'Under the Magnifying Glass':

A report on shaming within the Gypsy and Traveller communities

Contents

Foreword

Hello! My name is Christina Kerrigan and I am an Irish Traveller woman and the former Partnerships and Development Officer at Traveller Movement. I now deliver most of the training on Domestic Abuse awareness alongside colleagues for TM.

I have worked for a number of years to call out the practice of 'shaming' and 'scandalising' and this report is a welcomed step towards this goal.

The suicide rate among Traveller communities is extraordinarily high in comparison to the wider UK population. It has been a real eye opener hearing more and more about people who have ended their lives because of the shame they felt.

People have suppressed their sexualities and who they really are because they are afraid that, not only could they experience shame or harm, but their families could face wider repercussions from those in the community. Some families believe divorce is a sin. If you leave an abusive relationship, you can lose your community, your respect and your name. As a Traveller woman in this situation, it can seem much easier to take your own life than to leave your husband.

In some Traveller families, there are certain religious expectations made about sexuality and gender roles. Women are expected to be pure, respectable and have no sexual relationships before marriage. Men are expected to be the dominant breadwinner. You would hope that when a woman does get married that their love is built on mutual respect, however, this is sadly not always the case. Who and where do these women turn to when they are married and suffering domestic abuse? Or when they are suffering mental health issues at a young age but are afraid to speak to a doctor? A lot of the time, leaving feels impossible and mothers can avoid seeking support because they are afraid that their children will be taken by social services.

Suicide rates are through the roof and many of these are no doubt influenced by experiences of shaming. Whether it is because of a person's sexuality, or a young girl who "got a name for herself" and ends her own life, it often can be due to the shame they are made to feel by their own people. We all have a limit and when that limit is breached, we hurt. This can manifest itself in self-medication, through alcohol, drugs, self-harm and suicide. Is this really where we want to be going? Have enough of our people not already died before their time?

The shaming that goes on in our community, which results in the suicides of many, is our biggest shame. It is no longer enough for us to cry and share rants of rage on Facebook when we find our young people hanging at the end of a rope or slipping away from us on an overdose of drugs. Instead, we must stop and think about how we are contributing to this cycle of shame and how we may inadvertently be handing these people the rope to take their own lives.

We need to stop this shame game!

Christina Kerrigan

Background and Context

Gender, sexuality and honour-based abuse

Sarah Everard, Sabina Nessa, Sukhjeet Uppal, Balvinder Gahir, Bibaa Henry, Khloemae Loy, Nicole Smallman and Libby Squire are the names of a fraction of the women who we have lost in the United Kingdom in recent times. Femicide Census has found that one woman is killed every three days in the UK [1]. While political will has grown in recent months, there must be further emphasis on prevention and support. Femicide Census point to "cuts to welfare, women's refuges and support services, policing, criminal justice and other key state agencies" which disproportionately impact ethnic minority women [2]. If the Government is determined to build on this awareness and momentum for change, as the VAWG strategy 2021 attests, greater awareness and education around Gypsy, Roma and Traveller experiences of abuse, gender roles, mental health difficulties and 'shaming' must be undertaken.

This month, the House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee has launched an inquiry that will review the VAWG Strategy and "identify specific areas for further scrutiny, such as domestic and international obligations to prevent VAWG, so-called 'honour-based' violence and different preventative strategies [3]". 'Honour'-based abuse can be distinguished from other forms of violence by the level of approval or collusion from family or community members. Examples of supposed shameful behaviour can include: sexual orientation; wearing make-up or 'unacceptable' clothing; having a relationship outside of the community; not obeying family/community rules; seeking a divorce. We echo the demand for a national effort to tackle 'honour' abuse that includes specialised evidence-based training and inclusion in domestic abuse strategies. Alongside violence against women and girls, we must also remember Ranjith Kankanamalage and campaign against the tragic violence perpetrated against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex people throughout the UK.

