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Take Back the Tech! Game [tactical activity]

This role-playing game was developed in order to help participants decide how to take action in local scenarios of online gender-based violence (GBV). Each game takes on one specific scenario of an online GBV example.

About this learning activity

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This role-playing game was developed in order to help participants decide how to take action in local scenarios of online gender-based violence (GBV). Each game takes on one specific scenario of an online GBV example.

There are several different Scenarios to choose from, or you can make your own:

- Blackmailed to Go Back
- Trolled on Twitter
- Faked on Facebook
- Porn Pretender
- Disinformation to Discredit
- Watching and Waiting

To play, one **Game Facilitator** and three teams are needed:

- **Survivor Teams A** and **B**. Each team consists of the Survivor of the online GBV Scenario, and a set of four Advisors: Legal, Solidarity, Communications, Skills.
- A third team called **the Public** presents challenges for each Scenario and decides which Survivor Team chose the best strategies given each context.

Each Survivor Team will develop a Survivor persona to address the Scenario and Challenges presented by the Game Facilitator and the Public.

Survivors will justify their chosen first step to the Public, arguing why it is the best option for their persona and local context. The Public can question each Survivor about their choice. The Public then presents a new challenge in the Scenario from the Challenge cards, and Survivor Teams develop and justify new strategies for two more rounds. As Survivor Teams strategise, so does the Public, exploring possible bystander responses.

The Scenario concludes with the Public presenting a plausible ending to the escalating attack. To finalise, the Game Facilitator debriefs how each player felt in their respective role, to tease out insights, including regarding the role of bystanders and the importance of solidarity. If ever facing such a scenario themselves, with a friend or as a bystander, participants will be better equipped to consider possible response and prevention strategies from many angles.

Learning objective this activity responds to

This responds to all the learning objectives in this module.

Although you can opt for Survivor Teams to “play to win”, the real goal of this role-playing discussion is to help participants:

- explore and weigh strategies for responding to online GBV and understand that there is not just one response; responses are multiple and contextual
- appreciate the ways in which scenarios can escalate
- examine how different elements and actors are involved, and the importance of support networks

Who is this activity for?

This game can be participated in by participants with any levels of familiarity on online GBV.

Time required

1.5 – 3 hours

You can play several Scenarios or just one. Each Scenario should be played 2-4 rounds before starting another Scenario. The game entails a lot of discussion around strategies to mitigate online GBV, and how people respond to actions. There must be sufficient time to orient role players, play out the Scenario as well as unpack how people felt in each role.

Resources needed for this activity

- Printed cards for the game (details in the Cards section)
- flipchart paper
- markers
- tape
- stickers, poker chips, paper cut into small squares, or individually-wrapped candies, if using tokens
- Space big enough for teams to be able to have discussions.
- A table big enough to accommodate the Strategy Cards that each team will be presenting per round.

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Mechanics

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Players and cards

The participants will be split into three teams:

- **Survivor Team A**
- **Survivor Team B**

- **Public**: presents challenges for each Scenario and decides which Survivor Team chose the best strategies given each context.

The Survivor Teams ideally would have 5 players per team. Each player has a role:

1. **Survivor**: Ultimately decides what strategy to play
2. **Content Advisor**: Provides advice to the Survivor about content-based strategies. The Content Advisor holds the Content Strategy Cards.
3. **Legal Advisor**: Provides legal advice to the Survivor. The Legal Advisor holds the Legal Strategy Cards
4. **Solidarity Advisor**: Provides advice to the Survivor relating to getting support from other people on the internet. The Solidarity Advisor holds the Solidarity Strategy Cards.
5. **Skills Advisor**: Provides advice to the Survivor about what she can do online. The Skills Advisor holds the Skills Strategy Cards.

The **Game facilitator** is an individual role. They keep time, read the scenario out loud and keep the game running smoothly.

This game requires a minimum of 10 participants and can easily accommodate groups of 30, but to ensure the quality of discussion and time limitations, it is best played with groups of under 20 people. Team size is adjusted depending on the number of participants. See chart below.

