

# **Educational Resource and Study Guide to Accompany the Prevention film Elizabeth and Ziggy: A Young Person's Entrapment in Sexual Abuse**

**Celeste Coler and Jon R. Conte<sup>1</sup>**

## **What is Elizabeth and Ziggy?**

Elizabeth and Ziggy is a series of seven short episodes tied together in a 35 minute film about Elizabeth, an ordinary teen, as she becomes consumed by a sexually abusive relationship with her teacher/coach. Through Elizabeth sharing her internal world with her dog Ziggy, the series depicts the conditioning or "grooming" process for abuse. This educational guide is meant to highlight the red flags, developmental issues, and typical processes involved in youth abuse by adults in important roles in their lives.

Discussion of Elizabeth & Ziggy can take place after each episode/part or after youth view the entire film.

This guide provides a thoughtful, informative backdrop to the information covered in the series including discussion questions, definitions, and additional resources for young people.

## **What is Grooming?**

Grooming is a process used by adults that include manipulative behaviors that allow abusers to gain access and the trust of a potential victim. Grooming often manipulates youth to consent or believe they have consented to the abuse and reduces the risk of the abusive behavior being identified or reported. It is important to understand that grooming is usually a process perpetrated by an adult within the youth/victim's circle of trust. This may be a coach, teacher, youth group leader, etc.

Many grooming behaviors are the same behaviors that a mentor or caring adult will exhibit in interaction with youth but instead of caring and mentoring the child, the behavior has the intent of convincing the youth that the relationship is a real one. Normal aspects of being a youth can create "vulnerabilities" which can be manipulated by adults as part of creating a relationship in which the youth is abused and does not report it for a period of time.

The following are aspects of the conditioning process deliberately manipulated by the adult with the purpose of:

- Convincing the youth that adult cares;
- Convincing that the youth and adult have a special, unique relationship;

---

<sup>1</sup> Celeste Coler is a Claremont McKenna student and Co-coordinator of the Youth Participation Program and Jon R. Conte, Ph.D. is the former Director of the Joshua Center on Child Sexual Abuse Prevention, University of Washington, Seattle, WA. For information contact jrcontephd@gmail.com.

- Making the youth believe that only the adult truly cares about the youth;
- Desensitizing the youth to touch;
- Creating a secret relationship which feels special and unique to the youth;
- Convincing the youth that the youth wants the relationship to become intimate;
- Manipulating the real care the youth may feel for the adult to avoid reporting the behavior which will get youth and adult in trouble
- Separating emotionally the youth from peers and adults who would stop the abuse;
- 

Meeting the developmental needs of youth in an effort to create a special relationship in which the youth depends upon the adult for emotional and other support (e.g. access to special events or experiences, gifts, etc)

While grooming can take numerous forms, many of which are depicted in Elizabeth and Ziggy, below is a list of common behaviors and red flags that may indicate that grooming is taking place.

- Privately/Secretly gives you expensive, special or personal gifts in exchange for your silence
- Shows you pornography, gives you drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, vaping products
- Asks for nude pictures or shows you nude pics of themselves or others
- Encourages you to sneak out of the house and/or not tell parents you are with them
- Makes sexual remarks on your physical appearance or development (example: you look sexy)
- Seeks to have deeply personal conversations with you especially about sexual things
- Discusses their own deeply personal problems with a you (example divorce, need for companionship)
- Encourages you to keep secrets
- Threatens you with your mistakes
- Makes uncomfortable touches to private parts of your body
- Shows unnecessary physical affection in public or in private locations
- Uses their position and authority to get you to do something you are uncomfortable doing
- Seeks or encourages you or others to be alone with them, including on-line
- Excessively calls, texts or other contact with you
- Seeks to control who you are friends with
- Seeks to control you and what you say to your parents or trusted adults
- Uses past experiences or mistakes to guilt you into silence

It is critically important to recognize that what makes a youth vulnerable to grooming mostly are completely normal aspects of being a young person. Victims and their peers often blame the young person for not stopping the abuse or not disclosing the abuse earlier. The basic purpose of grooming or conditioning is to manipulate the

young person so that normal protective instinct and relationships with peers or adults who can help are overridden. Self-blame and victim-blaming are inconsistent with modern understanding of victimization. In a strange and unconscious way they also serve to protect youth and adults from the realization that all youth are vulnerable to grooming. By blaming the victim there is an idea that it could never happen to me or it could never happen to my child because the victim is different and was abused because of that difference.

Every state of development has unique emotions, experiences, and challenges which are a normal part of growing up.

What are the normal developmental experiences of being a teen? What aspects of the teen years are part of normal development?