[1] Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (2021) 'New cross-system approach needed to end epidemic of violence against women and girls', available at: https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/news/news-feed/cross-system-approach-needed-to-end-violence-against-women-and-girls/

[2] Long, J., Harvey, H., Wertans, E., Allen, R., Harper, K., Elliott, K. and Brennan, D. (2020) 'UK femicides 2009-2018', Femicide Census, available at: https://www.femicidecensus.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Femicide-Census-10-year-report.pdf

[3] The House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee (2021) 'Preventing Violence Against Women and Girls inquiry launched',UK Parliament, available at: https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/328/women-and-equalities-committee/news/158692/preventing-violence-against-women-and-girls-inquiry-launched/

Shaming is a form of social behaviour control that is used in many different cultures in many different forms. Women and gender non-conforming people in particular have been the victims of public shaming. In 16th and 17th-century Europe, tens of thousands were rounded up and slaughtered for being different, non-conforming or outcasts in some of the earliest witch hunts. In contemporary times, we are increasingly aware of 'fat-shaming', 'slut-shaming' and 'body-shaming' as practices that seriously impact one's self-image, self-worth and mental health. The idea of public shaming has been around for centuries, but technology and social media has taken it to new heights.

Online Harms

1,800,000 women and non-binary individuals have suffered online abuse in 2020 [4]. Online Gender-Based Abuse (OGBA) disproportionately affects women and non-binary people from marginalised backgrounds.

GRT communities face online abuse within their communities and outside their communities. While many communities throughout history have used shaming as a form of social control, online 'shame pages' are now proliferating within the Irish Traveller and Romany Gypsy communities and require serious action from tech companies.

[4] The Ripple Effect: COVID-19 and the Epidemic of Online Abuse by Glitch UK and End Violence Against Women Coalition under a creative commons lisence

The Online Safety Bill proposes to edit section 11 of the Communications Act (duty to promote media literacy) and requires that OFCOM "must, in particular, carry out, commission or encourage educational initiatives designed to improve the media literacy of members of the public [5]". The Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport are formulating an online media literacy strategy that, over the next 3 years, aspires to support organisations to undertake coordinated and wide-reaching media literacy activity [6].

Following government consultation with OFCOM, priority categories of legal but harmful content for adults will be set out in secondary legislation. These could include some forms of online abuse, including discriminatory abuse targeted at women and LGBTQIA+. The Law Commission recommended that a shift from offensive content itself to the harm caused is needed [7]. Appropriate platform response and improved reporting mechanisms might include: removal of harmful content, sanctions against offending users, or changing processes and policies to provide better protection online. If a company fails in these duties, it could face an investigation and enforcement action from OFCOM, including large fines. Tech companies' have committed to making their platforms safer for women and minority groups, but we are still seeing the impact 'shaming' has upon the mental health of Gypsies and Travellers.

[5] DfCMS (2021) 'Part 4 — OFCOM's powers and duties in relation to regulated services Chapter 8 — Media literacy', Draft Online Safety Bill, page 93, available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/985033/Draft_Online_Safety_Bill_Book marked.pdf

[6] DfDCMS (2021) 'Executive Summary', Online Media Literacy Strategy, page 4, available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1004233/DCMS_Media_Literacy_Repo rt_Roll_Out_Accessible_PDF.pdf

[7] Law Commission (2021) Modernising Communications Offences: Summary of the final report, available at: https://s3-eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/lawcom-prod-storage-11jsxou24uy7q/uploads/2021/07/Summary-of-Modernising-Communications-Offences-2021.pdf

Mental Health

Based on the All-Ireland Traveller Health Study (AITHS), Pavee Point report that Travellers experience a 6.6 times higher suicide rate when compared with non-Travellers, accounting for approximately 11% of all Traveller deaths [8]. This is an issue that similarly impacts transgender women, transgender men and non-binary people, too [9]. Mental health services are underutilised by GRT people for a variety of cultural and practical reasons. They may be more reluctant to engage for fear of disclosing information that could result in their ostracisation from the community. As GRT people feel excluded from the wider society, close community bonds provide a sense of security and protection. As such, rejection from the GRT community leaves participants feeling isolated and negatively impacts participants' mental health [10].

Countering 'shaming' requires a commitment from everyone. While tech companies can take responsibility for the online aspect of shaming, we must all take responsibility for awareness-raising campaigns and training for schools, the police and third sector organisations. In addition to education of services, healthy relationships education is an essential preventative measure we must centre if we want to eradicate 'shaming'. If something is not done to tackle violence against women and girls, toxic and harmful online behaviour and their impact on Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people, we fear there will be many more lives lost to shaming related suicides. This report will outline the phenomenon of 'shaming', its implications to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people and what is needed for a meaningful change.

