



Postgraduate Courses related to Clinical  
Criminology and Legal Psychology - Italy



# ANTIGROOMING TRAINING COURSE FOR PARENTS

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**Negative ICT usage by young people**

# DO YOU speak Grooming?

Child grooming refers to actions, that are deliberately undertaken with the aim of taking care of a child and establishing an emotional connection with him, in order to weaken child's inhibitions in preparation for a sexual activity or exploitation.



# WHO is the cyberpredator?

The cyber predator is a man between 25 and 40 years old, who has a good knowledge of cognitive and affective process which characterize the psychological world of the preadolescents. The reason why he has these knowledge is that he has a multi-problematic personality, pervert and fixed on a childish level, but also because he is dedicated to children and updating him on their interests like music, sports, fun, he can develop an experience that allows him to approach to preadolescent's wishes and needs (Salter, 2003).



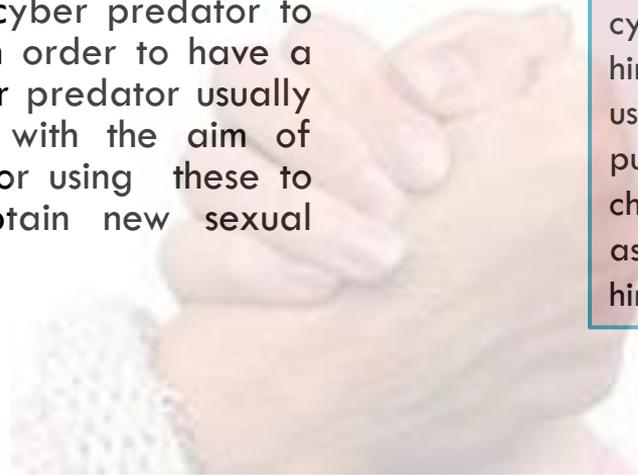
# “Cyber predator as ● ● ● ● guide AND mentor?”

The cyber predator usually introduces himself as a guide, a mentor, capable of explaining the complexity of the life, the management of problems and how sexuality works.

Obviously the real purpose of all this is exclusively sexual and not educational, this fact is soon revealed by the request of the cyber predator to meet the child in the real life, in order to have a sexual relationship, that the cyber predator usually wants to film or photograph with the aim of uploading these images on line or using these to blackmail him in order to obtain new sexual relationships (Finkelhor, 2004).

## Virtual sexual activities

The production of paedo-pornographic material can be realized also during the virtual relationship on the web, when the cyber predator asks to the child to show himself naked on the webcam, in order to use the video also for a commercial purpose. In this contest, he can urge the child to joint virtual sexual activities, asking him to masturbate while looking at him through the monitor.



# THE GROOMING

can be divided in five main steps:

- 1) friendship forming stage
- 2) relationship-forming stage
- 3) risk assessment stage
- 4) exclusivity stage
- 5) sexual stage

- **2** Once he obtains a friendship, he tries to become his best friend, discussing with him on topics like school, music, personal and family problems

relationship  
forming  
stage

- **1** The cyber-sexual predator tries to approach the child and to obtain from him a photo.

friendship  
forming  
stage

- **3** The cyber predator asks him where the pc is located and if the parents can control or participate to the virtual activities

risk  
assessment  
stage

- **4** The cyber predator suggests to keep confidential the virtual relationship in order to consider this particular and exclusive

exclusivity  
stage

**SEXUAL STAGE**



# 1) Friendship forming stage

## 2) Relationship-forming stage

In the first approaching stage (O'Connell, 2003), known as the "friendship forming stage", the cyber-sexual predator tries to approach the child and to obtain from him a photo in order to evaluate the physical characteristics of the child and, in case he lives in the neighborhood, to recognize him.

Once he obtains a friendship, he tries to become his best friend, discussing with him on topics like school, music, personal and family problems. And it is indeed with the time spent with the child, that the cyber sexual-predator aims to consolidate their friendship and to become the center of victim's affective and cognitive interests (build of a relationship).



