

Module 3: Harassment and gender-based violence

Welcome back to Module 3 of "How to report safely strategies for women journalists and their allies". My name's Alison Baskerville and I'm your lead instructor for this course. During the last session, we talked about personal safety and situational awareness and touched on our own inbuilt survival guide that can help us to navigate some of the risks we face as journalists. We also looked at some hotel safety considerations and how to create a safe haven wherever we might be staying during our work. We also had a conversation looking at basic travel safety tips and some great advice from one of our media safety professionals based in Sri Lanka. During this module, we're going to look at something that affects many journalists, particularly women and LGBTQ reporters, and that's harassment. We're going to look at the effects of harassment not only in the workplace, but also on the ground. We're going to look at gender-based violence where we will have some practical advice, as well as an interview with Delia Gallagher, a Ugandan based non binary photographer who will share with us their experiences of dealing with perception of gender and how that affects their work on a daily basis. We're also going to look at sexual violence and give you some practical tools that you can use if you experience this through your work. We will also have a session and a conversation with Christine Chick, who is a survivor of sexual violence and has also reported uncovered many stories relating to this issue within the photojournalism industry. Now, we're aware that this is a difficult and potentially triggering subject for many of the people who will be following this on this course, and we will put as many content warnings in place as we need to throughout this session. I'd also advise you to stop listening to the video if something does come up for you and of course, make use of the discussion forum and any avenues to contact myself or anybody else from the night sent a team to let us know if there is anything that's raised from this. And we can help you with signposting to supportive organizations who will be able to give you further advice and guidance. Sadly, within journalism itself, this is a pervasive issue that has affected many reporters, as we've previously mentioned. The International Women's Media Foundation carried out several studies on this area with the most recent survey stating that nearly two out of three of their respondents said they'd been threatened or harassed online at least once, which is more than reported physical threats or harassment. And so, I wanted to start by mentioning that this threat of online harassment has been on the rise over the last few years, and approximately 40 percent said they avoided reporting certain stories as a result of online harassment. This is an issue that many journalists now face and therefore it's important within your planning and also when you report to make sure you have a good understanding of how to protect yourself online through your phone and also through your devices. I would urge you to take part in the massive online course, which is specifically focused on online harassment. This course will give you excellent advice on how to prepare yourself for your reporting, but also how to manage the threat of trolls, the threats from state governments that might use to tap your phones and your computers, etc... It's important to think about why this matters in relation to journalists and the work that we do. And I wanted to share with you a graphic which we call the pyramid of violence, and it shows here that how our behavior in a wider way, sexist and homophobic transphobia, jokes, problematic language and objectification of someone, fear that gender can lead to much more significant threats to people. And again, if we look at some of the barriers here, traditional roles, glass ceilings, rigid gender-based stereotypes, these give agency to more significant threats, such as harassment of verbal abuse. And at the top of this, we see sexual assault in the manifestation of rape, emotional and financial abuse, and at the very worst, murder. So, all these things that we talk about have a relationship with each other. They don't live in isolation. And the normalization of rape jokes and rape language on social media has had a significant impact on this. And as we mentioned earlier on in this module, the number of

women experiencing death threats, rape threats online have grown exponentially over the last four years. So, the online harassment is really manifested over the years to become a more significant threat. Again, people can use their keyboard and their phone to hide behind to manifest these threats, and I just wanted to point out that an online threat is as serious as a physical threat. So, to take it as seriously and to report it if you can. And also, to put some of those mitigating tools in place that are mentioned in the online harassment mass online course that you can also register for. I will also share a resource with you on some very basic online self-defense that you can use to support yourself in this situation. I wanted to start really here by looking at the types of journalists who report the most experiences of harassment. Now, statistics are really good start point to look at the issue. And actually, when we research into that, we can then see how it affects us personally, depending on our identity or how we identify into or how a perceived identity is in the world in general. But what's really interesting to notice out of this survey is that fifty two percent of people have experienced harassment, were self-employed or freelance journalist. So am identified as being both and a smaller percentage worked for a media organization or outlet. So, I want to circle back here to the contact information that we hold within our risk assessment so that we can maybe understand that this isn't just about the other contingencies we've talked about, whether it's being caught in in an active shooter event, a protest, civil unrest being caught in a IED or working on a front line, dealing with those very high level but low percentage threats. One thing I want to bring up here that it's more likely that you will experience some form of harassment over some of those other threats. So, within your risk assessment, when you're doing your research, identify somebody who you feel comfortable talking to about this, who you could approach and share that something has happened either within the newsroom workplace scenario or also on the ground when you're actually out reporting. Now, this is a can be a challenging process because it's for many an uncomfortable conversation. But building that peer support network is really vital in actually dealing with something when it happens, but also post the event. So having a good support network in place, awareness is being raised in newsrooms and certainly with editors. However, it's very useful to have a conversation with your editor to find out exactly what support is in place if you experience some form of harassment through your line of work and finding that out will give you peace of mind that if you are fortunate to experience this through the course of your reporting, that you do actually have something in place to be able to access if you do need to get some help. Another part of the research element here and these early conversations before we go on the ground is also about looking at what we've already touched on. This hospital facilities and primary health care places do some research about the area you're going to about what facilities are available for people who are survivors of sexual assault. Is there a support network in place there? In certain areas, they have a good set up, certainly in the U.K., there are sexual assault referral centers or otherwise known as a sock. This is a way of bypassing the police, potentially, if you are not comfortable approaching the police. Now, also, remember here that in certain countries, you would be unwise to approach the police because they may actually cause more harassment of violence to you afterwards, also because of their cultural approach to dealing with sexual assault. This is, again, a conversation to have with other journalists and other people who have worked in these settings who perhaps have a similar identity to you to find out what's the best course of action, were anything to happen. Another part of the research is to look at what support you would get from your embassy; does it actually have a 24-hour phone number and does it have capacity to support you if you were to experience sexual assault? Does it have any kind of service that can offer you? And again, this depends on where you're located and whether you have access to consulate support. And that's not always a privilege that everyone does actually have. And I just want to add here, I'm basing this on a global context and quite general, and I appreciate that not everyone will have access to