TOTAL PLAYERS	SURVIVORS	ADVISORS	PUBLIC	FACILITATOR

10	2	2 foreachteam=4	3	1
12	2	3 foreachteam=6	3	1
14	2	4 foreachteam=8	3	1

16	2	4 foreachteam=8	5	1
20	2	4 foreachteam=8	9	1
30	2	4 foreachteam=8	18	2

Cards

There are

- Content Strategy Cards (5 per Advisor; one Content Advisor per Survivor Team)
- Legal Strategy Cards (5 per Advisor; one Legal Advisor per Survivor Team)
- Solidarity Strategy Cards (5 per Advisor; one Solidarity Advisor per Survivor Team)
- Skills Strategy Cards (5 per Advisor; one Skills Advisor per Survivor Team)
- Scenario Cards (6 cards in total)
- Challenge Cards (31 cards in total; 5 per Scenario plus a "Make your own" Challenge card; a list of generic challenge cards can be found below)
- Role Instruction Cards (7 cards in total)

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Strategy cards

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All games, no matter the scenario will have these Strategy Cards.

Content advisor

1. Publish a piece of writing about the experience. Note the title of the piece, where it is published and where it will be distributed.
2. Contact the media about the experience. Note which media agencies you would contact and how you'd convince them to cover it.
3. Ask feminist bloggers to write about the experience. Note which bloggers you'd suggest and why.
4. Respond to attacks on social media. Explain the response, note what hashtag you will use and which communities will be your targets and allies.
5. Come up with your own content strategy.

Legal advisor

1. Call a lawyer and ask them to file a lawsuit. Note which law/s you will cite.
2. Go to the police and file a report. Explain why you think the police can help.
3. Document the experience for later legal use. Note what you would document and how.
4. Submit an abuse report to a social media platform. Note which platform(s) and the policies that were violated.
5. Come up with your own legal strategy.

Solidarity advisor

1. Ask people for support. Note what kind of support you want and who you will contact.
2. Create a campaign to highlight the abuse. Note the name of the campaign, target(s), allies and at least one action.
3. Ask your friends be your social media filter, documenting and deleting or hiding abusive comments from your view so you don’t have to see them.
4. Ignore the attack and carry on as usual. Note why this could be effective.
5. Come up with your own solidarity strategy.

Skills advisor

1. Double check account privacy and security settings. Do you want to hide your friends and photos from public view on Facebook? Have you tried two-step verification for logging into your accounts? Note other steps you’d take.
2. Search for information or pictures of yourself online. What terms would you search for?
3. Go offline for a while. Under what conditions would this be a good strategy? What are the benefits?
4. Report the abusive accounts/content. Note which platform(s) and the policies that were violated.
5. Come up with your own skills strategy.

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Scenarios + challenge cards

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Generic challenge cards

- There is no law in your country against online blackmail, extortion, or threats.
- When you go to report the problem to the police, they tell you there’s nothing they can do until something “real” happens and suggest you just go offline.
- Whoever has it in for you is great at making memes.
- You post screenshots of threats you received, and your social media platform says you violated community standards and temporarily locks you out of your account instead of taking action against the person who threatened you.
- You come from a conservative family and community, and they blame you for what is happening.
- You report the person who is doing this to you on your social media platform and get this reply: “This is not a violation of our community standards.”
- You get reported and locked out of your own account..
- You are queer. But no one in your family and your work place knows about it. If this gets out, you´re in trouble.
- Someone posts private information about you: your address, your location, your work place.
- Nude pictures of you are released on social media.
- Memes to slut and body shame you seem to be everywhere.
- Your photos accompanied by derogatory remarks that attack both your person and your values are circulated.
- Accounts using your name and photos are posting rude, racist, misogynist comments on people’s social media and on your organisation’s page.
- One of your donors/clients followed a fake account thinking it was you, now they are emailing you demanding an explanation.
- Someone has contacted your social media community one by one, sending each follower a link with false information about you.

There are specific Challenge Cards for each scenario.