### 3) Risk assesment stage

### 4) Exclusivity stage

In order to assesses the risks, keeping a virtual relationship with the child, the cyber predator asks him where the pc is located and if the parents can control or participate to the virtual activities. Only after that the child ascertains that there are no risks to be caught or uncovered and after that the child is really convinced to have found a true friend, the cyber predator suggests to keep confidential the virtual relationship in order to consider this particular and exclusive (exclusivity stage). In this respect, common used phrases are: *“You are special and I really love you”*; *“Be sure that nobody is informed on our special love”*



## 5) Sexual stage

At this point the following stage is generally introduced by phrases like: *“Have you ever been kissed?”* or *“Have you ever touched yourself?”*, or *“I’d like to kiss you”*, sentences which rarely are considered intrusive by the child in consideration of the intense, intimate and exclusive virtual relationship created with his “best friend”.



Cyber predator, exploiting the emotional involvement of the child, will then try to propose himself as a potential “lover/fiancée”, telling him that probably one day they will meet and he will demonstrate to the child all the “love” he feels and, in the meantime, he will be happy if he can have some photos in which the child appears naked or touching his genitals.

And in this respect, often happen that the cyber predator starts long descriptions of sexual activities which in the future the “couple” may carry out, taking information on the sexual interests of the child.

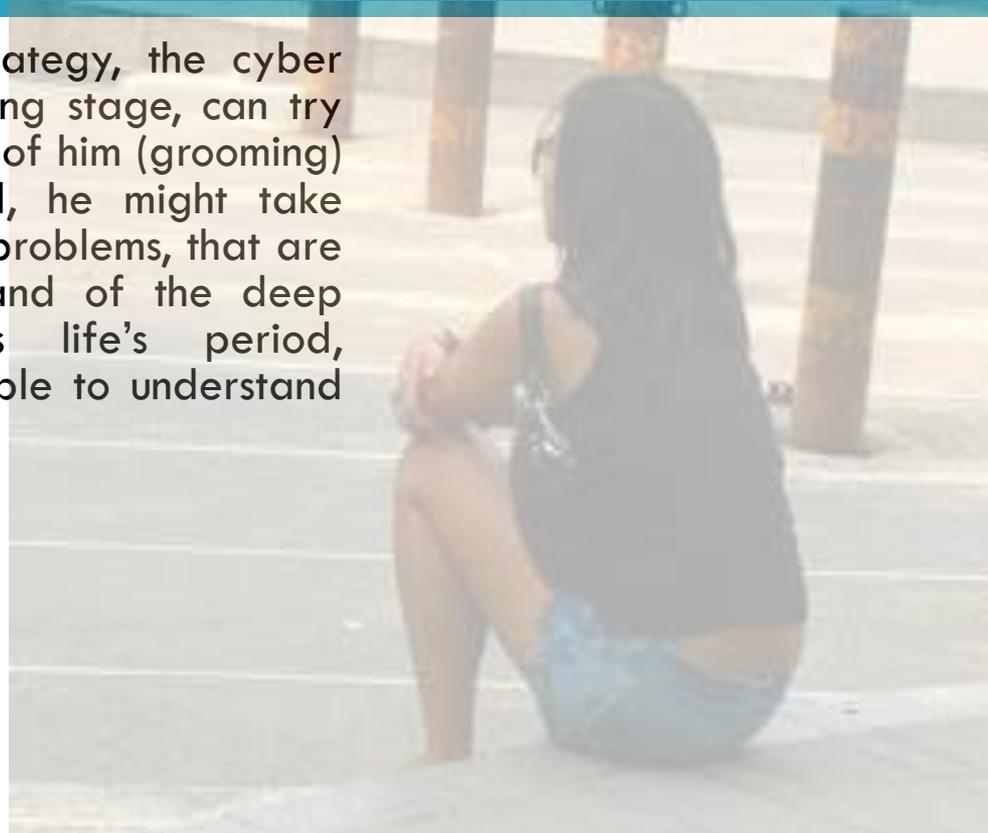
A circular gold coin (aureus) featuring a central figure, likely a deity or ruler, surrounded by a Latin inscription. The figure is seated and appears to be holding a staff or scepter. The inscription around the border is partially legible and includes the word "AVGVSTVS".

# A PARTICULAR STRATEGY OF CYBER PREDATORS: OEDIPUS THEMES



# OEDIPUS themes

Having regard to the use of this strategy, the cyber predator, during the relationship-forming stage, can try to seduce the young victim, taking care of him (grooming) and of his inner world. To this end, he might take advantage of the personal and social problems, that are common in the preadolescent age, and of the deep uncertainty that characterizes this life's period, pretending to be the only adult capable to understand and limit this discomfort.