[8] All Ireland Traveller Health Study Team (2010) 'All Ireland Traveller health study: summary of findings', page 94, available at: https://www.ucd.ie/t4cms/AITHS_SUMMARY.pdf

[9] Wiepjes, C.M., Nota, N.M., de Blok, C.J., Klaver, M., de Vries, A.L., Wensing-Kruger, S.A., de Jongh, R.T., Bouman, M.B., Steensma, T.D., Cohen-Kettenis, P. and Gooren, L.J., 2018. The Amsterdam cohort of gender dysphoria study (1972–2015): trends in prevalence, treatment, and regrets. The journal of sexual medicine, 15(4), pp.582-590.
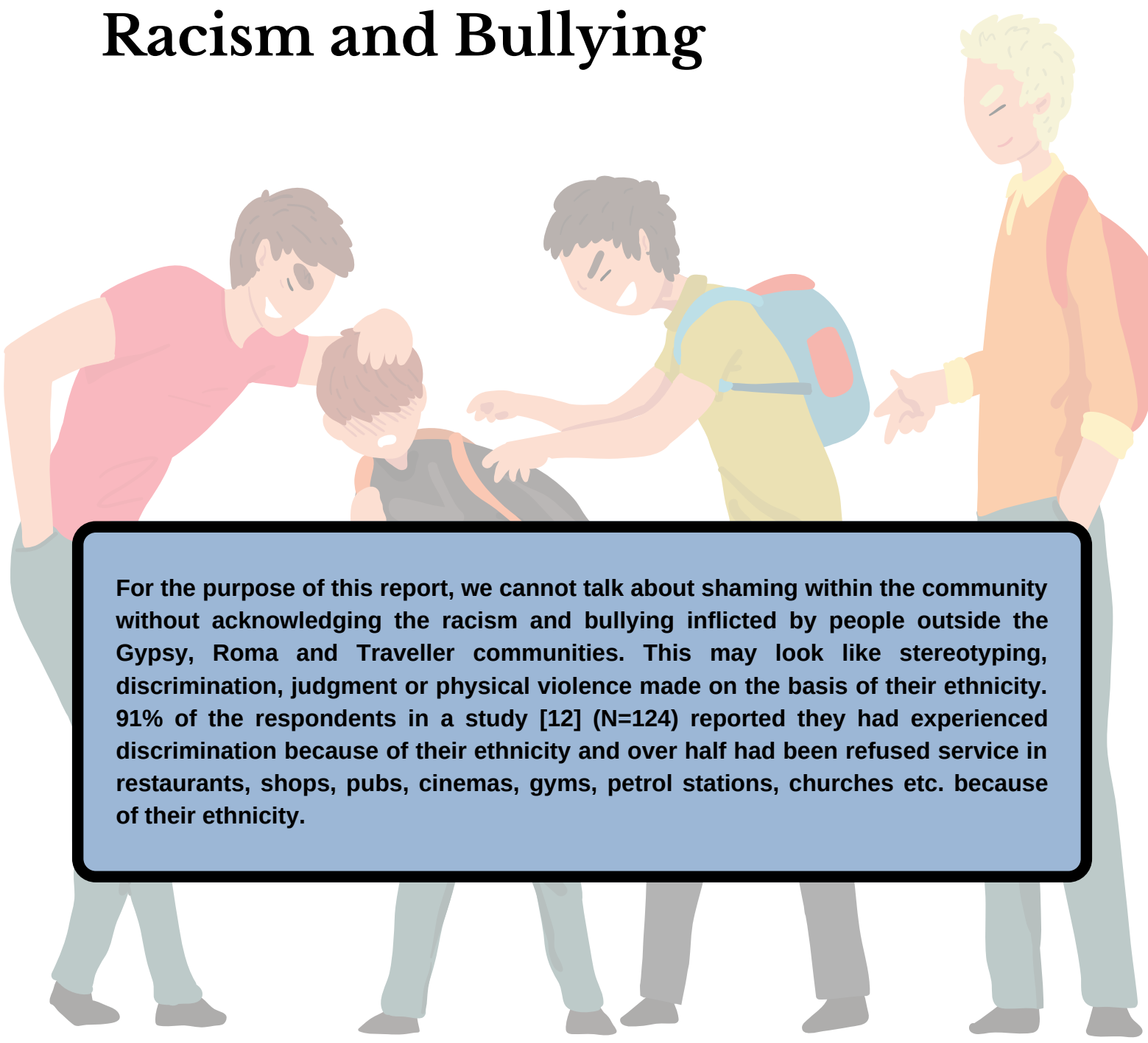
[10] Thompson, R., Stone, B. & Tyson, P. (2021) 'Mental Health Support Needs Within Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller Communities: A Qualitative Study', Mental Health and Social Inclusion, DOI 10.1108/MHSI-09-2021-0066.

