sexual, isolating, economic control, threats, pressure, threatening by suicide)
- There is help
- Show the abused person that help is within reach – tell the responsible centre manager – the oratory manager for example. Professional help is provided by these institutions: Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, Department of Social Protection of Children and Social Guardianship or a psychologist.
- Sexual violence /*Handbook, page 38/*
- The victim actively defends him/herself (fight or flight) during the attempted sexual abuse, seeks out help directly after the assault, gives a detailed account to the confidant, has unwavering certainty in his/her testimony regardless of how their social surrounding reacts to it, shows visible symptoms of trauma and only negative feelings towards the offender (myth)
- In reality, the victim could outwardly appear passive (doesn't fight back, freezes) and due to feelings of confusion, shame and worry, comes forward only after some time (weeks, months, years or even decades). When describing the experience, the victim might not remember many details. If the offender is someone viewed positively by others (someone popular, respectable or important), the victim is often pressured to withdraw their statement. There might not be any obvious signs that the victim had experienced abuse (the symptoms of trauma are often hidden). If the

T

offender is someone with a lot of good characteristics, the victim might have mixed feelings about them and show them love, respect, regard, gratitude or compassion on the outside.

- If you notice the following features or tendencies in any adult's behaviour, you should be more watchful – WARNING SIGNS. /*Handbook, page 38/*
 - feels more comfortable in the company of children than amongst peers,
 - has childish interests and manners,
 - denies his/her own sexuality or has strange sexual interests,
 - spends an excessive amount of time with a single child,
 - gives unusual or generous gifts to children,
 - keeps secrets with children,
 - communicates with children on social networks (like facebook) for reasons other than the organisation of events or free-time activities for instance,
 - takes children on private holidays or to private places,
 - keeps hundreds of photos of children (in the phone, computer...),
 - purposely breaches physical boundaries during contact with children (groping, obtrusive touching, coming up with games involving physical contact),
 - has inappropriate sexual comments in the presence of children (sexual jokes, ambiguousness, talking about details of their own sexual experiences...),
 - offers children alcohol or drugs.
- It is important to add that the behaviour described above is not, of itself, evidence that the person is sexually abusing children. This kind of behaviour might also occur in people who manipulate children systematically in order to abuse them in the future or continue the abuse undisturbed for longer.

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Discussion

- **What do you think happened in this scene?**
- Do you know what domestic violence is? What are its types?
- **Did you know that domestic violence includes (physical, psychological, sexual, isolating, economic control, threats, pressure, threatening by suicide)?**
- Do you think it is true that the child sides with the victim? (truth/myth)
- Domestic violence is easily exposed nowadays. (truth/myth)
- What do you think happens after the child is abused (silence, willingness to talk immediately...)?
- What do you think is a typical behaviour of a child molester? (*use the warning signs mentioned in the theoretical part in the discussion*)
- It is important to add, that, contrary to popular belief, not only fathers (men) are aggressors. Another important point is that domestic violence does not occur only in families with a lower socio-economic status.

PLAY



Section 7

Agatha and Adam sit by the river and Adam is trying to encourage her, which is initially not accepted by Agatha. Some time passes in the story, which is shown by the sun setting and the change of scenery for a darker one (evening). The final scene takes us to the entrance of an education counsellor's office, which could start forming a way out of Agatha's situation. **The keyhole symbol**, in which Adam is found, point to the fact that we – the people who are around and notice what is happening – could be the key to opening a door which someone needs opened. Adam and his concern for Agatha's situation is the key for her later decision to seek out help.

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Discussion:

- **What do you think happened in this scene?**
- Do you think that it is easy to help in this kind of situation?
- **What would you have done in Adam's place?**
- **What would you have done in Agatha's place?**
- At school or in your surroundings, who is your person to go to in such a situation? Would it perhaps rather be someone you don't know?

• **THE END**



This short animated film and the issue presented in it is not an easy one. That is why it is important to look into all the impulses raised by the audience, properly explain and convey all the information in order to promote a better understanding of this issue.

The main principle of the meeting leader:

Do not moralize or lecture!

It is dangerous, especially for teachers and leadership figures, who work with children.

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This material has been created as a handbook to a short animated film.