# OEDIPUS themes

The tested repertoire is composed by **generic** questions (aimed to verify the willingness to approach the theme) like: “How it goes with your parents?” ”, **rhetorical** (which implicitly contains an answer), “Do your parents esteem you?”, “Do they really understand your problems?”, and **seductive** (exalting the qualities of the young victim) “Do they really understand how much are you worth?”, “Considering your skills, do they understand that they should put more trust in you?”.

All this questions allow the cyber predator to convince the preadolescent that he/she has finally found an authoritative adult, different from his/her parents, with whom he/she can freely speak without the risk to argue or to be judged.

# OEDIPUS themes

- Adding some moderate positive comments on parent's work, **"Surely they love you, but they can't prove it because they have many problems. You know, you must understand"**, the predator strategically avoids competition and maintains a neutral position, in order to gain the confidence of the young victim. The cyber predator presents himself as positive parental substitute, a loving father, who personifies the oedipal ideal and thus realizes the desire of the pre-adolescent to interact with a perfect father.
- This is clearly a confusing and mystifying experience, because the level of fantasy is superimposed on reality's level and so the preadolescent consciously creates a relationship with the cyber predator, but unconsciously he is trying to realize the oedipal desire to conquer the father figure. In all probability this unconscious oedipal desire will lead to a sexual abuse.
- Obviously not all preadolescent are so susceptible to the oedipal theme, but only those who have suffered affective deprivation, and so find the psychological attention, that they have not received from their parents, in these at risk relationships.



# Cyber-sexual predators and their approaching techniques on children at risk

Qualitative analysis of case studies carried out by the IFOS team

# CYBER predator strategies

Before asking sexual activities, the cyber predator tries to build a relationship with the young victim



In the following chat (in which Dr. Luca Pisano, with a fake web profile, pretended to be a beautiful 16 years old girl, named **Camilla**), the cyber predator is a man of 37 years, named **Maurizio**, that approaches with a catchy compliment.



## CHAT 1 - Camilla and Maurizio

# CHAT 1: Camilla and Maurizio



**Maurizio** — 14:34: I arrived recently here, but I can't find true people

**Maurizio** — 14:34: You seem sincere

**Camilla** — 14:35: Yes but I'm very young compared to you...too much..

**Maurizio** — 14:35: but does really age matter?

**Maurizio** — 14:36: come on, I don't seem old as I am

**Camilla** — 14:36: ahahahha but I look my age.

**Maurizio** — 14:36: usually people think that I'm younger than my age

**Camilla** — 14:36: Really?

**Maurizio** — 14:37: In this photo I seem old, but people tell me that I'm like a twenty-five year- old

**Maurizio** — 14:38: I find you very attractive



**Camilla** — 14:39: thank you

**Maurizio** — 14:39: is it your photo?

**Camilla** — 14:39: sure

**Maurizio** — 14:40: eeeeeeee, you are very attractive indeed

**Maurizio** — 14:40: but the age will change you!

**Camilla** — 14:40: I hope no!!!!

**Maurizio** — 14:41: no, you are very attractive and you will only better

**Camilla** — 14:41: you're exaggerating

**Maurizio** — 14:41: but your feature will change

**Camilla** — 14:41: help....!!!

# CHAT: Camilla and Maurizio

- ❑ **Camilla** — 14:41: I hope no!!!
- ❑ **Maurizio** — 14:42: but even better
- ❑ **Maurizio** — 14:42: can I kiss you :-D
- ❑ **Camilla** — 14:43: why?
- ❑ **Camilla** — 14:43: I don't know you.... it's not necessary!
- ❑ **Maurizio** — 14:43: hahahahahaha
- ❑ **Maurizio** — 14:43: but it is a virtual kiss
- ❑ **Camilla** — 14:43: what are you laughing at!!!!
- ❑ **Camilla** — 14:43: and what does it means?
- ❑ **Maurizio** — 14:44: it means that it is not real
- ❑ **Maurizio** — 14:44: yes because is like I'm giving it to my niece

