



Narratives of harm and safeguarding in response to the virality of *Everyone's Invited*

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Abstract

Drawing from my doctoral research I will explore the context and development of narratives of harm and safeguarding in relation to sexual abuse between secondary age students with a focus on how these developed in response to the virality of the website *Everyone's Invited*, which allowed the posting of first-hand accounts of abuse. My research combines Cultural-Historical Activity Theory with a Narrative Policy Framework approach to show how the source of the narrative and other contextual factors impact the way that problems, heroes, villains, and solutions are conceptualised and developed. Starting with the changing media and policy landscape I will summarise the complex and contradictory situation that existed in the late 2010s before covering how this developed into the narratives that emerged out of the *Everyone's Invited* and the media response to it. I will then consider how these narratives informed the narratives of harm and safeguarding used by school safeguarding leads as they sought to respond to the media storm. Across these narrative developments I will emphasise the tension between individual and structural causal explanations, including the role of technology, and the different solutions that resulted. To conclude I will briefly reflect on how these narratives have subsequently developed as the discussion of gender-based violence in schools continues to develop at a fast pace.

Keywords: child protection, education, gender-based abuse, safeguarding, technology enabled harm