Scapegoating & Online Harms

This week, we're looking at scapegoating and how the internet affect this. It's a term you've probably head before but may not not know what it really means... so lets have a look!

A "scapegoat" is a person or group that is blamed for something bad or tragic, without concrete proof.

So, "scapegoating" is the act of blaming a group or person for something bad that has happened, or that someone else has done

SHOUT OUT UK
THE VOICE OF THE NEXT GENERATION

Activity 1: Research

Use the internet to do some research about the term "scapegoat", answer the 2 questions below:

1) Where does the word originate?
2) When was it first used in its current meaning?

In particular, this link may be helpful:
Scapegoat Definition

So why does it matter?

Scapegoating can be very minor or devastatingly serious.

A minor example would be blaming your brother or sister for finishing the cake (when you actually ate it yourself).

However, the Nazis blamed the Jews for all the problem in Germany which ultimately led to the horrors of the Holocaust.

Scapegoating can be incredibly serious and it's important to **call it out** when we see it.

Social Media

As always, anything that happens in real life is reflected in our online lives. A lot of scapegoating occurs online. Commentators express their opinions, placing blame on certain groups, often without evidence.

If these views match people's prejudices, they can spread very quickly and become viral - even if there is **no evidence** at all!

We must **ALWAYS** stop and think before sharing something. Is this a **fair** accusation? Is there **proof**? How does **bias** play a role?

Scapecoating and Covid-19

Scapegoating happens a lot in politics because politicians often want to place the blame outside of themselves.

This has been happening with Covid-19.

TASK: can you think of any examples of Covid-19 scapegoating?

United States

Donald J. Trump ✔ @realDonaldTrump · 16 Mar

The United States will be powerfully supporting those industries, like Airlines and others, that are particularly affected by the Chinese Virus. We will be stronger than ever before!

💬 129.2K　　🔁 71.2K　　❤️ 325.3K

Trump has repeatedly referred to Covid-19 as "the Chinese virus", blaming China for the devastating effects of the pandemic rather than his own government's lack of action early in the outbreak

Criticized for Pandemic Response, Trump Tries Shifting Blame to the W.H.O.

The president said he would halt funding for the organization because it caused "so much death" in the way it "pushed Chinese misinformation," though he himself effusively praised China's handling of the virus.

Trump has also blamed the World Health Organisation for the spread of the virus, in an attempt to divert attention from his own failure to take it seriously

India

DISPATCH

India Is Scapegoating Muslims for the Spread of the Coronavirus

The pandemic has provided fresh opportunity for Hindu nationalists to beat down an already disadvantaged minority group.

BY **SAMEER YASIR** | APRIL 22, 2020, 1:02 PM

In India, Hindu Nationalist have been attacking Indian Muslims, blaming them for the spread of the virus.

This is a prime example of pre-existing prejudice leading to scapegoating in a crisis

China

NEWS   CORONAVIRUS ADVICE   US POLITICS   VOICES   SPORT   CULTURE   INDY/LIFE   INDYBEST   INDY100   VOUCHERS   PREMIUM   CLIMATE BLOGS

People wear masks as they walk on a street in Guangzhou

Black people in China 'banned from McDonalds and evicted from their homes' over coronavirus fears

'They treat us like animals,' says Max, who was forced from his apartment and put into quarantine – despite testing negative for Covid-19

William Yang Taiwan | @WilliamYang120 |
Wednesday 15 April 2020 09:45 | 141 comments

In China black people have been blamed for spreading the virus, they have been banned from entering shops and restaurants, including a MacDonald's in Guangzhou

Lijian Zhao 赵立坚 ✓
@zlj517

2/2 CDC was caught on the spot. When did patient zero begin in US? How many people are infected? What are the names of the hospitals? It might be US army who brought the epidemic to Wuhan. Be transparent! Make public your data! US owe us an explanation!

3月11日，美国众议院监督委员会
就新冠肺炎举行听证会

1:01   3.7M views

From Global Times ✓
3:37 PM · Mar 12, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

7.6K Retweets   15.4K Likes

A Chinese minister, Zhao Lijian, made allegations that the virus may have originated in the US and been brought to China by U.S. military personnel in October 2019. All scientific evidence suggests the virus originated in a wet market in Wuhan.

United Kingdom

> **Andrew Pierce** @toryboypierce · 12 Apr
>
> If families gather for holy month of Ramadan will there be a huge spike in Covid cases. Doctors are very worried
>
> 💬 2.2K   🔁 952   ♡ 3.7K   ↥

COVID-19 Toolkit for Muslim Communities (25 March)
Stay At Home → Keep Connected → Support

Early in the outbreak, some right wing commentators suggested that Muslims were ignoring the social distancing guidelines and making the spread of the virus worse. **There was no evidence of this at all.**

The Muslim Council of Britain is in accordance with all NHS and government guidance . The first 5 doctors to die of the virus were Muslim.

Again, pre-existing prejudice takes the form of finger pointing in times of crisis.

Activity 2

Make a poster about scapegoating to explain it to your parent/brother/sister. It should include:

1) A few facts about where the term came from

2) A few examples of scapegoating (both historical examples and current ones)

3) Some information about the role of the internet in encouraging scapegoating

Then, use your poster to teach other people about scapegoating and why we need to be careful to avoid it!

Activity 1: Answers

1) **Where does the word originate?**

Leviticus 16:8 - God declared that each year, two goats should be sacrificed to take the burden of sin of all people

2) **When was it first used in its current meaning?**

1530 is the earliest recorded use of it in it's current state