**Maurizio** — 14:44: how sweet

**Camilla** — 14:45: hmmmmmm

**Maurizio** — 14:46: come on, you inspire me tenderness

**Camilla** — 14:47: sorry, but if I inspire you tenderness, why are you chatting with me?

**Maurizio** — 14:48: why not? I want to know you

**Camilla** — 14:49: yes but I'm too young for you...I go to school!

**Maurizio** — 14:49: but don't misunderstand me

**Maurizio** — 14:50: I understand but I will go to jail if I have a friend of your age?

**Maurizio** — 14:52: friendship does not have age

**Camilla** — 14:49: now I have to go....!

**Maurizio** — 14:52: can I contact you again?

# Analysis of chat 1

“Situational offenders” are people affected by a serious personality disorder and use the world wide web to cure their solitude, low self –esteem, depression, anxiety

and they may have a real life characterized by a respectable job, sometimes a wife with children or an official girlfriend with the same age.

Probably Maurizio is a **situational offender** (Lanning, 1998), that in the real life does not have a compulsive necessity to find adolescents and preadolescents for sexual purposes. This hypothesis is confirmed by his profile, which is populated by guys and girls that are 26 years old and older. We can consider Maurizio as a occasional cyber predator, because he acts only on line and so only with the protection of anonymity.

This approach with a young girl creates in Maurizio not only a sense of guilt for the discreditable behavior, but also a strong excitement for the transgressive act. This two factors may contribute to create in Maurizio's problematic and immature mind, a relevant confusion of which he seems not to be aware.

So Maurizio convinces himself that he is not doing nothing wrong, because he uses to his benefit the arbitrary division of reality in two categories: real (as it is) and virtual (as it seems). This fact lead also to a confusion of the logical process, so he experiments his fantasies in a world that he wrongly considers as not real.

- In fact he defines the kiss as “**virtual**”, a word that he considers as **synonym of unreal**, in this way he causes a big confusion comparing Camilla with his niece.

# CONCLUSIONS 1:

## CAMILLA

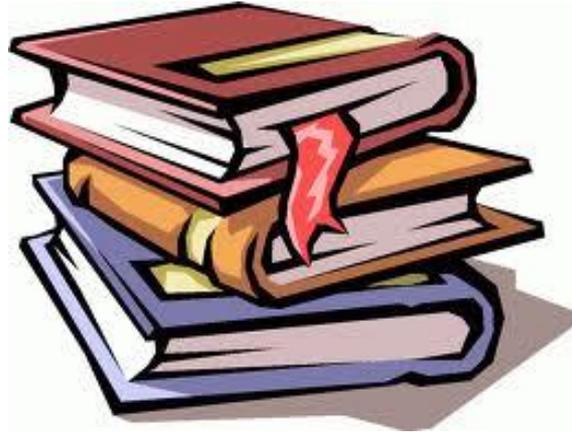
- ❑ **Makes the mistake of chatting with someone much older than her;**
- ❑ **But she is able to avoid being confused by the cyber predator**

## MAURIZIO

- ❑ **Praises the beauty of Camilla;**
- ❑ **Tries to confuse Camilla telling her that a virtual kiss is not true;**
- ❑ **Tries to confuse the psyche of Camilla, superposing the register of passion (“to give a Kiss”) with the register of tenderness (“yes because is like I’m giving it to my niece”) and introducing the Oedipal theme of taking care (“friendship does not have age “)**

**FOR further information about passion and tenderness, please read:**

**Confusion of the Tongues Between the Adults and the Child: *The Language of Tenderness and of Passion*. S. FERENCZI, 1933**





## CHAT 2 - Camilla and Vincenzo

# CHAT 2: Camilla and Vincenzo

**Vincenzo**, is 62 years old, he is a refined man that presents himself in the photo of his profile with jacket and ties and he contacted my fake virtual profile, “Camilla”, leaving the following message:

**Vincenzo** — 14:57: Hi, I'd like to listen some music next to you

**Vincenzo** — 14:57: but it seems that we are... pretty far

**Vincenzo** — 14:58: telling the truth, also for the age

**Vincenzo** — 14:58: even if I prefer a young woman then an old one

**Vincenzo** — 14:58: ...a beautiful woman then an ugly one

**Vincenzo** — 14:59: and you seem so beautiful....

**Vincenzo** — 14:59 :-)

# Classic offenders

Obviously not all cyber predators are occasional. There are some “**classic offenders**” who have a serious psychopathology and are certainly more dangerous than a classic offender like Maurizio.