Introduction

Within the community: 'Shaming' and 'Scandalising'

'Shaming', or 'scandalising', are actions that intend to cause someone else to feel shame for being or doing something that another person(s) feels is wrong or undesirable by their 'community behavioural standards'. Public shaming aims to damage a person's image, sense of self-worth and mental health. Shaming has also begun to manifest in 'shame pages' online. Some Irish Traveller and Romany Gypsy individuals have been creating 'Traveller shame pages' and 'Gypsy shame pages' with the purpose of publicly humiliating other members of their own community. The high suicide rates have been partially explained by the online abuse, shaming and discrimination. For further information on shaming please consult the **#StopShaming Campaign** [11].

[11] Traveller Movement (2021) 'Stop Shaming', available at: https://travellermovement.org.uk/stop-shaming/

Outside the community: Racism and Bullying

For the purpose of this report, we cannot talk about shaming within the community without acknowledging the racism and bullying inflicted by people outside the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. This may look like stereotyping, discrimination, judgment or physical violence made on the basis of their ethnicity. 91% of the respondents in a study [12] (N=124) reported they had experienced discrimination because of their ethnicity and over half had been refused service in restaurants, shops, pubs, cinemas, gyms, petrol stations, churches etc. because of their ethnicity.

[12] The Traveller Movement (2017) 'The last acceptable form of racism? The pervasive discrimination and prejudice experienced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities'

Methodology

Our online survey about 'shaming' was launched in March 2020 and collected answers for two months until May 2020. We widely distributed the survey on our social media platforms and via our contacts. This report is based on the answers of 73 Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people. Of the respondents, 53 identified as women, 18 identified as men and 3 identified as transgender or gender non-conforming.

The majority of respondents identified as Romany English Gypsy and Irish Traveller, although a small number of Roma, Scottish Traveller and Welsh Traveller also participated.

The survey addressed Gypsies, Roma and Travellers experiences in and feelings about:

- Shaming or scandalising within the communities
- Racism and bullying from outside the communities

Findings

70% of respondents have experienced shaming or scandalising

77% believe 'shame pages' are terrible and must be removed

"state of him"

"you've made your bed, now lie in it"

"Bullying is far too easy to do to anyone now with the freedom of being able to write whatever they want behind a phone or through a computer and not even know who they are"

Romany Gypsy woman, 25-34

"We get judged by what other Travellers do. In school the teachers say things like, 'What are you doing there, you are just going to get married', 'You are going to fail your GCSEs' and 'Your lot don't really go to school so why are you here?" [13]

[13] Plan International (2020) 'Gypsy and Traveller girls,' The State of Girls' Rights in the UK, page 120, available at: https://plan-uk.org/file/plan-uk-state-of-girls-rights-report-2020pdf/download?token=42bpRbf8

Women and Shaming

There is a gendered component to shaming. Women and girls' reputations hold high importance within the GRT communities [14]. The majority of our respondents were female and spoke to a wide range of activities that are seen to transgress traditional gender roles. GRT women can be shamed on the basis of their position as a woman, a wife and a mother.

Gender Roles:

The respondents write that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller women can face tight-knit community surveillance and risk bringing shame to themselves and their families if they do not dress, behave or present themselves in a manner that complies with traditional gender roles. Respondents spoke to the level of scrutiny they can experience with regards to their clothing, make-up, hair dye, skin colour, body type and weight. In the digital context, this extends to social media posts and online profiles. Where image-based sexual abuse and so-called 'revenge porn' occur, shame pages, profiles and group chats can be used to circulate the online abuse and further degrade the victim-survivor.

"They are slut-shamed for having sex or even just meeting a boy where they might not have even done anything, having too many boyfriends, dancing 'scandalously' at weddings"

Irish Traveller man, 18-24

[14] Plan International (2020) 'Gypsy and Traveller girls,' The State of Girls' Rights in the UK, page 120, available at: https://plan-uk.org/file/plan-uk-state-of-girls-rights-report-2020pdf/download?token=42bpRbf8

In general, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller women are not expected to have multiple romantic relationships or sexual partners. Many GRT women are married young and divorce is not seen as an option due to religious belief and community tradition. Regardless of whether there is drug misuse, domestic abuse or other serious marital problems, wives are often expected to remain in the marriage and can face shaming if they do not. Remarrying can also be taboo in cases where GRT women have been widowed.