1. Blackmailed to Go Back

This scenario is taken from here: https://www.takebackthetech.net/know-more/extortion

Scenario Card (printed on a card with copies given to all teams, or projected on the wall, or written on butcher paper)

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An ex-partner is threatening to expose your naked pictures on the internet if you don´t get back together with them. You are desperate for a solution.

Challenge cards for Blackmailed to Go Back

1. There is no law in your country against blackmail and extortion online.
2. Your family and friends are conservative, and will blame you for having nude pictures.
3. Your Ex just messaged you. The phone with your pictures was stolen! They've lost control over your photos!
4. Your photos are released on social media.
5. Your Ex´s followers have created memes, using your pictures, to slut and body shame you.
6. Blank Challenge: The Public decides what the Challenge is.

2. Trolled on Twitter

Scenario Card (printed on a card with copies given to all teams, or projected on the wall, or written on butcher paper)

You are a feminist activist. You are opposed to the misogynistic and bigoted statements that your current President has made. You appeared in a video that went viral, criticising the President. Now, there is a Twitter mob against you.

Challenge cards for Trolled on Twitter

1. Twitter responds to your reports stating there is no violation of community standards.
2. You are queer. But no one in your family and your work place knows about it. If this gets out, you´re in trouble.

3. Your photos are made into memes with derogatory remarks that attack both your person and your values. They get circulated.
4. A local celebrity just re-tweeted a meme against you.
5. Someone posts private information about you: Your address, your location, your work place.
6. Blank Challenge Card: The Public decides what the Challenge is.

3. Faked on Facebook

Scenario Card (printed on a card with copies given to all teams, or projected on the wall, or written on butcher paper)

Someone is screen-grabbing all of your photos on Facebook, and has created accounts using them, with your name. You don't know how many accounts there are or why this is happening. And you don't know how to make it stop.

Challenge cards for Faked on Facebook

1. Some of the accounts using your name and photos are posting rude, misogynist, racist comments.
2. One of your donors/clients followed a fake account because they thought it was you. Now your donor/client is emailing you demanding an explanation.
3. The fake accounts in your name have real information about you.
4. A fake account in your name and with your photos is posting obscene photos on your organisation's Facebook wall.
5. You have been locked out of Facebook. You've lost access to your Facebook account.
6. Blank Challenge Card: The Public decides what the Challenge is.

4. Porn Pretender

Scenario Card (printed on a card with copies given to all teams, or projected on the wall, or written on butcher paper)

You've just been informed by a friend that a video with someone that looks a lot like you is circulating on a do-it-yourself porn site with your first name, city and profession, and the number of views is rising.

Challenge cards for Porn Pretender

1. The video starts out with you, but the explicit scenes are with someone who only looks like you.
2. The site Terms of Service say consent of all subjects must be obtained before uploading. You report the video and say it does not have your consent, but they still haven't taken it down.
3. The video is being picked up and promoted by other porn sites.
4. Someone just tweeted your handle with a link to the video.
5. Men on the street are leering at you and say they've seen your video.
6. Blank Challenge Card: The Public decides what the Challenge is.

5. Disinformation to Discredit

Scenario Card (printed on a card with copies given to all teams, or projected on the wall, or written on butcher paper)

Your organisation is well known for using creative strategies to fight misogyny. It works with communities of all ages, including kids. Someone is trying to discredit your organisation and its director. Now if you search for your organisation, the top result is a warning to parents that your director is part of a ring of so-called "sexual deviants".

Challenge cards for Disinformation to Discredit

1. Your organisation is known for it's community trainings, but fewer people are signing up now.
2. Someone has contacted your social media community one by one, sending each follower the link with false information.
3. One of your donors contacts your organisation to say they are pulling your funding.
4. Your director was just paid a visit by the police after they received an anonymous tip about her.
5. The lies get picked up by local media.
6. Blank Challenge Card: The Public decides what the Challenge is.

6. Watching and Waiting

Scenario Card (printed on a card with copies given to all teams, or projected on the wall, or written on butcher paper)

You are receiving anonymous messages on your phone and social networks. The messages are friendly greetings, but the sender won't say who they are and seems to know a lot about what you are doing and where you are.