These people search “off line” and “on line” preadolescents or children, pressed by the need to dominate and express power in the relationship, or to exercise control or revenge, turning a childish trauma, or rather the abuse suffered in the childhood, into a triumph in adult age (Stoller, 1978).



# Characteristics of classic offender

Also in this case, the first approach, that is based on the evaluation of the physical characteristics, aims to emphasize the beauty of the young victim, and the cyber predator is not worried at all about the relevant age difference (50 years).

Furthermore, unlike a classic offender, he reveals his identity, adding in his profile many information that allow his identification.

**Probably Vincenzo** is a classic offender that has approached gradually the world of social networks:

- 1) at the beginning discovering it after the suggestion of a friend (Discovery, Young, 2005);
- 2) then experimenting some sexual fantasies with adults (Experimentation);
- 3) and finally searching adolescents or preadolescents in the attempt to feel stronger feelings (Escalation)

**Only in the most serious cases**, the cyber predator can feel an irresistible compulsion that consists in a daily search of excitement, anxiety and fear (Carnes 1992) , all emotions that he felt during grooming and alluring attempts. In this way the cyber predator puts in the center of his life only the world of social networks and the desire to have sex with children.

# Characteristics of compulsive offender

- In this respect Young (2005) evidenced that the compulsive cyber predator experiments on line an altered state of conscience that allows him to forget personal, economic, sentimental problems, lived in the real life.
- So he tries to rationalize his behavior, being convinced that he can stop it whenever he wants. Only after he realizes to have loose control and to be completed under the control of his needs (Hopelessness).

**In addition to cyber predators** who gradually build a relationship with preadolescents, there are those, which don't waste their time, and that explicit immediately their sexual ends in order to understand if it is the case to invest time and energy with a pre adolescent.

# CONCLUSIONS 2:

## CAMILLA

- ❑ **DOES** not respond to the message and therefore avoids getting involved in a dangerous relationship

## VINCENZO

Reveals his identity, adding in his profile various information that allow to identify him;

Does not want to consider the age difference;

Immediately reveals his sexual targets;



# *Exercises* for parents

CHAT A - Camilla and Emresco

Please, YOU read the following chat

# Exercise A: Camilla and Emresco

**Emresco** — 15:48: hi, I live alone, I'm divorced and I'd like to meet beautiful women like you

**Camilla** — 15:48: but I'm not a woman. I'm only 17 years old

**Emrescue** — 15:49: Girl

**Emresco** — 15:49: but I have to say that you're very pretty

**Camilla** — 15:49: thank you

**Emresco** — 15:49: and am I nice?

**Emresco** — 15:50: what do you like of me?

**Camilla** — 15:50: the age!

**Emresco** — 15:50: does mature men attract you?

**Camilla** — 15:50: yes

This is our case study on “Emresco”, who is 57 years old and works as secretary in an elementary school in Abruzzo (Italy). He asks to Camilla, in the very first minutes of the chat, if she is willing to meet him and have sex.

# Exercise A: Camilla and Emresco

- **Emresco** — 15:51: and do you like to have sex?
- **Camilla** — 15:52: but we don't know each other
- **Emresco** — 15:52: true
- **Emresco** — 15:52: and what do you do?
- **Emresco** — 15:52: do you study?
- **Camilla** — 15:53: yes, economy
- **Camilla** — 15:53: and do you work in a school?
- And what do you do?
- **Emresco** — 15:53: secretary
- **Emresco** — 15:54: Imagine I was in your school, would you like thar?
- **Camilla** — 15:54: hmmm, I don't know
- **Emresco** — 15:55: you are really pretty
- **Camilla** — 15:56: thank you