"I was sexually assaulted by a healer in the community and had to leave because of it. I've seen similar things happen to others"

Scottish Traveller woman, 25-34

"I was also scandalised when I got divorced from my husband when we couldn't cope with the death of our child"

Romany Gypsy woman, 55-64

"[I was scandalised] When I left my husband because he was beating me and taking drugs,"

Irish Traveller woman, 35-44

GRT women are extremely proud about how clean they keep their homes and how well they feed their families to the point that they can be judged over it. GRT mothers can be vulnerable to shaming as their parenting styles and choices can be scrutinised. Some respondents say women can be judged for the number of children they have or for not having any children.

Furthermore, usually mothers are not expected to stay in education or employment and can be judged if they do.

> "I got pregnant at 16 years and my Father shunned me for twenty plus years"
>
> Romany Gypsy woman, 45-54
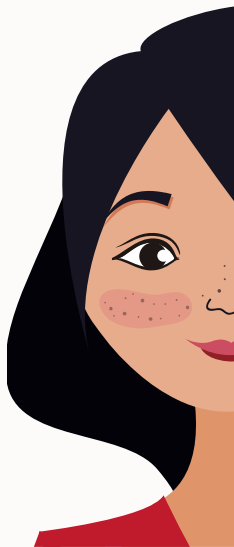
... As a Minority within a Minority

GRT women who are LGBT or have a disability also spoke to the shaming they experienced. Lesbian, bisexual and transgender women from the Gypsy, Roma or Traveller communities can experience additional shame on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity

Men and Shaming

Men are also vulnerable to being scandalised. Men are expected to be the breadwinner of the household and any qualities they have that do not align with GRT understandings of masculinity can result in shaming. The majority of male survivors of shaming were subjected to the practice on the basis of their sexual orientation, skin colour, disability or other minority status.

Gender Roles:

Men who show sensitivity or weakness may be scandalised for not upholding traditional notions of masculinity. Similar to women, men are judged based on their appearance, behaviour and possessions. Weaknesses could look like refusing a fight; helping with housework; struggling financially; being a victim; mental health difficulties and infertility.

"I feared for my own life as they had said they'd have no problem killing me dead. I also felt very suicidal but mostly ashamed I couldn't look anyone in the eye for weeks because I felt everyone was talking about it and looking at me like scum, but I've kept up the lies for now and it seems to have died down"

Irish Traveller man, 18-24
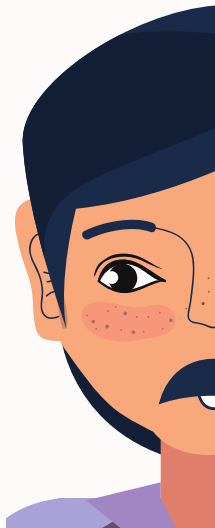
Other Minority Status:

While men experience shaming, the majority of male respondents spoke to the shaming they experienced on the basis of their race, skin colour, LGBT identity, disability and status as a prisoner. LGBT respondents feared ostracism from their families and abuse from the community at large. Certain respondents felt suicidal and feared for their lives.

"Came out as gay got completly abandoned by my family and community and had to start a new life,"

Romany Gypsy man, 25-34

"I was shamed online. Young Travellers my age tend to make group chats and add random Travellers into it. As a Gay man I am always on the receiving end of the abuse"

Irish Traveller man, 18-24

Why Does Shaming Happen?

Respondents, 51 of whom experienced shaming, provided nuanced explanations of why this phenomenon occurs within GRT communities. Overarching explanations pointed to institutional racism, systematic discrimination and patriarchy. Gender roles, socialisation, parenting, lack of education and the impact of social media were also cited as the underlying reasons for both shaming and external racism and bullying. As well as this, the historical discrimination and marginalisation of GRT communities plays a role in shaming.

"There is a sense of needing to defend our own boundaries and police our own community,"

Romany Gypsy trans-man, 25-34

Historical discrimination and marginalisation results in distance and mistrust between GRT communities and the wider population. Centuries of state violence and mistreatment by services created to protect society (police, social services, etc.) has resulted in intergenerational trauma and a fear of losing one's identity. Without the trust in mainstream services, members of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities turn to one another. 'Shaming' is therefore used as a form of social control to police the behaviour of one another within the community and maintain cultural traditions.

