Meeting online strangers offline: The nature of upsetting experiences of adolescent girls

# Details

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## Sample

14 girls aged 15-18

## Implications For Educators About

Other

# Abstract

The present study focuses on meeting online strangers face-to-face. This activity represents one of the least prevalent but also most feared online risks for youth. Due to the low number of youth experiencing upsetting meetings and the dominance of quantitative research designs in the area, the current state of knowledge does not provide a clear view of what happens at meetings that youths find upsetting. The aim of the present study is to enrich knowledge in this area by exploring such upsetting experiences in more depth by using qualitative methodology. Based on 14 interviews with Czech girls aged 15 to 18, who reported upsetting meetings with online strangers, the study identifies the discrepancy between expectations and reality as the core reason for these negative feelings. There were several reasons for this discrepancy: different developmental phases, related different experiences with romantic relationships, and exaggeration of impressions formed online.

# Outcome

"Study identifies the discrepancy between expectations and reality as the core reason for these negative feelings. There were several reasons for this discrepancy: different developmental phases, related different experiences with romantic relationships, and exaggeration of impressions formed online." (Dědková et al., 2014, pp. 327)
"There was a lot of variation in the severity of the experiences: from meeting older man and leaving the meeting immediately without so much as a second thought later to being drugged, raped, and dealing with depression for months. These two examples represent two extremes and show us the variability of upsetting meetings with online strangers ... Upsetting experiences from meeting online strangers may not be so different from what may happen in “normal” adolescent dating. The added factor of the internet may contribute in some ways to building up unrealistic expectations, but it is unlikely to be the exclusive cause of the problems. In concurrence with other studies in the area, this study also supports the notion that popular myths about finding online strangers to be crafty liars often do not correspond with reality" (Dědková et al., 2014, pp. 343)