



**#SAY something if
you SEE something**

Solihull

SOLIHULL EXPLOITATION AWARENESS

GROOMING & CONSENT





Targeted

- Observing
- Selecting
- Initiating contact and gaining trust
- Sharing information



Befriended

- Making you feel special
- Giving gifts and rewards
- Spending time together
- Listening & remembering
- Keeping secrets
- Being there
- Understanding better than anyone else
- Offering protection
- Testing out criminal activity or physical contact



Hooked In

- Being a special friend or partner
- Establishing a relationship
- Lowering inhibitions
- Involvement in forbidden activities
- Being inconsistent



Trapped

- Withdrawing friendship & attention
- Using
- Reinforcing dependency
- Isolating from family and friends
- Tricking and manipulation
- Using violence and assault



The word ***grooming*** is used to describe the process that someone may use to trick you into believing they are trustworthy. They do this so they can eventually involve you in criminal, sexual or violent acts, and exploit you.

By being aware of the whole pattern of these behaviours you may be able to quickly spot things that you or someone you know might need to be suspicious of if they happen.

Grooming can happen very quickly, and anyone can groom. It could be a male or a female, someone your own age, older or younger.

Targeting Stage

At this stage the person who is going to groom someone is choosing which child or person to work on and beginning to manoeuvre them into a situation where they can increase contact with them.



Observing

This means the person who is going to groom is watching a child or person, without them necessarily realising. It may happen quickly, or over some time; maybe in a public place where the child or person often is, for example outside a local shop.

Selecting

The person grooming is more likely to approach a child or person who looks vulnerable. They may be on their own, look unhappy, or not be in school.

Abusive people also look for signs that a child or person is open to making new friends, like giving lots of eye contact and smiles

to strangers or being boisterous and drawing lots of attention to themselves.

Initiating Contact and Gaining Trust

This can be done quite simply, by saying “Hi”, by being friendly or keeping a promise. This is what is confusing about telling grooming apart from just being nice, but if you don’t know them you may want to question why someone you have just met is doing things for you.

Sharing Information

People involved in grooming children or people often work together, as well as alone. A very common targeting behaviour is asking children or people for their mobile phone number, and then sharing this information so they can be contacted by their associates without anyone else knowing.

Befriending Stage

In this phase someone who is grooming puts a lot of effort into becoming important to the child or person; becoming someone they rely on. This way they develop a strong influence.



At this stage there still may not appear to be anything obviously wrong, but there will be signs that you can look out for.

Making You Feel Special

This is often done just by giving lots of compliments or noticing little things. A person who is grooming might pay special attention to what music you like or what you were wearing the last time they saw you. They may offer to sort things out for you or give you protection.

Giving Gifts and Rewards

These may be presents, food or attention. Things that you may not be able to get or afford, like mobile phones, jewellery, drugs, alcohol, money, and clothes are commonly used.

Spending Time Together

Spending time with people you like is normal, but the person grooming spending an unusually large amount of time with a child or person can make them dependant and miss the groomer a lot when they are apart. This could include spending time in their home with them.

Listening and Remembering

The person grooming will listen carefully to any personal details shared and remember them. This makes anyone feel listened to and valued and is a simple way of making someone feel understood. However, a groomer can use this later especially if it is personal or embarrassing.

Think very carefully about what you share. After all, information is power.

Keeping Secrets

A groomer may not want others to know about their friendship with a child or person, or that they even see each other. If someone says not to tell anyone else what you are doing or where you are going with them you should be very careful and ask yourself why the need for secrecy.

Being There

Giving a child or person the message that if they need anything, the adult will be there for them, can be part of grooming. This is especially likely if the child or person has shared problems they are having. It can be another way of encouraging them to rely on the groomer.

Understanding Better Than Anyone Else

The groomer makes the child or person believe they understand them and know them like no one else. If this happens it could include bad mouthing or putting down parents or carers. Be aware that this can be part of making you dependant on someone.

Offering Protection

A groomer will often offer a child or person protection. This technique is particularly used with children or people who are being bullied for example.

Testing Out Criminal Activity or Physical Contact

It could just be an 'accidental' light touch to the knee or face or asking you to look after something, but the groomer is probably testing your reaction. If this happens and you flinch and don't know what to do, would they carry on or insist? What if you said "No", would they carry on and insist then?

Someone who only wanted to be a friend shouldn't make you uncomfortable or force you into anything.

Hooked Stage

The most common grooming method used is to become their special friend or partner. However, this stage can also be a close, protective, non-sexual relationship.



What the methods have in common is that from the inside it looks and feels like a very caring and genuine relationship, but while developing this illusion of intimacy and care, the groomer is gaining full control of the child or person and making them very vulnerable. It is a calculated technique and it works.

Being a Special Friend or Partner

They may simply describe the child or person as their mate, boyfriend, or girlfriend and introduce them as their “girl”, “bro” etc.