"Old traditions and the fear of losing their identity for future generations"

Irish Traveller man, 35-44

"Fear of culture disappearing"

Romany Gypsy trans-man, 25-34

"Travellers have their own idea of what it means to be a Traveller and what it means to be decent. Most of this is a reaction to Gorga [non-Gypsy/Traveller] values and modern Gorga societal trends. Scandalising is used as a method of control to make individuals conform to what some believe are the acceptable norms"

Undisclosed man, 45-54

Why Does Bullying/Racism Happen?

> "The stereotypical view people have is that Gypsies and Travellers are bad people"
>
> Romany Gypsy girl, under 18
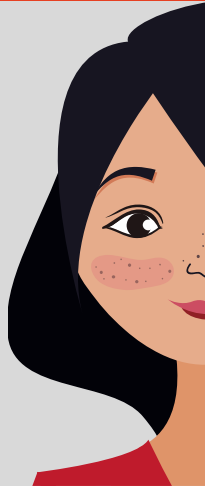
Historical discrimination and marginalisation results in distance and misrepresentations of minoritised communities. This lack of education and understanding is then reinforced through **negative stereotypes** [15], **negative media coverage** [16], and **scapegoating**. Gypsies, Roma and Travellers are attributed blame for a plethora of political issues and respondents listed housing shortages, unemployment, high crime rates and environmental destruction as just some examples. Elsewhere, Traveller Movement has reported on the discrimination perpetrated by non-GRT communities in greater detail [17]. For example, our 2021 report found that 96% of the respondents had heard negative stereotypes about Travellers and crime. A survey conducted by YouGov on behalf of the Traveller Movement found that over a third of parents in Britain would be unhappy with their child having a play date at the home of a Gypsy or Traveller [18]. Dangerous misinformation can spread from the media to the public and impact legislation and authorities' responses. The combination of negative stereotypes; lack of education and a lack of legal or social protections further endangers an already marginalised cohort.

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[15] [1] Green, C. (2015) 'Eric Pickles illegally discriminating against Gypsies and Travellers, the High Court rules', The Independent, available at: https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/eric-pickles-illegally-discriminating-against-gypsies-and-travellers-high-court-rules-9993154.html

[16] Lord Justice Leveson (2012) 'An inquiry into the culture, practices and ethics of the press', The Leveson Inquiry, available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/270941/0780_ii.pdf

[17] The Traveller Movement (2017) 'The last acceptable form of racism? The pervasive discrimination and prejudice experienced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities'

[18] Traveller Times (2017) 'YouGov poll shock – only 4 out of 10 parents OK for child to "playdate" a Traveller', available at: https://www.travellerstimes.org.uk/news/2017/10/yougov-poll-shock-only-4-out-10-parents-ok-child-playdate-traveller

"Many don't know what 'Gypsy' [means] or the legislation that is supposed to support us,"

Romany Gypsy woman, 45-54

"There's a stereotype of them being brutish, uneducated and dangerous,"

Romany Gypsy woman, 18-24

Discussion

How do we tackle shaming?

We asked the respondents what they thought would be the best way to stop shaming. They said:

1. **Awareness Raising Campaigns**
2. **Stronger Reporting Mechanisms**
3. **Training, Targeted Education and Media Literacy**

Awareness Raising

The majority of respondents believe a video and social media campaign to inform the public and create awareness is necessary. A video that examines the impact of 'shaming', unhealthy relationships and LGBT identities within GRT communities aims to challenge stereotypes and improve understandings of what abuse can look like.

> "A movement for scandalised girls and boys like a hashtag or something. if more people come out then eventually it will force acceptance upon the community"
>
> Irish Traveller man, 18-24

The second most common recommendation was to organise an educational event on the topic of shaming. This will be expanded upon under the third heading on training. Respondents offered many additional recommendations that focused on educational events for schools, police and the communities in question. In addition to this, respondents stressed the need for tech companies to take shaming seriously and recognise their responsibility in tackling online shaming pages and posts.

Stronger Reporting Mechanisms

The majority of respondents spoke of the need to tackle online shaming through stronger reporting mechanisms. Most suggested improving social media measures and legislative change to increase accountability in the area. Participants believe these solutions would result in racist and sexist online harm being taken seriously.