# Exercise A: Camilla and Emresco

**Emresco** — 15:56: you fascinate me with those eyes

**Emresco** — 15:57: with the lips

**Camilla** — 15:57: yes, thanks for the compliments

**Emresco** — 15:57: you're welcome

**Emresco** — 15:58: are you romantic?

**Camilla** — 15:59: yes, a lot

**Emresco** — 16:00: how sweet

**Emresco** — 16:00: Do you like to be cuddled, followed?

**Emresco** — 16:00: listened

**Camilla** — 16:00: yes, a lot. Why you ask me this?

**Emresco** — 16:00: because your eyes are full of beautiful love

**Camilla** — 16:01: ohh, thank you

**Emresco** — 16:01: and I'm a very sweet person

**Emresco** — 16:02: where are you?

**Emresco** — 16:04: in Cagliari?

**Camilla** — 16:05: yes

**Emresco** — 16:05: but we are far

**Emresco** — 16:05: tell me the truth...If I come

**Emresco** — 16:05: will you meet me?

**Camilla** — 16:06: come on, we have just known each other

**Emresco** — 16:06: I understand, but I mean

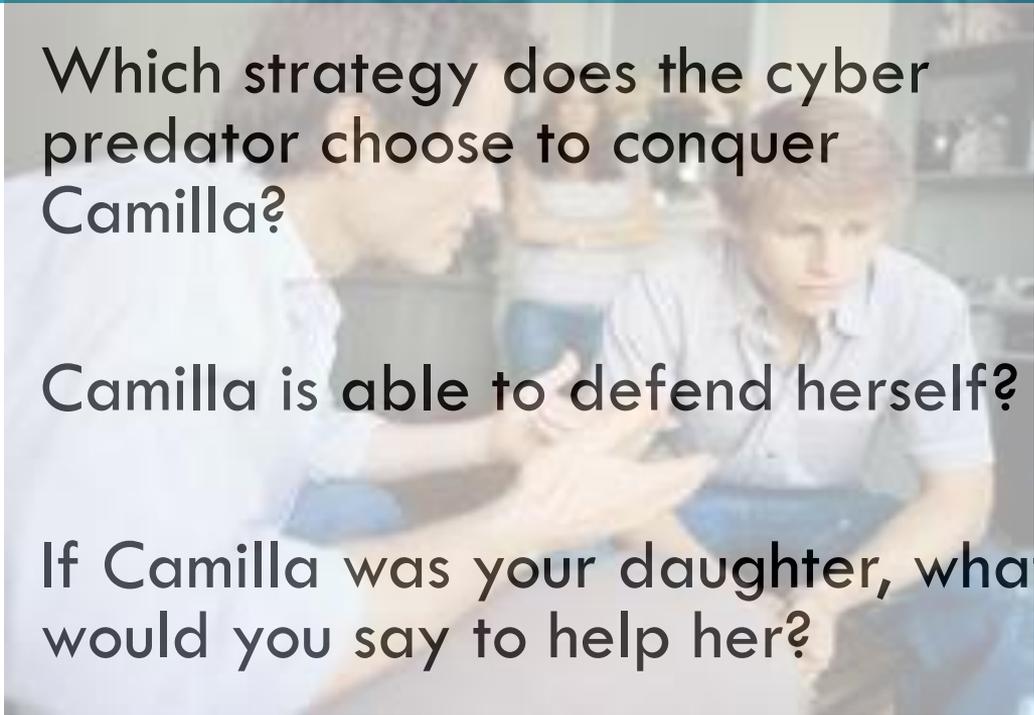
**Emresco** — 16:06: know me, for real

**Emresco** — 16:06: nothing else

**Emresco** — 16:06: you are an angel Camilla

# Questions for parents

Try to  
answer the  
questions  
and then  
compare  
your  
answers with  
those of the  
next slide



Which strategy does the cyber predator choose to conquer Camilla?

Camilla is able to defend herself?

If Camilla was your daughter, what would you say to help her?