Establishing a Relationship

A groomer may offer to teach a child or person something new. This may be how to have sex or ‘make love’. Online this can be teaching sexual things in private chat rooms or via a webcam. They may teach them how to conceal drugs and weapons, and how to establish a criminal network.

Lowering Inhibitions

Children and people who are groomed have been shown pornography, criminal activity and/or extreme violence to get them used to thinking it is normal behaviour to have sex or be involved in crime and violence.

Involvement in Forbidden Activities

The groomer may offer alcohol, drugs, or entry to adult venues such as clubs, pubs, and parties. While this might seem exciting or fun, the danger is you become increasingly involved in things that you cannot easily tell the people who care for you about, which could make you vulnerable.

Being Inconsistent

The person who has groomed may make a child or person insecure about their care or affection for them. One minute a groomer builds up their victim's hopes and the next they punish them.

For example, they may promise something but later claim they didn't mean it. This can build dependency.

Hooked Stage

By this stage it is clear something bad is happening. Techniques of control and isolation become obvious, but because the groomer has made the child or person dependant, it is very hard for them to get away.



The more trapped and isolated the child or person is, the crueller the groomer can afford to be.

Withdrawing Friendship and Attention

The abuse no longer acts as if they care about the child's or person's feelings.

Using

Sex is demanded by the groomer, and their associates, it is not loving or romantic. The child or person is forced to do other things on demand, such as carrying drugs, money, or weapons. They may be encouraged to have sex or physically attack other children or people.

Reinforcing Dependency

The groomer lowers the child's or person's self-esteem further, maybe by calling them "damaged goods" or making threats to tell people about what you've done. This may be linked to information shared in the past, or because the groomer has made the child or person do humiliating or criminal things.

Isolating from Friends and Family

This could include not allowing any contact at all with family and friends and taking away photos or reminders of life before the abuse. This could be done by making threats to harm your family and friends if you do not do what they want.

Tricking and Manipulation

A groomer will claim they are owed for the things they gave you; clothes, drugs, food etc. They may say the payment is doing something the child or person doesn't want to do, usually something sexual and/or illegal.

Using Violence and Assault

A groomer will frequently use violence or threats of violence to keep a child or person frightened and in their control. If this ever happens to you or someone you know it is vital you find a way to

confide in a trustworthy adult and get help to leave the situation quickly. Violence will almost always get more serious over time.

Consent

Those who groom can make other think they are making choices and deciding what they do for themselves, but often this is not the case, so it is important to understand what consent means.

Consent happens when all people involved in any kind of activity agree to take part by choice. They need to have the **freedom** and **capacity** to make that choice.

There are lots of things that can affect someone's capacity; their age, their learning ability, their mental health and wellbeing, things they may have taken; for example, someone under the influence of alcohol or drugs may not have the capacity to know what is happening.

The process of grooming children or people for exploitation often involves gaining their trust and making them feel they are making choices; however, they are often being manipulated by the groomer and do not have the freedom to say "no".

If the child or person is lacking something in their life, such as money, love, or affection, this could limit the choices they can really make and a groomer could take advantage of this.

The person grooming will also introduce the child or person they have targeted to sexual and/or criminal violence, so it can be normalised. This may be done through access to violent pornography, or viewing films, playing games, receiving social media posts that includes these things.

Some people may show ignorance or deny that anything is wrong. Research shows that even if there is evidence that a child or adult is being abused, some people will remain 'wilfully ignorant' and turn a blind eye to the abuse.

In Solihull we want to encourage people to speak out and say something if you see something.



If you need help in Solihull - Call **0121 704 8021**

IN AN EMERGENCY - CALL 999

Further useful information can be found at:

[Crimestoppers UK - \(crimestoppers-uk.org\)](https://www.crimestoppers-uk.org)

Call - 0800 555 111

[Think U Know - \(thinkuknow.co.uk\)](https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)

[Stop It Now! UK and Ireland - \(stopitnow.org.uk\)](https://www.stopitnow.org.uk)

Call – 0808 1000 900

[NSPCC Childline - \(childline.org.uk\)](https://www.childline.org.uk)

Call – 0800 1111

[Missing People - \(missingpeople.org.uk\)](https://www.missingpeople.org.uk)

Call – 116 000

[Parents Against Child Exploitation \(Pace\) UK - \(paceuk.info\)](https://www.paceuk.info)

Call – 0113 240 3040


[St Giles Trust - \(stgilestrust.org.uk\)](https://www.stgilestrust.org.uk)

Call – 020 7708 800

[National Working Group Network - \(nwgnetwork.org\)](https://www.nwgnetwork.org)

Call – 01332 585371

[West Midlands Anti-Slavery Network - \(westmidlandsantislavery.org\)](https://www.westmidlandsantislavery.org)



Exploitation is a form of abuse where someone is groomed, then forced or made to do things for the benefit of others.