While it does increase time efficiency, there is a problem with who is entrusted with the status of 'trusted flagger'. Victims-survivors of online harm are not empowered to remove the abusive content or shame pages that affect them personally. This can be seen to compound the powerlessness many victim-survivors feel after experiencing a crime. We recommend an approach that is more survivor-centred and offers survivors the ability to have greater agency in the digital environment.

Trusted Flaggers have been relied on to monitor tech companies such as Facebook and YouTube. Trusted flaggers report harmful content to the platforms and companies review the content and remove it if applicable. While it is more time-efficient than public users' use of reporting mechanisms, the duty of care companies hold is outsourced to charities and non-profits without providing the accompanying financial resources needed for this method to be truly effective. Due to the limited number of Trusted Flaggers and lack of resources, harmful pages remain online for longer than they should. In keeping with the Joint Briefing: The Online Safety Bill and Online Harms Against Women [19], Traveller Movement recommends that funding should be given to organisations supporting survivors of online abuse and working on prevention [20]

[19] Centenary Action Group, Glitch, Antisemitism Policy Trust, Inclusion London, Stonewall, Compassion in Politics, Women's Equality Party, The Traveller Movement, Women's Aid Federation of England (Women's Aid), #NotYourPorn, Imkaan, Girlguiding, The Jo Cox Foundation, End Violence Against Women Coalition (EVAW), Womankind Worldwide, Equality Now, Tell MAMA UK and Julia Slupska, Oxford Internet Institute (2021) Joint Briefing: The Online Safety Bill and Online Harms Against Women, available at: https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5f6c6785a30f513e35cda046/t/614ca4226972ec62222dd0b7/1632412706796/CAG+Joint+Briefing+Online+Safety+Bill+020921.pdf

[20] Youtube Help (2021) 'YouTube Trusted Flagger program', available at: https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/7554338?hl=en#zippy=%2Cngos-and-government-agencies

> "Work with social media organisations for them to better police it if complaints are made so that these pages and accounts can be shut down easier. I don't think social media has a grasp on the culture or the nuances within the different GRT groups to understand what is being asked when reported"
>
> Romany Gypsy woman, 45-54

Education and Training

Respondents spoke of education and training as a key solution to shaming. In addition to social media awareness campaigns and events, delivering training to schools and the police force was popular recommendation. Many also saw the importance of digital and media literacy skill trainings for the Gypsies, Roma and Travellers themselves. Empowering themselves to know how to report and successfully remove a shame page was highlighted as crucial in tacking shaming.

Media Literacy

The UK Government must effectively deliver the newly published Online Media Literacy Strategy and promote 'Digital Citizenship' education as a key priority [21]. Governmental institutions and tech companies have a role to play in digital citizenship education for all and should be informed by a protected characteristics approach. A public health approach must be adopted to examine the wider impact of online abuse in a community, rather than treating online abuse as a single incident.

[21] Glitch (2019) 'Digital Citizenship', available at: https://glitchcharity.co.uk/our-campaigns/

More education is needed on misinformation and how this operates to harm marginalised groups, including the LGBTQIA+ community, at an even higher rate. Certain minority groups have limited literacy and education levels that make them vulnerable to harmful misinformation, conspiracy theories and abuse. Romany Gypsy and Traveller women and girls have been misinformed about the health impacts of certain diet pills and nasal tanning sprays online that cause severe harm [22].

