

# The Blue Whale Challenge

## Prevention

This game emerged in Russia in early 2017.

In Russia more than 100 deaths have been attributed to the “Blue Whale” challenge or similar games. In February two adolescents jumped from a 14 story building in Irkutsk, in the region of Siberia. According to investigators, these suicides took place after completing the tasks.

In Portugal as at 4<sup>th</sup> May there are four cases (three of self-mutilation) and one an attempted Suicide that are being investigated by police for possible connection with this game.

The following information has been provided by the PSP police.



### What is the Blue Whale Challenge?

- The blue Whale Challenger consists of a daily sequence of 50 tasks, the objective is to make the victim commit suicide
- The challenges are sent daily to the victim by a healer/moderator/administrator
- These tasks range from something simple such as producing mere drawings. To others such as self-mutilation or crimes against third persons, not necessarily on an escalating scale
- The name has its origin in the behaviour of some Blue Whales who beach themselves in apparent suicide.
- Youths with depressive tendencies are the most vulnerable and therefore need greater supervision.

### How is a person invited to join and pressurized to stay?

- Joining is initially made through conversations on social networks, where the game is presented and proposed by so called “friends”
- After this, an administrator validates the acceptance of the victim who has been “invited” and integrates him/her in an application, by conversation through WhatsApp, through which they interact.
- The healer/moderator pretends to be interested and understanding of how the victim feels, offering him/her the possibility of undertaking various tasks in order to build esteem and feel valued.

- In truth he is only fooling the victim, involving the victim in a lie, which is physically auto-destructive and psychologically leading to a breakdown.

### Consequences

- In Portugal any healer/moderator undertaking this activity is liable to one of the most serious crimes in our legislation; crimes against life.
- That is, the crime of inciting or helping a person to commit suicide, which incurs a penalty of three years in prison if the victim is an adult and at least attempts the suicide.
- If the victim is a minor, the penalty increases to 5 years.
- The police are attempting to locate these healers and moderators and bring them before the courts
- The creator of the game has already been arrested together with some healers and moderators

### What to do?

Teachers, parents and friends need to be aware of this game and any signs that a person maybe participating in these 50 challenges. Signs are:

- “Inscriptions” in the palms of the hands
- Signs of self-mutilation on arms, legs and lips
- A sudden interest in horror films
- Undertaking unexplained activities late at night or early hours
- Becoming exposed to danger in areas such as high places
- Taking an interest in the design of Blue Whales
- Remaining uncommunicative for excessively long periods

If any of the above are apparent parents should discuss with local police and/or a school term supervisor, teacher or school psychologist

If needed, seek specialised psychological help from a psychopathologist with clinical supervision.

### In addition:

Parents are advised to keep themselves informed about the game and to alert children and young people to its implications;

- There should be greater supervision and monitoring of children's activities on the **Internet** and social networks;
- It is also important that parents warn children about the risks of adding strangers and recommend that only family, friends and school people be on the social network friends list;
- The PSP also recommends the proper use of digital media and but there is no need to prohibit access;
- Most importantly is to encourage dialogue and discussion in the family about the issues related to security, privacy dangers regarding the **internet** in order to promote greater knowledge on the part of children and young people;

Posted 6<sup>th</sup> May 2017