- Moving away from parents and increasing independence
- Exposure to more adults and older teens
- Struggling with self-esteem, belonging, and identity
- Experimenting with relationships and experiences
- Feeling excited about increasing independence ( at times overly confident)

### **PART 1** The Beginning

In this episode, what aspects of Elizabeth's life, which are typical of most youth, might an adult with negative intentions (i.e. a groomer) exploit? In other words what aspects of being a youth make Elizabeth vulnerable?

- Elizabeth mentions that she feels ignored by her parents.
- She had a fight with her parents.
- Elizabeth feels her brother gets more attention and understanding from their parents.
- Elizabeth states that she feels very insecure.
- Mom thinks Coach is a great guy.
- Coach is well liked, and charismatic. Youth think he is "cute" or "handsome".

Are there any preliminary signs of grooming in this episode?

- Coach Kingsly offers Elizabeth the position as captain and tells her that he will advocate on her behalf to colleges. While this moment in and of itself is **not** grooming, it sets the stage for his creating a closer bond.
- Elizabeth asserts that her mother knows and trusts Coach Kingsly. While this moment in and of itself is **not** grooming, it demonstrates that Coach Kingsly is a trusted, well-liked member of Elizabeth's community.
- How many normal aspects of being a young person does Elizabeth describe which could put her at risk?

- How would a real friend respond to Elizabeth's normal angst?

## **PART 2** Coach Kingsly

In this episode, what aspects of being a young woman, which are typical of most youth, might an adult with negative intentions (i.e. a groomer) exploit? In other words what aspects of being a youth make Elizabeth vulnerable?

- Elizabeth feels isolated and even ostracized from her peers.
- What seems to be the reasons for Elizabeth being so happy in this episode?

Are there any signs of grooming in this episode?

- Coach Kingsly uses his authority to give Elizabeth an ultimatum between getting Elizabeth a big scholarship, and spending time with Brandon, a boy she likes. Here, Kingsley is seeking to control who Elizabeth is friends with.
- Coach Kingsly encourages Elizabeth to be alone with him in his office.
- Coach Kingsly shows unnecessary physical affection by putting his hand on Elizabeth's leg in his office.
- Other adults may be noticing something, how does the Coach discount this with Elizabeth before anything serious happens?

Identify moments in this episode where some form of bystander intervention takes place or when bystander intervention should have taken place?

What is difficult about intervening when you witness grooming, exploitation of power dynamics, or abuse? Why is it nonetheless necessary to intervene?

How would you do or say about your concerns to Elizabeth that she might be able to hear?

Do you think it is too early to say or do something? If yes what would you do? If no what would you do?

## **PART 3** Mon Cheri

In this episode, what aspects of Elizabeth's life, which are typical of most youth, might an adult with negative intentions (i.e. a groomer) exploit? In other words what aspects of being a youth make Elizabeth vulnerable?

- When Elizabeth talks to her parents about her game, they seem uninterested. Elizabeth leaves the interaction feeling like she cannot tell her parents about the things going on in her life.

Are there any signs of grooming in this episode?

- Coach Kingsly gives Elizabeth a noticeably long hug. Later in the episode he puts his arm around her, touches her cheek, and puts his hands on her lower back. This is an attempt to make physical touch seem appropriate or caring.
- While Coach Kingsly seems to genuinely care about Elizabeth's success in soccer, he is using the illusion that he cares to gain Elizabeth's trust.
- Coach Kingsly discusses his own deeply personal problems, including his intimate relationship with his wife, with Elizabeth.

Do you think Coach is trying to come between Elizabeth and her parents?

What did the Coach do to support Elizabeth in not going to the prom with a guy she is interested in? Why would the Coach do this?

Elizabeth said she felt old and young at the same time? What is this about?

Coach reveals personal details of his life and then Elizabeth does the same. In what ways does this cement the relationship?

Elizabeth has some emerging questions about the relationship. What are they.

#### **PART 4** The Kiss

In this episode, what aspects of Elizabeth's life, which are typical of most youth, might an adult with negative intentions (i.e. a groomer) exploit? In other words what aspects of being a youth make Elizabeth vulnerable?

- Elizabeth lies to her parents after calling Coach Kingsly Ben.
- Elizabeth's parents begin to notice things that they question. What are these?

Are there any signs of grooming in this episode?

- Coach Kingsly convinces Elizabeth to lie to her parents, arguing that he has her best interests in mind, and they do not.
- Coach Kingsly continues to talk to Elizabeth about his deeply personal marital problems.
- Coach Kingsly, for the first time, touches Elizabeth in public.
- After he kisses Elizabeth, Coach Kingsly asks her to keep it a secret.
- Coach says they have a special relationship other people will not understand. What impact does this have on Elizabeth?