# ANSWERS

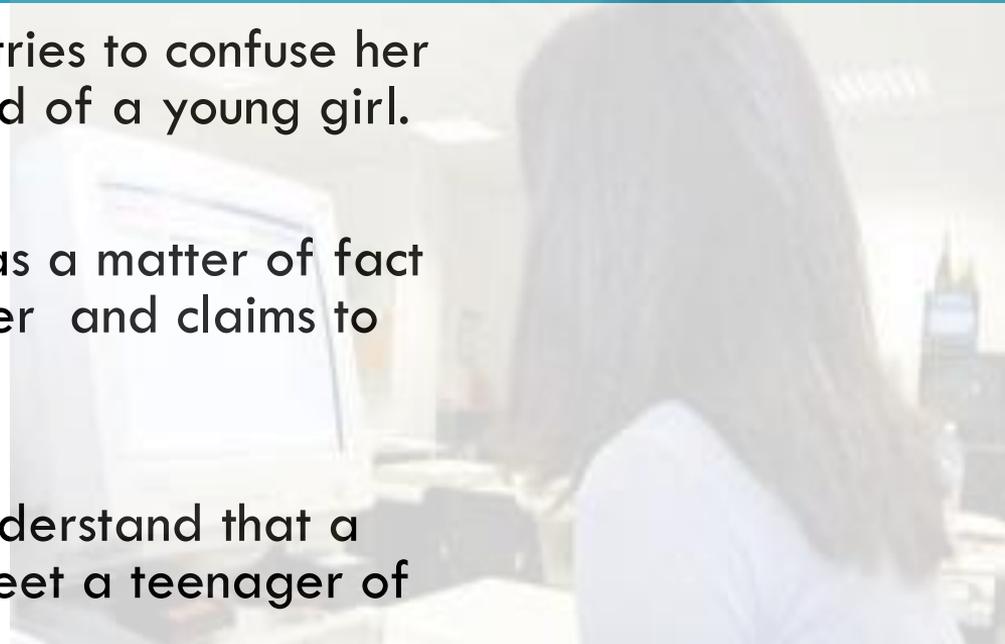
Exsercise A

# ANSWERS

He praises Camilla's beauty and tries to confuse her telling that she is a woman instead of a young girl.

She is unable to defend herself, as a matter of fact she accepts to chat with a stranger and claims to be attracted by men.

Parents should help Camilla to understand that a man of 57 years who wants to meet a teenager of 16 years has a psychopathology.





**Exercises**

**for parents**

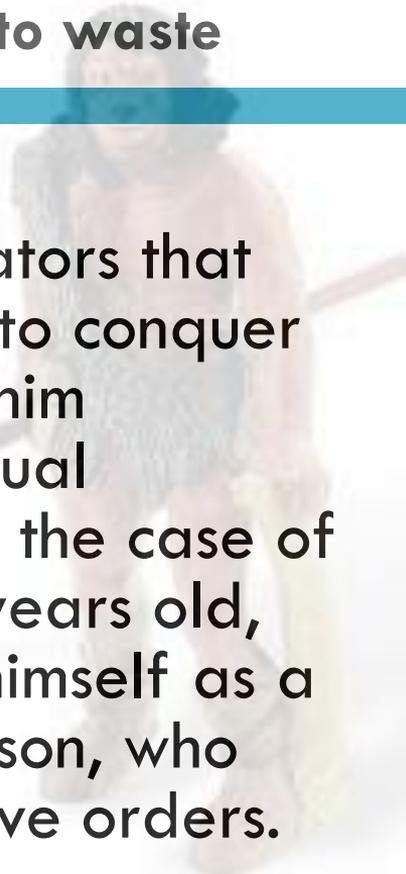
CHAT B - Camilla and Cuciolottobello

Please, Read the following chat

# Cyber predators who don't have time to waste

Different from cyber predators, which gradually build a relationship with preadolescents, this kind of cyber predator, doesn't waste his time, and reveals immediately their sexual ends in order to understand if is the case to invest time and energy with a particular subject.

- There are also cyber predators that are very nagging, they try to conquer the preadolescent sending him seductive and explicitly sexual messages every day. This is the case of “cuciolottobello”, man, 38 years old, shopkeeper, who presents himself as a normal, sweet and nice person, who doesn't like to give or receive orders.