Challenge cards for Watching and Waiting

1. Messages are becoming more and more frequent, from one or two a day to a dozen.
2. You report the problem to the police, but they say they are only messages, friendly ones at that. If you don't like them, don't read them.
3. Your office secretary says they talked with your boyfriend and he seemed really nice. You don´t have a boyfriend.
4. One of the messages mentions a close family member (your child, sibling or parent).
5. The tone of the messages is becoming more aggressive towards you.
6. Blank Challenge Card: The Public decides what the Challenge is.

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Role instruction cards

Advisors instructions (1 for each team)

Given the Scenario, pick **one** strategy from your cards or create one of your own. You cannot propose a multi-step strategy. You can only show one option to your team's Survivor and justify why you think it is a good choice. As a team, you have five minutes to discuss the presented options and help the Survivor make a decision. Your goal is not to have the Survivor pick your strategy, but for the Survivor to be able to argue their preferred choice well enough to get support from the Public.

The Public instructions (1 or 2 if it's a large group)

Listen carefully to the Scenario and to the Survivor profiles. As Survivor teams decide on a strategy, discuss amongst yourselves who makes up the online public and how these bystanders might affect the Scenario. Once Survivors present their preferred strategy, you can ask them questions. Individually decide which Survivor has the best response to the Scenario and give them your support token (optional), explaining your choice. Then collectively choose a Challenge Card to begin the next round. In the final challenge round, discuss possible conclusions to the Scenario. After Survivors present their final strategies and tokens are counted to see who had more Public support, the Public will present their preferred ending to conclude the game.

Game Facilitator instructions (1)

Game facilitators must be familiar with all game instructions and get the game started by forming the two Survivor/Advisor teams, and the Public. Help the Public choose a good scenario for their context. Keep time: Teams will have 7-10 minutes to decide on a strategy and 5 minutes each to persuasively present their strategy and answer questions. Make sure Survivors are only presenting one strategy at a time. No round should last more than 20 minutes. The game concludes with the Public’s proposed closure to the Scenario, usually after three challenge rounds. End with a reflection on how each team felt during the process. The scenarios and challenges explored in this game could have been experienced by anyone, so it’s important for the Game Facilitator to keep a fun, light atmosphere as much as possible.

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Game Play

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Playing to “win”

This game is designed to have quick, strategic responses to very difficult and often triggering situations. It was purposefully designed in timed, competitive rounds and to be carried out in a light, swift way to encourage debate and discussion with a degree of distance. A gaming Scenario

generates adrenalin and expectation around escalations, both a part of the online GBV experience. An atmosphere of game competition is one way to bring in these elements when strategising.

However, it is important to note that some groups are not comfortable with competition or able to assert that one Survivor Team strategy was better than the other presented, so using tokens as points and declaring a “winner” in your game is entirely optional. The Game Facilitator should decide if they want to introduce competition and tokens before beginning the role-play.

If using tokens, each member of the Public should receive four tokens (in the form of cut-up colored papers, poker chips, individually wrapped candies, stickers, etc.) at the beginning of game play. Each member of the Public will award one token per round to the Survivor Team whose strategy best fit the Survivor profile and context. At the end of three rounds the Public debates; if there is consensus, five extra points can be awarded to the Survivor who has chosen the best overall set of strategies. The total number of tokens will determine which Survivor Team “won” the scenario. The round ends when the Public provides closure to the Scenario with a plausible conclusion.

> ***Facilitation note**: When inviting people to play, the Game Facilitator should have alerted possible participants that this role-play will be talking about gender-based violence on the internet and distressing subject matter will come up, in case anyone wants to opt out beforehand. The Facilitator should remind participants of this before starting the game and encourage all participants to be sensitive to each other in the role-play process.*

Game setup – 15 minutes

Game Facilitators must be familiar with the following game instructions and make sure teams understand their roles.

Get the game started by forming **Survivor Teams A** and **B** and the **Public**.