Earlier in the guide, you are provided with a list that details the purpose of the conditioning (grooming) process. Of that list, what behaviors has Coach Kingsly demonstrated thus far?

If you were on the soccer team, how would you react to the Coach hugging Elizabeth?  
Does it matter what kind of a hug?

- Convincing the youth that adult cares
- Convincing that the youth and adult have a special, unique relationship
- Making the youth believe that only the adult truly cares about the youth
- Desensitizing the youth to touch
- Creating a secret relationship which feels special and unique to the youth
- Convincing the youth that the youth wants the relationship to become intimate
- Manipulating the real care the youth may feel for the adult to avoid reporting the behavior which will get youth and adult in trouble
- Separating emotionally the youth from peers and adults who would stop the abuse

Many times in the last four episodes, Elizabeth has suggested that Coach Kingsly is a well-known and well respected adult in her community. How might this effect Elizabeth's ability to recognize that grooming is taking place or confide in a trusted adult about Coach Kingsly's inappropriate behavior?

#### **PART 5** The Bracelet

Why is it relevant that Coach Kingsly stays to talk to Elizabeth's dad? How might this contribute to the grooming process?

In this episode, what are some forms of intervention that seem to be taking place? Are they effective or ineffective?

Elizabeth's peers make fun of her for what they acknowledge is an odd dynamic between Elizabeth and Coach Kingsly? What is a more appropriate way to respond if you witness grooming or abuse taking place?

Are there any new signs of grooming in this episode?

- By offering to save money for college, Coach Kingsly is offering Elizabeth expensive, special or personal gifts in exchange for her silence
- Coach Kingsly makes remarks on Elizabeth's appearance many times.
- Coach Kingsly and Elizabeth demonstrate increasing inappropriate behavior and sexual acts.
- Coach makes some aspects of their relationship public (e.g., giving a ride home)

In this episode the grooming has had the desired effect. Elizabeth believes it is a "real relationship". What does she say and do that indicates she has been conditioned or groomed into an inappropriate relationship?

Elizabeth tells Ziggy she is so confused. She does not really explain this. If you were Elizabeth what might cause the confusion? Is there a possibility that the grooming has not been totally successful and there are some thoughts or feelings that cause Elizabeth to be confused?

## **PART 6** Trapped

We see a change in Elizabeth in this episode.

How would you describe what Elizabeth is going through?

She is ambivalent about the relationship, what are the positive and negative aspects of the relationship Elizabeth is reacting to?

Has the coach's behavior changed?

Why do you think his behavior has changed?

Is the grooming over and replaced by control?

When the Coach calls about seeing Elizabeth talking to a boy, what does he try to do to her? How does he use normal developmental concerns against her (e.g., how she is viewed by the rest of her community)?

What are the examples of how the coach tries to control Elizabeth?

What does not looking at Elizabeth when they had sex in the classroom tell Elizabeth about the "relationship". Later in the car what does he do to try to keep her thinking he cares?

What is the effect that Coach Kingsly's voicemail may have?

- Coach Kingsly creates the illusion that Elizabeth is not trusted or looked down upon in her community. This implies that if she were to come forward about the grooming and abuse, she would not be believed.

At this point, what are Elizabeth's options in terms of support and disclosure? Why might she be hesitant to pursue these options? What is keeping her a prisoner? Does she know she is a prisoner?

What are the negative consequences in Elizabeth's life at this point?

If Elizabeth was your best friend what would you talk to her about?

## **PART 7** I have to tell someone

Elizabeth is feeling trapped and that the “relationship” is mostly toxic.

How has the Coach’s behavior changed?

What does Elizabeth think might be going on in the relationship?

Is Elizabeth feeling what the Coach really wanted in the relationship?

Elizabeth feels guilty for running lives. Who should feel guilty?

How could the principle have handled the situation more effectively?

Elizabeth tried to get out of the relationship, what controlling techniques does the coach use again her?

How might her mother have reacted that would support Elizabeth in disclosing?

Is the thought of a month at soccer camp more than Elizabeth can bare?

What do you think Elizabeth should do?

### **Joshua Center Resources for Grooming and Sexual Abuse**

[All Youth 2 Youth Joshua Center Resources & Discussions](#)

[Joshua Center Youth Discussion: Mentors and Trusted Adults - Identifying Red Flags with Mike Johnson](#)

See also:

Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network. <https://www.rainn.org/>

How to Support a Loved One

Grooming: Know the Warning Signs