# Exercise B: Camilla and Cuciolottobello

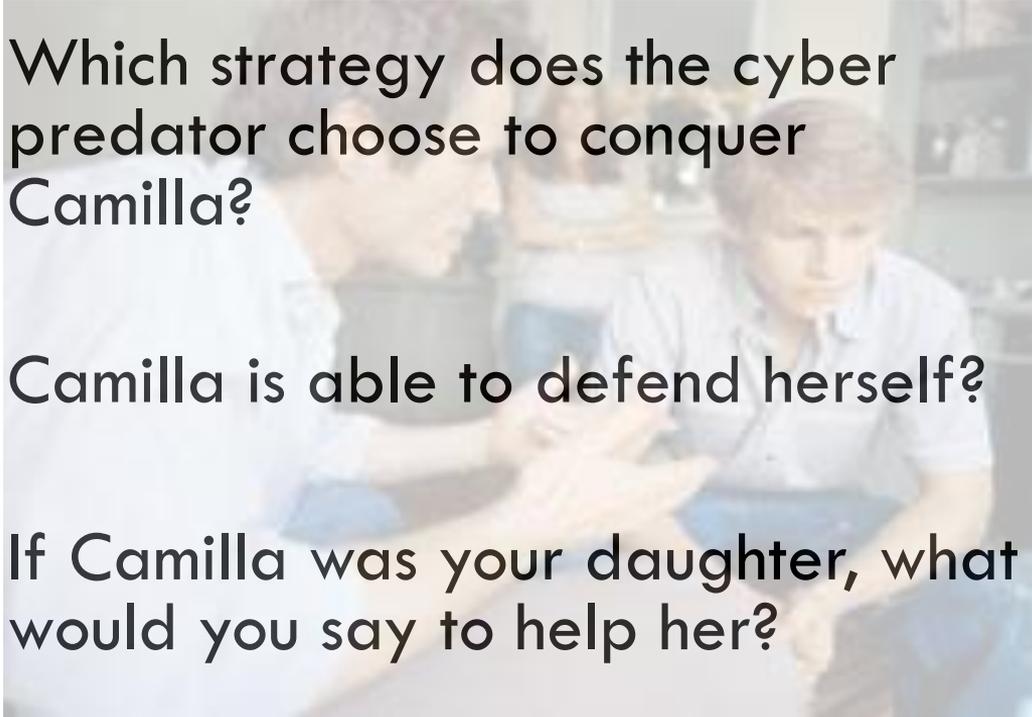
- **Cuciolottobello** — *Tuesday, November 30, 2010 09:47*: sweetheart! such beautiful eyes, such lips
- **Cuciolottobello** — *Thursday, December 2010 22:30*: I'd like to know you
- **Camilla** — *thursday, December, 9 2010 22:34*: hi
- **Cuciolottobello** — *thursday, December, 9 2010 22:35*: are you from Cagliari
- **Camilla** — *thursday, December, 9 2010 22:35*: yes
- **Cuciolottobello** — *thursday, December, 9 2010*: do you like to meet me?
- **Camilla** — *giovedì, 09 dicembre 2010 22:35*: but...I don't know you....
- **Cuciolottobello** — *thursday, December, 9 2010 22:36*: Let's know each other
- **Cuciolottobello** — *Friday December 10 2010 15:54*: If you wasn't minor...I would like to go out with you one day
- **Camilla** — *Friday December, 10 2010 15:54*: yes, but we don't know each other....better chatting

# Exercise B: Camilla and Cuciolottobello

- **Cuciolottobello** — *Friday December 10 2010, 15.57, ok sweetheart, I like you*
- **Camilla** — *Friday December, 10 2010 15:57: what are you talking about... you don't even know me...!!!*
- **Cuciolottobello** — *Friday December, 10 2010 15:57: let's know each other*
- **Cuciolottobello** — *Saturday December, 11 2010 23:03: one day I would like to see you*
- **Cuciolottobello** — *Saturday December, 11 2010 23:05 and give you a gift*
- **Cuciolottobello** — *Sunday December, 11 2010, 17:03 would you like to have a top up card for your our mobile? You recharge me and I recharge you*
- **Cuciolottobello** — *Saturday December, 11 2010 17:08 sweaty*
- **Camilla** — *Saturday December, 11 2010 17:08: I don't understand*
- **Cuciolottobello** — *Saturday December, 11 2010 23:10: I mean the mobile phone, in exchange of some kisses.*

# Questions for parents

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Which strategy does the cyber predator choose to conquer Camilla?

Camilla is able to defend herself?

If Camilla was your daughter, what would you say to help her?



# ANSWERS

Exsercise B

# ANSWERS B



He praises and emphasizes the beauty of Camilla and commits a sexual harassment.

She is unable to defend herself because she accepts to chat with a stranger and accepts the sexual harassment.

Parents should help Camilla to understand that a man who sexually harasses has a psychopathology and is very dangerous.