As well as this, digital exclusion on the basis of literacy, digital skills and education levels is highly relevant in the context of reporting. One's ability to read and comprehend content must be at a very high level before one can report abusive content. This requirement manifests as digital exclusion for certain minority groups. If a victim-survivor or advocate has limited literacy and digital skills, they have little chance in challenging online abuse or getting anything removed. Removing this option from minority groups is disempowering. Targeted digital citizenship education is therefore also beneficial in ensuring the empowerment of all minoritised communities.
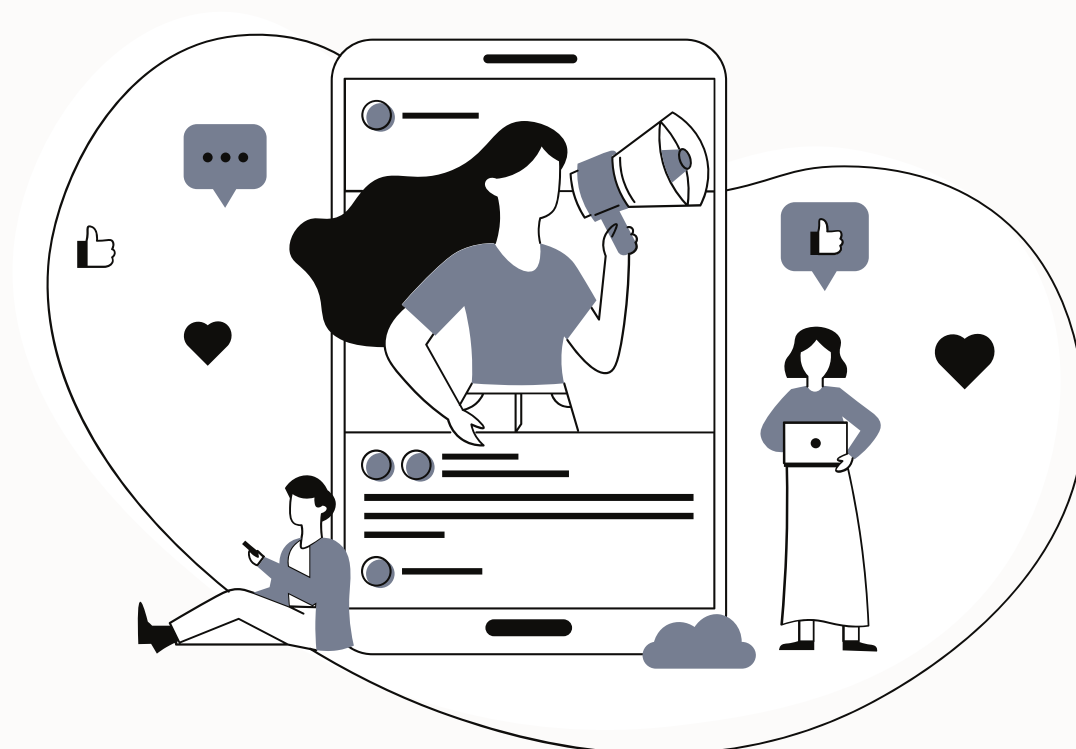
[22] Plan International (2020) 'Gypsy and Traveller girls,' The State of Girls' Rights in the UK, page 119, available at: https://plan-uk.org/file/plan-uk-state-of-girls-rights-report-2020pdf/download?token=42bpRbf8

Recommendations

① A public health approach by leading sector agencies must be adopted to examine the wider impact of online abuse, rather than treating online abuse as single incidents.

② Funders and commissioners should work alongside key stakeholders to resource an educational campaign to highlight the harms shaming poses within GRT communities and how it relates to healthy relationship education

③ Following the Finnish model [23], the Department of Education and NUT must ensure that multi-platform information literacy and strong critical thinking becomes a core, cross-subject component of the national curriculum to combat harmful misinformation and 'deep fakes'.

④ We fully support the Joint Briefing recommendation [24] to ringfence 10% of Digital Services Tax to fund organisations supporting survivors of online abuse and working on prevention, with 50% of this funding going to 'by and for' led Black and minoritised specialist organisations.

⑤ Under the Equality Act 2010, governmental institutions and tech companies should monitor online abuse against victims with protected characteristics.

⑥ Local authorities must provide access to targeted online safety courses for parents.

⑦ Frontline support services, staff employed by a local authority, the police and the NHS should follow Savera's 'One Chance Rule' where suspected harmful practices have occurred.

⑧ Mental health services and Children's services must be aware of the existence and impact of shaming in order to provide targeted support.

⑨ Targeted digital citizenship education is necessary to empower all minoritised communities.

[23] Henley, Jon. (2020) 'How Finland starts its fight against fake news in primary schools', The Guardian, available at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jan/28/fact-from-fiction-finlands-new-lessons-in-combating-fake-news [accessed 15/11/21]
[24] Centenary Action Group, Glitch, Antisemitism Policy Trust, Inclusion London, Stonewall, Compassion in Politics, Women's Equality Party, The Traveller Movement, Women's Aid Federation of England (Women's Aid), #NotYourPorn, Imkaan, Girlguiding, The Jo Cox Foundation, End Violence Against Women Coalition (EVAW), Womankind Worldwide, Equality Now, Tell MAMA UK and Julia Slupska, Oxford Internet Institute (2021) Joint Briefing: The Online Safety Bill and Online Harms Against Women, available at: https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5f6c6785a30f513e35cda046/t/614ca4226972ec62222dd0b7/1632412706796/CAG+Joint+Briefing+Online+Safety+Bill+020921.pdf