- It may be better if the volunteer Survivor has not experienced online GBV themselves.
- There are four types of advisors: Legal, Communications, Solidarity and Skills. The Advisors do not have to be specialists in the area assigned to them (ie legal advisors do not have to be lawyers).
- The Survivor Teams decide who plays what role in the team. That role will last until Scenario rounds are played out. If there are fewer people in the game, Advisors may have

to play the role of two advisors.

Give each Survivor Team flipchart paper, markers and the Survivor and Advisor Instructions.

- Their first task is to **develop the Survivor profile** and context and draw that persona on flipchart paper.
- Remind them they don't have to think up a scenario, just information about the Survivor:
  - How old are they?
  - Do they live in a rural or urban area?
  - What are their family, friend and work communities like?
  - Their sexuality, religion, language?
  - Their education level, tech skills?
- Teams have only 5-10 minutes to draw up their Survivor profile.

While Survivor Teams do this, the Game Facilitator gives the Public their instruction cards and briefs them on their role:

- Encourage the Public to think about who is in their midst – are they friends, family, trolls, bystanders,representatives?
- How might bystanders affect the way the Scenario evolves?
- Members of the Public can decide to take on a specific role and react to the Survivor Teams as that role (ie conservative family member, best friend, troll), or as themselves.

The Game Facilitator or Public may choose a Scenario for the game. The available Scenarios are

- Blackmailed to Go Back
- Trolled on Twitter
- Faked on Facebook
- Porn Pretender
- Disinformation to Discredit
- Watching and Waiting

Each Scenario has its own Challenge cards. Alternatively, the Game Facilitator or Public can create one based on their context.

TIP: If creating your own Scenario, keep in mind the Scenario should start at the point thatthe Survivor is concerned about what is happening, but not already facing a full-blownattack.

Round 1 – 20 minutes

1. Survivors present their personas to the Public.
2. The Game Facilitator reads the Scenario out loud.
3. In their Survivor Teams, each Advisor has 2 minutes to pick one strategy from their deck to recommend to the Survivor. Multi-step strategies are not allowed. Show one option to your team's Survivor and justify why you think it is a good choice.
4. Each Team then has five minutes to discuss the available strategies and help the Survivor make a decision, based on the best option for their Survivor profile.
    1. The role of the Advisors here is not to get their strategy picked, but for their team to get support from the Public with a persuasive presentation of the strategy chosen by the Survivor.
    2. Survivors can only pick one strategy at a time, and it is their decision, not the Advisors'.
5. While the Survivor Teams discuss for no more than 8-10 minutes, the Public should also be discussing the Scenario and what strategy they think the teams should take. The Public begins to imagine possible ways the Scenario will escalate, and examines Challenge cards.
6. Each Survivor presents their first strategy to the Public, arguing why it is the best option for their profile. The Public can ask questions but each Team has a maximum of 5 minutes presentation time.
7. The Public provides feedback on the choices. If using tokens, each member of the Public votes, explaining their choice.

Throughout, the Game Facilitator keeps time and tries to keep a fun, light atmosphere as the scenarios and challenges explored in this game could be upsetting for participants if explored too deeply.

Round 2 – 20 minutes

1. The Public selects and presents the first Challenge.
2. Survivor Teams proceed the same as Round 1.

Round 3 – 20 minutes

1. For the Survivor Teams, same as Round 2.
2. While the Survivor Teams debate, the Public is asked to come up with a closure to the Scenario. What kind of solution do they foresee as plausible, what strategies would they add? The Game Facilitator, while not encouraging a “happy ending” does ask the Public to look for feasible, and if possible positive solutions to this escalating violence.
3. Survivors present their strategies.
4. If using tokens, the Public makes a consensus decision as to which Survivor Team had the most coherent set of strategies and as a group awards 5 extra tokens. Each Survivor Team counts tokens to see who “won” the Scenario. If not using tokens the Public will provide feedback.
5. The Public presents their proposed solution.

Wrap up – 15 minutes

The Game Facilitator leads a discussion about strategies learned and how participants felt given their assigned roles.

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