the same resources as others. But there are things in place in most environments that can support you with this. So, we've looked at your own personal contact information, who you might be able to feel safe to reach out to. We've looked at you. Embassy information, who's to contact any primary health care that you might need, especially for injury and also you may need to access the morning after pill and also an antiviral for HIV, if that's present in the area that you're going. So, what else can we research here to help us if we are caught, if we are raped in the line of what we do? The other part of this, which is the kind of research phase, is also to look at what we're packing and what we're taking with us. I've touched already on the morning after pill. I would also encourage you to take Ziploc bags and things that you may be able to store items in as pieces of evidence. We're not encouraging you to be for forensic investigators here, but you may have an opportunity to gather some evidence that may be able to be used either in a prosecution. But also, there is research that states that being able to do this for yourself is a form of empowering yourself after a very traumatic event. So, what we suggest here is taking a paper bag, Ziploc bags, gloves that you'll probably have anyway within your first aid kit and also hair comb to remove any hair or any other items from either from the head or the lower body. In the last session, we talked about hotel and room safety, those elements that we talked about completely apply to the situation as well. That safe haven is also about preventing someone from getting into our room. Now, if someone was to get into that safe space, if you were to be raped in those in that setting, then there's this is we're going to talk now about post rape and what you can do for yourself in this situation. I feel this is not an area that is talked about enough and actually from the people that I've spoken to who've been through this, they wished that they'd had more advice on what to do afterwards because it is a traumatic event. And also, it's difficult to make clear decisions at this point. But with like every plan that we make, if we know some of the steps of how to support ourselves, then it does help us to give the agency to ourselves that someone else has taken away in that moment.

So, let's have a look at what we might consider doing post event. The first thing we need to do is get ourselves to a safe place, even if it's in your hotel room, if you're travelling with somebody. This is where having their room number and their contact information is vital. Who can you call straight away? What we don't want to be doing is being on our own for a significant length of time. So, reach out to somebody either close to you or even someone who's not there at the time to let them know that something has happened. The next thing we want to do is check ourselves, make sure that we are not physically injured in other parts of our body. Get ourselves again into a safe space, reach out that somebody know what's happened. Again, at this point, we want to be getting some kind of support in place if it's safe to go to a police station, do so. If not, get yourself to a primary health care center or a hospital that has somebody there that might be able to support you. There are certain nurses and people within the police who are trained in helping and supporting survivors of sexual assault. I will say here it is a mixed experience for many people and not everybody will be sensitive to you as they should be. Again, it's a difficult situation for you to approach because whilst you are in the moment, you may not fully be aware of what people are doing. So, try and get somebody with you, if possible, to take you to those places again. At this point, we need to not shower so that any evidence can be collected again. Use. If you have packed those items, I mentioned earlier into your first aid kit, use some of those, whether it's bed sheets, whether it's items of clothing, whether it's any bodily fluid that you can manage to collect, to use those things, to be able to put them into a safe place, keep them to one side. Let's also think about the psychological impact of going through this as well, and this is why it's so important to try and get somebody alongside you to help you with this, because it's very difficult not to go and survive this, but also to go and reach out for some support. And again, you'll be highly adrenalized and

probably unable to think very clearly about what the next steps might be. Once you've had a medical examination, bearing in mind you could be in the hospital for a number of hours, once you're through that process, once you've been able to get back to a safe location, even if it's to get out of the place you're going, which is advisable, and back to your home location, then we have to think about the longer-term impact of this as well. Now, reporting it to your if you were a staff reporter to your editor, newsroom safety manager is essential. And again, this is why it's really important if you're in one of those positions to understand, to know how to support somebody who's been through this as well. Again, what we're looking for here is that you get some period of time off and also perhaps some support through therapy and also some financial support. But the key thing here as well is to if you were in a position of being an ally, is to listen to what the person is asking you to do with them. Often, we have procedures in place to help support a survivor of sexual assault, but sometimes that person will not want those in that particular time. So be mindful of this and remember to be an active listener in this moment to really hear what they're asking of you. Also, be careful about taking over the situation and telling somebody what they need to do, because at this point in time, this person has been completely disempowered for a period of time. Therefore, it's really important for their psychological well-being to gain some agency back. And if you start taking over and becoming quite authoritarian, this is, again, about domination of power and can actually be quite triggering for someone who is a survivor of sexual assault. If you're the person that's experienced this again, reach out to people to ask for help. Try not to sit in silence with this. There is much more visibility on the experience of sexual assault from women, LGBTQ people within journalism now and at the end of this module, we're going to post a list of resources that you can use to support you. It's really, really, really important that you do speak to somebody as soon as possible. These things can sit within us for many years, but they will never really go away, so the better, the sooner you reach out, the better they can. This is why I have a really good peer support network is helpful is especially as a freelancer working in environments. When you are at your own a lot, then it's probably good to have people that, you know, you can talk to. There's a basic standard of care for survivors of sexual violence that organizations can have in place. And here's just a few suggestions that I have for you. Make sure there's appropriate medical and psychological support available and as soon as possible, and it's done in a confidential, if not anonymous fashion. Offer choices that empower the survivor only intervene if someone could be at further risk. Offer support and advice on a legal and justice processes and also only help pursue prosecution if this is what the survivor wants. Respect the survivor's confidentiality by following information sharing protocols on a need-to-know basis while allowing the survivor to speak out as desired. Follow clear response protocols for identifying and dealing with alleged perpetrators. Also provide a feedback mechanism to survivors, so they're kept informed by any actions that might be taken. Remember that this happened to them and therefore they should be informed of every decision that you make around their care and mitigate any risk and exposure through prevention, preparedness and swift post incident action. And again, this preparedness phase is again embedded in the risk assessment process and creating this basic personal safety plan. Now, if you're a freelancer, without this support from management or from an organization, have a conversation with the person that is going to support you to be aware of the things you might need in place if this was to happen. Create your own checklist that might be useful to you whilst you are reporting so that you've got a little guide to help yourself afterwards, because when you've been through a very stressful, traumatic event, it's hard for you to then make bigger decisions. To be more rational would be more in our emotional self and obviously in the more adrenalized part of ourselves because we've been through a stressful event. In this session, we've talked about some of the pre-trial planning that you need to do generally for any assignment that you go on any reporting trip and all of the things we've talked about from session one up until now apply in relation to

harassment and sexual violence. Sexual violence is as traumatic as any other significant traumatic event, therefore the aftercare for being through this, if you've been raped, if you experience any form of sexual violence, is exactly the same as how someone would be treated from a survivor, from any event where symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder may happen, they may not. Again, it's important to check in with yourself over a regular period of time to see if anything is still affecting you, if you're still having some thoughts and feelings around what's happened that seem to never really go away. And again, this is where talking to people can be very helpful. Reaching out to colleagues, reaching out to a friend can also help. We've come at a difficult subject in this module, but a really necessary one. And hopes that some of the issues that we've talked about here, some of the tools that I've shared will be helpful to you. But I also hope that you never find yourself in this situation. And I think the more we call out harassment in any scale in the places we work and also in the line of what we do, the better it is for all journalists working on the ground, specifically women, specifically LGBTQ journalists. If you have experienced any triggers or you found the subject difficult, then please do reach out to myself the Night Centre for Journalism. And of course, if you need support because you are a survivor of sexual violence, you can access the emergency grants fund, which will help you to support you with legal costs and also for counselling as it can be expensive if you're a freelancer. But most of all, take good care of yourselves whilst doing your work and remember, as journalists, you have an important role in calling out truth to power and also raising the voices of those that are oppressed. So, thank you for joining in on this session. You're going to have a great chance to meet Anna Zuber, who is an emergency psychologist working with photographers and journalists. And she's got some great advice on Section four of how to deal with going through a traumatic event. In this module, you're going to hear from Kristen Chick, a working journalist who is a survivor of sexual violence, as I've mentioned, and also create significant articles which called out a long history of sexual abuse and violence within the photography industry. And finally, you'll get a chance to hear from the Delovei Kwagal, a Ugandan non binary photographer, about their experiences of gender-based violence and some of the tips that they've had to develop to keep themselves safe. And our next module, we're going to be looking at our next and final module, we're going to be looking at our mental health and emotional well-being. So, don't forget to take part in the quiz, the discussion forum, and you'll see for our next session shortly.